

**TOWARDS A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE:
Evaluating Autonomy, Identity, and the Metropolis in
The legacy of Japanese Experimental Music**

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Abstract

Towards a Universal Language: (Evaluating Autonomy, Identity, and the Metropolis in the legacy of Japanese Experimental Music) attempts to survey the rise and evolution of radical Japanese avant-garde music throughout the second half of the Twentieth century.

Analysing the vast economic and social changes that have occurred within Japan's Metropolitan centre over the past half-century, the study draws together diverse areas of research including Japanese modernist composition, jazz, electronic, improvisational and experimental psychedelic music, examining each within the context of key social, political, and art historical issues.

The legacy of avant-garde music in Japan, which began to take initial root during the post-Hiroshima era under allied occupation, embodied for the first time in centuries a progressive, indigenous form of Japanese music that relied neither upon bland mimicry of the West, nor nationalistic adherence to its own folk traditions. The research presented within this thesis focuses upon issues of creative independence, identity, and cultural autonomy, examining the pursuit made by successive generations of defiant, often anarchic avant-garde musicians and sound artists, to develop a creative language that was/is independent of dominant cultural and artistic practises in Japan. These dominant mainstream trends have, throughout Japanese history, been predominantly manifest in either its artists' nationalistic adherence to traditional folk culture, or unoriginal mimicry of European and American fashions.

The study examines the relationship between Japan and the West at each point in history, and the effect both contemporaneous and residual historical-political factors have had upon cultural exchanges between the two. It also considers the attitude of individual Japanese artists to both traditional Japanese culture and that imported from the West, as well as the way in which the avant-garde communities of Tokyo have historically reacted to, been informed by, and evolved as a result of the specific conditions and changing nature of the city itself.

The foremost aim of the study is to establish a modern historical lineage of radical avant-garde music in Japan, examining how the historical, political and cultural relationship between Japan and the West, as well as external political, social and cultural factors (historical and contemporaneous), have influenced the development of Japanese experimental music itself, and the possible reactionary nature of that work.

Towards a Universal Language considers the extent to which Japanese experimental music at its most progressive, challenging, and anarchic, can be defined historically by it's autonomy from Japanese tradition and Western mimicry - remaining throughout its multiple incarnations over the last fifty years, a statement of the new, the contemporary, and the independent.

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JAPANESE MODERNISM 'BENEATH THE VENEER OF APPROPRIATION'

0.1 Introduction

Intellectuals should be criticised for bringing the theory of modernism – let alone postmodernism – to art without considering theoretically such facts as the structural differences between different cultures and societies

(Asano, 1994, p.71)

Japan is a country with many people, and many different aspects to its music scene, of course... But one interesting thing is the fact that anyone from another culture can approach a country's music from a different point of view. So for example, Japanese kids growing up can hear American rock and roll, and also hear European experimental music, and then start a band that combines rock with experimental music in ways which wouldn't occur to an American kid.

(Mason Jones, 2001, p.47 - Japanese Independent music)

European and American journalists don't really understand the differences within the Japanese independent music scene. Musicians have grown up in very tiny rock clubs and other uncommercial experimental venues. This has resulted in a melting pot of the various Japanese dialects and young people's slang.

(Haco, 2001, p.49 – Japanese Independent music)

We learned everything about music from the American and European music. We have no Japanese musical roots... Our musical roots are the music of other countries. Japanese style is also based on imitation but it is not analytical, it's obscure. When they start to copy something, they will soon find themselves going in a different direction. It is not important for them to make a precise copy.

(Uchihashi Kazuhisa, 2001, p.51 – Japanese Independent music)

Modern Japan has spent a long time trying to discover itself in the huge Western European mirror, but now that some time has passed, it should try to see itself in those countless fragments of mirror. But the ability to unite those numerous scattered, distorted images is called imagination. And the power to do that requires an act of will.

(Takemitsu, 1995, p.70)

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The research presented within this thesis attempts to survey the history of radical avant-garde music in Japan. It focuses specifically upon the most subversive and anarchic Japanese music of the post-war period¹, drawing together a rich and diverse range of historical, social, and musical sources. As a body of work, it perhaps represents one of the first studies to analyse, with such inclusive historical and stylistic scope, the development of such rebellious aural art in Japan, placing the subject within the context of social, political, and art historical issues, already familiar to discourses around visual and performance arts.

As well as providing a chronological account of the history of the most challenging Japanese experimental music, each chapter engages with a specific thematic issue. Chapter One establishes a number of themes that subsequently run throughout the duration of the study, discussing the Japanese avant-garde immediately after world war two, and the social, political, and artistic context in which they worked. Focusing largely upon the career of Toru Takemitsu, it introduces a number of key ideas regarding Japanese avant-garde culture: in particular, the attitude of avant-garde artists towards their native cultural heritage; the influence of the West; and the endeavour to develop an autonomous and universal cultural language.

Chapter Two deals most directly with the idea of Japanese avant-garde music as an oppositional, reactionary phenomenon, examining the role and cultural status of jazz and free jazz music during the 1960s. The chapter looks closely at the decade's heated social and political climate, which saw the outbreak of anti-ANPO riots in and around the Shinjuku district of Tokyo – an area then renowned as both a centre for the student community, and place most commonly populated by jazz kissas, the Japanese jazz cafes. While Japanese protest folk (styled upon the American genre of the same decade) is the music most overtly associated with Tokyo's political unrest at that time, Chapter Two nevertheless examines the origins of Japanese free jazz in this context, discussing both the highly politicised nature of

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American free jazz, and the work of a few pioneering Japanese avant-garde artists. In particular, the work of Masayuki Takayanagi is examined here.

Chapter Three, *From Group Sounds to Avant-garde*, traces the development of Japanese psychedelic music from its origins in mid-1960s Japanese popular culture (when emphasis was simply placed upon recreating the formula laid out by American and British pop groups) to present, where the term *psychedelic* possesses unique, and strictly avant-garde connotations. Looking initially at the notion of cultural mimicry, it examines more widely how psychedelic music as a concept has changed and evolved in Japan over a number of decades to gain severance from, and in a sense surpass, its origins in 1960s youth culture.

Specifically addressing the work of contemporary sound artists, Chapter Four looks at Tokyo itself, seeking to examine how the unique conditions of the city influence both the lives and work of the avant-garde. Looking at recent social conditions such as *Hikikomori*, and drawing parallels with the work of Japanese artists currently working in other media, it focuses largely upon the work of contemporary improvisers, whose approach to soundwork has evolved in direct response to their immediate environment. The chapter discusses the influential emergence of *Onkyo* during the late 1990s at the Off Site Gallery –a venue which, like the jazz kissas of the 1950s and 1960s, owes its unique identity and character to the nature of Tokyo itself, and the physical restrictions the city imposes upon its residents.

¹ Rather than upon Japanese experimental music as a whole

0.2 ‘Overcoming Modernity’ in Japan

Historical Context

One can see a posture by which the Japanese community has consistently sought out its own identity – its belief in a self-sameness, nurtured for more than ten centuries – to face the incessant intrusion of the modern era as a product of enlightened reason. (Monroe, 1994, p.27)

Translated roughly as ‘overcoming modernity’, Kindai no Chōkoku was the title given to a 1942 academic conference held in Kyoto. The essential aim of the forum was to evaluate the nature, and future development, of modernism in Japan – looking to establish a cultural direction for the future that neither blindly followed the lead of the West, nor resisted modernisation as an imposing foreign threat. Throughout the history of Japan, the confusion between westernisation and modernisation often resulted in episodes of nostalgic revivalism and the popular rise nationalistic values.

Attendees at the conference sought to pioneer a future for Japan that was both forward-looking and modern, yet autonomous and independent of western developments: a cultural direction that exclusively represented and reflected contemporary Japan, and which would be instrumental in determining the nation’s future development.

As historian Alexandra Monroe points out, ‘The Kyoto debate was the culmination of decades of intellectual protest against western political, economic, and cultural influence in Asia. On one hand, this movement grieved the passing of traditional Japanese values in the wake of industrialisation ...on the other hand, it was related to leftist revolutionary ideals which defended a modernisation process that relied neither on western models nor reified traditional forms.’ (Monroe, 1994, p.23)

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Modern Japanese art has been regarded, throughout the course of the twentieth century, as a problematic and paradoxical phenomenon in the West. Informed by the presumed ‘universality’ of the Western art historical values, dominant European and American discourses often seemed unanimous in the conclusion that Japanese art could only ever really exist outside the realms of modernism-proper².

Throughout history, mainstream Japanese art and culture has seemed to shuffle between opposing and contradictory poles, moving sequentially between cycles of westernisation and nationalism with the passing of each era. When artists in Europe and America were first pursuing what came to be seen as the modernist ideal³, exploring and transcending boundaries throughout the arts, art in Japan was generally regarded to have changed very little. It seemed to many Western onlookers that Japanese artists were simply continuing to do much the same as they had always done: i.e. either producing highly derivative work based largely upon Japan’s ancient folk traditions; or superficially imitating the latest Western trends, taking pride in their ability to imitate rather than innovate. In either case, it was presumed in the West that Japanese art, by its very nature⁴, would never be able to truly encompass (inherently Western) modernist ideals.

This perception of Japanese modernism, however, is symptomatic of a much deeper fixed idea about Japanese culture on the whole that, for centuries, has continued to linger and misguidedly inform Western views.

Central to this, particularly during the latter half of the twentieth century, is the common misreading of Japan as a mixed-up and unfathomable place – a nation characterised by a multiplicity of contradictions and cultural paradoxes that divide and define its culture in equal measure. Such tensions are often thought to be manifest in the perceived failure of Japanese society to find resolution between native culture and imported culture, or the uneasy

² i.e. The Western perception of modernism

³ The efforts made by artists during the first half of the twentieth century to challenge and displace the principles upon which art in the nineteenth century had been based. In the visual arts, for example, this meant non-representational aesthetic, structural, and technical concerns overtook the traditional emphasis placed upon explicitly conveying meaning, and representing subject matter.

⁴ i.e. As non-Western art

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way in which cultural elements of the past and the present remain at odds, with conflicts between the traditional and the innovative; the ancient and the progressive.

Throughout history, the prevailing attitude within Japanese society towards Western culture can be seen not only to have characterised key historical periods, but also served as the catalyst for social, political and cultural change. Both the Meiji Restoration and the period immediately following the Pacific war, for example, were defined and shaped (albeit under different circumstances) by how Japan related to the West, as Japanese culture moved swiftly from outright rejection to the enthusiastic appropriation of Western culture.

In many respects, modernism has historically been considered the fundamental preserve of the West – a worldview pioneered and effectuated by European and American minds. Throughout the twentieth century, the idea that a country such as Japan could possibly be capable of developing its own unique modernist ideal was, in the West at least, hardly considered. As historical accounts of Japanese history frequently concur, ever since Commander Matthew Calbraith Perry arrived upon Japanese shores in 1853, his black war ships grimly demonstrating the might of the industrialised world, modernism was regarded in Japan as the product and sole dominion of the Occident. Up until that point, Japan had undergone 250 years of self-imposed international isolation under the Tokugawa Shogunate, remaining an agrarian nation severed from the dealings and developments of the outside world. That the modernist ideal could be something wholly unrelated to, distinct from, or independent of Western culture was inconceivable, not only to Western minds, but the majority of Japanese also.

Throughout the decades that followed, as popular accounts usually attest, Japan sought only to learn from Western industrialised nations, emulating as closely as possible the means and methods by which it could produce such technology. From this perspective, Japan was simply seeking to catch up with the Occident - to westernise - and gave no mind to the idea of pursuing its own independent modernist identity.

Writers, historians, academics, and artists in Japan, as well as those in the West, posited Western value systems as universal. By apprehending Western modernism as

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universal modernism, the ‘non-Western’ modernity of Japan could subsequently only be regarded, within and outside of Japan, as inauthentic, subordinate and artificial.

Japan was the first Asian country to self-consciously Westernise during the late nineteenth century, driven by the perceived need to catch up with industrialised Western nations. Furthermore, the military threat posed by the Occident made it a matter of urgency that Japan acquire modern skills and techniques, not only in the fields of science and industry, but most notably that of warfare. Of these objectives, the Japanese state pursued the latter with such inexhaustiveness and intensity, that it incorporated not only the study of Western technology and tactics, but also the whole culture of modern warfare – including music.

Together with the re-establishment of music classes to schools and religious song⁵, the arrival of military marching music was key to the initial introduction of Western-style music to Japan. The first marching band was established under the guidance of Irish bandmaster John Fenton Williams around 1870, and the growth of Western-led military music in Japan resulted in concerts and performances becoming popular with the public. It was the importation of music in this way that, for example, brought about the composition of *Kimi ga yo*, Japan’s national anthem.

Japan’s graduation from isolated agrarian nation to post-industrial global force, constitutes something of a highly-accelerated progression and, according to some historical commentaries, is partly responsible for the rapidly evolving, high-speed culture now frequently associated with Japanese life by Westerners.

Although Japan’s interest in the West (i.e. in adopting facets of Western culture and technology) was initially undertaken as a matter of self-preservation, by the 1880s Westernisation had gone far beyond the pursuit of military and technological know-how. As Endymion Wilkinson has suggested, by embracing European and US institutions, laws, even ideas, ‘Japan saw a way in which to become ‘fūkoku kyōhei’ (‘a rich and powerful country’) in its own right. (Wilkinson, 1991, p.43).

⁵ Religious song was re-introduced following the revocation of anti-Christianity laws in 1873.

0.3 ‘Autonomy’ in Japanese experimental music

Translated to mean ‘autonomy’, the concept of *Jiko hon’I* represents, on a number of levels, a key principle underlying the development of Japanese avant-garde music during the latter half of the twentieth century. Discussed by writer Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916) at the turn of the century, *Jiko hon’I* signalled the realisation that many of the cultural values presumed, during the Meiji era, to be ‘universal’, were in reality derived from the dominant Western patriarchy and possessed little real grounding or pertinence in Japan. Under the precept of autonomy, Sōseki strove to underline how crucial it was for Japanese artists to reject the largely accepted imposition of ‘universal’ Western ideas and conventions.

Following the ruin and devastation of the Pacific war, when many in Japan saw American culture as the key to their own country’s revival, an alternative and reactionary form of Japanese music evolved in isolation: music that relied neither upon bland mimicry of the west, nor nationalistic adherence to native folk traditions. For avant-garde composers like Toru Takemitsu, this spirit was reflected in the impulsive creation of genuinely contemporary art – art that was the product of everyday personal experience.

In focusing upon the issue of cultural autonomy, the following study examines the quest undertaken by successive generations of avant-garde musicians and sound artists, to develop a creative language that was/is independent of mainstream cultural trends in Japan. These mainstream trends have, throughout Japanese history, been predominantly manifest in either its artists’ nationalistic adherence to traditional folk culture, or unoriginal mimicry of European and American fashions.

In considering this, the following thesis will, in part, seek to analyse radical Japanese experimental music in relation to the vast changes that have characterised and shaped post-war Japanese society, tracing its development as a reactionary phenomenon. Here, the idea of autonomy exists in the legacy of artists and musicians who stood apart from, and in opposition to, the political and cultural mainstream.

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Utilising not only popular and experimental methods from Europe and America, but also musical strategies derived from indigenous Japanese practises, what resulted was the growth of an avant-garde lineage that evolved independently of dominant artistic practises in Japan. This legacy of avant-garde music, which initially began to take root during the post-Hiroshima era under allied occupation, embodied for the first time in centuries a progressive, indigenous form of Japanese music that relied neither upon bland mimicry of the West, nor nationalistic adherence to its own folk traditions.

0.4 Literature Review and Research methodology

The primary aim of this thesis is to trace the development of the most dissident experimental music and sound art in Japan throughout the second half of the Twentieth century, from the end of World war Two to present. The study will look to examine the development of the musical avant-garde within Japan's metropolitan centre, considering the mass economic and social changes that have occurred over the past half-century.

The recent influx of articles, journals, and publications (over the past few years in particular) covering various aspects of Japanese avant-garde music, clearly reflects its increasing international prominence, and recognition as one of the most vital and dynamic grounds in the development of contemporary new music. Despite this however, there appears to be, as the opening quotes suggest, a sense in which Western journalists are still striving to get to grips with, demystify, and satisfactorily 'understand' the work of Japanese experimental musicians. No doubt, the centuries dominated by (often politically motivated) stereotypes and misinformed perceptions about Japan have played their part in this, and the insidious legacy of such views - both in Japan and the West - is something I will return to.

In tracing the history of Japanese avant-garde music, the thesis is written from a consciously Western perspective, with one of the principal aims being to consider the way in which existing Western literature has interpreted Japanese avant-garde music, taking into account the history and nature of understanding, misunderstanding, and – most importantly - genuine cultural exchange between Japan and the West. In considering the extent to which widespread perceptions of Japanese culture in the West might, for example, still be influenced by long-standing misrepresentations and stereotypes of Japan, it was important to examine the historical and political factors that led to the formation of those stereotypes in the first place.

While a number of existing and recent studies successfully analyse either the work of renowned Japanese musicians, or the historical development of specific musical genres in Japan, it was clear to me at the outset of my research, that very little had been written which

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sought to coherently bring together the historical lineage of experimental and pioneering Japanese avant-garde music as a whole.

The vast scope of the subject, as well as the ever-evolving nature of contemporary experimental music in Japan⁶, makes it impossible for the study to attempt to deal exhaustively with the activities and minutiae of any one artist, movement or moment in history. Indeed, notable bodies of research have been produced which deal specifically with individual avant-garde artists, movements and genres. In part, one of the intended functions of this thesis is to bring together existing research into such areas as Japanese modernist composition, jazz, improvisational, and experimental psychedelic music which – while often comprehensive – have remained largely self-contained areas of research. The present study will seek to identify and discuss the common artistic, social and historical links between each of these moments at their most experimental and subversive, mapping out a compelling historical lineage of anarchic Japanese experimental music.

In *The music of Toru Takemitsu*, Peter Burt goes to great lengths to examine the compositional techniques and methodologies of the composer, analysing the structures beneath all of his most renowned works. More interesting to the course of my own research, however, were sections that dealt with Takemitsu's attitude to both Western culture, and the culture of Japan. Burt places the composer's early rejection of his native culture within the context of his experiences during the Pacific war, and the conspicuous relationship Takemitsu saw between traditional Japanese music and the ultra-nationalist regime under which his country had been led to war. Traditional Japanese folk music and art had, after all, been the key propagandistic tool by which patriotism and loathing for the enemy had been incited.

Burt usefully pinpoints key stages in the career of Takemitsu, all of which revolve around perceptions of Japan and the West: firstly, his rejection of Japanese culture and love of Western modernism; his re-discovering of Japanese culture through the eyes of Western modernism⁷; his attempts, through compositions such as *November Steps*, to blend East and

⁶ Spurred by the often prolific nature of the respective artists

⁷ In particular, this relates to Takemitsu's fascination with the work of John Cage

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West; and the final stage of his career, in which the composer sought to transcend geographical and cultural definitions of music altogether – to ‘swim in an ocean that has no East or West’.

The artistic life of Toru Takemitsu, shaped as it was by his own complex relationship with Japan and the West, perhaps epitomises many of the issues and tensions that have subsequently remained at the heart of the development of Japanese avant-garde music.

Noriko Ohtake’s *Creative Sources* for the music of Toru Takemitsu further examines the composer’s journey, as he constantly sought throughout his life to find a resolution (in his own mind) between his position as Japanese composer and avant-gardist. This eventual resolution, ultimately, was to nullify and discount the relevance of geographical boundaries (i.e. physical points of origin) to the reception of music. In tracking Takemitsu’s career, the evolution of his creative, philosophical and aesthetic principles, *Confronting Silence*, a collection of the composer’s own writings, is an essential resource. Many of the essays and lecture notes compiled deal, particularly, with the composer’s own ongoing efforts to overcome not only the mental, historical, and creative boundaries between Japan and the West, but the inaccurate perceptions such compartmentalising terms can often lead to in music. As he asserts in *Noh and Transience* (1980), for example, ‘I dislike generalisations such as “Western” or “Eastern,” for even in such a simply constructed instrument as the flute one can hear subtle differences of a cultural nature in different geographic areas’ (Takemitsu, 1995, p.56)

The catalyst for Takemitsu’s initial reawakening to Japanese music was the work of John Cage, a Western modernist composer obsessed with Eastern philosophy, and Japanese Zen Buddhism in particular. Helen Westgeest’s *Zen in the Fifties: Interaction in art between East and West* looks specifically to examine why, in the first place, influential Western artists in the wake of World War Two, saw Eastern philosophy as the basis upon which a new avant-garde language could be based.

The relationship between Japanese and American culture is also discussed at length within the context of jazz music in E. Taylor Atkins’ *Blue Nippon: Authenticating jazz in*

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Japan. Atkins' account is notable in that it brings into play a number of issues that are fundamental to the history of Japanese avant-garde music also. For instance, the long-established practice of cultural mimicry in Japan, and the way in which such attempted imitation – when got wrong – has often led to a uniquely indigenous Japanese version of its model. The unique locations and venues provided by Japanese cities such as Tokyo (due to the lack of available space) was also pivotal in shaping the development of Japanese jazz, and has remained so to the development of live music in the ensuing years.

Other recent publications, such as the bi-lingual periodical *Improvised music from Japan*, and *Japanese Independent music*, published by Sonore, provide access for English language speakers to contemporary Japanese avant-garde music, including essays and interviews with Internationally recognised practitioners and commentators. Sonore's text also offers an A-Z directory listing Japanese musicians and groups, although the accelerated pace at which new artists develop and come to the fore in Japan, would require updated editions to be published annually, at least, to remain up to date.

The foremost aim of this thesis is to trace and establish the modern historical lineage of Japanese avant-garde music, following its development from the immediate post-Hiroshima generation, to those contemporary innovators whose work is attracting increasing recognition on the international stage. This will be done consciously from the perspective of a Western writer, assessing all relevant existing English-language literature on and around the subject, to examine how the historical, political and cultural relationship between Japan and the West has influenced both the development of Japanese experimental music itself, and its reception in Europe and America.

In relation to this, a number of themes and areas for discussion will recur throughout the course of the thesis: -

- The relationship between Japan and the West at each point in history, and the effect both contemporaneous and residual historical-political factors have influenced cultural exchanges between the two.

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- The attitude of individual Japanese artists to both traditional Japanese culture and music, and that imported from the West.
- The way in which the avant-garde communities of Tokyo have historically reacted to, been informed by, and evolved as a result of the specific conditions and changing nature of the city itself.
- The influence of external political, social and cultural factors (historical and contemporaneous) upon the work of artists of each period and genre, considering the possible reactionary nature of that work.
- The concept of cultural autonomy, and the extent to which the most challenging and anarchic avant-garde musicians in Japan have sought to define themselves against, and in isolation from, the dominant musical mainstream of Japan.

The modern mainstream culture of Japan (art, fashion, popular culture, etc) is caricatured or dismissed in the West as a confused, chaotic and often comical amalgam of Western popular trends and products, mutated, misunderstood and misappropriated. For some time, Japanese culture - popular culture in particular – has been written off as merely the sum of Western cultural products indiscriminately imitated, mixed and mingled, regardless of their original native cultural context.

In seeking to find a genuine mode of expression, however – something that was immediate, and representative of contemporary experience (whether personal or political) – Japanese avant-garde artists have, over the past half-century, continuously striven to achieve independent creative identities, rejecting the dominant trend of shallow mimicry.

‘Throughout its rise to international prominence, the Japanese avant-garde has struggled with how to preserve, transform or universalise its cultural legacy, and beneath the veneer of appropriation, has deeply resisted the blind assimilation of western culture.’ (Monroe, 1994, p.21)

Although the endeavour for creative cultural autonomy was evident during the Meiji era, the solution was frequently seen to reside in the formulaic blending of Western

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modernism and traditional Japanese sensibilities. The Tokyo School of Fine Arts established by Tenshin Okakura (1862-1913), for example, was founded upon the principle that a new convention of modern Japanese painting could be pioneered through the combination of traditional Japanese and Western modernist styles. Here began the search for a means by which Japan could move forward and develop as a new, modern, internationally successful nation, whilst simultaneously preserving its traditions and cultural heritage.

Writing during the 1930s, Jun'ichirō Tanizaki expressed his opposition to the way in which Western culture, with its emphasis upon industry, technology and capitalism, had become an intrusive presence in Japan. Expressing his views prior to the outbreak of the Pacific war, and before the absolute onset of ultra-nationalism, Tanizaki argued that traditional Japanese culture provided a true 'spiritual' alternative to this fundamentally imported and alien way of life.

According to Alexandra Monroe in *Scream at the Sky*, this 'spirit of opposition' demonstrated by the pre-war avant-garde, was the very thing that Japanese artists after the war would carry forward and use to try and pioneer a new future. *Scream at the Sky*, edited and contributed to by Monroe, functions as a comprehensive collection of writings which chronologically traces the development of Japanese avant-garde art from 1945 to present (1994). While no attention is given to experimentation in music, the essays nevertheless provide an essential insight into the social and political conditions under which the Japanese avant-garde have worked throughout the twentieth century. From the foundation of the Zen'ei bijutsu-kai in 1947, for example, to the work of 'obsessional artists' in the 1960s, it became clear that important common aims, motives and convictions had continued to be shared between visual, performance, and sound artists of the Japanese avant-garde.

Throughout the course of the programme of research, I was fortunate to make contact with a number of notable figures actively involved in various areas of Japanese avant-garde music. Ongoing email correspondence with Kazu Yasutani and Yasunori Saitoh of Japanese jazz label *Jinya Disc* provided an invaluable insight and first-hand account of the Tokyo jazz scene of the 1960s and 1970s, specifically in relation to the life's work of Masayuki

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Takayanagi. Similarly helpful was avant-garde musician and producer Hoppy Kamiyama, whose email interviews and archived materials proved invaluable. Other similar online communications were established, and conversations with academics such as Eckhardt Derschmidt and practitioner/writer Frank Stofer enabled me to assess the direction and focus of my study during the initial research phases.

This ongoing process of self-assessment while undertaking the research and writing of the thesis was aided greatly in May 2002, when I was invited to present a paper⁸ at the *History Matters* Conference, held at The New School for Social Research in New York. The paper I delivered focused specifically upon the phenomenon of the jazz kissas and free jazz music during the 1960s, examining their role within Tokyo's volatile social and political climate, and the outbreak of the anti-ANPO riots. The feedback and discussions generated by the paper proved invaluable, particularly (given the nature of both the conference and the institution itself) in grounding the political and sociological context of my research.

For similar reasons of context, throughout the first phase of my programme of research I also subscribed to a number of English-language Japanese newspapers including *Japan Today* and the *Daily Yomiuri*, and studied elementary Japanese language as an elective module at Liverpool John Moores University.

An integral factor in my research was also to focus upon the soundwork itself, and throughout the duration of the study I made provision to attend as many performances as possible. Travelling regularly to London, Manchester and Leeds, as well as venues in Liverpool, I was fortunate enough to witness a number of performances by many of the key contemporary artists focused upon in the study, including Otomo Yoshihide, Acid Mothers Temple, Sachiko M, Toshimaru Nakamura, Keiji Haino, Taku Sugimoto, Boredoms, Haco, Ishikawa Ko, Makoto Kawabata, Ami Yoshida, as well as recitals of the work of Toru Takemitsu.

It was equally important that I was able to access the recorded output of virtually all the artists discussed. As well as visiting retailers both personally and online, I also had some

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success in contacting many of the relevant record labels (most of which are small, independent organisations, frequently run by the artists themselves) who currently release and distribute such work. In nearly all instances I was fortunate in receiving a great deal of interest and support, ranging from continued correspondence and offers of further information, to CDs, catalogues, and archived press materials being forwarded. Interviews, reviews and up-to-date listings published in publications such as *The Wire* - a UK-based periodical dedicated to avant-garde music - also proved important source material, particularly with regard to release, touring, and events information.

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CHAPTER ONE

MODERNIST COMPOSITION IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD:

TORU TAKEMITSU AND THE AVANT-GARDE

1.0 Introduction: Toru Takemitsu

Conditions were harsh during the war, and the Japanese military government brutal. But among the common people, some of them maybe remembered old American movies, and thought that Japan couldn't win the war. Many thought that Japan was wrong... Toward the end of the war, I was in Junior High School. I was working alongside soldiers in the mountains, helping to build a food distribution base. The only songs we could sing were army songs. There was almost no music. (Takemitsu, 1994⁹)

The score for *Minamoto Yoshitsune* (1966), a Japanese period drama, marks one of several important early steps in the career of modernist composer Toru Takemitsu. Bringing together the musical traditions of Japan and Europe in what might be seen as a very physical, literal way, it was for this composition that he first placed conventional Japanese instruments such as the shakuhachi, shinobue, and ryūteki, next to the Western classical orchestra.

Eclipse (1966) represented the first transposition of these experiments into a classic symphonic context and, importantly, was followed a year later by what is regarded to be one of his most significant compositions¹⁰, *November Steps* (1967), commissioned by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in celebration of its 125th anniversary. Recorded in 1967 by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra conducted by Seiji Ozawa, it has remained amongst the most widely received, high profile pieces of the composer's career.

⁹ Interview with Toru Takemitsu, conducted for the documentary, *Music for the Movies: Toru Takemitsu*, directed by Charlotte Zwerin. See Bibliography for full details.

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The success of *November Steps* also had the (perhaps unfortunate) outcome of giving listeners, particularly in Europe and America, a false perception of Takemitsu's career and life-long work. As historian Peter Burt suggests, the composition 'had the deleterious effect of creating the impression that the composer's career was dominated by the attempt to create some sort of bridge between traditional Japanese instrumental praxis and western symphonic music.' (Burt, 2001, p.111)

In reality, only a handful of concert works openly juxtaposed Japanese and Western musical conventions in this way, including compositions such as *Distance* (1972) and *Voyage* (1973). However, apart from the anecdotal use of such interplay in his incidental music works (which he would continue to explore throughout the course of his career), Takemitsu's appropriation and repositioning of traditional Japanese instruments within a Western context, was never really surpassed by *November Steps*.

Takemitsu is largely remembered as a Japanese composer whose work succeeded on an international level, and – in one way or another – found consolidation between Japanese and Euro-American musical conventions. In a career spanning around forty years, his music went through a number of notable stages that were shaped and defined by the composer's attitude towards Western and Japanese conventions.

To many, one of Takemitsu's most significant achievements can be seen to have developed during the second half of his career. By the time of the 1980s, the composer's work had attained a sense of creative autonomy completely in keeping with his internationalist preoccupations, and the quest to develop a creative language that transcended geographical cultural boundaries. Rather than being born of a synthesis between Western and Japanese conventions, Takemitsu's later compositions constituted what Koozin describes as the adoption of, 'an international musical vocabulary to express an indigenous aesthetic goal.' (Koozin, cited in Burt, 2001, p.236). In other words, this was creative autonomy realised

¹⁰ As well as being one of the most famous

through the expression of distinctly Japanese themes by way of a language derived from contemporary Western musical practices.¹¹

Takemitsu's work, however, underwent a gradual journey before he was eventually able to realise or define his intentions thus, beginning with the outright rejection of Japanese culture during the formative stage of his career. It was largely through a fascination with the work of John Cage (whose work dealt with chance operations, indeterminacy, and the I-Ching¹²) that Takemitsu himself first began to explore and engage with the musical heritage of Japan. Through the interplay of Western avant-garde techniques and Japanese folk traditions, Takemitsu had, by the 1980s, begun to consciously work towards creating music that transcended traditional cultural and geographical boundaries.

1.1: Upon Seeking Drastic Change:

The Post-war avant-garde in Japan

In the years immediately following the Pacific war, not only was Tokyo the centre of the Japanese art establishment, but dominant within its circles was an approach to art driven by a Marxist and Socialist agenda.

In 1955, the *Gutai Bijutsu Kyōkai*¹³ held their first exhibition: a twenty-four hour outdoor event entitled 'experimental Outdoor Exhibition of modern Art to Challenge the Mid-Summer Sun'. A year later, in October 1956, the group's founder Yoshihara laid down the core principles of the Gutai Group in a manifesto, published in *Geijutsu Shinchō* journal.

To the dominant Socialist/Marxist contingent in Japan, whose work usually flaunted their penchant for surrealism and social realism, the work of the Gutai Group seemed self-indulgent and shallow, lacking the requisite social content and political engagement. Politics was, in fact, something the Gutai Group actively set out to avoid.

¹¹ Biographer Peter Burt has also drawn attention to this point, observing in Takemitsu's work from this period, 'several points of congruence between certain aspects of his own native culture ...and the contemporary preoccupations of a number of "advanced" musicians in the West.' (Burt, 2001, p.236)

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While the work of Japan's social realists was defined by its highly political nature and, some might say, deep-seated suspicion of the US and the West, the Gutai Group remained detached from politics, concerned more with achieving philosophical, artistic goals. Nevertheless, that is not to understate the movement's underlying social and cultural aims, which regarded the end of the war, and the fall of oppressive Japanese nationalism, as providing them with a fresh start and new possibilities for creative freedom.

Much of Gutai's work reflected the idea that, particularly in the immediate wake of the war, physicality rather than symbolism was the most appropriate form of expression. As historian Alexandra Monroe explains: 'Deeply affected by the atrocities and betrayals of the war, artists around the world found existential solace in the denial of symbolism, the freedom of gestural abstraction, and the materiality of paint itself.' (Monroe, 1994, p.84)

While most obviously, the notion of physicality made itself apparent in the work of the Gutai Group through such things as action painting and performance events ('physical' endeavours in the most literal sense), musique concrete has also been listed amongst the group's activities at that time. That musique concrete should be considered a physical approach to art and music is related to its use of real, everyday sound, as well as the physical manipulation of recorded sounds on magnetic tape.

Relief Statique was the first musique concrete piece produced by Toru Takemitsu, commissioned initially as incidental music for Yasuji Inoue's radio play *Hono*¹⁴ (1955), and premiered as an independent sound piece at a 1956 *Jikken Kobo* concert. Unaware of the work of Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry, the European innovators of musique concrete, Takemitsu pioneered his own experiments with audio magnetic tape independently.

The career of Toru Takemitsu began with him moving in identifiably nationalistic circles: first under the guidance of Yasuji Kiyose from around 1948, and then in 1950 when he was invited to join *Shinsakkyokuha* (the New Composition Group) – a composer's collective founded by Kiyose and his colleagues. In December 1950, Takemitsu performed

¹² The Chinese Book of Changes

¹³ 'Gutai Art Association', founded by Jirō Yoshihara in December 1954.

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Lento in Due Movimenti, a solo piano piece, at the Seventh *Shinsakkyokuha* recital, for which he received an acrimonious critical reception.

While Takemitsu was understandably hit hard by the dire critical response his *Shinsakkyokuha* performance received, his attendance at the event nevertheless led his making two opportune and important acquaintances: Jōji Yuasa (composer) and Kuniharu Akiyama (poet and music critic). It was with these and other similarly inclined artists, that pioneer Shūzo Takiguchi founded the art movement he would name Jikken Kōbō¹⁵.

In a manifesto-like statement set out for their first exhibition, the artists of Jikken Kōbō declared that, through an ‘organic combination’ of various art forms, they sought ‘...to create a new style of art with social relevance closely related to everyday life.’ (Jikken Kōbō, cited in Yoshiko Kakudo and Glen Glasow, 1995, p.xi).

Whereas *Shinsakkyokuha*¹⁶, however, was decidedly conservative in its academic musical sensibilities – particularly music of a nationalist bent – the experimental Workshop was not. On the contrary, as one historian points out, ‘...it had a decidedly anti-academic bias – in fact, it seems that any kind of formal musical education was a barrier to membership, and this naturally helped consolidate Takemitsu’s position as an outsider to the highly conservative world of institutional Japanese academic establishment at this period.’ (Burt, 2001, p.39).

On 4 February 1956, six months prior to Gutai’s ‘experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Mid-Summer Sun’, Jikken Kōbō organised a showcase event featuring musique concrete and electronic music. One of the key aims of such events was to introduce Tokyo’s public and music-loving fraternity to the work of renowned Western experimental composers, many of who were still largely unheard of in Japan. Compositions by the likes of Messiaen and Schoenberg received their Japanese premieres through Jikken Kōbō performances.

¹⁴ ‘Flames’. The play was first broadcast on the radio station *Shin Nihon Hoso* in 1955.

¹⁵ ‘The Experimental Workshop’

¹⁶ With whom Toru Takemitsu parted company in 1952)

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Another underlying intention behind such evenings was to showcase the new and progressive music of the collective's own members.

Born in 1930, and graduating from High School in 1949, Takemitsu was fundamentally self-taught, although is known to have spent some time studying under the direction of Yasuji Kiyose. However, of all of Takemitsu's contemporaries, it was perhaps fellow *Shinsakkyokuha* member Fumio Hayasaki that had the most influence upon the young artist. The nearest thing to a teacher figure Takemitsu had during his formative years, Hayasaki is widely remembered for film scores he was commissioned to produce for early Akira Kurosawa films such as *Rashōmon* (1950) and *The Seven Samurai* (1954).

In 1957, two years after Fumio Hayasaki died, an ailing bed-ridden Takemitsu slowly completed a commission for the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra entitled *Requiem for Strings*.

The fact that *Requiem* was such a large and elaborate piece commissioned by the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, has led to the suggestion that by this time he was perhaps beginning to outgrow the more moderate undertakings of Jikken Kōbō. During the course of the next three years, he also completed three additional commissions for the NHK, the national broadcasting service of Japan. The first two, *Tableau Noir* and *Solitude Sonore*, were aired on NHK in the July and November of 1958 respectively.

While in many ways a reflection of the composer's own personal melancholy (the title perhaps inspired by his mourning of Hayasaki), in a wider social context *Requiem* has to some extent been associated with the period in which he grew up, and the prevailing air of disillusionment and despondency. The experiences that, as a nation, Japan had endured during, and in the aftermath of, the Pacific war aroused sentiments that clearly defined his work during this formative period.

One of the most tangible factors in this was the composer's strong anti-nationalist feelings, clearly evident in the negative attitude he displayed towards traditional Japanese music as a young man, and the discontent he often referred to upon hearing it. In this sense, the personal despondency expressed by Takemitsu through compositions such as *Requiem*, is indicative of the wider social and cultural despondency in the midst of which he had been

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brought up and now experienced. The psychological damage of world war two, with the complete undermining of the Emperor's divine status and the fall of nationalism (creating considerable questions in Japan about its identity as a Nation and a people), was equally as far-reaching and consequential as the physical ruin of the country¹⁷.

Raised at a time when the music of Europe and America was officially banned by state authorities as the product of the 'enemy', Takemitsu harboured a sincere dislike for traditional Japanese music that stayed with him as he decided to study music after the war. Employed by the Taisho Nationalist regime as a tool of wartime propaganda, Takemitsu rejected Japanese music for the bleak memories of war that it conjured. Far from being restricted to simply music, in fact, these anti-Japanese sentiments informed the young composer's view of his native culture at large. As Ohtake points out: 'Affected by his negative impression of wartime Japan, Takemitsu developed a sense of predilection for non-Japanese objects. These preferences were amplified, consciously or unconsciously, by the many Western images around him.' (Ohtake, 1998, p.1).

So it can be seen that the ground was prepared for the root Takemitsu's career would subsequently take, beginning with his profound interest in, and study of, Western avant-garde music. Ironically, however, it was through his involvement with the work of John Cage that Takemitsu began to see the music and culture of Japan afresh, and work towards a creative aesthetic that would seek first to fuse, and later transcend, Japanese and Western styles of music.

Like other oppressed states during the war, abstract art was banned in Japan throughout the 1940s, with only sanctioned propagandistic work to be produced and displayed. In the years immediately after, there was a realisation amongst the country's gathering and regrouping avant-garde about the extent to which censorship had held Japanese culture back. Nevertheless, as critic Shūzō Takiguchi observed in 1954, 'There was a feeling

¹⁷ 'Vast ruin was the material casualty of defeat in 1945. The far greater wound was a psychological shame and loathing for Japan itself.' (Monroe, 1994, p.127)

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that we were waiting for something to change that was not changing drastically enough.'

(Takiguchi, cited in Monroe, p.89)

To many, the work of the Gutai Group can be seen to represent a celebration of the liberty and freedom artists were able to exercise after the conclusion of world war two. Although the loss and devastation caused by the conflict had left Japan – and the world at large – in a state of shock and mourning, the work of the group nevertheless marked the dawn of a new sense of hope and optimism in Japan. The creative freedom they now exercised perhaps pointed to the chance of a new utopian future, as the nation collectively shook off the fall of imperialism and moved (under the enforced control of General McCarthy) towards US-style democracy.

The first thing actively undertaken by the Gutai Group was to produce a journal in 1955, which – perhaps illustrating their Internationalist sensibilities – was swiftly translated into English.

The fact that the art institutions and authorities of Japan refused to acknowledge the significance of the Gutai Group during its active life span (1955-1973) is perhaps testimony to the subversive, anti-establishmentarian stance of its founder, Jirō Yoshihara. Interestingly, one reason often cited for the group's relative lack of recognition and critical neglect in Japan, has been said to be Tokyo's domination of the Japanese art world, and its aversion to anything that might have evolved outside of the metropolis stronghold. The Gutai Group was based in the Kansai district, three hundred miles away from Japan's capital, and the group's founder, Yoshihara, was a central figure in the development of the Kansai art scene. However, from around the 1970s, the work of the Gutai group did begin to be afforded a new retrospective significance at the hands of less Tokyo-centric, revisionist appraisals of Post-war Japanese art history.

To artists belonging to and associated with the Gutai Group, abstract expressionism gave them the freedom from political engagement, enabling their work to be dominated by more aesthetic concerns, and distance themselves from the social realists of Tokyo.

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Politics aside however, it should perhaps come as no surprise that, just as visual artists belonging to the Japanese avant-garde often based their expressive language upon the work of abstract expressionists such as Jackson Pollock, pioneers of avant-garde modernist music found the likes of John Cage so influential. Parallels have, of course, been drawn between the work of Cage and Pollock, contemporaries at the cutting edge of US art during the 1950s, both of whom developed new modes of perception and expression based upon indeterminate, chance-based principles.

1.2 Exploring the West to Rediscover Japan

Takemitsu's relationship with traditional Japanese music and instrumentation can be traced all the way back to his childhood, where he was brought up by an Aunt who played and taught the Kōtō, and whose house was filled to the brim with all manner of traditional musical instruments.

Until his first encounter with the work of John Cage in 1958 however, Takemitsu had, by his own admission, 'struggled to avoid being Japanese.' (Takemitsu, cited in Burt, 2001, p.110). As previously discussed, his early association with Jikken Kōbō had seen the young composer develop a keen interest in the work of European composers such as Debussy and Messiaen. Nevertheless, despite his dark opinion of traditional Japanese music, which he largely associated with nationalist wartime propaganda, it had from an early age remained something with which he was familiar.

Even prior to Takemitsu's discovery of Cage, the former had begun to stray from his strict focus upon Western avant-garde methods, and betray a growing interest in traditional Japanese music. Even if only on a symbolic level, references made in the programme notes to compositions such as *Requiem* (1957) and *Masque* (1959) (which alluded to Nō Theatre), indicate that a curiosity with Japan's traditional musical heritage was already making itself present in the mind and work of Takemitsu. The next step – actually including traditional

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Japanese instruments in a composition – was not far away, and appeared initially in a number of works he produced for film and TV. For the most part, the composer regarded television and movie score commissions almost as experimental sketchbooks. Exempt from the conventions and restrictions of the concert hall, they presented Takemitsu with the freedom to experiment and try new ideas which, if successful, would usually later find their way into his avant-garde concert pieces.

In a 1961 documentary produced by the NHK about Japanese Kimono, Takemitsu employed instruments such as the Koto and Chikuzenbiwa (a Meiji-era variation on the Biwa, a lute like instrument), as well as other native Japanese instruments in the scores for films such as *Seppuka*¹⁸ (1962) and *Kwaidan*¹⁹ (1965).

‘To my knowledge, Japanese instruments had never been used in Japanese films. They all had western music. I desperately wanted to try using Japanese instruments... When I first used Japanese music in a film, it caused a sensation. “Wow! He used the Japanese Biwa in movie music!” Isn’t that a strange response? Even the Japanese were confused by this sound.’ (Takemitsu, 1994²⁰)

Just as during the 1950s Takemitsu had immersed himself almost exclusively in the music of Western composers, throughout the 1960s his work increasingly began to evolve as the amalgamation of Japanese and Western sensibilities. Juxtaposing the classical Western orchestra and the inherent aural qualities of traditional Japanese instruments, Takemitsu developed a new creative language through the amalgamation of these two things. The composer has himself recalled how stumbling, almost by chance, upon a Bunraku²¹ performance during the early 1960s, helped awaken his interest in the melodic and tonal qualities of Japanese instruments. Intrigued by the sound of the Futazao Shamisen, an important part of the Bunraku orchestra, he became increasingly fascinated by the differences between Western and Japanese instruments. The sonic qualities and playing techniques

¹⁸ ‘Hara-Kiri’

¹⁹ ‘Ghost Stories’

²⁰ Interview with Toru Takemitsu, conducted for the documentary, *Music for the Movies: Toru Takemitsu*, directed by Charlotte Zwerin. See Bibliography for full details.

²¹ *Bunraku* is a traditional form of Japanese drama performed with musical accompaniment

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integral to each, seemed to illustrate the wider, more profound contrasts that existed between Western and Asian musical conventions.

Noise, it seemed, was one crucial difference. Not only had Western music and Western musical instruments evolved in such a way so as to create distinction between noise and music, but within those boundaries only ‘musical-sound’ was desirable - ‘noise-sound’ was a thing to be rejected and eradicated from Western composition. Whereas Western instruments such as the piano, for example, evolved in such a way so as to limit their potential for producing accidental noise (i.e. only the notes intended by the player would be heard, with virtually no extraneous, unplanned-for sounds occurring), traditional Japanese instruments, on the other hand, actively included and encouraged this.

1.3 Universal Language: Transcending West – Transcending Japan

While *November Steps* (1967) is perhaps the piece in which Takemitsu most famously juxtaposed the sound of Japanese and Western instruments, it did not, however, unify or fuse them. *November Steps* as a composition seems to play these previously incognizant sets of sounds against each other, highlighting the differences between the two sets of conventions rather than amalgamating them. It was with *Autumn* in 1973, however, that Takemitsu first created such unity, combining instruments such as the Biwa and Shakuhachi with a full Western orchestra, to consciously attain much more numerous and poignant instances of unity and coalescence than are present in its 1967 predecessor.

Takemitsu’s development of an autonomous creative language however, began in the 1960s with the combining of Japanese and Western conventions, and reached its apex during the 1980s, as Takemitsu sought to transcend all notions of national identity and geographical boundary. ‘To swim in an ocean that has no East and West.’ (Takemitsu, 2001, p.234)

Integral to this, therefore, was the composer’s own conscious re-awakening to traditional Japanese music – his move away from the anti-Japanese sentiments and exclusive adherence to Western music that marked his early work, and new-found willingness to

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explore his native musical heritage. In all of this, the influence of John Cage can be seen as significant, providing a bridge between Western modernism and Japanese tradition that enabled Takemitsu to first explore the latter from a fresh perspective.

By studying John Cage's Zen Buddhist inspired works, Takemitsu was able to access aspects of traditional Japanese culture that he had previously only been able to associate with the ultra-nationalist regime of World war Two. Re-imported from the perspective of a Western artist, Japanese music and culture no-longer bore the same historical and political baggage that made its study otherwise so undesirable during the sensitive post-war period.

During this time, it was the overriding aim of the Japanese avant-garde in general, to find a new mode of expression – a new autonomous identity – that truly represented Japan at that time, and their experiences of it. Discussing one infamous avant-garde collective, for example, Alexandra Monroe points out how, 'Released from the ruins of history, the post-war Gutai artists claimed to rebuild and re-imagine Japanese culture in the post-occupation years.' (Monroe, 1994, p.98)

If the dominant cultural trend in Japan, both before and after the war, was to sway pendulum-like between the rejection and total-imitation of Western culture, then any new expression of contemporary Japan would have to avoid either of these.

Initially, for Takemitsu, this assertion of independence and autonomy found expression through the combination of fundamentally Japanese subjects and ideas, with modes and techniques influenced by the Western avant-garde – in particular the Fluxus group and John Cage.

With this in mind, the composition *Ring* (1961) stands as both Takemitsu's earliest and most significant graphic scores, as well as an indication of the extent to which he was directly stirred by the chance and Indeterminate work of John Cage during this period. The four movements of *Ring*, for which the title forms an acronym ('R' – *Retrograde*; 'I' – *Inversion*; 'N' – *Noise*; 'G' – *General Theme*), are to be performed in any order and interpreted in numerous ways by the musicians. The physical graphic elements of the composition relate strongly to its title, with its three interludes and four movements notated

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graphically, as historian Peter Burt explains, by way of, ‘a circular (‘ring’-like) design which may be read in either clockwise or counter-clockwise sense, and at a choice of two speeds.’ (Burt, 2001, p.93)

Perhaps in part as a result of his association with graphic artist Kōhei Sugiura, Takemitsu produced quite a number of graphic compositions between the years 1962 and 1963, many of which continued to utilise a similar circular motif to that featured in *Ring*.

While *Corona* for pianist(s) (1962), for example, used a range of coloured circular shapes which, through slits in the card, could be interlocked, *Corona II* for String(s) (1962) and *Arc* for Strings (1963) continued to encompass similar circle motifs within systems of graphic notation.

It is in the case of the latter of these compositions, however, *Arc* for String(s) (1963), that a different kind of physicality might be said to be apparent, in the allusions to nature and physical characterisations called upon by Takemitsu. In *Arc*, the structure and organisation of the composition as a whole is based upon an image of an imagined traditional Japanese garden. The central sound of the piano aurally describes, through music, the pianist Yuji Takahashi taking a stroll through this garden landscape, the features of which are represented by the various elements of the orchestra. The aural and compositional iconography of the piece is highly descriptive, if not metaphorical, in its representation of the physical elements of the scene, even conveying the particular manner in which Takahashi walks²².

Just as the piano score takes on the characteristics and perspective of pianist Takahashi walking through the garden, so too is the landscape itself matched by music and instruments that describe the physical nature of its various elements. The ‘timeless’ nature of the sand, for example, is represented by ‘densely chromatic webs of sound for strings,’ just as the most ephemeral things in the garden, grass and flowers, are alluded to through “mobile” patterns’ performed by two of the four groups of wind and percussion instruments.’ (Burt, 2001, p.104)

²² ‘He has a unique way of walking that resembles limping, which is important in this piece.’ (Takemitsu, cited in Burt, 2001, p.103)

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In his critique, Burt also makes reference to several other significant features of *Arc*. Firstly, the composition as a whole is split into two distinct sections, marking the point at which Takahashi changes the direction of his perambulation – turning round and coming back the other way. This turnabout is marked compositionally by the fact that features of the garden heard throughout the movements of the first section, are revised in reverse order on Takahashi's walk back. The music illustrates the fact that the pianist, symbolically, is now returning the way he came, walking passed the things he saw on his way into and through the garden.

That Takemitsu should predominantly be remembered as an artist who brought together Japanese and Western musical traditions, however, does his legacy and important place within Japanese musical history something of a disservice. It was through the popularity and success of *November Steps* that the composer's reputation was established thus, although, in truth, the long-term significance of his career as a whole pointed to something far more relevant and fundamental to the future development of Japanese experimental music.

Although Takemitsu's career began firstly with the rejection, and then the re-adoption of Japanese identity (the latter through his extended engagement with Western modernist composition), it was during the course of the 1980s that he defined the *raison d'être* of his work most fully. This purpose, fundamentally, was not to blend various types of world music traditions, or create a unified amalgam between Western and Japanese musical traditions, but rather transcend any taxonomy wherein music is apprehended and labelled according to its geographical origin (as Western or Eastern, for example).

In a 1975 lecture at Yale University, Takemitsu drew attention to the fact that, 'It is extremely easy for Western music to adapt traditional Japanese music. It is not difficult to blend the two. I have no interest in either of these procedures... Nothing that truly moves us will come from superficial blending of East and West. Such music will just sit there.'
(Takemitsu, 1995, p.92)

With this in mind, Takemitsu adopted the belief that music had the potential to gradually transcend cultural and geographical boundaries, evolving as part of a 'universal

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language' that is autonomous and relevant to all. Importantly, this is an idealism that, while he discussed in terms of music, seemed to have a more profound and far-reaching resonance for the composer. To Takemitsu, the concept demanded that people disregard traditional, inherited ways of viewing the world and its culture, displacing the old stereotypes and lines of demarcation by discovering more about the actual character and nature of various cultures, and therefore nurture a genuine understanding. Within this ideology, there thrives the prospect for a music which both knowingly embraces the culture from which it originated, while openly referencing other globally and historically diverse musics, not as a crude fusion, but as a new emancipated, autonomous form of expression (autonomous, that is, from long-standing perceptions and opinions about music, which are often purely based upon inherited judgments about the character of a nation and its culture; emancipated by a genuine awareness, understanding of, and openness to various cultures).

In an article for *Ongaku no Yohaku Kara* in 1980, Takemitsu wrote of his dislike for 'generalisations such as "Western or Eastern",' questioning how something like the sound of a flute, for example, could possibly convey 'subtle differences of a cultural nature in different geographic areas.' Continuing on the theme, he argued, '...it becomes increasingly more important for us to understand our immediate past ...Indeed, we are moving toward a universal language. But rather than unnaturally forcing the process – crowding Japanese sounds into Western musical structures, for example – we must recognise the varying sensibilities and aesthetics that give different cultures their special character.' (Takemitsu, 1995, p.56)

1.4 Conclusion

In discussing the work of composer Toru Takemitsu, and the first generation of post-war Japanese avant-garde artists to which he belonged, this chapter has introduced many issues that will be central to this thesis, and the history of Japanese experimental music.

- While comprising a diverse range of artists, methods and movements, perhaps one of the most crucial factors binding and underlying the work of Japan's post-war/post-Hiroshima avant-garde as a whole, was the common need to reflect, express, or be a product of, everyday life – whether from an overtly political or directly personal perspective. In the immediate wake of the Pacific war and Atomic Holocaust, the prevailing sense of despondency, loss, and uncertain identity were obviously fundamental to this. Standing in direct contrast to the long-standing dominant trends of Western mimicry and nationalistic revivalism, the work of the early Japanese avant-garde reflected, in a variety of ways and from a variety of perspectives, the experience of belonging to Japan at that point in time. A distinctive, autonomous, and relevant artistic expression.
- Takemitsu's search for an autonomous creative language was largely governed by his own changing attitudes towards the West and Japan, and the way in which he related to the culture of each.
- This was marked initially by his outright rejection of Japanese music as a young man, obsessed instead with emulating the work of avant-garde composers from Europe and the West. Partly as a result of John Cage's own infatuation with Eastern philosophy and culture, Takemitsu began to explore the indigenous musical heritage of Japan, unrestricted by fears that he might be considered nationalistic because, in effect, it was through the eyes of a Westerner that he now rediscovered traditional Japanese music in a new light.
- While many regard the landmark of Takemitsu's musical career to be the blending of Eastern and Western musical conventions (epitomised by *November Steps*), the composer

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himself argued during the latter part of his career, against the uselessness of judging music simply by its geographical origin. He warned against the reductiveness, oversimplicity and obstructiveness of dividing and labelling music as merely Eastern or Western. Primarily, he came to regard the complete transcendence of such distinctions as his ultimate objective.

- Takemitsu believed that, by drawing indiscriminately upon old, new, native and world cultures, music should become a ‘universal language’, free from the inherited, outmoded, restrictive value systems that often dictate how music is received.

Although various Dada-inspired cliques existed during the first half of the twentieth-century, risking a hazardous underground existence in fear of the prevailing nationalistic regime, it was only in the fragile aftermath of Nagasaki and Hiroshima that Japan’s avant-garde Community began to establish itself. In following chapters, I will examine the development of Japanese experimental music from these modernist origins, tracing a legacy that runs through jazz, psychedelic, noise music and contemporary sound art. While stylistically and aesthetically many of the artists assembled within this legacy appear, superficially at least, to often have little in common, the fundamental driving and binding factors at the root of Japanese experimental music have remained the same. Essentially, these factors – when broken down – draw a significant parallel with the issues underlying Takemitsu’s work and the early post-war avant-garde, summarised above.

- Music which exists independently of prevailing fashions or traditional styles: an autonomous, independent, or ‘universal’ creative language.
- Music which, while not necessarily an overt political or personal statement, nevertheless exists as an artistic product unique to that place, person and time, transcending either bland mimicry or revivalism.
- Music which, in its own way, is embroiled in and deals with issues of identity (directly or inadvertently) – whether personal identity, national identity, artistic identity, musical identity.

CHAPTER TWO

JAZZ KISSA RADICALS:

TOKYO FREE JAZZ AND THE ANTI-ANPO UPRISING

2.0 ‘...An Imported Soundtrack of Liberation’

Throughout the course of the 1960s, the Shinjuku district of Tokyo played host to what were the first ever scenes of Western-style public protest in Japan. Angered by the double renewal of ANPO²³; the situation in Vietnam; and the prolonged presence of American forces in Japan (highlighted by the situation in Okinawa), students, radical groups, and social dissidents not only demonstrated in the streets and squares of Shinjuku but, in 1968, famously set out from the district to overrun Tokyo’s Parliament building.

At the Treaty’s first renewal in 1960, and it’s second in 1970, groups on the New Political Left, workers’ unions, and in particular student movements such as the *Zengakuren* (National League of Students, est. 1968) and *Zenkyoto* (Committee of Interfaculty Struggle), took to the streets of Tokyo to protest on a scale, and with an intensity, that was unprecedented in post war Japan.

On the American side, one of the motivating factors behind the administration’s drive for a renewed agreement was the fear that Japan could be on the verge of a socialist revolt. In both the United States and in Japan, the rise of public protest during the 1960s corresponded with the enforcement of increasingly strict state control and, in this context, was a response not only to wider political issues, but also to the fear of oppression. The defeat of student protesters in Tokyo, as measures taken against them by the state intensified and the hazards involved in protesting increased, led to both the breakdown of New Left protest movements, and their subsequent dispersal from Shinjuku.

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In this chapter, I want to consider the extent of the relationship between social movements on the New Left in Japan (and the major political uprisings for which they were responsible) and Japanese free jazz during the late 1960s. In doing this, it will be essential first of all to look at the distinct cultural place occupied by mainstream jazz music during the twentieth century in Japan, particularly within the context of US occupation and its influence. The role played by the jazz kissas of Tokyo²⁴ in relation to both the proliferation of free jazz, and as meeting places for students and members of the New Left during the 1960s, will also be considered as a significant factor, as will the contribution made by notable free jazz players, particularly Masayuki Takayanagi (1932 – 1991).

The link between politics and free jazz is very much grounded in the genre's North American origins, and the interrelationship between free jazz and black power. In looking to the genesis of free jazz in the United States (i.e. the music of artists such as Albert Ayler, Ornette Coleman, Chick Corea, and John Coltrane, etc), the following paper will compare black political issues at the origins of the music, to the experiences of Japanese activists, and consider whether these ideals were in some way present in the free jazz of Japan.

It could well be argued that the protest folk of singer/songwriters such as Kan Mikami, Tomoya Takaishi, and Nobuyasu Okabayashi received a wider following from media and public alike²⁵, and shared a much closer relationship with the protest movement in Japan (despite criticism from certain dissident corners that the adoption of protest folk resulted more from a desire to emulate US trends, than genuine innovation).

Notwithstanding its highly politicised origins in the US, the relationship between politics and free jazz in Japan is largely dismissed as an inconsequential and marginal factor. Throughout the course of the following chapter nevertheless, I hope to examine this further, reassessing the relationship between radical protest and free jazz in Japan, and the important historical role of the latter in its influence upon subsequent generations of avant-garde musicians in Japan.

²³ The US-Japan Joint Security Treaty, *Anpo Joyaku* – 'Peacekeeping Treaty'

²⁴ Jazz Kissaten meaning Jazz Café.

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The proliferation of jazz music from America can generally be traced from the start of the twentieth century, as it spread first throughout Europe and, gradually, into Japan.

In discussing this, historian Eckhart Derschmidt has identified a number of parallels within the historical development of European and Japanese jazz. In both, for example, it was imported predominantly by members of the affluent classes, despite fundamentally being the product of oppressed social groups in America. Furthermore, jazz was subject to similar censorship in the years leading up to World war Two under both the Nazi regime, and the ultra-nationalist government of Japan. Throughout the 1920s, jazz enjoyed enormous popularity in Japan, and to a large extent was seen as a symbol of everything progressive and exciting about the West. Nevertheless, during the nationalist years of World war Two, American music became strictly taboo, and the looming threat of persecution for anyone caught listening drove jazz deeply underground (despite the fact that, in practise, such laws proved almost impossible to implement).

However, with defeat and occupation at the conclusion of the war, and the period of disillusionment in Japan that followed, a crisis in national self-identity triggered the mass assimilation of American ways and American culture. Partly because it had played such an important part in nationalist propaganda, traditional Japanese music for many in the post war period conjured up unwelcome associations with World war Two. In the immediate wake of the conflict, it was felt that anything inherently Japanese-by-definition should be rejected, and any product of the Western World embraced.

The burgeoning prominence of jazz during the 1950s epitomised this hunger for Western products and, aided by the presence of US forces (and, in particular, their radio stations), its popularity in Japan flourished.

Although the popular rise of jazz was something that occurred internationally during the immediate post-war period, the historical and cultural position it occupied in Japan, however, is incredibly unique. Only in Japan did the institution of the jazz kissa evolve – a place dedicated to the playing of, listening to, and exclusive appreciation of jazz vinyls – even

²⁵ Around 30,000 people, for example, attended Nakatsugawa Folk Jamboree in 1971.

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though, in spite of this, Japanese jazz musicians themselves were largely neglected, if not dismissed, by devotees at home and in the US. Their dedication to accurately emulating the style and music of US players is in large part the reason for this and, to some historians, is symptomatic of the supposed deeply rooted culture of mimicry in Japan.

From around 1954, George Kawaguchi's Big Four became one of the most popular native jazz ensembles in Japan. The band were known for adapting popular tunes of the moment to sound like jazz standards, and, making around one hundred and seventy performances on Japan's most popular radio show, Bunka Hōsō's *jazz at the Toris*, became hugely popular with the nation's listeners (Derschmidt, 1998). Jazz could also be heard via NHK's *Rhythm Hour* programme, as well as a number of other private radio stations, although, in general, Western music mostly came courtesy of US military radio stations, usually broadcast in metropolitan areas only. While records were available on import for anyone who could afford the exorbitant prices, and films such as *The Glen Miller Story* were hugely popular, outside of Japan's major cities, access to jazz music during the early 1950s was nevertheless extraordinarily limited.

The first major US jazz combo to play in Japan was the Gene Krupa Trio in 1952, with the Louis Armstrong Allstars and Norman Granz's jazz at the Philharmonic following in 1953. Visits from famed US players did not really become a regular occurrence until around 1961, and live jazz on the whole remained relatively rare in Japan throughout the 1950s.

Just as it had been a decade before the war (prior to its censorship under the nationalist regime) jazz music resurfaced in the early 1950s, adopted, according to historian Michael McDonagh, '...as an imported soundtrack of liberation from domestic cares.' (McDonagh, <http://www.insightjapan.com/jazz.html>). The idea that jazz was in some way embraced as a liberating force - something that was modern, exciting, and an alternative to tradition Japanese culture - is a familiar one amongst Western commentators. As president of *Blue Note Records* Bruce Lundvall, for example, suggests: 'I think jazz represents a certain freedom and liberation that is not typical of the Japanese lifestyle. It represents a tremendous

opportunity for the people to just sort of let down their guard, and to hear music that is improvised and free.’ (Lundvall, <http://www.allaboutjazz.com/iviews/blundvall.htm>)

If, indeed, the wider Japanese public received popular jazz and jazz standards as manifestations of freedom and modernity, then the emergence of free jazz during the 1960s, and its adoption by the New Left, can be seen as a more radical and concentrated materialisation of these ideals. Furthermore, the work of free jazz pioneers such as Masayuki Takayanagi and Abe Kaoru (1949 – 1978), with its growing retrospective acclaim worldwide²⁶, renders unfounded the time-honoured criticism that Japanese jazz musicians lacked inventiveness, and simply mimicked the style of players in the West.

2.1 Anpo 1960

Just as 1960 saw a rash of civil uprisings take place in America (e.g. in San Francisco), so too in Japan did student factions orchestrate similar incidents of civil dissent in Tokyo: events that were fuelled, in large part, by mounting anti-ANPO sentiments, the rise of the New Left, and the formation of groups like *Ampo Tōsō* (the Security Treaty Protest movement).

These scenes, the largest experienced in post-war Japan up to that point, brought together a diverse range of social groups from throughout Japan to remonstrate against the proposed renewal of ANPO. What these gatherings and rallies represented essentially, was a coming-together of various elements from the Japanese New Left: the formation of an alliance between political parties, trade union workers, Communist Party youth groups, and student radicals. Although espousing an ethos of relative passivity throughout the protests of 1960, the confrontational tactics employed by anti-ANPO demonstrators nevertheless pushed the limits of what could be regarded non-violent protest.

²⁶ In 2000, for example, American guitarist Jim O’Rourke released the CD *Tribute to Takayanagi*, which featured performances by a number of other notable avant-garde musicians, keen to acknowledge to the influence of Takayanagi. 1995 also saw the release of a biographical film, directed by Wakamatsu Kohji, dramatising the life of Abe Kaoru.

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The US-Japan Joint Security Treaty was established initially in 1951, negotiated by Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru and US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.

Some of the most critical points agreed upon within its pages included: -

1. That US forces could be stationed in Japan, and carry out operations from there without first seeking permission from the Japanese authorities.
2. If deemed necessary, the US military could arbitrate and intercede in matters of civil conflict within Japan.
3. The US was not committed to defend Japan, should it fall under attack from any foreign powers.

Some justification was sought for the treaty by the fact that, in 1960, Japan had no military capabilities of its own, and so was vulnerable due to its close proximity to Korea and the ongoing conflict there. According to Ambassador Douglas MacArthur II, the US ambassador to Japan, American military presence ensured the defence of the country.

Once the Korean War was over, however, and the Communist threat seemingly diminished in Japan, such justification seemed neither sufficient nor relevant to many Japanese. Nevertheless, the US administration were reluctant to renegotiate the terms of the treaty, cautious about what it saw as Japan's burgeoning relationship with the USSR: something highlighted by talk of a Japanese-Soviet Peace Treaty, and the possible handing over of the Kurile Islands (a small, sparsely-populated area which, in military terms at least, possessed minimal strategic importance).

Citing Article 26 of the US-Japan Joint Security Treaty, Secretary of State Dulles claimed that the US had a right to demand equal treatment to the Soviet Union, and that if such an agreement were to be made in relation to the Kurile Islands, then the USA should have equal claim to dominion over the Islands of Okinawa and Ryukyus.

After the successful completion of negotiations between the USSR and Japan, the US administration decided to commence talks regarding the renewal of Anpo. Despite his supposed lack of experience in the field, newly appointed Ambassador MacArthur II was at the centre of the talks, and reportedly commanded a good deal of respect from Japanese

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Emissaries due to both his name (i.e. being the nephew of General MacArthur) and his strong political connections in the White House.

MacArthur undertook his post in February 1957, and after only a year had begun recommending to Washington that US-Japanese relations be reassessed, and Anpo renegotiated.

In 1958, the Secretary of State and Japanese Foreign Minister Fujiyama Aiichiro announced that the treaty would, indeed, be renegotiated. It became clear to both the President and US Foreign Secretary that much had changed in Japan since 1951, when the Joint Security Treaty had first been established. Speedy negotiations ensued and the US Senate, not too bothered about hearing the finer details of the proposal, generally agreed that the Japanese situation had altered significantly enough to merit a revision of the current agreement.

Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke, appointed in 1957, was a member of the Liberal Democratic Party, and remained a controversial – if not unpopular - figure to Japanese politicians and public alike. During the Second World War he had been a key member of the Japanese government under general Tojo Hideki and, after spending three years imprisoned under US occupation for war crimes (released without charge), had managed to successfully re-launch his political career. It was widely suspected that, beneath the public façade, he remained unconvinced by the virtues of democracy, and was simply exploiting the current situation to satisfy his own ends (masking his own true beliefs beneath the veil of his words).

The New Japanese Left also began to gather itself during the late 1950s. Student protest groups, well versed in the histories and principles of socialist ideology, felt that they could associate with the campaigns being fought by revolutionary groups around the world and, indeed, from throughout history. Enmity towards the US government was at the heart of the New Japanese Left, and behind much of the solidarity, empathy and kinship they shared with guerrilla groups in other countries. However, as a de-militarised nation, they were without the weaponry and arsenals possessed by their revolutionary counterparts abroad.

Despite bringing about the collapse of Japan's government of the day, the demonstrations of 1960 nevertheless failed to prevent the re-working of the US-Japan Joint

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Security Treaty, and in the years that followed student groups were left to contemplate just why it was their actions had failed.

In common with corresponding incidents in North America, the anti-Anpo protests of 1960, far from being spontaneous outbreaks, were the product of intense organisation and planning. Similarly, as was the case in the US, Japanese protesters attempted to juxtapose their own non-violent actions with what they saw as the repressive tactics of the authorities, using the example of state oppression to highlight the justness of their own cause. Ultimately, it was felt that the government had acted unlawfully by deciding to renew the treaty without full backing from the Japanese people, and campaigners determined to stiffen their resolve, regroup, and prepare for the Treaty's second planned renewal in 1970.

By the mid-1960s, the ethos of non-violent protest was rapidly being abandoned, and a second generation within the social movement began to make its presence felt. With this, the nature of social movements on the New Left as a whole began to change, as this new generation of protester leaned ever more in favour of adopting violent and confrontational means to achieve their aims.

2.2 Free jazz and Politics

The interplay between music and politics is, unquestionably, a subject of perpetual interest. In a similar way to Blues music, it has been argued that, historically, jazz developed within a kind of dualistic context: existing as both an intrinsic part of capitalist culture, while at the same time acting as a reactionary art form against it, destabilising industrial/consumer society from within its very boundaries.

According to music critic Hua Hsu, jazz is bound up with '...contemporary issues of cultural citizenship, identity, representation, authorship and "dissonance",' (Hsu, 2001, p.78) and, to this end, Hsu cites Duke Ellington: 'Dissonance is our way of life in America. We are something apart, yet an integral part.' (Ellington cited in Hsu, 2001, p.78).

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Musically, socially, politically and historically, free jazz is closely rooted to the idea of non-concurrence – the collapsing of boundaries between their being a right and a wrong way – a destroying of linear perceptions, linear histories, and linear expectations.

In terms of the music itself, free jazz mounted a challenge to traditional expectations of music (conventional structure, melody, harmony, notation, rhythm, song, etc), exploring the possibilities of improvisation and free-playing as an essential part of this.

In socio-political terms, however, its history is also deeply rooted in the social climate of America during the post-war period, leading to its association with the civil rights movement and, ultimately, the black power movement.

Music commentator Ben Watson describes it thus: ‘free jazz’s challenge to black music’s role as entertainment... A historical sketch – slavery, reconstruction, post-war exclusion, civil rights, the Black Panthers ...jazz as a cry of resistance ...African improvisation versus European fixidity, utterance versus transcendence.’ (Watson, 2001, p.79) Free jazz defiantly challenged the foundations of the dominant capitalist culture of America, situated, as it was, at a rather lowly position within that culture.

The genesis of free jazz can be said to be rooted firstly in be-bop during the mid-late 1940s (the music of artists such as Charlie Parker, Charles Mingus, and Dizzy Gillespie), and later that of Lenny Tristano. Classed as a *cool jazz* or *west coast cool* player, two of Tristano’s songs from 1949, *Digression* and *Intuition*, are considered forerunners to free jazz music in that they were without pre-arranged harmony or rhythm, although unlike free jazz they did however possess harmonic consonance.

Also referred to at the time as ‘energy music’ and ‘the new thing’, free jazz derived its name from the 1960 Ornette Coleman album *Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation*, although two preceding recordings, *Something Else* and *The Shape of Jazz to Come*, are regarded to mark the real start Coleman’s avant-garde playing. Epitomised later by works such as *Ghosts* by Albert Ayler (1965), and *Ascension* by John Coltrane (1965), free jazz was pioneered by a number of other key artists including Charles Mingus, Sonny Rollins, Eric Dolphy and Cecil Taylor.

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In terms of the relationship between free jazz and politics, there are two possible arguments. The first might be that free jazz – not always overtly political in itself - was hijacked by black power as a soundtrack to the civil rights movement, partially through the writings of people such as Frank Kofsky (e.g. *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music*) and Amiri Bakara (e.g. *Blues People* - 1963). Bakara, known also as Le Roi Jones, was not only an influential poet, playwright, music critic, and social commentator for black civil rights, but also the leader and key protagonist of the Black Arts Movement. Sharing close political affiliation with black power, the movement looked to both Marxism and pre-colonial African culture to empower and liberate African Americans. Free jazz, poetry and plays were central to the Black Arts Movement, and regarded as means by which independent and authentic black culture could be reclaimed and established²⁷.

To suggest free jazz was simply appropriated by the civil rights movement without any social-political content of its own, however, is misleading. On one level, songs such as *Fable of Faubus*²⁸ by Charles Mingus, *Now's the Time*²⁹ by Charlie Parker, and *Alabama*³⁰ by John Coltrane directly addressed pertinent black civil rights issues. There is an argument to suggest that while jazz was popular as an export of American culture around the world, it was nevertheless anti-American by its very nature. America projected onto the world that its way of life was centred upon civil freedom, but jazz exposed the fundamental floors of that – it exposed the real rule of capitalism and the domination of the white bourgeoisie. That globally celebrated jazz musicians such as Miles Davis and John Coltrane still didn't get paid, credited, or treated the same as white musicians³¹, only strengthened the idea that jazz was a music of freedom, emancipation, and a call for change.

²⁷ These forms of art and performance could, by their very nature, also be both performed at public meetings and demonstrations.

²⁸ *Fable of Faubus* related to the racism of Orvil Faubus, the governor of Arkansas.

²⁹ *Now's the Time* (1959) is seen as a call for social change

³⁰ *Alabama* was a response to the racist murder of four black girls in a church bombing.

³¹ For example, black jazz musicians would be forced to enter clubs and venues via the back door

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John Coltrane, whose music in many ways was deeply rooted in African culture³², became something of a figurehead in the link between free jazz and civil rights, despite contesting any outright connection. While Coltrane did meet and support Malcolm X, he simply believed that his music was the product of that particular place and time, and, in particular, an expression of his experiences in it. As much as anything else, it is through the expression of human existence that the work of Coltrane is linked to the civil rights movement and Malcolm X, adhering to the belief that art reflects the social conditions in which it was made.

The unique place of jazz within Japanese society is crucial, and through the history of jazz and free music, much can be explored and discerned concerning Japan's wider political and cultural history.

In any examination of the Tokyo free-music scene during the late 1960s, and, for that matter, its link with student political activism, Masayuki Takayanagi stands to the fore as a pre-eminent figure. Overtly engaged with social and political issues as a writer, critic, and, most significantly, a free jazz guitarist, Takayanagi's work embodies the most political and reactionary elements of Japanese avant-garde music and art during this period.

A controversial and outspoken figure, Takayanagi remained consistently single minded and resolute throughout his career, in both his social and political commentaries, and in his approach to music. An artist whose musical beginnings in the 1950s were defined by his virtuosity and distinction as a mainstream jazz guitarist, Takayanagi, by the end of the 1960s, stood as a lone outspoken voice of political dissidence within Japanese free jazz circles.

Through the development of 'Mass Direction'³³ and 'Gradual Direction'³⁴ approaches to improvisation, the establishment of the New Artist Organisation,³⁵ the formation of his

³² E.g. Coltrane's more Afrocentric works include *Black Pearl* (1958), *Africa* (1961), *Dahomy Dance* (1961) and *Tunji* (1962)

³³ The theory of *Mass Projection*, developed by Masayuki Takayanagi, offset his altogether more restrained *Gradual Direction approach with its loud, aggressive, and chaotic dynamics. According to Jinya Disc's Kazu Yasutani, Takayanagi once said that when he played a 'Mass' piece, his aim was to

*New Direction*³⁶ ensembles, contemporary new music artists such as Masami Akita and Otomo Yoshihide now cite Takayanagi as a major influence during their formative years. Together with the likes of Kaoru Abe, Takayanagi is acknowledged as one of the few notable jazz players of the era to work Autonomously, and transcend mere mimicry of American jazz and free music.

However, evident in most of Masayuki Takayanagi's work, whether musical or written, was the presence of strong personal views on social and political matters. For example, in an interview published in Issue 5 of the magazine *jazz*, March 1970, Takayanagi systematically criticised and denounced the Tokyo jazz scene at that time. Not only did he dismiss the jazz Café circle for its lack of innovation and its adherence to the culture of Western mimicry, but also offered scathing remarks about musicians and critics on the scene, rebuking them personally by name. It was the latter that perhaps created the most controversy in Japan: public naming and shaming was seen to be both unacceptable and socially disruptive, and from this point onwards many notable venues and jazz kissas in Tokyo refused to have him play.

The extortionate price of collecting jazz records meant that, in the main, only radio stations and jazz kissas could really afford to indulge.

The jazz kissas were officially coffee shops, although in the main, coffee drinking was very much a secondary concern – an excuse to immerse oneself in music and Manga. During the 1960s, personal audio technology had not yet made music and popular entertainment as accessible as it would become a decade later. In the jazz kissas of Tokyo, not only were the records of western artists like Eric Dolphy and Ornette Coleman played, but – due to limited funds and space – Japanese Improvisers would also often play solo, yielding

project the imaginary sound of blood bursting and flowing from a suddenly cut artery - in an abstract sense, attempting to express some perception of life itself. (Yasutani, 2002)

³⁴ A style of play developed by free-jazz pioneer Masayuki Takayanagi, *Gradual Direction* is essentially a quiet and pensive improvisational approach, which stands in complete contrast to his **Mass Projection* style.

³⁵ A workshop to encourage young musicians to explore improvisation, renamed *Ren Juku* in 1975

³⁶ Renowned free jazz group founded and led by Takayanagi

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performances that, according to contemporary sound artist Otomo Yoshihide, were 'more abstract and extreme' than those of a band. (Yoshihide, Iss.185, p.34)

Jazz cafes during the 1950s were frequented by enthusiasts as places of knowledge and learning, and, as Eckhart Derschmidt explains, patrons were expected to 'be able to tell white from black players,' if they wished to be thought of as 'real jazz fan[s].' (Derschmidt, 1998, p.308)

These early jazz kissas were serious places of learning. Due to the high cost of importing records from the US, they took on the ambience of jazz appreciation classes, even to the extent where customers would take notes and address the owner as sensei. The serious, academic-like nature of the jazz cafes was paralleled by the tone of popular jazz publications, such as *Swing Journal*. This kind of authoritarian disseminating and dedicated appreciation of jazz, while perhaps contradictory to the nature of the music itself (particularly in its popular Western context), reflects the studied seriousness it demanded as an almost sacred, highbrow product.

By the 1960s, although records had become a little easier to get hold of, they were nevertheless still sufficiently rare and expensive to ensure jazz kissas maintained their indispensable cultural role. Late night radio shows still remained one of the best ways a listener could get to hear jazz at home, although in 1969 the first dedicated jazz program also appeared on television, hosted by Watanabe Sadao.

The development of Live Houses in the Shinjuku district of Tokyo from around 1965, corresponded with a notable change in the collective attitudes of the student population. It was around this time that students began to turn away from the consumerist rewards and trappings of economic growth, and develop an empathy with free jazz musicians in America who, in ways to which they could relate, had also suffered at the hands of state repression.

As Derschmidt explains in his study on the rise and fall of the jazz kissa, in free jazz students saw kindred spirits expressing comparative experiences to their own: 'In the musicians of the free jazz movement – John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor – they found powerful allies expressing their common experience of oppression and solitude (Steinhert

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1992:212; Nakano 1984:86). There are several accounts of how closely the student movement and the intellectuals related the musical expression of free jazz to their own situation (e.g. ...a short citation from a small literary magazine in 1970: “The New Left is jazz. And We Are Ayler.”).’ (Derschmidt, 1998, p.307)

Some of the most palpable manifestations of this social consciousness can be found in the 1970s audio tape performances of Masayuki Takayanagi, where guitar improvisations were combined with recorded footage from things such as Hitler’s speeches, the Japanese Emperor’s broadcast at the end of World war Two (acknowledging defeat), and TV news footage taken from the 300 Billion Yen Burglary. He also based improvisations upon subjects such as the DAI-GO-FUKURYU-MARU, a Japanese ship that was seriously contaminated after drifting into a US test area for nuclear weapons. In addition to this, Takayanagi would often set aside thirty minutes or so at the end of a performance to allow open floor discussions, expressing his views on a range of social, historical, environmental, and political issues: from the proposed building of a new nuclear energy plant, for example, to World war Two and the Japanese Emperor.

In retrospect, it could be argued that Takayanagi’s exclusion from the jazz kissa, subsequently led to him undertaking some of the most important work of his career, away from the mainstream commercial jazz establishment of Tokyo. In his personal account of the Tokyo free jazz scene, Otomo Yoshihide, a former student of Takayanagi, recalls the guitarist’s belief that as an artist, it was his responsibility to engage directly with social and political issues: ‘In his somewhat severe writing style, he would scrutinise jazz or improvised music always from the vantage point of its relationship with society... Takayanagi was indeed constant throughout his life in his dedication to an independent pursuit of self-expression against the background of society.’ (Yoshihide, www.l-m-c.org.uk/texts/otomo.html)

Kazu Yasutani of *Jinya Disc*, a label dedicated solely to the release of Masayuki Takayanagi’s work, concurs with this: ‘...[Takayanagi] stated clearly that music is an expression of the root of humanity and society, and true musicians have to be able to read

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newspapers and understand the facts and events in the context of our society and history.'

(Yasutani, 2002)

In both Japan and the United States during the mid-1960s, new radical factions arose within counter-cultural social groups, leading to both the validation of violent protest, and contact being made with revolutionary social movements around the world (e.g. Cuba). However, just as the confrontational tactics employed by these social movements intensified during 1967 and 1968, so too did attempts by the government to counter such action, with Police procedures becoming ever more hostile, and new laws introduced to help thwart protests and fragment the social movements. Nonetheless, not only was the new generation of activist more aggressive, but also more used to the kind of counteractions employed by the authorities, and quite adept at evading and slipping through the net of state control.

While 1968 saw the growth and expansion of the Black Panther Party in the US, and the formation of the Black Liberation Army deep within its ranks, Japanese revolutionaries began to believe in their own potential to be at the forefront of world revolution. It was with this conviction that movements such as the *Zengakuren* (National League of Students, est. 1968) and *Zenkyoto* (Committee of Interfaculty Struggle) were founded, and began canvassing student campuses to gather support before the proposed second renewal of Anpo in 1970.

Many participants in the 1960 anti-Anpo protests now led Japan's new student movements and, in general, most new recruits either had a personal recollection of the previous uprisings, or older relatives that had taken part. Due both to the post-war baby boom and recent educational reforms, there were more college and university students during this time than ever before, which may well have contributed significantly to the scale and intensity of political activism on campus. Other mounting issues, such as the Japanese/South Korean Peace Treaty of 1965, fuelled anti-government sentiments amongst the New Left even further.

A new generation of jazz kissa also evolved during the mid-1960s, which were altogether different in character to their austere, scholastic predecessors of the 1950s. Meditative listening, rather than academic-style learning, came to dominate these darker,

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louder, far more intense places. Jazz kissas became almost temple-like spaces, with the dense atmosphere, loud music, and strict rules enhancing the status of jazz as a cult.

The popularity of US free jazz pioneers like John Coltrane, Albert Ayler and Ornette Coleman in the mid-late 1960s was a worldwide phenomenon, and by no means exclusive to Japan. However, as previously stated, what *was* unique was the specific way in which this music was adopted in Japan, evident in both the development of free jazz-orientated jazz kissas, and the unique way in which student protest groups associated their own ideals with those historically rooted in the music.

To the generation instigating the Demos, free jazz symbolised their kinship with other radical social movements around the World. They saw their struggles against the Japanese government - who stood accused of cowing down to the West - as analogous to the battle against social oppression waged by the black power movement in the United States, and revolutionaries of Ché Guevara in Cuba. The origins of traditional jazz in the religious music and work songs of African Slaves in North America was significant, although free jazz possessed its own directly political heredity linked to black power, and the struggle for Racial Equality.

The adoption of Muslim names and ethnic, African clothing formed an integral part of these musicians' challenge to the dominant white society in which they lived. Critic Ben Watson, in a recent article, has suggested that a number of parallels can be drawn between free jazz and other dissident movements throughout history, including Dada and punk: namely, the mixture of derision and anger imbued in the artists' evasion of, and contempt for, conventional approaches to music and jazz. Free jazz can be seen as marking a complete 'break' with the status quo, raising '*...unheard possibilities for musical and political action.*' (Watson, 2001, p.79)

Members of the New Left in Japan empathised with this and, through the adoption of free jazz as the soundtrack to their cause, the jazz kissas of Shinjuku became not only places to drink coffee and listen to records, but also a gathering point for those on the revolutionary left.

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The uprisings in 1968 are closely linked to what was seen as the ongoing influence of the US in Japan. After initially losing the Anpo argument, and suffering a dearth in self-confidence as a result, student protest movements found new struggles like the Narita Airport Issue to unite behind. This controversial event was supported by an infamous and well-documented protest concert, featuring many of the most notable free jazz, Folk and avant-garde musicians in Japan, including Kan Mikami and Masayuki Takayanagi.

Despite his strong political views, however, and willingness to speak and act out against the Japanese authorities, Takayanagi was nevertheless dismissive of the large-scale anti-Anpo riots. Rarely, if ever, did his music or writing stray onto the Joint Security Treaty debate, but rather, he remained critical about the protests against Anpo, feeling that they eventually became just a superficial boom or fashionable pursuit amongst the jazz kissa generation.

Yasunori Saitoh, founder of *Jinya Disc* and lifelong friend of Takayanagi, recalls things as follows: 'I remember his comment about a protest march and riot covered in a music magazine article published in the 1970s. When I asked him what he thought about the "Demo" (which, in Japanese, means a protest march that usually results in a riot), he answered: "That is just a nuisance. They have gone about it all by the wrong means".' (Saitoh, 2003)

Affirming the guitarist's commitment to political activism and engagement with social issues however, Yasunori Saitoh further recounts that: 'Takayanagi participated in anti-Vietnam-war concerts... he was sensitive to social and political movements. He often said to his students that artistic activity is to express the foundation of the world they now live in, and taught how to read newspapers to know their social environment well. Though, as far as Anpo and political protests in Tokyo during the late 1960s are concerned, I believe he thought of it as a childish boom, in which very few people had given serious thought to either their causes or consequences.' (Saitoh, 2003)

The protest environment of the late-1960s was radically different from that at the start of the decade. In Japan, protesters had their own reasons for demonstrating against Vietnam:

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specifically, that the presence of US military bases in Japan had led to the Nation playing an unwilling, yet crucial, part in the Vietnam war. The issue of Okinawa also became the focus of increasing tension, since the Treaty revision of 1970 proposed that US bases be maintained on the Islands, even when sovereignty had been returned to Japan.

Even though Japanese students during the mid-1960s were less able to travel abroad than their counterparts in the United States, they nevertheless used all other means and media at their disposal to keep abreast of radical movements abroad.

International Anti-war Day in 1966 represented a point at which Japanese protesters from most factions (the political Left, old and new) felt united by a common goal – both with counterparts in Japan and other protesters around the world. What lie at the centre of frustrations was the Japanese government's foreign policy, and the way in which it had sanctioned the continuing presence and influence of the American military in Japan. For the Japanese student movements, these two things created a tangible link between Anpo and Vietnam, cementing their opposition to both.

While most protests during the mid-late 1960s were aimed at government policy, however, it was extremely rare that the government ever made any attempt to address or repeal the policies in question. Rather, the attention of the state was focused more intently upon developing tactics to counteract the actions of protesters. Most commonly, it was the police who would be called upon to counter-act protester action, and so the police - a tangible symbol of the State - subsequently came to be seen as the adversary and target of protester angst, regardless of the specific political issue in question.

After the death of a student during a Demo in 1967, who was hit and killed by a police vehicle, the government began to target new laws against the New Left in Japan. A new body was set up to gather information on radical, subversive, anti-establishment political groups, and a new statute passed: *The Anti-Subversive Activities Law*. In concise terms, the law meant: -

1. Stiffer punishment if it was clear a crime was linked with anti-government activities.

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2. Special investigations allowed which would enable certain social movements to be legally outlawed if found to be a sufficient threat to National security.

In addition, a major disturbance at the Shinjuku Railway Station in 1968 sparked a new *Criminal Riot Law*, which enabled state authorities to officially pronounce a situation to be a riot, and in doing so arrest anyone still within the vicinity after thirty minutes had passed. The statute also included the offence of incitement within its margins, which made anyone suspected of provoking a particular situation, present or not (i.e. by way of a previous speech, political hand bills, etc), subject to imprisonment without bail, pending a court hearing (which could take months to arrange).

The protests of 1968 began at the very outset of the year in January, when members of the New Left mounted demonstrations in both Tokyo and at the port of Sasebo, in reaction to the landing of a US nuclear aircraft carrier, the Enterprise. As previously mentioned, it was the National League of Students, the *Sanpa Zengakuren*, who were at the centre of most of these disturbances, with their three factions: Chukaku, Seikai and Bunto. The Enterprise demos at Sasebo lasted around five days and, despite the many press reports condemning student action, these demonstrations attracted a good measure of public backing, and even public participation.

However, the violent clashes between police and protesters that had begun with the Sasebo Harbour Protest, continued to escalate at other demonstrations throughout the course of the year. One such incident took place at Oji, the site of a proposed new American military hospital, while financial mismanagement issues at Colleges and Universities led to students arranging further major strikes, and occupying a number of campus buildings. While in general, public Universities were quite tolerant of such action, private institutions (which, at the time, made up 70% of all) often called police in to arrest students for riot offences.

As the year progressed, not only did anti-Vietnam sentiments grow, but clashes continued to break out between Police and protesters, as work began on the new Airport at Narita in March. With US B-52 bombers setting off from Okinawa to Vietnam, many

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Japanese protesters were obviously keen to express their anger at their Nation's unwilling involvement in, and proximity to, the conflict.

By late spring 1968, students on the New Left had continued to gather increasing support from the student population at large, as an atmosphere of dissent spread throughout Japanese campuses. Beyond simply rebelling over the situation in Vietnam, students also took issue over a number of on-campus matters. High tuition fees, together with huge financial and class discrimination issues within the higher educational system, became further cause for a growing number of students to instigate protests, and occupy campus buildings.

The establishment of the *Zenkyoto* (Committee of Interfaculty Struggle) in 1968, was yet another indicator as to the scale of the growing unease, targeted at symbols of the state and, as some saw it, US Imperialism. *Zenkyoto* was not merely a student organisation, but included members from all facets of academic life, from professors to researchers, and workers' union members also attended the demonstrations they helped to organise. Throughout the course of these organised public events, the US Embassy, Police Headquarters, Parliament Building, and Railway Station in Shinjuku all came under fire.

The Tokyo protests of 1968 peaked over a series of three days, after which the state authorities managed to force student protesters back onto the campuses from which they set out, with the final *Zenkyoto* stronghold - an occupied building of Tokyo University - eventually giving way in January 1969. In the period that followed, the government introduced a series of measures in direct response to what had occurred, attempting to come down hard on those who had been at the centre of events that year.

2.3 Change

In light of the above, then, the nature of the relationship between free jazz and the anti-Anpo protests starts to become more apparent, bringing to light a number of issues related to the broader history of jazz music in Japan, and its unique place in the Nation's culture.

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With this in mind, two key points can be identified at which free jazz and social activism converged during the 1960s: -

- Firstly, the political heritage of free jazz in the United States, and the empathy student activists in Japan felt they identified with Civil Rights fighters in America.
- Secondly, the cultural significance of jazz music itself in Japan, and the history, development, and important social function played by the Tokyo jazz kissas.

Not only were musicians like Masayuki Takayanagi fully committed to engaging publicly with controversial political issues, but he, and others, took an active part in specially organised protest concerts, such as the 1971 Sanri-Zuka Nippon Genyasai Festival.

In addition to this, by the early 1970s, it became common for jazz magazines to print articles on political issues, particularly on the subjects of Anpo, Vietnam, and Japanese foreign policy. This burgeoning political consciousness within the Tokyo free jazz community, is further highlighted by the fact that New Left protesters and student demonstrators were regular attendees at jazz kissas - places, according to Otomo Yoshihide, that were '...rich with the youth subculture of the day. Avant-garde jazz, Manga, music and culture magazines, notebooks filled with the opinions of young leftists, concerts every one or two months, and 8 millimetre film shows.' (Yoshihide, www.l-m-c.org.uk/texts/otomo.html).

In contrast to his dismissive attitude towards the anti-Anpo Demos, Masayuki Takayanagi nevertheless participated in anti-Vietnam protest concerts, and supported this cause fully even though, for the social movements at the heart of the most intense Tokyo protests, these two issues were by no means unconnected. However, I think it is important to note that Takayanagi was not so much critical of the anti-Anpo/anti-Vietnam argument itself, but rather of the methods of protest adopted by activists as ever more violent means were adopted.

His irritation was directed against the second generation of New Left students who, emerging during the second half of the 1960s, enrolled at college with activism, rather than education, as their primary objective. His frustration was seemingly further intensified by the

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vast number of students who, by 1970, had climbed aboard the anti-Anpo bandwagon, having been pro-actively canvassed by social movements like the *Zengakuren*.

As Yasunori Saitoh recalls: 'He uttered once after performing at the Sanri-Zuka protest concert that no one seriously listened to the music ...I also remember him expressing his opposition to the superficial anti-Anpo movement advocated by some jazz magazines.' (Saitoh, 2003)

Just as he doubted their political conviction and their motives for protesting, so too was Takayanagi suspicious of their presence at jazz kissa performances and free jazz concerts, aware that many were merely following fashion rather than expressing any real concern for music or politics.

By 1969, in light of increasing state pressure, a growing sense of disillusionment had begun to creep into many of the student movements, with growing doubts and questions being asked as to whether mass street protests would ever succeed.

The dominance of free jazz on the underground scene, and of the meditative-type jazz kissa to which it belonged, also fell into decline towards the start of the 1970s, replaced by the rise of jazz Fusion music, and the lighter, more relaxed jazz kissa spaces that accompanied it. This change in fashion can be attributed to a number of things: the emergence of a new student generation, with their own styles and tastes; the death of US free jazz pioneers such as John Coltrane (1967) and Albert Ayler (1970); and the defeat of New Left students in the violent Anti-Anpo demonstrations in 1970.

By this time, not only had the rioting social movements and student groups begun to feel that their actions, however fierce, were failing to change anything, but also plans to redevelop Shinjuku had started to take dramatic effect. The district's bohemian countenance was gradually being erased by the emergence of skyscrapers and business complexes, displacing, as a consequence, the non-conformist revolutionary contingent it had harboured throughout the previous decade.

Just as members of the protest generation scattered and seemingly disappeared during the early 1970s, the decade's passing also saw the widespread decline of the jazz kissa cult,

and very few of the original Tokyo establishments survived. Despite this however, in the time that has elapsed since, the relationship between improvised new music and social awareness has not only remained in evidence, but burgeoned throughout the course of the 1990s.

As recently proposed by writer Yoshiyuki Kitazato, 'the story spans the period from the New jazz Hall³⁷ era in the '60s... to the '90s, when Japanese musicians became a real presence on the global scene,' although, as he rightly points out, 'It is unlikely that the musicians themselves experienced the '60s as an era of infancy.' (Kitazato, 2003, p.55)

Just as artists like Otomo Yoshihide and Keiji Haino continue to engage directly with social, political and cultural issues, the work of others – particularly those associated with the so-called *Onkyo* genre – have reacted to contemporary Tokyo life in more subtle, indirect ways³⁸. The word *Onkyo* translates closely to mean 'sound' 'echo', or 'reverberation', and it is with the texture, absence and isolation of sound - rather than in expressive noise or music - that artists associated with *Onkyo* are often preoccupied. Primarily, it relates to the 'no-input' concept – removing all but the most minimal, residual, fundamental elements of the sound source at hand: i.e. a sampler without samples (Sachiko M); a self-contained mixing desk using its own output as input (Toshimaru Nakamura); A turntable without records (Otomo Yoshihide); or aural spaces between the striking of guitar notes (Taku Sugimoto). In terms of its autonomous avant-garde development, exploration of improvised means, and close proximity to contemporary societal issues, such work exists within the larger legacy of reactionary new music, that evolved, in large part, through the free jazz of the anti-Anpo generation.

³⁷ A seminal Tokyo free jazz venue established in 1969 by Goro Sakai, manager of the equally venerable Pit Inn. The New Jazz Hall was the first venue in Tokyo dedicated to experimental improvised music, and avant-garde free jazz.

³⁸ The minimal means used, and often barely perceptible nature of such sound works, have been posited as a reactionary gesture to the 'information overload' of contemporary urban life, rejecting the flood of noise and information that saturates overcrowded urban centres like Tokyo. As Toshimaru Nakamura recently conceded in an interview with Phil England, he is caught up in a battle against information, and, despite making a number of limiting decisions like not having a TV, not reading newspapers, etc, there is still too much information around him. 'I have to say no. So probably my music is that kind of statement.' (Nakamura in England, 2000, p.12)

2.4 Conclusion

Throughout the course of the 1950s and 1960s, American jazz was not only one of the most popular forms of music in Japan, but one of the male population's favourite pastimes. Jazz café's were intrinsic to the social lives of many Japanese, and – particularly during the 1950s – jazz music was a thing to be appreciated in the most serious, studied manner, inviting its own very unique brand of intellectual snobbery.

Jazz came to Japan initially as a direct result of American occupation. That it was initially received in such a wholesale, almost obsessive way, however, owes much to the cycle of Westernisation that marked the era, as Japan sought to re-assess its National identity and reject the disastrous nationalism of recent decades.

Despite its extreme popularity and important place within Japanese culture at that time, it is worth pointing out that it was strictly jazz-as-an-American-product that attracted such veneration. Jazz was an exotic import: something that could be brought into the country at no small cost³⁹, or recreated by Japanese musicians attempting to mimic as closely as possible the sounds and techniques of their American heroes.

However, several factors lead to the evolution of certain forms of Japanese jazz music that, rather than being completely derivative of Western styles, became something wholly unique to Japan.

For example, as venues for live performance, jazz kissas were often too small to accommodate full jazz ensembles, resulting in musicians having to adapt suitable styles and techniques for solo performance. That musicians of such posthumous renown as Kaoru Abe and Masayuki Takayanagi performed thus is notable, since not only did both make the significant transition from Traditional jazz player to Avant gardist, but are now also acknowledged to have been highly influential to contemporary avant-garde musicians.

³⁹ Whether paying foreign musicians to visit Japan, or importing expensive vinyl records.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM GROUP SOUNDS TO AVANT-GARDE: THE EVOLUTION OF JAPANESE PSYCHEDELIC MUSIC

3.0 Introduction:

Japanese Culture Catching Up and Down

The Japanese economy and society is geared to catch up with the west.

Therefore, Japanese society also expects their artists to catch up with the West.

But maybe catching up, or down, is not culture's business. (Nam June Paik, p.81)

The practise of mimicry, it is argued, constitutes an integral part of Japan's artistic and cultural heritage – a convention evolved over centuries of traditions being passed by master onto apprentice.

Japan's historical inclination to undergo periods of Westernisation, and mimic Western cultural forms is, according to certain sociological conjecture, a symptom of the same inherent mindset. As at the end of World war Two, when the failure of Nationalism (as the supposed embodiment of Japanese national identity) triggered what might be regarded as a crisis in National self-confidence, Westernisation, and the adoption of Western culture, represented an attempt to start anew and re-learn from a new Master: the West.

If, however, America was indeed the new teacher from whom Japan, at the conclusion of World war Two, would seek to learn⁴⁰, then one subsequent outcome would be that, through this eagerness to learn and progress, Japanese culture would become extremely familiar with, and knowledgeable about, American culture. Much better informed, in fact,

than America was of Japanese culture. By casting itself in the apprentice role, Japan made it almost natural for foreign Nations to assume the position and character of *educator* (a role fulfilled, throughout the centuries, by China, Europe, and the US respectively).

According to Wilkinson, one significant upshot of this is that Japan has remained historically more knowledgeable about Western culture, than the West generally is about Japan. Essentially, it could be argued, this is because its society's opinions, perceptions and worldview are based upon 'a rich tradition of knowledge' (Wilkinson, 1991, p.46), rather than reductive stereotypes and projections – fundamental elements characteristic of nineteenth-century Orientalism, for example.

The Oxford English Dictionary⁴¹ credits *Orientalism* as 'Oriental scholarship; knowledge of Eastern languages', and *Exoticism* as merely the 'Tendency to adopt what is exotic or foreign.' Here, the former is implied to be an erudite, scholarly pursuit – a means by which to enhance cultural understanding - and the latter nothing more than a shallow, fetishistic pursuit, more inconsequential than insightful. Throughout the course of the twentieth century, however, differentiation between the two terms blurred, as the fallacious scholarship of 19th Century Orientalism seemed, upon revision, increasingly to have been driven by exoticist sensibilities.

That *Exotic* is defined as, 'Outlandish, barbarous, strange, uncouth. Also, having the attraction of the strange or foreign, glamorous,'⁴² is significant, and says much about many insidious preconceptions concerning 'The East'.

The skewed stereotypes and presumptions that define the Western legacy of Exoticism, are all-too evident throughout the course of nineteenth and twentieth century art history: from the paintings of Jean-Leon Gerome⁴³, Henri Regnault⁴⁴, and Etienne Dinet⁴⁵, to

⁴⁰ Positioning the US, at this point in history, as a role model for Japan's future development (which was perhaps enforced by General MacArthur's determination to re-mould Japan in America's image).

⁴¹ The Oxford English Dictionary Online, Second Edition, 1989. Subscribed to by Liverpool John Moores University.

⁴² The Oxford English Dictionary Online, Second Edition, 1989. Subscribed to by Liverpool John Moores University.

⁴³ E.g. *Pelt Merchant of Cairo* (1869), *Guard of Harem* (1859), *An Almeh with Pipe* (1873)

⁴⁴ E.g. *Salome* (1870), *The Carpet Market* (1887), *The Snake Charmer* (1883)

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the compositions of Puccini, Debussy, and Berlioz (not to mention Benjamin Britten, Martin Denny, Peter Gabriel and Paul Simon). Furthermore, the collective designation 'Oriental' has, for over five hundred years, helped to perpetuate a tendency in the West to mix-up and confuse the customs, peoples and distinct identities of different Asia-Pacific Nations – whether Japan, China, Korea, or Singapore, etc.

Sound artist and author David Toop describes the notion of 'Exotica' as a place invested with imaginary qualities, and a sense of mystical *Otherness* that, in reality, never really existed: a construct of Occidental minds that betrays, to some extent, the needs, desires and fantasies of those in the 'industrialised West.' According to Toop, 'The ultimate goal of the true exotic is to erase history, stop time, manufacture memories; by force of will, to fabricate an identity based on ethnic and cultural characteristics that have never before existed; to become a fabulous island, rising out of the sea, then sinking once more into the abyss'. (Toop, 1999, p.77)

From another perspective, however, it might be suggested that perhaps Japan has knowingly benefited from – and sought to perpetuate - certain consequential aspects of Orientalism. It might be said, for example, that as a Nation, it has suited Japan in many ways to remain shrouded in mystery and evade comprehension abroad.

During the early years of his career, renowned filmmaker Akira Kurosawa⁴⁶ was criticised by some quarters of the Japanese press for the popularity his work had achieved in America and Europe - movies such as *Rashōmon* (1950) and *The Seven Samurai* (1954). He was accused, primarily, of Internationally popularising Japanese culture, and pandering to American/European audiences by selling them exoticised images of Japan. Supported by a number of contemporaneous critics, Kurosawa repelled such criticism, arguing that perhaps his detractors' disapproval stemmed from their unease that a product of Japan had become so successful – and had therefore been *understood* - abroad.

⁴⁵ E.g. *Girls dancing and Singing* (1902), *The Snake Charmer* (1889), *Slave of Love* and *Light of my Eye* (1904)

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Just as the role model of Chinese culture was gradually abandoned in the nineteenth century, by the 1920s Japan began similarly to depart from the European model it had previously aspired to, gravitating towards a sensibility of pan-Asianism. The events of World war One are thought largely to have played an integral role in this.

In addition, European Nations had themselves begun to recognise and discuss the problems of their weakening position and gradual degeneration on the world stage. The self-diagnosed symptoms of impending decline on the part of Europe, and acknowledgement of its own vulnerability, contributed further to Japan's disillusionment and the strengthening of pre-World war Two Pan-Asian sentiments.

Nevertheless, the construct of 'New Japan' - which epitomised the nation's Ultra-Nationalistic wartime ideals - was itself, largely contradictory in nature. On the one hand, 'New Japan' was knowingly reliant upon certain facets and products of Western culture, particularly in relation to things it would need to secure victory over US and Allied forces (e.g. military strategies, technology, marching music, propaganda techniques, etc). However, the Japanese also saw 'New Japan' as the driving force behind Pan-Asianism, and the central superior force within Asian culture: crucial both to the preservation of Asia's ancient past, and creation of its future legacy.

In the larger scheme of things, however, this pattern of adoration and rejection would ultimately come full circle as the balance of world power shifted and changed. As the active Global influence of Europe diminished, and the USA emerged to take its place, so too did Japan look to the latter as the ideal model for its own redevelopment. US victory over Japan in the Pacific war was, of course, a significant factor in this radical shift from supreme Nationalism to extreme Westernisation.

Eventually, however, as the economy and international confidence of Japan increased, the USA also ceased to be perceived as the figurehead after which it fashioned its social and economic structure. Once the teacher has been surpassed by the pupil (or, at least, equalled), it

⁴⁶ Notably, Kurosawa frequently commissioned Toru Takemitsu to score some of his most celebrated films, and was highly praised by the composer (with some gratitude) for the trust and freedom he

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ceases to be a role model, and becomes a competitor (at best) or subject of pity or scorn (at worst). As the twentieth century wore on it might be argued that, in terms of business and economy, at least, Japan's respect for the US diminished greatly.

The cycle of adulation, disillusionment, and rejection of a role model Nation - whether China, the USA, or any number of prominent European countries – pervades the course of Japanese history. In choosing its models from abroad, however, it might be argued that there exists an historical tendency to over-idealise these countries, often causing the Japanese to become disappointed, even scornful, as a result (feeling somehow cheated by the inability of these teacher-Nations to match their own unrealistic expectations). As Wilkinson proposes, 'Time and again young Japanese would report their disappointment at finding that actual Europeans or Americans did not live up to the ideals of freedom, humanism, love of truth or whatever qualities they had associated with Europe or America.' (Wilkinson, 1991, p.42)

According to a five-yearly survey undertaken in Japan, Japanese citizens in the early 1990s generally regarded that only they, the Chinese, and the Jewish had not suffered decline as a race of people over the last fifty years.

Despite the widespread drive towards modernisation/Westernisation that dominated Japanese culture for several decades after the Pacific war, during the 1980s the social, cultural and economic structures of Europe and the USA became increasingly undesirable as models for Japan. According to Endymion Wilkinson, various reasons can be suggested for this: -

- Europe and the US took much longer to recover from the oil crisis in 1973 than Japan.
- The financial and industrial markets of Western Nations were also having a tough time trying to contend with Japan.
- The incessant so-called 'Japan bashing' it was felt media on the Occident, particularly business media, were indulging in.
- The perception that Western nations had over time misplaced their work ethic, instead becoming proud, overconfident and hedonistic.

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- **Inherent and frequently publicised problems that were seen to be evident in the social structure of America (e.g. racism, crime, drugs, etc).**

In addition to this, there was also the feeling that countries in the West had consistently tried to use Japan as the excuse or blame for their own shortcomings.

Europe, generally speaking, was ill at ease with the rising influence of the Japanese economy during its boom time, particularly when it seemed to be at the expense of - and a threat to - its own economic welfare.

The USA was also uneasy about the emergence of this burgeoning economic superpower, with the added irony being that Japan seemed, economically, to have beaten America at its own game on a number of different levels. This was epitomised, for example, by the success of the Japanese motor industry, and in general it appeared that the Japanese had managed more effectively to embody all the values and ethics integral to the American Dream (particularly in the rewards of hard honest work coming to fruition). By the late 1970s, businesses in Europe and the United States saw the Japanese way of conducting and managing business as the ideal model. An entire culture emerged - accompanied by a wave of publications, courses and theories - which sought to encapsulate the success of Japanese businesses, and enable those in the West emulate its successes.

Whereas the USA was still regarded as the dominant World force, however, Europe was (and still is) seen by the Japanese more as a museum of High Culture, than a relevant or influential power in contemporary terms. Europe is apprehended almost like a piece of living history, and a repository of High Culture from which lavish objects can be obtained to adorn and embellish everyday life - the practical concerns of which are more than catered for in Japan. The attainment and enjoyment of Western material products as something akin to status symbols, is something that was established in the Meiji era.

Essentially, it has become common for cultural commentators in Europe and America to assert that Internationalism and Globalisation have, to a large extent, transcended the old trans-cultural distinctions and polarisations in Japan.

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An image emerges of the contemporary Japanese youth as having a richer and broader mix of cultural sources to draw upon than any generation previously. Also, like other nations, Japan is constantly engaged in the (often a-historical) re-assessment of its culture and traditions.

3.1 The Origins of Japanese psychedelia

...[A]ll foreign cultures are accepted unconditionally. And because of this very lack of conflict with an axis, there is no development except for the constant importation of the new. As a result, what we see in Japan is a cohabitation of foreign thoughts, regardless of their cultural or historical origins... (Karatani, p.37)

Vast economic change, political unrest, and radical social upheaval defined the 1960s in Japan. Not only were more people flooding in from rural areas to seek careers in the burgeoning cities, but an atmosphere of social radicalism, not unlike that in countries such as China, France, the UK and USA, was making itself felt. University students, Workers Unions, and social movements associated with the New Political Left demonstrated against issues such as the renewal of the US Japan Joint Security Treaty⁴⁷; Japan's unwilling involvement in the Vietnam war; and the continued US occupation of Okinawa (despite Japan regaining independence in 1952).

Although the music of Japanese psychedelic artists during the mid-late 1960s usually avoided any engagement with politics, there nevertheless emerged a small, nonconformist contingent of underground artists, whose work was almost as politically pro-active as that of the generation's folk-inspired protest singers⁴⁸. At the forefront of this psychedelic avant-

⁴⁷ More commonly known as *Anpo*. See chapter entitled *Protest*.

⁴⁸ E.g. Protest singers such as Nobuyasu Okabayashi, for example, who has been described as Japan's answer to Bob Dylan. One major event to highlight the popularity of folk during the late 1960s and early 1970s, was the Nakatsugawa Folk Festival of 1971. Despite attracting over 30,000 people

garde were groups like Lost Aaraaf (which featured a young Keiji Haino) and Les Rallizes Denudes who, according to writer Paul Collett, might be seen as 'the ultimate seminal Japanese psychedelic group.' (Collett, p.25)

In common with jazz⁴⁹, avant-garde, and electronic music, psychedelia possesses a unique history and cultural denotation in Japan, which belies its more banal origins in the *eleki* and *group sounds* (GS) trends of the 1960s (vastly popular genres characterised by their strict adherence to, and dedicated mimicry of, fashionable British and American styles).

One of the first attempts in Japan to recreate the Rock 'n' Roll sound reflected the Japanese love of jazz as much as anything else. *Hi no Tama Rock* by Izumi Yukimura constituted a fundamentally awkward amalgam of Glen Miller-esque big band jazz, and late 1950s American rock 'n' roll.

The relationship between jazz and the burgeoning pop culture of the mid-1960s, however, is significant. For example, in major cities jazz kissas⁵⁰ were central to the growth and development and diffusion of Japanese guitar pop, crucially providing places in which bands could regularly play, earn a wage, and cultivate a following. In a cramped city such as Tokyo, all accessible performance spaces were willingly utilised, and throughout the 1960s the role of jazz kissas extended beyond mere jazz-dedicated coffee shops, increasingly playing host to a variety of live musics. While only the larger jazz kissas were able, in terms of space, to accommodate a full band (smaller establishments were restricted, in terms of live music, to solo performances), these venues, together with Live Houses, functioned as important conduits enabling Japanese live music to flourish and develop.

A residency at Tokyo's *La Seine* jazz kissa was given, to GS band The Golden Cups during 1967, for example, just as an array of other bands like The Tempters⁵¹, The

however, the criticism of participant Kan Mikami (who shuns his association with folk) that it was 'just a big Woodstock imitation', underlines the criticism that Japanese protest folk simply constituted another example of cultural mimicry. The rhetoric of dissent contained within the music, had less to do with genuine political conviction, as it did an ambition to emulate famous American protest singers. (Mikami, http://www.info.net.nz/opprobrium/html/print3/ints/p3_mikami.html)

⁴⁹ See chapter entitled *Protest*.

⁵⁰ See chapter entitled *Protest*.

⁵¹ From around the time of their formation in 1965.

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Thunders⁵², and The Tigers⁵³ all development as professional bands by playing at jazz kissas. An early incarnation of The Spiders, featuring drummer Tanabe and vocalist Hiroshi Kamayatsu (whose father was a jazz singer brought up in the United States⁵⁴), also played regular jazz-based sets at the coffee shops.

Just as intermittent appearances by famed American artists like as The Gene Krupa Trio and Louis Armstrong Allstars⁵⁵ stoked the popularity of jazz during the early 1950s, so too did visitors from the West impact equally significantly upon the growth of Japanese pop music a decade later.

Two tours, in particular, were notable in this regard, triggering a reaction amongst teenage listeners and aspiring musicians that would define how Japanese popular music developed throughout the course of the next decade.

In 1966 The Beatles travelled to Japan to undertake a series of performances at Tokyo's Budo Kan Hall. While by this time, the so-called 'Liverpool Sound'⁵⁶ phenomenon was already present in Japan, The Beatles' historic visit nevertheless did much more than simply build upon their existent popularity there⁵⁷. Impacting significantly upon the subsequent direction of youth culture and popular music, the Budo Kan Hall shows were influential in the development of (and were the catalyst for) an entirely new trend in Japanese popular music: the *group sounds* boom.

It was after the visit of an America group one year prior to this however, that an earlier, albeit equally derivative, Western-style genre pre-empted the rise of group sounds (GS) music. Touring Japan in 1965, it was the Ventures' instrumental, echo-guitar driven, surf sound that triggered the copycat Japanese *eleki* phenomenon. Bands who would later redefine their music in the group sounds mould, such as The Spiders, Mops, The Tempters,

⁵² Earning a regular wage performing at Kyoto's *Den-en*.

⁵³ Secured a 7000-Yen residency at the *Nanba-Ichiban* Jazz Kissa on Osaka while still going under the name The Funnies.

⁵⁴ Although, apparently, his main fondness was for Country and Western music.

⁵⁵ Followed by a continuous string of others from 1961 onwards.

⁵⁶ A term which referred not only to groups inspired by the Mersey Sound, but British Beat music in general, influencing such bands as The Spiders circa 1965.

⁵⁷ The formation of groups such as The Tokyo Beatles as early as 1964, attests to the long-standing nature of The Beatles' influence in Japan.

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The Tigers⁵⁸, and The Bluejeans⁵⁹, all began as Ventures-style imitators, performing West Coast surf covers as faithful to the Ventures' model as possible.

Whether as a direct result of The Beatles' 1966 visit or not, the global revolution in popular music also made its mark in Japan from this point onwards, with familiarly touted bands like The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Zombies and The Small Faces all amassing popularity amongst the Japanese youth. It was in this shift from Ventures-style eleki music to vocally led pop that the group sounds genre derived its name, implying a shift in emphasis away from solo performers and instrumentalists.

GS music was essentially based upon a principle of authentic recreation, copying the most popular Western artists as faithfully as possible (developing, in this respect, in a similar way to previously imported musical styles: whether eleki, mainstream jazz, or military marching music, etc). However, unlike the preceding eleki trend, where such mimicry focused simply upon the music alone, GS was informed by the unprecedented worldwide rise of Beatlemania. This, and the British invasion in general, created an entirely new template for teen-image and youth culture that, for a time, would be simulated not only in Japan, but throughout Europe and the US as well (e.g. highlighted in America by groups such as The Aerosmiths or, more famously, The Monkees).

As well as the well-crafted image, carefully reconstituted album sleeve designs, and faithfulness to Western musical models, GS bands also jumped enthusiastically on the movie-making bandwagon. A good many of these films, like The Jaguars' 1968 offering, *Jaguars Tekizen Jyouriku*, were based largely upon the formula laid down in The Beatles' movie *Help!* from 1965. While The Spiders also made a string of films in similar musical-comedy-slapstick vein, The Tigers deviated slightly with their first movie release, *Sekai wa Bokura wo Matteiru*⁶⁰ - a science fiction-type offering released in 1968.

The GS era is generally thought to have lasted between 1966 and 1969, during which time it was not only the musicians whose behaviour and identity would be modelled on that of

⁵⁸ The Tigers were known then by their original moniker Sally & The Playboys.

⁵⁹ The Bluejeans were later renamed The Bunnys.

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their Western peers, but that of the fans also. Chart-topping GS bands such as The Tempters, The Carnabeats, or The Jaguars, were idolised by Japanese teenagers with the same frenzied enthusiasm one might have thought exclusively reserved for the Fab Four themselves. As Hitomi I explains in his liner notes to the 1999 *GS I Love You*⁶¹ CD compilation: 'This pop explosion was ably supported by a wildly enthusiastic teen audience that gave the major GS groups such as The Tigers and The Spiders the kind of popularity reserved for visiting stars such as the Walker Brothers or The Monkees, i.e. hit singles, movies, lavishly-packaged albums and mob scenes wherever they played.' (Hitomi, 1999, <http://60spunk.m78.com/gs.htm>).

Just as television programmes like *Beat The Beat*, and *New Eleki Sound* had, in 1965, served as a platform for Japanese eleki bands to play their Ventures and Shadows-style cover versions, so too by 1967 had a new generation of TV shows emerged, like *Young 720*, catering for the GS Boom, and playing host to bands such as The Golden Cups. The creation of popular media forms dedicated to the GS market, and its emergent teen generation, continued through the publication of periodicals and magazines such as *Seventeen*.

The difficulty and expense involved in obtaining records from the West proved problematic for jazz and pop enthusiasts alike throughout the 1960s, and - for musicians - was paralleled only by the near impossibility of importing authentic instruments (e.g. Fender and Gibson guitars, or Vox backline equipment and effects, etc).

The Golden Cups, of all the GS bands, were the most fortunate in this respect and, in many ways, highly influential because of it. One of the band's guitarists, Kenneth Ito, had grown up in Hawaii, and due to the Island's strong connections with the US, was able to acquire a Fender Telecaster guitar - a rare commodity for a musician in Japan. In addition to this, lead guitarist Eddy Ban became the first GS guitarist to use an American-style Fuzz pedal, bringing it back to Japan after a brief stay in the States during 1965. Jimmy Page, during his time in The Yardbirds, performed a similar historical role in introducing the effect

⁶⁰ 'The World is Waiting for Us', released 10 April, 1968.

⁶¹ *GS I Love You: Japanese Garage Bands* (1999), Big Beat UK, CDWIKD 159

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to England. Until this point, the Fuzz pedal had most notably been the staple of American Garage and early Psych bands. The imported effects pedal was subsequently copied by a manufacturer in Japan, and duly disseminated throughout the burgeoning community of R&B, freakbeat, and psychedelic-inspired musicians. Amongst the first early GS songs to feature the distinctive Fuzz sound, was The Spiders' 1967 single *Taiyou no Tubasa*.

In his brief historical outline of eleki and group sounds music, Glenn Sadin has argued that GS, unlike the preceding trend, constituted much more than simply a genre built upon the mimicry of British and American models: 'Rather than just merely imitate their British and American heroes, the GS groups developed their own, distinctly Japanese style, characterised by darkly dissonant oriental melodies and a tendency to go from a gentle ballad or a straight-ahead pop song into an over-the-top, fuzzed-out screaming rave-up, all within the same song!' (Sadin, <http://60spunk.m78.com/glenn.htm>)

In response to this idea, however, it might well be suggested the quirks and characteristics that supposedly distinguish group sounds music from Western Garage, Psych, and R&B, were merely the by-product of imitation gone wrong. In other words, these were traits and idiosyncrasies that, in many cases, the artists themselves may not necessarily have desired or intended: the product of misinterpretation or unsuccessful imitation, rather than any outward, concerted drive to pioneer an original sound or approach.

In retrospect, much has been made of the mass-produced way eleki and GS bands saturated the Japanese teen market during the 1960s, as they attempted to find the formula that would take them as close to their British and American heroes as possible. There are few grounds upon which the musicianship, production, arrangement or recording quality of GS music can be questioned, although - even from the time such bands started out playing at the American military bases - the issue of originality has remained consistently problematic.

Whether in relation to politics or fashion, economics or cinematography, there is little question about the immense impact American culture had from the time of the Allied occupation onwards. Japan's drive towards post-war re-development and modernisation was,

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for several decades, defined to some extent by the urge to emulate and 'catch-up' with the United States.

With the force of such influence in mind, playing at venues frequented by American GIs - particularly military establishments - was an important step for any band seeking fame and professional status, and yet another reason why adopting both an American sound, and set-list of Western covers, was so desirable. Just as Golden Cups played their versions of favourites like *Gloria* and *I Got My Mojo Working*, other groups like The Spiders and The Carnabeats actually went on to release a range of covered material. The Spiders' second LP *Spider Album 2*, for example, failed to contain a single original composition, while The Carnabeats' debut single was a cover of *I Love You* by The Zombies (which, interestingly, was sung in Japanese).

A number of groups also flirted with the dream of international success. While The Swooners had travelled to Hong Kong to support The Kinks and Manfred Mann, The Spiders became the first GS act to sign up to the American musicians union, and performed to a largely American crowd at their 1967 Hawaii concert. Together with the likes of The Bluejeans, The Spiders had performed support sets for the visiting (eleki-inspiring) Ventures in 1965, and despite also later opening for The Animals and The Beach Boys, refused to play on The Beatles' Japanese tour - their confidence dented by frequent criticisms and accusations of unoriginality. As GS essayist Hitomi I explains: 'They played some original songs along with lots of the Beatles and Animals covers. Sometimes, the audience shouted, "Go home imitators!'. This made them nervous, so when The Beatles came to Tokyo in '66, when they were offered the opening act slot, the band refused it because they were tired of being called imitators.' (Hitomi, <http://60spunk.m78.com/spiders.htm>).

Without doubt, some of the most significant factors and conditions underlying the GS boom were existent only in Japan, and contributed to the dualistic paradox that made the music both unique and extremely derivative⁶².

⁶² Or, perhaps, unique purely because of its attempted adherence to Western models.

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As previously mentioned, the various types of live venue on hand in Japanese cities, often played a part in dictating the sort of music a band would play. For example, the more crowd-pleasing sets tailored to suit mainstream cabaret/concert halls, would differ from what a group would play in small, inner city Live Houses and jazz kissas, or US military bases.

In addition to this, the relative lack of adequate recording facilities meant that bands would have only extremely limited studio time, and thus record in a way that would optimise what few hours were available.

The absence of drugs and drug culture in 1960s is also a notable and fascinating aspect in the history of Japanese youth culture, particularly given the eventual assimilation of psychedelic music and fashion into the GS equation.

3.2 psychedelic Sound In Japan

While opinions vary as to the actual extent to which drugs may have influenced cutting-edge music and fashion over the years, the fact that they have played a significant part within the history of youth culture is unquestionable. In England, for example, the use of uppers (Amphetamines, etc) became a defining feature of mod culture during the mid-1960s, not only providing a recreational substance less loutish than alcohol (seen to be the vice of beer-swilling rockers, and older generations), but contributing to the popularity and growth of Northern Soul, R&B, and freakbeat music on the scene.

Similarly, the vibrant London psychedelic scene, which evolved in 1967 around music and multimedia nights – or happenings - such as the *UFO* or *The 14 Hour Technicolour Dream*, would not have transpired had it not been for the vast intake of LSD indulged in by those involved. It was genuinely felt by many amongst the psychedelic generation that taking acid really did enable one to explore some intangible, unknown mental/spiritual territory, and

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voyage through what writer Julian Palacios describes as 'inner space'. As Palacios argues in his study of the life of Syd Barrett⁶³, 'The idea was popularised by Timothy Leary, as well as Alex Trocchi who wrote in the early sixties about drug users being 'cosmonauts of inner space'. (Palacios, 1998, p.145)

Although The Mops were the first self-professed psychedelic band in Japan, their claim to psychedelia never extended much beyond the point of artifice. When, in 1967, the group's manager returned from a trip to West Coast of America, sampling for himself the sights and sounds of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury area, he saw the opportunity to tap into a Western cultural phenomenon that had so-far bypassed Japan.

The band, formerly another Ventures-influenced eleki ensemble, released their debut album in April 1968. The sledgehammer subtlety of its title, *psychedelic Sound In Japan*, acted as a statement of self-designation and outward intent, underlining the kind of *far out* image they hoped to convey. Through cover versions of definitive West Coast songs such as *Light My Fire*⁶⁴, *Somebody To Love*⁶⁵ and *White Rabbit*⁶⁶, as well as the band's well-crafted image (from the album's typically psychedelic sleeve, to their corresponding style of dress), The Mops' management went to great lengths to recreate both the aural and visual iconography associated with psychedelia. As Alan Cummings proposes: 'Their enthusiasm, in the absence of the right chemicals, is utterly commendable. The lack of psychedelic drugs was only really felt when The Mops couldn't supply the 'LSD Party' set up to promote the album. Instead, they handed out dried banana skins to the assembled journalists, in the hope that smoking them would produce an appropriate levitational effect⁶⁷'. (Cummings, 1999, p.31)

⁶³ Founder member of the Pink Floyd, and the group's singer, songwriter, and lead-guitarist between 1965 and 1968. David Gilmour eventually replaced Barrett, following the latter's rapid mental decline thought, to some extent, to have been triggered by a combination of drug use and an inability to deal with the burdens of sudden fame.

⁶⁴ Released January 1967 on The Doors eponymous debut album, *The Doors* (Elektra/Asylum records)

⁶⁵ Featured on Jefferson Airplane's 1967 album *Surrealistic Pillow* (RCA 74321847912), although originally written and performed by the group's vocalist Grace Slick whilst still a member of previous band The Great Society.

⁶⁶ Also featured on the 1967 *Surrealistic Pillow* album by California-based psychedelic group, Jefferson Airplane.

⁶⁷ Although the availability of mind-expanding drugs was suitably abundant at the event, writer Julian Palacios, in *Lost In The Woods*, nevertheless recounts the novelty appearance of similarly fruity highs at The 14 Hour Technicolour Dream: 'A plastic igloo had been set up in one corner, where a laughing

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In many respects, the discovery of LSD, and its appropriation for youthful recreation on both sides of the Atlantic, was massively important to the direction popular music took during 1967 and 1968. From The Beatles to Syd Barrett-era Pink Floyd; The Pretty Things to The Hollies (all of whom had their roots in Beat and R&B and, to varying extents, experimented with psychedelia during this period); the experience of taking LSD momentarily triggered alternative ways to perceive both the creative process and the world at large. As a new, unexplored, and mysterious root into what, it was felt, was the unknown, a spirit of discovery and experimentalism enveloped the generation's youth culture and creative arts.

Nevertheless, that is not to say that the relationship between drugs and the creative arts should not be seen in perspective. It was the absence of originality and creative independence, rather than a lack of drugs, which meant The Mops would ultimately be dismissed historically as simply another GS band, rather than the genuine pioneers of psychedelia in Japan. As will be seen later in the Chapter, the legacy of psychedelic music in Japan - perhaps owing to its independence from drug use - has both outlived and in many ways transcended its 1960s Western namesake.

In addition to the absence of narcotics during the 1960s, the issue of language also became significant at the outset of the GS era, contributing to the way in which Japanese popular music developed over the coming decades. Although eleki could be considered equally, if not more, derivative of contemporaneous Western trends, the very fact that it was an instrumental style of music made it relatively easy for Japanese musicians, with the right equipment and ability, to perform. Sounding authentically like The Ventures did not require a single note to be sung, or lyric uttered, enabling a generation of young musicians (amounting to hundreds of eleki bands from 1965) to reproduce the sounds of their American and European peers without hindrance.

The 1966 arrival of The Beatles in Tokyo, however, and the subsequent explosion of vocal-orientated group sounds music, brought to bear a new set of problems - problems which

Suzy Creamcheese dispensed banana-skin joints. Touted for their hallucinogenic effects. A bitter aftertaste was all it left one with, but one simply had to laugh at the incongruity of standing in the midst

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would both hinder those artists wanting to sound authentically Western, yet, in retrospect, help to create some of the distinctly original qualities of GS music.

The issue of language in Japanese popular music is a concern which contemporary avant-garde artist Keiji Haino has openly taken to task. In the struggle for authenticity that gripped so many GS artists, song lyrics were regarded a crucial component, and typical Rock 'n' Roll argot was duly used to add an air of genuineness and legitimacy - despite, in actual fact, often serving to do little more than confuse Western listeners (e.g. 'But I don't care of them/So I'm just a Mops'⁶⁸). However, just as Japanese remains a difficult language for native English speakers to master, so too might it be said that the Japanese accent and enunciation is not easily suited - particularly in song - to English dialect, leading to results often caricatured in the West as humorous, unintelligible, or confusing⁶⁹. The Golden Cups were, perhaps, one notable exception, remaining relatively unhindered by the language barrier owing to the fact that vocalist/guitarist Kenneth Ito had been brought up in Hawaii, and therefore possessed a natural grasp of English.

As Keiji Haino has argued, however, the decision to frequently adopt the English language in songs (or, more to the point, the idiosyncratic language of Western Rock 'n' Roll music) epitomised the GS predilection for authenticity⁷⁰ over originality. Haino, keen to ward against what he regards the hazards of US cultural imperialism, suggests that had such bands sung exclusively in Japanese, the different requirements in timing, rhythm, timbre, cadence, etc, naturally demanded by this, would have brought about a completely autonomous form of Japanese pop music.

of this mad, milling throng smoking a banana!' (Palacios, 1998, p.141)

⁶⁸ *I'm Just A Mops* (Suzuki/Hoshi) - The Mops : from the album *Psychedelic Sounds In Japan*, Victor Sju-356 (1968) [Japan]. Also featured on *Nuggets II: Original Artyfacts from the British Empire & Beyond* (2001), Various Artists four CD box set, Rhino 76787.

⁶⁹ In an interview translated by Hitomi I and Glenn Sadin, former Carnabeats and Golden Cups member Al Takano recalls an incident from 1971, at a Golden Cups performance in Okinawa: 'While we were playing... bassist George said, "I smell something!" and opened the curtain behind the drums. Suddenly, fire attacked me! There were drunk foreigners and GIs there, so I shouted in English "Fire! Fire!" but, as you know, *Fire* is the title of a song, so the audience thought I was calling out the song and said, "C'mon." All of our instruments got burned... It was sad.' (Takano,

<http://60spunk.m78.com/interview1eg.htm>)

⁷⁰ i.e. The authentic recreation of British and American Pop, Garage, Freakbeat, and Psychedelic music.

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In an interview with Alan Cummings from 2002, Haino makes clear his feelings that, despite being rooted in the GS music of the 1960s, this is a problem that still blights contemporary Japanese popular music. 'If they sang in Japanese just once, they'd soon realise that Rock 'n' Roll won't fit into eight-beat rhythms. And if they'd realised that then I believe that all they could do would be to develop new rhythms. That would have created Japanese rock.' (Haino in Cummings, 2002, p.36)

There are also parallels to be drawn between Haino's own concern for language, expressed through his sound works, and those engaged with by contemporary artists working in other media. The works of Linda Nishio, for example, reflect her own experiences as a Japanese-American, and the necessity she feels to assert or reclaim her cultural identity as such. In one notable piece from 1989 (*Competitor*), Nishio programmed an electronic billboard in Times Square, New York, to display the names of Japanese corporations which were literally American household names: companies like Fuji and Sony. As historian Bert Winther explains, however, the names on the billboard were displayed in such a way so as to challenge Americanisation, with Nishio using spellings that evoked the correct Japanese pronunciation, i.e.: '..."FOO-gee" ..."SO-knee" ..."KNEE-sahn" ..."nen-ten-DOUGH" ..."tow-YO-taah" ...ending with her own name, "KNEE-she-oh".' (Winther, p.65)

Describing Haino's own elusive, autonomous, use of language in music as a kind of antidote to the problems identified, writer Alan Cummings explains: 'Conscious of the social conditioning and control aspects of language, Haino's lyrics employ a strictly controlled vocabulary within a slippery syntax... Some of the language twists Haino puts his words through are virtually impossible to reproduce in English, but a particular favourite is the blurring of active and passive voices... Though ambiguously worded, it would be read in the context of his eternal wariness of authority in any form, and his advocacy of uniqueness, which he sees threatened by changes in Japanese physiology.' (Cummings, 2002, p.36)

The management of Japanese bands during the 1960s proved to be yet another significant factor in determining the way the music, and the GS scene as a whole, developed.

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Record companies, by their very nature, are driven by the need to generate profit and sell records - as many as possible. During the GS period in Japan, industry attempts to both second-guess and dictate new teenage trends had a huge influence both upon the way the GS scene developed, and how it has subsequently been perceived in retrospect. Numerous examples can be cited whereby groups were forced to comply with record company demands and release tracks chosen by the management, often against their own personal sensibilities and instincts.

The assortment of songs featured on The Golden Cups 1968 debut album, for example, illustrates this well. While several cover-versions and original compositions reflect the band's penchant for fuzz-pedal-inspired, Garage-style music (e.g. *Giniro no Glass* or the proto-punk version of *Hey Joe*), others, like *My Girl* or *Unchained Melody*, are included at the behest of Capitol Records - reflecting its demand for mass-marketable, widely saleable commercial products. In terms of shifting units, the strategy employed by Capitol proved successful, and the band's biggest selling single was a ballad entitled *Nagai Kami no Shoujo*⁷¹. Despite the single itself being disliked profusely by the band, however, its B-side (a more aggressive-sounding, Garage-style track called *This Bad Girl*) reflected the band's own underlying musical identity. Nevertheless, in September 1968 *Nagai Kami no Shoujo* was followed by an album of similarly harmless, run-of-the-mill material, again at the behest of Capitol, and against the better judgement of the band.

Management dictate would also largely shape the general atmosphere within the GS music community. Not only did record companies exercise strict control over what music a group would record and release, but also took it upon themselves to hype the rivalry between bands, not only publicly (i.e. as a ploy to sell more records), but privately also, forbidding friendship or socialising between rival acts. As musician Al Takano recalls, this scenario was played out between The Tigers and The Tempters: 'At the time we were controlled by our

⁷¹ 'A Girl With Long Hair'. To help ensure The Golden Cups had a mainstream commercial hit, Capitol Records employed the services of a professional songwriter to compose the single, rather than rely upon the band's own writing. A similar strategy was employed by The Tempters' management who, seeking outside assistance for the group's third single, produced a slow ballad which remained disliked by the band despite going to number one in the charts.

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producers. Each of the GS bands could not become friends because the other bands were considered rivals. We were familiar with The Jaguars Sin Okamoto... [The Jaguars' vocalist] came to my house in secret because it was forbidden.' (Takano, <http://60spunk.m78.com/interview1eg.htm>)

The GS era is widely thought to have peaked around 1968, and by 1969 had begun to give way to the popular rise of so-called New Rock which, with bands emulating the likes of Led Zeppelin, maintained popularity throughout the early 1970s.

The decline of the group sounds boom, however, did not necessarily occasion the end of psychedelic music in Japan. On the contrary, it might be argued that it was only with the passing of GS that Japanese psychedelia moved beyond the superficial mimicry of late-1960s Western fashions, and burgeoned as an Autonomous, avant-garde phenomenon.

Both Jacks and, to some extent, The Mops illustrate early crossovers between Japanese psychedelia and the avant-garde, despite being groups more widely associated with the GS trend. The latter, in 1968, participated in the 1968 Orchestral Space Contemporary music Festival on the invitation of modernist composers Toshi Ichihyanagi and Toru Takemitsu. Jacks, on the other hand, have been widely recognised for achievements beyond the West Coast mimicry typical of their peers.

First signed to jazz label Takt in 1968 (courtesy of jazz musician Sadao Watanabe), Jack's work has been re-visited and performed in recent years by contemporary pioneers like John Zorn and Keiji Haino, both of whom are keen admirers of the group. In addition, Jacks also came from a background of avant-garde theatre - something they shared with one of Japan's most notable, longstanding, and fiercely independent psychedelic pioneers: Les Rallizes Denudes⁷².

Les Rallizes Denudes are notorious, as much as anything, for their elusiveness, and the sheer scarcity of easily available recorded material. Little more than rare and infrequent bootlegged recordings of their performances materialise from time to time.

⁷² Also known as *Hadaka no Rallizes*.

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The historical relationship between avant-garde theatre and avant-garde music in the twentieth century is, without doubt, immensely significant. Whether in relation to the chaotic performance evenings of the Futurists; Dada's anarchic Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich; the Happenings of New York Fluxus artists during the 1960s; or the theatricality pioneered within more popular musical areas such as *The Exploding Plastic Inevitable* (featuring The Velvet Underground) and The Pink Floyd's 1968 *Games For May* event; sound and visual performance share an important legacy in the history of Western avant-garde art.

3.3 Towards Avant Gardism

An awareness of radical artistic movements from Europe and America was as important to the Japanese avant-garde, as Eastern Philosophies and cultural traditions were in the West (e.g. of the Zen-Boom/Beat-Zen generation). The formation of art and performance movements such as Ankoku Butoh dance or The Neo-Dada Organisers⁷³ attests to this quite clearly.

The work of the Gutai Group has also been frequently compared to that of their Fluxus contemporaries in New York, and they were the first Japanese avant-garde movement to seize the attention of the West. Established in 1955 by Yoshihara Jiro, the group hailed mainly from Osaka, and partook in the City's landmark international event, Expo '70.

For centuries, Japanese and Western art has continued to share a mutually difficult, erratic, and somewhat contradictory historical relationship, the difficult nature of which is perhaps illustrated by the early history of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts.

Established during the Meiji era in 1889, between 1890 and 1898 the school was placed under the direction of Tenshin Okakura - former student of Ernest Fenollosa, a scholar renowned for his absorption in traditional Japanese art. Despite being in the midst of the Meiji

⁷³ Formed in 1960 by Shinohara Ushio, an occasional collaborator with Ankoku Butoh founder, Tatsumi Hijikata.

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era, and its defining drive towards Westernisation⁷⁴, Tokyo School of Fine Arts was nevertheless initially founded upon principles dominated by the traditional Japanese Arts. This owed largely to the influence and life's work of US scholar and Harvard graduate Fenollosa, who in 1878 moved to Japan as a lecturer at Tokyo Imperial University. Fenollosa not only believed that traditional Japanese art possessed characteristics that took it beyond anything modernism could achieve, but was also acutely aware of the fact that in the West, these cultural products were not credited as *Art*, per say, in the same way that European and American art was.

Fenollosa's self-appointed undertaking, therefore, was to create a critical discourse and a history of Japanese art, which would see it established and recognised as *Art* in the West. As historian Kojin Karatani asserts, 'What he introduced was a position from which to see Japanese art as "art". Art does not exist without a discourse on itself. Although Japanese art had long existed, its status as "art" was asserted by Fenollosa: he singled it out as "art".'

(Karatani, p.33)

With this in mind, Karatani asserts that both the Tokyo School of Fine Arts and Tokyo National Museum (then the Imperial Household Museum) were instrumental in reinventing traditional Japanese art as "art" within a Western framework. However, less than ten years after the appointment of Okakura, both he and his traditionalist doctrine were ousted by the supporters/agents of Westernisation.

Contradictory perspectives have emerged relating to how Japanese art is perceived both at home and in the West. That which is often dismissed in Japan as derivative and too traditional, is welcomed in Europe and America, and what the Japanese have frequently praised and held up as modern, is derided in the West for being simply imitational - born out of the mimicry of Western trends.

As Karatani proposes, '...this Westernisation has wrestled with a radical paradox ever since: that which is praised as new and anti-traditionalist in Japan appears to be mere mimicry

⁷⁴ Which, was confused with, and seen as inseparable from, Modernisation.

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in the West, where, conversely, a return to Japanese traditionalism is viewed as cutting edge. And we remain trapped in the same predicament today.' (Karatani, p.34)

Nevertheless, Okakura remained firmly against the idea of Westernisation, and resolute in his championing of traditional Eastern (or pan-Asian) values, believing that in the West, the measure of a nation's civilisation was its technological capacity for warfare. At the end of the nineteenth-century, Japan came to be respected as 'civilised' by the West after defeating Russia in battle in 1905 - demonstrating its level of industrialisation by its capacity for mechanised warfare.

Okakura, however, argued against such a crude and barbaric yardstick for civilisation, and advocated an alternative social and cultural model based upon art, ceremony, and peace. He was keen to advocate the importance of the link between Japanese culture and Asian culture, with the former deeply rooted in the history and traditions of Asia as a whole. In this context Buddhism, which had come to Japan via the Ch'an sect in China, is particularly significant, having laid the foundation for Zen Buddhism in Japan. Spending centuries in international isolation had, in Okakura's view, enabled Japan to preserve some of the most fundamental elements of Asian culture which, in countries like India, were lost with the arrival of Western Colonists and Missionaries.

In-between the Nationalist reaction to Meiji Westernisation at the turn of the nineteenth-century, and the Ultra-Nationalism of World war Two, there was, according John Clark, a period between the late 1920s and late 1930s⁷⁵ wherein, 'A new kind of artistic subjectivity developed in Japan.' (Clark, p.41)

Relating specifically to painters during the late Taisho (1912-26) and early Showa (1926-89) periods, it seems that while most of the work was based stylistically upon that of Western avant-garde artists, there were notable moves made by others to express more subjective, 'self-conscious' concerns. As Clark points out: 'Among the small number of Japanese Futurists, Dadaists, and, by around 1935, far larger number of Surrealists, there began a private discourse about the situation of the creative artist in the world... in their

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conscious redeployment of “Western” style, they placed their own self-consciousness at the centre of their creative practice.’ (Clark, p.41)

This, essentially, reflects a wider trend in painting between the two World wars, which tended to be more inward-looking, and focus upon the expression of the artists' own feelings and experiences.

Notably, the rise of Japan's painterly avant-garde during the 1920s corresponded with the establishment of a government-devised Salon system, putting in place an official orthodoxy and symbol of authority and conservatism against which the avant-garde could define themselves.

Reacting to some of the work in the Akushon⁷⁶ exhibition of 1924, Japanese Dadaist Murayama Tomoyoshi argued vehemently against the blind mimicry of Western avant-garde artists: -

'Stand up by yourselves. I beg you to stop acting like monkeys. Respect yourselves more... Most of it is an imitational spineless French Imperial salon style boiled down from Picasso and Braque. There's nothing more shameless than this for the Japanese painting world. It makes you want to puke. Oh Mates, how far will you be slaves? It's as if you had been born slaves for generations.' (Murayama, cited in Clark, p.42)

This argument marked the first of many such 'attacks' Murayama would make on the subject, continuing his arguments against Japanese mimicry throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

In 1925, Murayama established the fleeting Dada-inspired theatre group Gekijo no Sanka (Theatre of the Third Section). Artistically 'radical', the group's work was criticised by some quarters of the Japanese avant-garde community for not engaging nearly closely enough with political and social issues.

Artist Ichiro Fukuzawa in 1937 argued that Japanese Surrealism was merely the product of sycophantic Japanese artists, trying desperately to emulate the artists they admired in Europe. Although Fukuzawa himself *did* use styles and strategies which, in aesthetic terms,

⁷⁵ 'The early Showa period'

⁷⁶ The avant-garde collective 'Group Action'.

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were derived from European Surrealism, he nevertheless used them to address contemporary Japanese social issues.

1928 was the year in which Surrealism was first introduced to Japan - a time when the nation's artistic community was seemingly split between artists who simply mimicked the European Surrealist style, and those that who criticised them for it.

It was also around this time that Police persecution began to be directed at those artists whose work overtly expressed, or in some way betrayed, Left Wing political tendencies.

During the mid-late 1930s, Surrealist art was openly linked with Communism by the Japanese State authorities, resulting in numerous artists and movements being placed under the watchful eye of the Police during this time. By 1941, virtually all avant-garde art was regarded as subversive by the then ultra-nationalist State, leading to the arrests and interrogation of a number of artists, including Surrealist Fukuzawa. The premise under which such questioning took place, was to ascertain (and presumably break) the supposed link between Surrealism and Communism.

In the tense political climate of Japan during the 1960s, radical theatre (not unlike the anarchic events organised by Dada and Surrealists) became an important instrument through which dissenting social groups would give expression to their frustrations and dissatisfactions. The close interrelationship between theatre and music has enormous significance in the history of the Japanese arts, with sound playing an integral part in such performance traditions as Noh Theatre and Kabuki.

The Taisho period (1912-1926) was a significant time in the history of Japanese music and theatre, heralding not only noteworthy changes influential to its future development, but also a radical growth in popularity.

To many involved in the arts during this period, efforts made during the Meiji era to introduce Western styles of music and theatre to Japan seemed, in hindsight, merely superficial; although that is not to say that Western practises and influences were dismissed altogether. Rather, what developed was a set of creative practises that not so much copied Western influences, as reshaped them to create something new and unique to Japanese culture.

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Shikō Tsubouchi, for example, saw the development of new conventions in National music and Theatre as essential, if Japan was ever to truly emulate modern Western countries. Regarding it as an important tool to both please and enlighten people, Tsubouchi outlined that the theatre shouldn't rely exclusively upon traditional Japanese conventions, but should be open to the use of other devices, such as Western-style music to give emphasis during key parts of a play. On the whole, however, he was widely in opposed to Westernisation, and believed that the arts should do more than simply seek to emulate European and American trends. One of Tsubouchi's main subjects of contention, was the rapidly growing taste for European Opera the Japanese public had seemingly developed.

As historian Roland Dominig points out, Tsubouchi saw the future of Japanese theatre and music as residing in the strengths and styles of traditional Japanese forms. 'He stressed that the Japanese music theatre of the future should not be a mere imitation of western music theatre but unite the strength of the traditional Japanese music theatre forms.' (Dominig, 1998, p.270)

Just as Tsubouchi saw the future of New Theatre in the reformation of traditional Japanese theatre, so too did his counterpart/contemporary, Kobayashi, believe that it should appeal to everyday people and, in doing so, should not simply be a copy of Western Opera. Whereas Kobayashi propagated the blending of Japanese and Western conventions into a new harmonious whole, however, Tsubouchi saw the future of New Theatre in the reforming of traditional Japanese theatre.

Kobayashi believed that if the theatre was to be modernised, then Western music had to be used in a leading role, although while he regarded Western music as important, it was nevertheless essential that the content of the plays be Japanese.

Les Rallizes Danudes began their early career providing sound for Gendai Gekijo⁷⁷, an avant-garde theatre troupe in Kyoto (the *only* one). The band's use of lights, mirror balls, and excessive volume has, in retrospect, led to many parallels being drawn with New York's

Warhol-led *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*, with Les Rallizes Denudes fulfilling the Velvet Underground role of aural provocateurs. Unlike their counterparts in Downtown Manhattan, however, the band - headed by guitarist Takashi Mizutani - found that their feedback-driven phonic barrage was not so much welcomed by members of Gendai Gekijo, as regarded a definite problem: something they performed in spite of, rather than in unison with. In light of this, the two parties inevitably parted company by early 1969, with the theatre group itself subsequently disbanding.

Unlike the general political detachment prevalent amongst GS groups, Les Rallizes Denudes' direct engagement with divisive social issues suggests an ideology more in line with free jazz players like Masayuki Takayanagi, or Protest Folk singers such as Kan Mikami, than other psychedelic artists. The fact that Mizutani and Keiji Haino were, until around 1971, close friends⁷⁸ is no surprise given the staunch convictions and Autonomous principles both candidly espoused. In 1971, Les Rallizes Denudes and Lost Aaraaf appeared together on the billing for that year's Trip Festival.

The extent of Les Rallizes Denudes' political underground involvement, however, was nothing short of intensive. In 1969 the group took part in the Barricades-a-Go-Go protest concert at Kyoto University, and a year later, perhaps more controversially, one member of the group (Wakabayashi) was found to have been involved in the notorious Aeroplane hijacking incident of Yodo-Go. Les Rallizes Denudes' New Left credentials were further underlined, not only by band leader Mizutani's supposed links with *Sekigun* (the Japanese Red Army), but also an incident wherein the group reportedly distributed Communist material to children (e.g. texts by the likes of Guevara and Lenin) after performing at a Junior School.

The evasion of commercial modes that has defined Les Rallizes Denudes throughout their career, in many ways exists as another symptom of these same political sensibilities. From around 1971, it seems that Mizutani plunged the group into a consciously devised, readily-embraced, anti-commercial fissure, acquiring cult status through deliberate obscurity

⁷⁷ 'The Modern Theatre.'

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(representing, perhaps, the antithesis of the GS psychedelic era, which was overtly commercial and popularist in its dualistic imitation of Western models).

From the moment of their formation in 1967, however, the group were outwardly - if not vehemently - opposed to the cultural mimicry they felt epitomised the GS Boom. As musician Julian Cope has observed: 'Politically too, Mizutani and his first co-conspirators, Kato and Tada Takashi, found the cultural cow-towing of the group sounds bands deeply embarrassing. So, instead of courting the more commercial Tokyo pop scene, Les Rallizes preferred to remain in the ancient and much smaller city of Kyoto.' (Cope, 2002, http://www.headheritage.co.uk/unsung/albumofthemonth/index.php?review_id=611)

This conscious decision to avoid the Tokyo mainstream is by no means a unique gesture, and is something which has both precedents and parallels elsewhere in Japanese art history⁷⁹. By 1970, however, Mizutani decided to relocate the group in Japan's capital after all.

The early 1970s are regarded historically as the beginning of a period of growing Nation self-confidence in Japan, not only in economic terms, but culturally also. In 1972, a conference was organised by academics in Tokyo to examine the interplay between Western and Japanese art, although in both its findings and prevailing tone of debate, the event proved relatively one-sided. Ultimately, the panel concluded that 'meaningful' cultural exchange could not occur between the two peoples since, although the importation of western culture was central to Japanese culture, 'the influence of Japan on Western culture was so superficial and so negligible that prospects for meaningful dialogue were bleak.' (Winther, p.55)

It was also decided at the 1972 conference that, although Westerners perceived themselves as worldly-wise and well-informed enough to undertake a sophisticated discourse on Japanese culture, they were merely 'flattering themselves.' Historian Burt Winther suggests that, although there was very likely some wider 'nativist agenda' (Winther, p.55) at work here (which thrived on the idea that Japan was, by nature, too complex for foreigners to understand), there are nevertheless certainly grounds for such criticisms - both then and now.

⁷⁸ The two apparently discontinued their friendship following a disagreement concerning Keiji Haino's girlfriend.

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Central to considering the development of indigenous Japanese psychedelia⁸⁰, is the influence of Taj-Mahal Travellers, and the group's founder member Takehisa Kosugi.

Kosugi left Tokyo University of Arts in 1962 as a graduate of musicology, after already co-founding Group Ongaku in 1961 - an arts collective which, through their Events Pieces, Happenings, and performances of Short Form-like scores, have been strongly likened to Zurich Dada and, in particular, New York Fluxus.

In 1969, Kosugi formed Taj-Mahal Travellers. Performed with a similar combination of amplifier hums, oscillators, amplified strings, etc (Kosugi himself being a violinist), their music, in many respects, bears comparison to the lengthy drone-based compositions of La Monte Young's Theatre of Eternal Dreams (also known as The Dream Syndicate).

A number of important connections also exist between Takehisa Kosugi and avant-garde sound artist Yasunao Tone. Not only were both co-founders of Group Ongaku, but in addition, following his graduation from Chiba National University in 1957, Tone became involved in the musicology programme at Tokyo University of Arts, from which Takehisa himself graduated.

From the outset of his career, it seems that three key sources of outside influence helped to shape Tone's work as an artist: Dada and Surrealism (e.g. Duchamp); US free jazz (e.g. Eric Dolphy and Ornette Coleman); and 'ethnic' music (e.g. from Indian traditional music, to the native folk traditions of Japan such as Noh and Kabuki).

Tone has, himself, recalled the awareness Group Ongaku members had of avant-garde artists and movements in the West, describing how - in certain ways - it served to inform their work: 'We thought then our improvisational performance could be a form of automatic writing, in a sense that the drip painting of Jackson Pollock was a form of automatic writing.' (Tone, cited in Licht, Iss.223, p.31)

⁷⁹ E.g. the Gutai Group, based in Kansai. See chapter 1.1, p.28

⁸⁰ A legacy of psychedelic music which, far from being based upon mimicry of late-1960s Western bands, has seen artists continue to explore and push out the boundaries of Psychedelia.

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Active as a performance artist from around the end of the 1950s, Tone's first solo concert in 1962 - *One Man Show by a Composer* - included a performance of the graphic score *Anagram For Strings*, as well as another fourteen pieces, lasting around six hours in total. A version of *Anagram For Strings* was later released on cassette for a Fluxus-dedicated issue of *Tellus Magazine*, performed by Takehisa Kosugi and Malcolm Goldstein.

According to future New York Fluxus artist Nam June Paik, one key hub of avant-garde activity during the early 1960s, was the Sōgetsu Art Centre of Tokyo. Not only recalling how 'John Cage, David Tudor, Yoko Ono, and George Mathieu had all done significant work there,' (Paik, p.77) Nam June Paik also cites this as the place where he himself first came into contact with avant-gardists such as Toshi Ichiyanagi, Toru Takemitsu, Yasunao Tone, and Takehisa Kosugi. Notably, it was Kosugi who introduced Nam June Paik to Jirō Takamatsu, Natsuyuki Nakanishi, and Genpei Akasegawa: founder members of Hi Red Centre.

In 1964 at the Tokyo Olympics, Tone worked in collaboration with Hi Red Centre, undertaking performance pieces such as *Cleaning Piece* (stopping traffic, pretending to be street cleaners - the police were even conned into helping); *Closing Event* (closed down a gallery space for a week, only unlocking the doors on the final day to celebrate the opening of the closing); and *Yamate Loop Train Event*: 'a happening on a commuter train.' (Licht, *The Wire*, Iss.223, p.31).

Tone's avant-garde activities continued as he moved from Tokyo to New York in 1964, returning the following year to organise the week-long Fluxus Festival, while continuing to explore the concept of paramedia in his own work. In wider historical terms however, Tone has expressed his view that Fluxus only really had genuine poignancy between the years 1962 and 1966, insisting that once institutionalised, its vitality was lost: 'Works are on exhibit in Museums... in such a way that works originally meant to be played as games or toys [are placed] in glass showcases only to be looked at, and the audience can't play with them. How can it be possible to make Fluxus still alive?' (Tone, cited in Licht, *The Wire*, Iss.223, p.31).

During the late 1960s Tone had, for the interim, returned again to Tokyo, during which time he declined Takehisa Kosugi's invitation to join Taj-Mahal Travellers. Around this

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time, he continued to be highly active in his avant-garde pursuits, running a student workshop from home, and founding Team Random - a computer arts-based collective, responsible for organising the *Biograde Process* festival (the first computer arts festival in Japan).

Taj-Mahal Travellers ultimately consisted of six musicians and one sound engineer, with Takehisa Kosugi - signal generator experiments aside - not straying from his instrument of choice, the violin.

Clearly, one of the most important points to note is that in a radical departure from GS music - or popular culture in any sense, for that matter - the connection between Western psychedelia and that of Taj-Mahal Travellers exists, not in relation to 1960s psychedelic pop music, but rather Western avant-garde art practises. Even the group's monumental camper-van tour (1971-1972), which saw them travel in a Volkswagen from Holland to the Taj-Mahal in India, was conceived by Kosugi as a performance piece in the Fluxus tradition, rather than simply an eccentric Rock 'n' Roll tour⁸¹.

Kosugi's involvement with the Fluxus group gradually became more direct, and a move to New York later saw him become the musical Director of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. His engagement with, and awareness of, the avant-garde on a global scale is something that has permeated the artist's work throughout the duration of his career. While his involvement with Hi Red Centre found an instant empathy with members of the Fluxus group in New York, critic Alan Cummings has also identified an element of cross-cultural interplay present between Group Ongaku and avant-garde practices in the West: '...like the use of non-musical objects, and an 'automatism' approach inspired equally by Cagean ideas of chance, Surrealist automatic writings and Jackson Pollock's action painting.' (Cummings, Iss.220, 2002, p.59)

Taj-Mahal Travellers were by no means the only psychedelic pioneers to possess such palpable associations with the European and American avant-garde. Alan Cummings, in an earlier article, says of Les Rallizes Denudes founder, Takashi Mizutani: '...from his few

⁸¹ Notably, as part of the performance piece/tour, Taj-Mahal Travellers partook in a number of significant arts festivals, including Osaka's Expo '70, and ICES '72 in London, amongst others.

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statements it is clear that the darker facets of French Symbolism and Surrealism, and the theatrical avant-garde of Jerzy Grotowski and Julian Beck were influences. (Cummings, Iss.186, 1999, p.34)

Also, like *Les Rallizes Denudes*, very few officially released recordings exist of Taj-Mahal Travellers' work. This evasion of the commercial market and, ultimately, the recording studio, is something which was also clearly evident during first twenty years of Keiji Haino's career: another pioneer of psychedelia and New music in Japan.

The work of Haino has generally been divided between collaborative ventures (ranging from *Lost Aaraaf* and *Fushitsusha* to *Nijiumi* and *Vajra*) and his solo output, which until 1990 had spawned only two official recordings (although since this time, the release rate of his work has been prolific, matching that of artists such as Masami Akita, Otomo Yoshihide, and Makoto Kawabata).

In an interview with Biba Kopf from 1999, Haino affirms the place of his work within the legacy of Japanese psychedelia, crediting Western artists such as Blue Cheer, The Doors, and Led Zeppelin (namely, the vocal technique of Robert Plant) as having a profound effect upon his working methodologies. Nevertheless, Haino is also keen to distance himself from the herd, and argues that he has never limited or drawn the kind of boundaries in his work that conventional musicians are prone to doing. Principally, while his music is often perceived at the vanguard of post-1960s psychedelia, Haino nevertheless states his ultimate intention is not to surpass or transcend psychedelic music⁸², but rather to extend its perceived boundaries and implications: 'The goal of my music is not to go beyond psychedelic music, but to deepen it. There are many people who call my music psychedelic. My music is faster. Unlike psychedelic musicians who stop because of their desire for easiness, for shortcuts, I do not stop.' (Haino in Kopf, 199, http://www.thewire.co.uk/out/9911_1i.htm)

What remains evident more than anything, however, is the artist's emphasis upon creative autonomy and isolation, raising similarities between his own career-long working

⁸² Perhaps in the way that GS bands did in the early 1970s, changing their styles in order to be so-called New Rock.

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ideology, and the highly politicised, anti-commercial convictions of Les Rallizes Danudes. Primarily, Keiji Haino is keen to emphasise that little progression or change has ever taken place in his work, ranging from his early saxophone playing with Lost Aaraaf in the early 1970s, to the most recent guitar or vocal-based solo projects. Haino stresses that the convictions and beliefs he expresses continue to remain the same, and his ability to be true and faithful to these principles is what differentiates his work from that of other, more transient, pop artists. As Biba Kopf explains: 'Change equals bad faith, a lack of courage in seeing things through to the last. Popular music, from punk through psychedelia, is scattered with part-explored paths or prematurely spent ideas. Projects are begun and then abandoned for want to will-power; musicians buckle under the pressure of the market place, where the idea of permanent change is essentially a way of talking up a novelty product.' (Kopf, 1999, http://www.thewire.co.uk/out9911_1i.htm)

3.4 Deep Purple meets Stockhausen:

Contemporary Japanese psychedelic music

In recent years, group sounds music has undergone something of a historical re-evaluation, with some critics and commentators positing it not merely as musical mimicry, but a trend which, through its unique quirks and characteristics, stands apart from its Western model. In aesthetic terms, at least, this is can be convincingly argued. Taken out of its original cultural context, appropriated, and reconstituted within a wholly new cultural framework, 1960s popular music did assume a unique and different identity when interpreted by GS artists.

The reasons for this, however, are implied within the early sections of this chapter. The range of instruments available in Japan at the time; the language differential; the type of venues artists would perform in; the dictates of Japanese music management; and the unique social and political circumstances prevalent in Japan during the 1960s, all inevitably contributed in distancing the music, however subtly, from that of the West.

In addition, it could also be questioned whether the social, musical, and stylistic differences that defined various youth culture factions in the UK and US (e.g. mod, psychedelic, Garage, R & B, freakbeat, etc) carried the same cultural connotations when assimilated into Japanese youth culture. Discussing this issue in an interview with Monia De Lauretis, Japan-based sound artist Mason Jones suggests that, 'one interesting thing is the fact that anyone from another culture can approach a country's music from a different point of view. So, for example, Japanese kids growing up can hear American rock and roll, and also hear European experimental music, and then start a band that combines rock with experimental music in ways which wouldn't occur to an American kid.' (Jones, cited in De Lauretis, p. 47)

Jones, when later asked directly about the ability of experimental musicians to seamlessly drift from one genre to another, continues thus: 'it can be traced back to the

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opportunity to get introduced to Western music without the same preconceptions and “baggage” that we have. When an American kid hears rock, they have a certain image in mind; when they hear jazz, they have a different image. Combining genres within a band isn’t done here as much (though it’s becoming much more common) as in Japan, because the images that come with a style of music seem to forbid it.’ (Jones, cited in De Lauretis, p. 59)

However, while it could be argued that significant differences exist to make GS music, on face value, distinctive and identifiable from that of contemporaneous American and British artists, it is nevertheless important to consider that these differences are purely aesthetic - brought about through the combination of incidental circumstances discussed above, rather than artistic intent on the part of GS musicians.

With one or two notable exceptions (for example, *Jacks*), the common intention of GS bands was to emulate the music currently being imported from the West, and it is only through imitation gone wrong, for want of a more articulate phrase, that GS developed its own (retrospective) identity.

In view of this, the beginnings of an independently developed, uniquely Japanese form of psychedelia is traceable, not to the group sounds-boom of the mid-late 1960s, but rather artists such as Les Rallizes Denudes and Taj-Mahal Travellers. During the early 1970s, when proponents of GS psychedelic music had largely turned their attention to the freshly popular New Rock trend, these artists developed their music within a context that, while not self-consciously psychedelic, nevertheless explored and expanded the meaning of psychedelia beyond its previous superficiality: primarily by virtue of their commitment to experimentation and serious musical discovery.

Interaction with the avant-garde at home as well as in Europe and America is unquestionably of paramount importance. Just as Takehisa Kosugi, for example, worked actively with Group Ongaku and the Fluxus group, so too were artists in the West exploring similar possibilities brought about through interaction between avant-garde art and popular music. While John Cale, for example, brought the pioneering drone work of La Monte Young to The Velvet Underground’s music, so too were musicians such as The Beatles, The Mothers

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of Invention, Syd Barrett, and Captain Beefheart informed by their background in the arts, and their relationship with the avant-garde. These were bands in the West who, essentially, GS groups sought to emulate, although did so in a purely limited, aesthetic capacity only: superficially copying merely stylistic elements of the work, rather than seeking to embrace the same genuine spirit of discovery and experimentalism that defined psychedelia as something radical.

Basically I am Japanese, so the music I play has a Japanese feeling, but naturally I also listen to Western music and it's part of the whole process of making music to see how I could mix these different elements... People might misunderstand the use of ethnic instruments... like, to make Japanese rock you have to use Japanese instruments, which is like saying German bands should use German instruments. (Kawabata, cited in Kopf, Iss.155, p.20)

Keiji Haino (whose legacy - as discussed – dates back to the early 1970s) and Masami Akita, are amongst a number of contemporary avant-garde artists in Japan whose work, both challenging and prolific, is often linked to the continuing exploration of post-GS/post-1960s psychedelia. Another to engage with such concerns, perhaps more self-consciously than the aforementioned, is Osaka-born Makoto Kawabata.

Like contemporaries Otomo Yoshihide and Masami Akita, Kawabata also began his career as a young man, distributing early solo works via a home-recorded, hand packaged cassette label entitled *Revolutionary Extraction Project*.

Perhaps more than any of his avant-garde contemporaries, Kawabata is keen to emphasise the importance of European and American influences in his work. By his own admission, he grew up relatively indifferent to, and independent of, Japanese experimental new music: partly because, living in the small rural town of Nara, he was far removed from cutting edge events and happenings in Tokyo. Nevertheless, Kawabata has also confessed that, with the possible exception of Keiji Haino, he still has very little interest in the Japanese

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avant-garde, claiming that his influences have always resided more in Western music from the 1960s and 1970s (particularly Progressive Rock, Hard Rock, electronic, and Krautrock).

Rather than representing some frivolous or fetishistic enthrallment with Western music, however (or accusations of Western exoticism), critic David Keenan has argued that the work of artists such as Kawabata reveals a deep understanding of Western popular music, born out of an immersion in, and serious dissection of, selected genres and moments in Western musical history. This can be seen within the context of jazz history in Japan, and in particular the intense - almost academic - way American jazz music was disseminated and absorbed through jazz kissas during the 1950s.⁸³ Referring specifically to the art and music of Acid Mothers Temple⁸⁴, Keenan proposes, ‘...one of the great things about the new Japanese music is the degree of theoretical seriousness in their approach to rock, which doesn’t so much inhibit the music’s excitement, as intensify it.’ (Keenan, 2001, p.38).

Discussing his lifelong absorption in Western experimental music, particularly that of the late 1960s and 1970s, Kawabata has directly expressed his interest in pushing out the boundaries of contemporary psychedelic music. Describing his initial motivation in forming Acid Mothers Temple, Kawabata explains: ‘I’d listened to all sorts of trippy psychedelic records but I was never fully satisfied with them. So I wanted to create a really extreme music.’ (Kawabata, cited in Keenan, Iss.210, 2001, p.38). In addition to influences culled from the history of British psychedelia and early Rock (from the original Pink Floyd, to Blue Cheer, to Black Sabbath), the discovery of European avant-garde music is something the artist also cites as central to his early development: particularly the electronic music of Karlheinz Stockhausen. ‘In terms of actual musical content, Stockhausen was the first thing that really shocked me... hearing electronic music was a total culture shock.’ (Kawabata, cited in Keenan, Iss.210, 2001, p.35).

Beyond simply wanting to emulate or reproduce the work of influential artists, however, Kawabata suggests that, even from the age of 13 when he formed *Ankoku Kakumei*

⁸³ See Chapter 2

⁸⁴ Collective founded by Makoto Kawabata

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Kyodotai ('Dark Revolutionary Collective'), his intention was always develop and explore new music through the synthesis of his influences. What resulted was the development of a methodology and mindset that would expand the potential meanings of existing works and genres, while simultaneously collapsing the narrow boundaries such taxonomy often leads to.

Although not necessarily a conscious intention (or, at least, not in the way of any consciously declared artistic-political manifesto), Kawabata's *Ankoku Kakumei Kyodotai* debut recording⁸⁵, through its spirit of sheer unguided experimentation, nevertheless achieved some real sense of cultural autonomy. Armed with only one borrowed synthesiser, members of the collective built their own instruments and, oblivious to any orthodox approach, devised their own guitar tunings. Needless to say, the music they created was by necessity equally experimental – in the most literal sense – with no member of the group possessing any formal knowledge of how to play.

Reflecting Kawabata's own recollection that he 'dreamt of how cool it would be to find a record that combined hard rock like Deep Purple with the electronic music of Stockhausen,' critic David Keenan says of *Ankoku Kakumei Kyodotai*: 'the album's two sidelong percussive jams are soaked in torrential electronics, revealing an approach to sound that invokes Amon Duul, musique concrete and surrealism, as well as early Nurse with Wound.' (Keenan, Iss.210, 2001, p.36).

This observation bears remarkable poignancy in relation to a comment made by Kawabata himself later in the same article, as he recalls the making of the first Acid others Temple recording: 'I edited and overdubbed all the tapes of jam sessions that we'd done and ended up with something that is like musique concrete... that record certainly felt like the first time that I'd fully realised my childhood dream of creating a music that fused hard rock and electronic music.' (Kawabata, cited in Keenan, Iss.210, 2001, p.38).

⁸⁵ Kawabata's first self-made cassette-album, released initially in 1980, and re-issued on a limited edition ten CD box set during the 1990s.

3.5 Conclusion

Chapter Three has traced the development of Japanese psychedelic music from its origins in Japan as a mere copycat genre, recreating the current fashions of Europe and America during the late 1960s. As seen in previous chapters with modernist composition and jazz, psychedelic music first came to Japan as a form of Western mimicry, evolving through copycat Western genres like *eleki* and group sounds music.

Beginning with the extended performances of artists such as Taj Mahal Travellers during the early 1970s, however, the concept of psychedelic music developed its own unique identity in Japan. It's adoption by successive groups of artists, ranging from Takehisa Kosugi and Keiji Haino, to Masami Akita and Makoto Kawabata, has seen the term develop a meaning and application in Japan that far extends its origins in 1960s Western counter-culture.

Far from bearing any retrospective or nostalgic connotations⁸⁶, ever since psychedelic culture stopped being fashionable in the West (and mainstream Japanese pop culture, therefore, found a new trend to mimic), psychedelic music in Japan continued to flourish amongst the country's avant-garde.

Even in the West, psychedelia as a movement or genre had, by the end of the 1960s, ceased to be about breaking new boundaries, trading its spirit of experimentation and free-thinking for a self-referential uniform and formula. However, it was once the mainstream youth culture of Japan lost interest in copying and recreating Western psychedelic culture, that the Japanese Avant Gardist take on psychedelia took root.

From Jacks, to Taj Mahal Travellers, to Les Rallizes Denudes, to Acid Mothers Temple, for example, the work of successive generations of Japanese psychedelic artists have little in common musically with what, in the West, would be considered 'psychedelic' in the popular context of late-1960s San Francisco, for example. There is little of the Flowery,

⁸⁶ Offering licence to follow a well-used formula from a by-gone era

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melodic psychedelic pop of Jefferson Airplane, Iron Butterfly, or Fairport Convention, for example, to be found in post-1960s Japanese psychedelic music.

The fact is, however, that even in the late-1960s, if psychedelic music was to be defined as avant-garde, it would be the early albums of The Mothers of Invention, or The Velvet Underground in New York, whose music was driven and informed by experimentation – the desire to break boundaries, and develop an approach to sound that refused to follow the simple formula of mainstream pop music. It is essentially in this vein that Japanese psychedelic music continued to develop after the 1960s, acquiring a history and identity that is unique to Japan.

CHAPTER FOUR

ISOLATION AND CHAOS

AVANT-GARDE JAPANESE MUSIC AND THE METROPOLIS

4.0 Introduction: Megalopolis

Tokyo is built on compacted layers of pornography. The images seep through into every eye, irrepressible and volatile. Every conceivable sexual encounter is documented in the comic books and internet guides which the Tokyo salarymen read compulsively, on their way to and from work. Only the extremity of a violent sexual encounter can duplicate the brutality of their own existence, bodies crashing into bodies for hours on end on the subways, avenues and corridors of the city. (Barber, 2001, p.83)

In 1986, it was estimated that around ninety million people resided in the thin strip of land between Tokyo and Hiroshima⁸⁷, one of the main inhabitable non-mountainous areas of Japan. Amongst the most densely populated regions of the world, this vast urban expanse stands in sharp contrast to the rice field and mountain landscapes depicted in traditional Japanese prints and woodcuts: images that have proven so alluring to Western Orientalists from the nineteenth-century onwards.

Tokyo is frequently portrayed in the West as a vast, topsy-turvy, unfathomable Metropolis; a dense and sprawling Disney World mutated by space-age technology, mass-capital investment, and a miscellany of misguided cultural appropriation. Crammed and

⁸⁷ *Architects at the Crossroads: Prog.6 Japan: The Zen Way of Building*, Written/produced by Peter Adams, 1986.

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anarchic, the extremely high price of land has contributed, in some part, to what Westerners often see as both the quirkiness and restrictiveness of everyday life in Tokyo; unique social and cultural characteristics which, to inhabitants of equally wealthy cities in the West, seem unfamiliar.

In many ways, the city represents a physical manifestation - an embodiment - of the many myths and perceptions that define the West's understanding of Japan; a metaphor in concrete and neon for some of the projected internal dichotomies presumed to be at the heart of contemporary Japanese culture.

Tokyo appears to encapsulate many of the extremes, paradoxes, and contradictions Western onlookers often like to believe underlie modern Japanese life. The lines of cram schools and sky-scraping office blocks (occupied around the clock by hard-working, highly committed executives – the so-called ‘salarymen’) pay testimony to the idea of the Japanese as automaton-like, disciplined worker-bees.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, US businesses were particular ill at ease with what they saw as the work ethic and mentality of the Japanese. The success their Asian counterparts were reaping at the expense of the American market, gave rise to a spate of ‘Japan-bashing’ in the US, largely justified and driven by the feeling that Japan was simply not playing fair. It became much discussed, for example, how Japanese workers were willing to work for much lower wages and far longer hours, than would be deemed acceptable in the civilised, ethical US market.

As frustration at Japan's success mounted in the US, the worker-bee salarymen became increasingly demonised, regarded by some as a contemporary incarnation of the Samurai warrior, or kamikaze fighter pilot – the next in a long line of inhuman and treacherous fundamentalists which, all throughout history, Japan had seemed to spawn.

There evolved a discourse punctuated by disdain and corporate xenophobia, maligning the Japanese market as an unyielding army of commerce, manned by scores of Salarymen Samurai and Worker-bee warriors who were conditioned to succeed at any expense. They were impervious, it seemed, to the usual trappings, perks, and personal gains

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of executive life. The myth of the salaryman at this time was that of a tireless cog in the machine; an automaton working uncompromisingly for the good of the collective. Not for the first time in history, the Japanese were fundamentally dehumanised within dominant Western discourses.

In the context of such protectionist and paranoid typecasting, the city of Tokyo seemed to epitomise what was most threatening and belligerent about the Japanese business world, and the impending threat of this new Yellow Peril upon US and global economies. Images of faceless salarymen crammed tightly onto tube trains, or marching down inner-city causeways as a collective mass to machine-like glass towers, seemed to confirm the city's place as inhuman hive to the Japanese worker-bee. From Fritz Lang's dystopian *Metropolis*⁸⁸ and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*⁸⁹, to familiar images of kamikaze pilots and warriors enacting honourable deaths, the West (America in particular) had the language and iconography already in place with which to interpret and construct these ideas of Japan.

Tokyo has also come to represent for many foreigners, the Japanese population's chronic embracement of consumerism too. According to commentator Peter Adam, the mixture of 'ritual, politeness, [and] shrewd commercialism' practised almost to perfection within the boutiques and department stores of Tokyo, 'says as much as anything about Japan.' (Adam, 1986)

If the city itself is regarded by some to constitute a futuristic, technology-driven Megalopolis, then the multitude of brightly coloured boutiques it houses, selling all manner of gadgetry and miniaturised personal appliance, enforce this on a microcosmic level. It perhaps also provides evidence for what many in the West see as Tokyo's, and Japan's, inherently paradoxical nature. The city and its people are seemingly seen to exist at both ends of opposite extremes. Salarymen, for example, are widely known on the one hand for their extreme dedication to work, and their insatiable out-of-hours appetite for sex, drink, and karaoke on the other. Equally, Tokyo life is also broadly associated with its inhabitants'

⁸⁸ *Metropolis* (1927), film directed by Fritz Lang.

⁸⁹ *Blade Runner* (1982), film directed by Ridley Scott.

dedication to the world of commerce (both as committed business people and ardent consumers); or the strict, unspoken conventions that rule everyday outward social relations (i.e. *Tatamae* and *Honne*), in contrast to Tokyo's supposedly promiscuous, sexually-charged private world.

Tokyo swims in its own richly damaged, intricately obsessed, sexual atmosphere. In its comic books and photography magazines, the young women are tightly ligatured for maximum vulnerability to sexual onslaughts. And the figures of the photographer Romain Slocombes broken dolls, bandaged, neck-collared or immobilised in plaster, lie with their gaping limbs on hospital beds, or else calmly walk the Tokyo streets with their wounds, anticipating further damages. (Barber, 2001, p.75)

4.1 City Noise - Beautiful Noise

While it could be questioned the extent to which such perceptions of urban Japanese society are grounded more in Western misconception than living reality, Tokyo's darker social side – its own uniquely seedy underbelly – has nevertheless featured strongly in the work and working methodologies of a number of experimental sound artists.

One of the most significant developments in the history of Japanese sound art has been Noise music, represented in the 1990s by the cut and paste, collage aesthetics of After Dinner and Ground Zero, and contemporarily by improvisers associated with the Onkyo and No-Input approach. Pre-empted by the post-free jazz works of artists like Masayuki Takayanagi and Keiji Haino during the 1970s, the genesis of Noise music-proper (i.e. Noise as a definable movement) took place during the 1980s. Evolving through the densely saturated, intense and volumatic compositions of groups such as CCCC, Hijokaidan, Incapacitants, Masonna, Aube, Hanatarash, MSBR, Gerogerigegege and Merzbow, Noise developed underground in the Metropolis areas of Tokyo and Osaka.

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Initially distributed during the 1980s on homemade DIY cassette labels, and small independent labels such as Alchemy, the physical appearance and presentation of Japanese Noise was usually marked by its artists' purposeful adoption subversive and confrontational imagery.

With regard to conventional Western music practices, the constituent elements of Noise music might be regarded as the waste; the unwanted elements; the products of mistakes or faults.

In wider historical terms, however, Japanese Noise music (known also as *J-Noise*, *Noise music* and *Japanoise*) forms a significant chapter in the long-running twentieth-century deconstruction of traditional Western musical practises. In line with the preceding work of post war avant-garde composers, 1960s Minimalists, or free jazz musicians, for example, both in Japan and America, Japanoise was driven initially by the need to challenge the complacent, unquestioning, widespread reliance upon age-old Western musical conventions. As has frequently been identified in countless histories of experimental music, principles such as rhythm, melody, and notation, have been derided throughout the history of the avant-garde as restrictive and outmoded rules. Why should a musician necessarily conform to twelve beats in a bar, for example, or write three-minute pop songs? Upon what criteria are the lines between noise and music drawn?

As writer and sound artist Brandon LaBelle suggests, in Western Classical tradition music represents order and authority, whereas noise equals the elements of unwanted disorder and disarray. 'Eastern music in general... is based upon a wider set of harmonic rules than Western classical music... Noise exists not in opposition to this attitude but rather is seen as the result of a musical pursuit, a positive by-product. In contrast, the Western classical tradition bases itself on harmonic rules that tend to refuse these sonic details.' (LaBelle, 1996, p.168).

Composer Toru Takemitsu firmly believed that the barrier between noise and music was a mindset born primarily in the West, evolved primarily from the nature of classical Western musical instruments. In much traditional Non-Western music, including that of

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Japan, sound is apprehended purely as sound, without any such line of demarcation between noise and music.

In an article published in music journal *The Wire*, David Toop has drawn attention to Takemitsu's embracement of what he terms 'Beautiful Noise' (Toop, 1998). A seemingly oxymoronical term, the concept of Beautiful Noise refers to the capacity for music to broadly embody all sound, and not simply adhere to the conservative dictates of Western notation, and melody, etc.

Takemitsu strongly regarded noise to be an integral part of Japanese music, epitomised by traditional musical forms such as that of the Gagaku orchestra, and aural characteristics of instruments like the Shakuhachi. Whereas Western classical instruments (e.g. the piano) were designed to reduce any capacity for noise and inaccuracy, traditional Japanese instruments inherently incorporated what David Toop describes as, 'the active inclusion of noise in sound.' Toru Takemitsu, for example, found himself fascinated by the Biwa, a traditional four stringed lute-like instrument played with the use of a huge triangular plectrum. The plectrum fundamentally necessitates a playing technique unconnected to the Western perception of technical accuracy, actively including elements of Noise as part of its sound. It was this very lack of distinction between Noise and music in traditional Japanese music that, Takemitsu believed, aided 'creativity'. (Toop, 1998, p.28)

As Takemitsu commented in his essay *Ongaku no Yohaku Kara*⁹⁰, 'On examination we find that the Japanese prefer an artistic expression close to nature while the Westerner treasures an artificial expression that is not part of nature... Historically Western music has striven to eliminate noise... But again we find the Japanese seem to have a very special attitude toward natural sounds.' (Takemitsu, 1995, p.56)

Within the modern history of Western music⁹¹, the work of artists seeking to collapse the boundaries between noise and music has almost always been contemporaneously marginalised. The Futurist *Art of Noises* manifesto (1913); the noise machines of Luigi

⁹⁰ 'The Margin of Music' (1980)

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Russolo⁹²; the musicalisation of found sounds through *musique concrete*; the early work of groups such as The Who and The Velvet Underground (which pioneered the amalgamation between feedback Noise and popular music). All such artists sought to challenge the perceived boundary between noise and music, and, in doing so, all were customarily deemed to be ‘experimental’ and ‘avant-garde’ – designations which, initially at least, detach the work from association with mainstream tastes, portraying it as something fundamentally marginal.

According to some accounts, Noise music represents an approach to sound which draws purely upon the ‘Rock’ elements of Rock ‘n’ Roll; the phonic ingredients that distinguish ‘Heavy’ music from mere pop or Easy Listening. While a Heavy Metal song and a top-ten pop song, for example, are usually based around similar twelve bar principles, a verse-chorus-verse structure, and (very often) a three minute time threshold (if it hopes to chart), there are, of course, fundamental differences: primarily, in terms of sound alone, the former usually attracts a more ‘select’ following owing to its increased tempo, volume, and – fundamentally – constituent elements of so-called Noise. Feedback, fuzz, forceful vocals, and raised volume, etc, are often regarded to be the defining characteristics of ‘Heavy’ music, and in this respect Noise music also.

However, whereas Heavy Metal, for example, might be regarded as an amalgam of Noise and traditional pop music, Noise music rather despatches with most melodic, song-based components, featuring Noise as the sole central element. A deconstruction of Rock, Noise music takes only the feedback, volume, rapidity, and supposed extraneous ‘waste’ elements of Heavy music, and explores their potential to be used as independent, rich, and powerful sources of sound in themselves.

⁹¹ This also includes the dominant musical trends in other parts of the world during the twentieth century, such as Japan, where Western musical practices came to dominate, displacing a nation’s own historic traditions.

⁹² Using the Noise machines, or *Intonarumori* (‘Intoners’), Russolo and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti gave the first performance of Futurist music/sound art in 1914, which ended (as did many Futurist performance evenings) in a chaotic brawl between the performers and their outraged audience. For a

The explosion in Japanese Noise music during the late 1980s and early 1990s represents an unquestionably significant chapter in the modern history of experimental music worldwide. Apprehended as a form of deconstructed avant-garde music, Japanese Noise is frequently regarded to have antecedents in the West, added to a lineage that runs not only through 1960s psychedelic music, early 1970s Krautrock, and Punk,⁹³ but the most cutting edge European and American avant-garde performance practices.

‘On whichever side of Noise-music one stands, it appears as a compelling extension and confluence of Cage and Fluxus performance and the rock psychedelia and punk traditions. It takes the boldness of punk, the improvisatory spirit of psychedelia, and the ethos of noise as a possible music – which cage and Fluxus brought to the forefront of avant-garde practise – and appropriates all of this in a kind of living theatre of subcultural extremity. (La Belle, 1996, p.169)

further account, go to <http://csunix1.lvc.edu/~snyder/em/russolo.html>; and for The Art of Noises manifesto, <http://www.unknown.nu/futurism/noises.html>.

4.2 City Noise and Sadomasochism

As embodied by the sleeve art of compilations such as *Extreme music from Japan*⁹⁴ (designed by Romain Slocombe), artists such as Masonna, Incapacitants, Hijo Kaidan, and Hanatarash sought to establish parallels between the pleasure-pain principles/experiences audiences are presumably subject to at Japanoise performances.

The live performances of Hanatarashi⁹⁵ during the early 1980s were particularly notorious. Featuring Seiichi Yamamoto on guitar, Hiro on bass, and Boredoms founder Yamatsuka Eye⁹⁶ on drums, the band named themselves after the Japanese word for ‘snot-nosed’, Hanatarashi, referring to Eye’s apparent claim that they were sure to get a punch on the nose sooner or later for what they were doing.

Although their exploits have no doubt received some measure of mythologisation over the course of time, anecdotes nevertheless abound as to the violent, belligerent, sometimes excessively dangerous nature of some of their performances. Recollections involve stories of chainsawed cats, band self-mutilation, and the demolishing of nightclubs with stolen bulldozers.

Eye in particular has, throughout his career, seemingly maintained a fascination with the relationship between audience and performer/audience and music. While in relation to recent Boredoms work, this takes a more profound form (bound up with the concept of Kotodama, and connotations derived from their Voordoms name-change), in earlier Hanatarashi performances however, the link was largely physical and confrontational.

Edwin Pouncey in *The Wire* cites one contemporary review of a Hanatarashi gig: ‘Ten minutes after the show begins, the room was full of broken glass... The fence set up to protect the audience was the first thing to be destroyed, and they are throwing pieces of the fence around. The audience are huddled like refugees in the corners of the hall. A broken pipe

⁹³ See LaBelle, Brandon (1996) ‘Music to the “nth” degree’ for a further example of this. Full details cited in Bibliography.

⁹⁴ Various Artists (1994) *Extreme Music From Japan*, Susan Lawly©, SLCD008.

⁹⁵ The ‘i’ was later dropped, with the band renaming itself Hanatarash.

spewed water into the room. A gas burner was flaming. So much metal and glass and concrete was being thrown against the walls that I got cut just watching. The fire extinguishers were smashed. There was no applause, or indeed any sound from the audience. The fire alarm went off. The room was getting too smoky to see. There were little bits of dead, dry meat stuck to the walls and ceiling from the animal cutting... Yamatsuka is clearly insane.’⁹⁷ (Cited in Pouncey, *The Wire*, Iss.223, p.36)

Michel Henritzi, discussing the work of proponents of Japanese noise such as Merzbow, Hijokaidan, and Incapacitants, has argued that perhaps the appeal of such sound experiences to Western listeners, centres upon their perception of it as something both exotic and extreme. As implied above, the extremity of Noise music presents itself on a number of levels: the extreme physicality and ‘violent visual’ elements of many performances; the confrontational, overpowering nature of the soundworks/compositions themselves; and the appropriation of sexual, fetishistic, and sadomasochistic visual imagery on the sleeve art, etc., of noise music.

In relation to the latter, Henritzi suggests that for artists such as Merzbow, S&M imagery possesses a fundamental symbolism which extends beyond that of a mere marketing tool (i.e. shock tactics – the concept of negative publicity being used for good), reflecting to some extent the relationship shared between performer and listener, art and audience.

‘The relationship between the noise performer and the listener also seems to be informed by the rituals of sadomasochistic sex, as the audience agrees to submit itself to the sonic pain of white noise inflicted by the performers.’ (Henritzi, 2001, p.31)

In 1992, Masami Akita (whose work is produced under the pseudonym *Merzbow*) released *music for Bondage Performance* on the Australian label Extreme, followed four years later by *music for Bondage Performance Vol. II* in 1996. The idea according to the artist was to create an album that allowed Akita to reflect his interest as a writer, researcher, musician and filmographer, in the historical and contemporary place of Japanese bondage

⁹⁶ After a number of name changes, the artist is currently known as Yamataka Eye.

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practice. While bondage imagery has become synonymous with the Japanese genre of the late 1980s and early 1990s, its association with the music was primarily as a superficial, overt way to shock, break social taboos, and gain instant credibility as an underground phenomenon.

The art of Japanese bondage, which involves using only an ancient form of rope to decoratively bind the subject, was rediscovered during the Edo period in around 1600. Notably, he has remained keen to distance himself from, and disapprove of, the Japanese clique who used bondage imagery to merely shock and sensationalise, without any knowledge of its genuine social, cultural, or historical nuances. Having released several publications on the subject, Akita feels justified in his claim that, like ancient bondage practice, his music finds an expression of beauty in cruelty.

‘My basic idea is that the connection between S&M and noise is fetishism... S&M is a fetishistic approach to the human body. Noise is the same for sound. That’s the reason for my interest in both areas, and of course, eroticism was the most important theme in Surrealism,’ (Akita, cited in Keenan, Iss.159, p.47)

4.3 City Noise – City Junk

The concept of finding value in the undesirable runs consistently throughout Merzbow’s catalogue of work on a number of levels, and constitutes part of a wide art historical lineage running through Dada, Surrealism, pop Art and Punk. From the inception of *Fountain* in 1917, Marcel Duchamp’s first Ready Made⁹⁸, there has developed an artistic tradition based essentially upon creating new meaning for existing objects through recontextualisation: discovering beauty in the subversive; value in the unexceptional; and new identity through subversion.

⁹⁷ In his article, Edwin Pouncey also cites the provocative, ironic, and rather flippant manifesto of Hanatarashi: ‘Kill the all noise artists! We hate Whitehouse. Piss off NWW. Asshole C93. Suck PTV. Fuck Coil. We love disco.’ (Pouncey, *The Wire*, Iss.223, p.36)

⁹⁸ See Glossary

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Not only has this lineage played an important part in consciously informing the working methodologies of Merzbow, but the city of Tokyo itself has also provided him with some of the key materials - physical and experiential - clearly recognisable in both his outlook and his work. In line with the junk art sensibilities of Dada and Surrealism, it was in exploring the flip-side of Tokyo's corporate, consumerist outer-guise (the seedier underground Honne⁹⁹, to the city's outer shiny Tatamae¹⁰⁰) that the artist began his work as Merzbow.

The name Merzbow alone serves as a strong enough indicator of the extent to which Akita has in some way either drawn upon, or been influenced by, Dada and Surrealism.

Merzbau/The Cathedral of Erotic Misery (translated as 'Merz House') was the name of Kurt Schwitters' life work – a monumentally constructed collaged interior built first in Hanover (destroyed by Allied bombing), then Norway (destroyed by fire), and finally England.

As an art student at Tamagawa University, Akita studied the work of Surrealists like Salvador Dali and Georges Bataille, and Dadaists Kurt Schwitters and Marcel Duchamp, drawn to their work not so much out of academic intrigue, as by its confrontational and dissident *raison d'être*. Evidence of Akita's empathy with such concerns can be found early on in his career, with the establishment of *Lower Arts and music* in 1980. Intrigued by European Industrial bands such as Throbbing Gristle, Akita (like avant-garde contemporaries such as Makoto Kawabata) began distributing his early recordings via home-made mail art cassettes, establishing the label *Lower Arts and music* (which would later mutate into the more professional *ZSF Produkt*).

Discussing this, and the work of Schwitters, Akita explains 'He made art from the oddments he picked up in the street, just as I make sound from the scum that surrounds my life. This does not matter to me as much now. The name is only important to my early work... I was very inspired by Dada and Surrealism, I thought that my early works were a realisation of Surrealism in music. But in a very punk way and not like academic electroacoustic music.'

⁹⁹ See Glossary

¹⁰⁰ See Glossary

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Probably the most influential Surrealist concept for me is: “Everything is erotic, everywhere is erotic”.’ (Akita, cited in Pouncey, 2007, p.48)

The self-proclaimed parallels Akita draws between his work and that of Industrial musicians in Europe, epitomises the knowingly marginal and reactionary nature of Merzbow sound works. Unlike punk, which by the end of 1978 had suffered commercialisation and mainstream appropriation (and, like most styles imported from the West, had no doubt spawned an imitative Japanese genre), Akita found an approach to sound in the West which, like his own at home, existed firmly within the margins.

Initially, however, the roots of Akita’s long-term working ethic and approach stretch back to his initial investigations at art school, and the Surrealist strategies of cultural subversion formulated, perhaps most famously, by Salvador Dali. In particular, the bringing together of objects belonging to, and associated with, extreme high culture on the one hand, and extreme low culture on the other.

It is perhaps with such strategies of subversion in mind – exploiting the congenital penchant to distinguish between high and low, good and bad – that Akita put together the *Lower Arts and music* cassette label. Drawing upon the Dada and Surrealist fascination for waste, junk, and found objects, Akita set about collecting cheap porn magazines and adverts from rubbish bins, using them to package his recordings. According to the artist, by exploiting such iconography, he wanted people to approach buying his music with the same trepidation and secrecy as they would buying pornography. As such, the resulting products were not only intentionally marginal, antagonistic, and informed by twentieth century avant-garde tactics, but also the exclusive product of Tokyo. Not only did such packaging embody the attitude and approach with which the soundworks were imbued, but – in a similar way to the music – represented fundamental aspects and experiences of Tokyo life, beneath the artifice of either outward social convention or tainted Western perceptions.

4.4 City Noise and Isolation

Architectural scholar Peter Adam has speculated that, after thousands of years practising the art of social and public constraint (often under the dogmatic rule of the state), the Japanese now possess an innate ability to make constriction work, and the chaos of cities such as Tokyo bearable.

However, over recent years, it might be argued that an increasing amount of evidence can be compiled which might suggest that, beneath the outward workings of everyday city life, the often intense demands and conditions of metropolitan life are causing some to react.

As Mariko Fujiwara points out, a researcher into youth trends in Japan: 'We have game machines. We have portable phones; with it you can play games throughout the day. Media in general creates a virtual reality. You don't spend as much time talking to your parents, talking to your colleagues, people in the neighbourhood... [teenagers] are always working, always studying, always busy with the classes in cramming school. With fewer children born into a family, if parents have some dreams, or hopes for their children, if you are the only child who can fulfil that kids certainly feel pressured.' (Mariko Fujiwara¹⁰¹, 2002)

According to a 2002 BBC documentary¹⁰², over one million young Japanese males, ranging from teenagers to men in their early twenties, living predominantly in urban city areas, have fallen subject to a unique Japanese form of agoraphobia.

Hikikomori is a social disorder which exists only in Japan, and afflicts almost exclusively young city-dwelling men. Becoming frequently more common every year, the basic symptoms of the indisposition are that sufferers lock themselves away for sometimes years upon end, refusing to leave their room, speak to anyone, or have any contact with the outside world.

¹⁰¹ Interviewed by Phil Rees for the BBC's *Correspondent* documentary, 'Japan: The Missing Million', Sunday 20 October, 2002)

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Exactly why such an extreme condition should manifest itself exclusively amongst young men in Japan is still the subject of intense speculation and research alike, although there is little to doubt the basic fact that Hikikomori, at the most fundamental level, is a reaction against the uniquely intense everyday pressures of Japanese metropolitan life. A last-ditch attempt to turn away from the complicated social structures, and the constant influx of information, stimuli, and new pressures, which are an ever-present reality in cities like Tokyo.

In an interview with the BBC's Phil Rees, former Hikikomori Counsellor and sufferer Yasuo Okawara explains: 'I think everyone has a different reason [for becoming Hikikomori]. The causes are complicated so I can't give you an exact answer. In my case I was stressed out by our competitive society. I became a workaholic. It's not that I wanted to become a Hikikomori, I happened to end up as one. Japanese society is not capable of accepting people with different attitudes so the lives of the people who are slightly different are very hard. If you drop out there is nowhere to go so the only place you can feel comfortable is in your house as a Hikikomori.' (Yasuo Okawara, 2002)

Feeling similarly at odds with the demands and intensity of Tokyo life, it seems that some architects too have responded to the problems of space, disorganisation, and overcrowding, through analogous gestures of amputation.

Described as an 'architecture of denial,' (Adam, 1986) Tadao Ando's cube shaped house represents this craving for seclusion, every bit as much as the glassy office towers and neon lights of contemporary Shinjuku epitomise Tokyo's appetite for all things bright, high speed, and purchasable.

Split symmetrically into two sections - one roofed over, and one open – Adam further describes Ando's structure as 'a response to a world overloaded with trivial forms and chaotic shapes that cancel each other out... a monk-like refuge.' (Adam, 1986)

Coupled with Tadao Ando's conviction that everyday comforts like air conditioning or central heating have dulled our senses, it is easy to read the building as an architectural

¹⁰² Phil Rees, *Correspondent*, 'Japan: The Missing Million', Sunday 20 October, 2002.

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protest against the trappings of modern life – specifically, the technological and commodified existence embodied by perceptions of Tokyo. The house contains minimal furnishings, little to immediately catch or please the eye, and refuses to convey any sense of modern day comfort, reflecting the architect's doctrine that technology, convenience, and all the paraphernalia of modern living has robbed people of their innate feelings and senses. Ando believes that individuals in society have not only become disconnected from nature, but also developed an increasingly false impression of what actually constitutes nature: 'Nature is not just flowers and trees. It is also wind, rain and light. Ando's idea is to make people aware of the physical environment and themselves.' (Adam, 1986)

Importantly, this kind of response, in its aesthetic and structural starkness, bears comparison to a range of methods, ideologies and tactics employed by a number of Tokyo-based sound artists and experimental musicians.

'It seems like I just keep saying no to everything... Everything is small, tiny or "no". I said no to emotion. I changed to a minimal set-up with this minimal music. I play in small combinations to small audiences. I don't subscribe to a newspaper, I don't have a TV. But the information coming in is still too much. I have to say no. So probably my music is that kind of statement.' (Nakamura, in England, *The Wire*, Iss.197, p.12)

On moving from guitar-playing to a branch of electronic music variously termed by commentators Onkyo, Zen Minimalism, or No-Input (more of which later), Toshimaru Nakamura has consciously marked his ground as a kind of musical reactionary abstainer.

As suggested in Nakamura's statement above, his work - like Ando's architecture –in many ways exists as a reaction to his experiences of Tokyo; an attempt to deny the barrage of information, noise, and multi-sensory excess that saturate contemporary urban life. However, the work of Nakamura and his contemporaries, as well as its integral connection with Tokyo, amounts to much more than this alone.

Toshimaru Nakamura began predominantly as a guitarist but, as one of a number of pioneering Japanese improvisers of his generation, during the mid-1990s turned away from

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expressive modes of composition altogether. Using what is often referred to as the no-input mixing board, what Nakamura does in the most simplistic terms is feed the desk's input and output sockets into each other, creating sound-works by manipulating the resulting feedback.

In principle, it is perhaps understandable to see why such an approach has been labelled 'No-Input', and why its seeming embodiment of space and 'the immediate' stimulated the use of Zen-derived argot amongst Western critics (e.g. the designation 'Zen Minimalism').

The fact of the matter, however, is that in Nakamura's instance, 'No-Input' is something of a misnomer. The implication, and widespread perception of his work, is that it consists of nothing more than the feedback from the mixing desk itself – the result purely of the implement's input being fed into its output. The fact, however, is that a number of effects units – delay effects in particular – are used to enable the artist to mediate and manipulate the sounds, greatly influencing the soundworks that result.

This is by no means to undermine Nakamura's art, or diminish the quality or importance of his work, but – despite his own protestations at being categorised – the mystique of the No-Input tag has nevertheless played an important part in capturing the attention and imagination of listeners. The vague understanding many in the West have of Zen Buddhism, coupled with a willingness to apply Zen terminology to anything that seems remotely empty, spatial, or 'spiritual', perhaps makes Onkyo unavoidably prone to associations with the 'Zen impulse.'¹⁰³

How much of this, however, is also part of the orientalist legacy rooted both in 19th Century exoticism and the 1950s Zen-Boom period? To what extent are Western listeners willing to believe – if not project – the idea that No-Input strictly means no-input, and that artists like Nakamura genuinely are able to create these vast electronic soundscapes from nothing more than the internal feedback of a mixing board? Might it be suggested that the nature of certain artists' work, like those associated with Onkyo, are in some ways

¹⁰³ Term used by critic Phil England in discussing Nakamura's work (England, *The Wire*, Iss.197, p.12)

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manipulated upon their reception overseas to fit long-perpetuated, mythical perceptions of the Japanese?

In many ways, the eager application of Zen terminology could well attest to this, and it is questionable whether in some cases associations with Zen are made purely because the artist is Japanese.

While not necessarily the case with any artists associated with no-input or Onkyo sound art, it is nevertheless interesting to highlight how a number of Japanese artists from various disciplines have begun to use traditional overseas perceptions of Japan to their advantage.

Directed by Shu Lea Cheang, the underground, tongue-in-cheek, sci-fi movie *I.K.U.*, was released in 2001, featuring – amongst a number of interesting contributions - a soundtrack written by The Saboten, one of many projects lead by sound artist and prolific music producer Hoppy Kamiyama.

Despite the allure of the film in terms of its clever plot; it's contradictory parodying and celebrating of pornographic convention; and its smooth sci-fi production, with just enough twist and chic to make it cool – despite all of this – one of the most interesting things about the movie according to critic Robert Schwartz, is the successful way in which its disparate collaborators worked. 'I.K.U.,' Schwartz enthuses, 'brings together some of the cream of Japanese underground/avant-garde culture with one of their opposite number from New York City.' (Schwartz. 2001, p.6)

Somewhere deeply rooted in the underpinning ideas of *I.K.U.*, however, its producer and co-writer Takashi Asai implies that there was a conscious acknowledgement and understanding expressed, of how the Japanese feel they are perceived as a nation by the West. The film, in this sense, interestingly and – to some extent – self-reflexively picks up on popular occidental notions of a Tokyo-centred, *Bladerunner*-esque idea of Japan, which is dominated on the surface by futuristic hyper-technology and fantasy-sex, yet beneath it all is unable to escape its traditions or past – its fundamental *Japaneseness*.

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In many ways (and it would be easy to say in the tradition of Tatamae) it seems that what the producer wants to do is knowingly re-present the Western caricature of Japan to the West, rather than what the Japanese might feel is the reality.

Takashi Asai: 'I wanted to make something that was unusual as a parody ... In the West these days it seems there is a lot of interest in Japanimation and the coyly erotic adolescent sexuality in 'Sailor Moon' ... it seems the west has some ideas about Japan that include an overt, brimming sexuality, you know, geisha and that kind of thing. Lastly, Tokyo is viewed as a futuristic city, abroad you see all these flashy images of Shibuya or hyper-technological scenes quite frequently. Thus I thought I'd give people around the world what they were looking for with this sci-fi porn film that incorporates digital effects, animation, and an obsession with technology.' (Takashi Asai, cited in Schwartz, 2001, p.7)

It would be far from accurate, however, to imply that Tokyo's contemporary no-input sound artists employed the same kind of knowingness in their work, or that their goals were in any way similar to those of the above. Where the two come together, is that they are both subject to age-old Western preconceptions of Japanese culture which, no-matter how residual or subtle, nevertheless influence how it is received. The key difference is that, while some artists are merely subject to their projected identity, the makers of I.K.U. sought to use and parody it.

In a series of interviews undertaken by Monia De Lauretis¹⁰⁴, key contemporary figures from Japan's avant-garde music scene were asked to comment upon the influence of European culture upon their own work, as well as that of other Japanese experimentalists.

Solo artist and founder member of *After Dinner*, Haco, suggests that for the most part Western culture is not given the opportunity to freely influence Japanese art and culture, since anything imported from the USA or Europe for public consumption, is usually 'filtered by the Japanese media.' (Haco, cited in De Lauretis, 2001, p.46).

¹⁰⁴ Published as the essay 'About Myths, Common Places and Other (Japanese) Oddities', in Franck Stofer (ed.) (2001) *Japanese Independent Music*, Sonore, France, pp.46-64

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Aurally, the work of some Onkyo-related artists (Nakamura and Sachiko M in particular, perhaps) might be said to bare some outward resemblance - aesthetically as well as methodologically - to that developed during the 1960s by early Minimalist musicians. Both La Monte Young and Tony Conrad, for example, engaged heavily with sine waves, frequencies, repetition, and the exploration of the drone, creating highly extended improvisations and compositions centred upon a single note or minute gesture. Japanese avant gardist Takehisa Kosugi explored similar territory, highlighted by the lengthy droneworks performed by Taj Mahal Travellers during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In his review of Nakamura's *Vehicle* CD from December 2002, critic Dan Warburton suggests that the artist's work had moved closer to the realms of something approximating Techno music. Techno, however, is also where Warburton sees Steve Reich's early minimalist principles as residing (expressed in music *As A Gradual Process*, 1968), and compares Nakamura's "I set limits and then wait and watch the music take its own path," to Reich's statement: "Once the process is set up and loaded it runs by itself." (cited in Warburton, *The Wire*, Iss.226, p.63)

Although often described as one of the pioneers of the Onkyo movement (a term, incidentally, first credited to Otomo Yoshihide in describing such works), Sachiko M has been keen to distance herself from the designation. Not only this, in fact, but she has furthermore set out quite frequently that her position is not that of a musician, and that her sound work – even in the broadest sense – is not music.

I don't think I'm part of Onkyo. Lately in Europe they talk about "Tokyo Onkyo" and "Japan Onkyo," but I think the people who refer to the word and the people who actually made the word are different. After Otomo used it to simplify things, it became a catchword. I never thought of myself as Onkyo, and I didn't get my start in that scene.
(Sachiko M, 2003, p.13)

That Sachiko Matsubara's career actually began as a sound effects engineer, rather than as a musician in the strictest sense (e.g. her counterparts Otomo Yoshihide and Toshimaru Nakamura both started out as guitarists), is perhaps indication that her approach is one of a sound artist rather than experimental musician. Experiments undertaken as a student at broadcasting school led to her making demo tapes in the radio department, and as a consequence becoming highly familiar with the open reel tape recorder. As the result of a teacher's recommendation, she also began to branch out into sound effect-making working, like countless others from Japan's sonic avant-garde, within the realms of theatre.

It was whilst producing sound effects for the Rinkogun theatre troupe that Sachiko M first came into contact with Otomo Yoshihide and, buying her first sampler in 1993, joined Ground Zero. It wasn't until 1998¹⁰⁵, however (after a number of years producing fairly standard sampled sounds) that she first began to work in more abstract ways, and set out on the path towards the pioneering sine-wave-based soundscapes with which she is now most commonly associated. The purchase of a new sampler was also fundamental to this: '...after I bought an S20, I was doing some work at home and noticed there was this really clear sound. Then I started experimenting, taking this "ooo" sound and changing the volume and pitch and doing various things. At the time I was tired of being in situations where I couldn't hear the sound I was making¹⁰⁶... and when I discovered sine waves, I realised the sound would definitely be audible, even when everyone was making extremely loud sounds... I was tired of sampling, and even though I was doing some electronic sounds, I didn't think they were really my sounds.' (Sachiko M, 2003, pp.13-4)

In 2001, the London music Collective (LMC) sponsored the Japanorama tour. From one perspective, the event provided a number of Japan's most pioneering experimental musicians their first chance to perform in the UK. From another, it gave UK audiences the

¹⁰⁵ On Ground Zero's *Consume* project.

unprecedented opportunity to experience first hand the work of artists whose recordings and performances elsewhere in the world, were earning them rapidly increasing international critical acclaim.

Curated by one of Tokyo's most prolific experimental musicians, founder member of Ground Zero Otomo Yoshihide, the tour brought together a number of artists commonly associated with the idea of Onkyo, or no-input music (despite often their own protests at being pigeonholed thus). As well as Otomo himself, these included Sachiko M, Toshimaru Nakamura, and Taku Sugimoto, although others such as Utah Kawasaki, Ami Yoshida and Uchihashi Kazuhisa, while not part of Onkyo, were also key participants on the 2001 tour, and are considered amongst the 'Japanorama Generation'.

Parallels can be drawn between Onkyo and certain movements from the canon of visual art history, primarily Minimalist painting and sculpture, with regard to some of the notable aesthetic and methodological principles underlying their work. Sol LeWitt (sculptor); Frank Stella (painter); Richard Serra (sculptor); Ad Reinhardt (painter).

Frank Stella's proclamation that with Minimalist art "What you see is what you see" (heralded as Minimalism's underlying maxim by critic Deborah Solomon), can be compared to the attitude conveyed by artists such as Otomo Yoshihide, Sachiko M, Toshimaru Nakamura, and Taku Sugimoto, et al. 'I simply make sounds I like,' declared Otomo in 2001, 'The answer is in the listener's imagination. It's the listener who discovers something in the work of Taku Sugimoto and Sachiko M. This is fundamentally different from the method where the music maker has the answer from the beginning and presents his or her work to the listener.' (Interview with Michael Henritzi, *Improvised music from Japan*, <http://www.japanimprov.com/yotomo/interview01.html>, 30 June, 2004)

¹⁰⁶ Particularly when working with Ground Zero, when she felt her sampled contributions were often anonymous and buried beneath the larger sound of the ensemble.

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In more ways than one, however, this form of improvised New music owes, both its inception and its fundamental aesthetic make-up, to contemporary city life, and in particular that of life in Tokyo.

The demanding, high-octane nature of inner-city life within Japan's capital has already been discussed, and given Toshimaru Nakamura's earlier 'just say no' proclamation, it is not difficult to see this approach to music in general as one that advocates a methodology and aesthetic of denial. The denial of information (i.e. a sampler with no samples; a mixing desk with no external input); the denial of musical means (a record-less turntable; a broken analogue synthesiser); the denial of sound and phonic information (a vocal technique where the sound of inhaled air resonates just as much as exhaled sounds; guitar compositions where spaces in between notes dominate, and of those notes actually played, most are barely audible).

However, while in many ways this could easily be seen as a reaction against the everyday demands of life in the Megalopolis, constituting a stand against its technology-fuelled daily 'information overload', there are also very specific reasons why this music evolved solely in Tokyo.

Geographical conditions and practical restrictions upon land and space, have long been a fundamental factor in determining the nature of life in Tokyo for its residents. For one thing, the mountainous, uninhabitable nature of much of Japan makes the region surrounding Tokyo traditionally one of the few larger areas suitable for habitation by a large population. Over the years, decades, and centuries, the increasing political, economic, and social importance of Tokyo contributed – as in most major capital cities around the world – to a vastly burgeoning population, making land for building, business and habitation at an absolute premium.

Even by the standards of most metropolitan centres around the world, however, the demand for – and, therefore, cost of – land in Tokyo is particularly high. While this, of course, is a major factor in creating the dense, highly-concentrated nature of the city, and its

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demanding way of life, the scarcity of land and space has also played a huge part in influencing the development of Tokyo's own unique leisure and recreation culture: evident none more than in its musical history of the past fifty years.

Emerging during the 1950s, the small, intimate nature of jazz kissas proved fundamentally important to the way in which jazz, and consequently avant-garde music in Japan, developed. Just as the restrictive cost and availability of property meant that jazz kissas had to be established in the smallest of venues, so too did their limited size impact greatly upon the nature of the live music performed there. Because most of the jazz coffee bars in Shinjuku - and other Tokyo districts – suffered due to limited funds and space¹⁰⁷, emerging free jazz players like Masayuki Takayanagi and Kaoru Abe performed solo, adapting their playing techniques and improvisation styles.

In this respect, jazz kissas were not only an important conduit for jazz in Japan, but, owing to specific social and economic conditions present nowhere else in the world but Tokyo, meant that musicians had no choice but to evolve and adapt their approach to music in new ways. As contemporary New musician Otomo Yoshihide recalls, the jazz kissa – and, in particular, the live performances many of them hosted - proved incredibly important to a young generation of attendees who would pioneer the future of improvised avant-garde music in Japan.

‘[W]hat had the most impact was live music. Sometimes the kissa would organise a concert. They had no money and the space was tiny, so they would book musicians to play solo . And a solo can be more abstract and extreme than a band. The first real impact on me was Kaoru Abe, playing a solo sax concert in Fukushima. I could hardly understand it but there was something there. It was similar to early punk, very high energy, and looked like total anarchy.’ (Otomo Yoshihide, *The Wire* 185, p.34),

The emergence of Live Houses in Shinjuku from around 1965 proved equally significant, particularly in providing a unique venue type where new extreme bands could play, particularly as Japanese Noise music developed.

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The relationship between the city and its performance spaces, the performance spaces and the music they give rise to (i.e. due to the specific set of conditions they provide) is therefore incredibly vital. This link is none more evident than in the case of Tokyo's contemporary minimalist¹⁰⁸ improvisers.

In 2000, Taku Sugimoto, Tetuzi Akiyama, and Toshimaru Nakamura relocated their monthly improvisational night to Off Site, a small gallery space in the Yoyogi area of Tokyo. From the late 1990s until that point, the trio's performance evenings had been held at Bar Aoyama in Shibuya, a regular, busy, high street nightclub. Importantly, however, it was the change in venue that provided the real catalyst the way in which their work was to develop.

Founded and run by visual artist Atsuhiro Ito, the Off Site gallery space is widely recognised as pivotal in the inception and development of Japanese Onkyo/No-Input music. In a succession of recently published essays and articles¹⁰⁹, testimony has been made to unique conditions of the gallery, and the air of concentrated restraint, intimacy, and intensity that has become synonymous with both the venue and the music. The combination of threadlike walls and closely adjacent residential homes meant that, from the outset, any plans to host live performances at Off Site would necessarily be conditioned by the need to minimise volume levels. Many of Off Site's neighbours would hardly grieve for the gallery (itself an old house converted by founder Atsuhiro Ito) should it be forced to close, and certain residents have registered complaints with the local council over disturbance and noise pollution issues. As Ito himself says of one particular neighbour, 'I think he doesn't like strange people coming in and out. It's such a small street, it's like his own back yard. He would be happy if it were closed down, but so far he hasn't taken legal action.' (Ito, cited in Clive Bell, *The Wire*, Iss.233, p.40)

¹⁰⁷ In many Jazz Kissas, setting up a full jazz ensemble would have left no room for customers or staff.

¹⁰⁸ 'It's not that their sound is always minimal; it's that they insist on keeping their systems minimal. Part of the idea is to get maximal effect out of a minimal system.' [Minoru Hatanaka discussing the work of Sachiko M and Toshimaru Nakamura] (Hatanaka, 2002, p.9)

¹⁰⁹ See Bibliography.

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However, like many such significant moments in avant-garde history, external restrictions and tensions do not simply stand in the way of what goes on at Off Site: they also serve, conversely, to provoke the most exciting and radical new art.

That the artists most identifiably linked with the music were gravitating towards more minimal means prior to their Off Site residency is true, as is the fact that Onkyo/No-Input is neither exclusive to, or dependent upon, Ito's gallery space. As their international critical acclaim has burgeoned, bars, theatres, and gallery spaces around the world have all been utilised by these improvisers, and the nature of the setting is often instrumental in determining one's experience of a performance.

In theatres and gallery spaces, for example, audiences are within surroundings that, for the most part, are associated with certain polite conventions – namely paying attention, with an expected respectful hush, when in the presence of the art/performance. Since voices traditionally go silent as the theatre lights dim, and visitors speak in hushed tones upon entering an art gallery, it seems normal and natural in these settings to apprehend live performance¹¹⁰ in the same way. The hushed expectancy that greets a performance is in large part customary: the product of age-old Western gallery/theatre-going conventions which serves to breed an anticipatory tensions around the microcosmic soundscapes, and magnify the minimalistic aural gestures. In a gallery or theatre, remaining still and silent for the duration of a performance is the expected social norm, to which most listeners adhere to, and which creates the idyllic crystal clear frame through which to apprehend these soundworks.

While the gallery or theatre space may present the ideal setting in which to be immersed, unhindered, in every minute sonic texture of Onkyo, some of the most interesting performances – or performance situations – nevertheless occur in less traditionally high-brow locations.

In the main, bars and nightclubs hosting Onkyo performances, are usually those whose specific agenda it is to champion, promote, and accommodate avant-garde music in the widest sense. While bound by a common left-of-the-centre artistic position, however, the

range of music and sound art collected under the broad designation 'avant-garde' is nevertheless incredibly wide and varied. Venues such as The Spitz in London, or The Knitting Factory in New York, for example, play host to everything from free Improvisation, to Noise, to Ambient, electronic, Dub, Leftfield ('Avant-') Rock, and any other variation/amalgam of the aforementioned. Avant-garde, in this context, applies to virtually any music, or approach to music, that by the restrictive mainstream standards of any genre, might be deemed cutting edge or alternative.

In the case of Onkyo/No-Input, listeners do, of course, attempt to attend to performances with the respectful hush and silence one might find in a gallery/theatre. However, at such venues the potential for incidental noises and sounds to break in is slightly greater since, even at most other avant-garde performances¹¹¹, the clunk of glasses, rattle of change, or occasional murmured voice would go unnoticed¹¹².

As previously mentioned, however, the evolution of what developed into and beyond No-Input/Onkyo music, is unquestionably tied to the unique nature of the Off Site Venue. Not only is the small upstairs performance space unable to host audiences any larger than around fifty people, but it's paper-thin walls – and irritable close-by neighbours – make performances of even any reasonable volume a threat to the venues future. While the artists initially involved with Meeting at Bar Aoyama¹¹³ were already beginning to experiment with a limited palette of sound and volume, it was only upon moving the monthly event to Off Site that their work began to explore these principles with more focus.

Off Site not only provided a willing venue sympathetic to the needs of avant-garde musicians, but the unique circumstances it presented played a huge part in pushing the work of improvisational artists like Taku Sugimoto, Toshimaru Nakamura, and Otomo Yoshihide

¹¹⁰ Onkyo/No-Input music, in this particular instance.

¹¹¹ Where the emphasis upon silence and minimal phonic gestures is not so pronounced.

¹¹² At one performance at The Spitz, London) in 2002, the tense, almost inaudible first moments of Sachiko M's improvisation were disrupted as bar staff, unaware that the performance had started, began to cash up the register. The sudden smash of coins, and thunderous printing of receipts brought the piece, momentarily, to a halt until the artist (succumbing first to a fit of the giggles) regained her composure and began again.

¹¹³ The Monthly Improvisational event initiated by Tetuzi Akiyama, Taku Sugimoto, and Toshimaru Nakamura.

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into what the latter would describe as Onkyo (although the designation itself would be something he, and others around him, would subsequently strive to escape).

As Minoru Hatanaka observes, this music evolves in many ways from the strict limits the artists impose upon their own creative processes, focusing in to explore and maximise the sonic possibilities they discover within those parameters. In relation to this, the conditions of the venue are obviously central, and the limitations Off Site imposes upon performers - both in terms of space and volume - is reflected directly in the type of improvised music that evolved there: ‘...the music that is performed at Off Site is music that conforms to the conditions of the space, and the space that is Off Site defines the type of music that is created there... What kinds of possibilities are hidden in restrictions? If musicians don’t have the ability to play with the limitations, they will quickly become burdensome.’ (Hatanaka, 2003, p.9-10)

While at one extreme even denying its position as music¹¹⁴, this form of contemporary Japanese Sound Art can be seen, from another perspective, within the wider context of Twentieth century experimental musical history (or, at least, can be seen to share common characteristics with certain key styles and movements from within that history, particularly in the West). Toshimaru Nakamura, Taku Sugimoto and Otomo Yoshihide, for example, all have their early musical roots in the world of jazz guitar¹¹⁵, just as Sachiko M first set out experimenting with sound effects, radio, and found sounds.

Throughout history, the musical avant-garde have consistently explored minimalism and self-constraint as a potential path to artistic liberation – a means to challenge musical conventions, and the values of technical virtuosity upon which they rely. The New York avant-garde of the 1950s and 1960s for example, were particularly significant in this, including the work of influential artists such as La Monte Young, Tony Conrad, John Cage, and Charlemagne Palestine.

¹¹⁴ E.g. ‘There were several lonely years when I couldn’t enter the place called music and musicians.’ Sachiko M interviewed by Takashi Azumaya (Azumaya, 2003, p.12)

¹¹⁵ Otomo Yoshihide, for example, was taught by Free Jazz pioneer Masayuki Takayanagi.

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While Onkyo/No-Input music can be seen historically within the context of Minimalist music in the West, it is also nevertheless fundamentally unique to Tokyo, and the legacy of Japanese experimental music. The elements of space, silence and diminution that characterise the work, reveal a search for less is something that pervades every aspect of the music: the mindset of the artist; the methodologies used to produce sound; and the resulting nature of the compositions.

4.5 Conclusion

I have examined in this chapter the way in which contemporary Japanese sound art connects with the wider history of Japanese avant-garde music. Central to the work of artists as disparate as Keiji Haino and Sachiko Matsubara, Otomo Yoshihide and Masami Akita, is the urge to establish distance and a sense of self that is detached – or set apart - from everyday external pressures, expectations, and conventions.

Akita's early use of imagery and items from the gutter, for example – objects that the rest of society had rejected – exemplify this attempt to challenge, and gain detachment from, the status quo. By embracing junk and pornography, Merzbow confronted Tokyo society with a side to everyday life secreted by polite convention. Automatically, Akita sought to define his work against mainstream art and music in Japan, by prodding at nerves and social taboos that already exist, imbuing his work with the same underground sense of prohibition as pornography.

While the influence of western art movements has informed the art and music of Merzbow, Akita nevertheless addresses and responds to the specific nature of Tokyo life, and his own experience of the City.

The work of contemporary improvisational musicians and sound artists is similarly linked intimately to Tokyo life. The demand for space and property has, for example, led to the establishment of unique venues whose necessarily restrictive conditions require performers to adapt their approach to playing. Just as the tiny jazz kissas of the 1950s and

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1960s meant performers like Kaoru Abe and Masayuki Takayanagi had to improvise solo (breaking new ground in the process), so too have contemporary artists responded directly to their surroundings.

In recent years, it has become difficult for many galleries to stay in business...

Under these circumstances, there are spaces popping up that are searching for ways to make a break with the old galleries... In spaces of this type, a sense of place can be created in which something new seems to be emerging. This leads to a sort of community that revolves around the artists who show at the space and the musicians who play there. (Minoru Hatanaka, p.8, 2002)

As discussed, it was the restrictions imposed upon noise and audience numbers at Tokyo's Off Site Gallery, that provided the catalyst for Japan's now- renowned Onkyo/No-Input contemporary Improvisational scene. However, aside from the specific conditions of the venue, and their role in fostering the minimal aesthetics of Onkyo, Off Site was also fundamental in that it provided a focal point for a burgeoning artistic community.

Its influence on my own work – as a place to meet numerous musicians, as well as to participate in and witness various avant-garde experiments – has been immeasurable. (Otomo Yoshihide, p.10, 2002)

That these artists should be drawn to such a venue in the first place however, and attracted to the restrictions it presents¹¹⁶, makes it clear that the venue alone is not solely responsible for the evolution of this branch of Japanese Sound Art.

As discussed throughout the course of the chapter, the artists now associated with Off Site were all engaged with avant-garde music prior to the improvisational events being held there. In addition to this, that they should predominantly be drawn so extensively to a Minimalistic, pared-down creative ideology, can be seen, in part, as a reaction to the experience of contemporary life in Tokyo. A refusal to subscribe to the multitude of

¹¹⁶ Restrictions that, in conventional musical terms, would be regarded only as problematic and inconvenient, and avoided if at all possible.

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technological options offered by a technology-driven society: to use the most minimal means, in its most minimal state, to produce a body of work void of excess, indulgence, or comfort.



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CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to track the development of the most challenging and anarchic Japanese avant-garde music to have developed throughout the second half of the twentieth century. The central aim was to present a unique account which examined the rise and evolution of experimental music in Japan, tracing its historical derivation from more established styles, approaches and genres. In doing this, I believed it would be possible to establish a coherent historical lineage of the most revolutionary and subversive experimental music in Japan, which would bring to light common themes and characteristics between a vast and disparate range of artists who, over the course of the last half-century (and frequently independently), have sought autonomy and isolation from the dominant musical mainstream of Japan.

From the outset, I established a number of key issues that would need to be addressed throughout the course of the investigation. Primarily, these were related to the relationship between Japan and the West¹¹⁷: the history and nature of cultural exchanges between the two; the way in which historical-political relations and events have influenced how each society perceives the other; and the extent to which these perceptions are coloured by - and perhaps have led to - the formation of certain stock views and cultural stereotypes. In order to evaluate the reactionary nature of the avant-garde in Japan, it was also equally important to discuss some of the key defining traits, and dominant cycles in mainstream Japanese culture throughout history. In particular, I chose to focus specifically upon the vastly changing nature of Tokyo over the past fifty years, examining how the Japanese megalopolis has played a key part – both directly and indirectly - in the history and development of Japanese experimental music. In exploring the history of Japanese avant-garde music as an autonomous, reactionary phenomenon, it is essential that any analysis be undertaken within the context of the immense transformations that occurred within post-war urban Japanese society.

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Throughout the course of the thesis, from the post-war avant-gardism of Toru Takemitsu to Japanese jazz, psychedelic music, and Contemporary Sound Art, several significant issues recur which have remained fundamental to the development of Japanese experimental music.

- Japanese experimental music is something which does not simply directly mimic Western avant-garde trends, but establishes a creative autonomy often by combining aesthetics, methods and philosophies from both Japan and the West to establish something new.
- There is frequently a tension that exists in Japanese experimental music between indigenous Japanese culture and Western culture. Quite often, Japanese avant-garde art is defined by how the artist chooses to combine, reject, juxtapose or play with these twin aspects.
- The most anarchic and challenging Japanese experimental music is largely a reaction to dominant musical and artistic trends. With mainstream Post-war Japanese music dominated by either backward-looking revivalism or – more frequently - mimicry of the current most-popular Western styles, Japanese avant-garde music has frequently developed through the twisting and subversion of dominant trends.
- This more dissident side of Japanese experimental music has also stood as a reaction to dominant social and political events. Japanese avant-garde music, as a direct product or expression of the time and place in which it was conceived, has been inextricably linked, throughout its history, to the prevailing social or political situation, whether as direct political statement or more subtle, personal reaction.

Encompassing a period from mid-way through the Twentieth century to present, the preceding chapters examine the history of Japanese avant-garde music within the context of significant social and political developments over the last fifty years. The relationship

¹¹⁷ i.e. Europe and America

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between the period of Allied occupation immediately after World war II and early Japanese modernist composition, for example; free-jazz and Protest Folk, the controversial renewal of the Anpo Treaty, and student protests of the 1960s; the development of Japan's dense, technological, cityscapes, and the social and cultural tensions permeating contemporary avant-garde developments.

Any review of the history of reactionary Japanese avant-garde music must also, by necessity, encompass a diverse assortment of sound artists and experimental musicians from the past half-century. Inevitably, therefore, the roll call of names collected within the margins of this study is both broad and eclectic: Toru Takemitsu, Keiji Haino, Ami Yoshida, Otomo Yoshihide, Toshimaru Nakamura, Masayuki Takayanagi, Masami Akita, Kawabata Makoto, Kaoru Abe, Yamatsuka Eye, Taku Sugimoto, Kazuo Imai, Hoppy Kamiyama, Shoji Haino, Aki Onda and Ko Ishikawa, to name but some. Other artists, however, such as Yellow magic Orchestra or Ryuichi Sakamoto, for example, were positively and intentionally excluded from the scope of the study. While these and other more mainstream Japanese artists were at the centre of the evolution of electronic synthesiser music during the 1980s, the study nevertheless strictly set out to trace the history of the most underground, anarchic and challenging artists of Japan's avant-garde.

Chapter One looked primarily at the immediate post-war, post-Hiroshima era, specifically within the context of the work of modernist composer Toru Takemitsu. Chapter Two examined how an avant-garde approach to jazz and improvisation arose from the mainstream jazz-boom of the 1950s and 1960s, and Chapter Three traced a similar development in Japanese psychedelic music. Away from the unoriginal, popular copycat group sounds genre of the 1960s, there eventually evolved an approach to, and perception of, psychedelic experimental music that remains both avant-garde and unique to Japan. Finally, Chapter Four focused upon the work of contemporary Improvisational Sound Artists in Tokyo, examining the relationship between their work and the City environment around them.

While the work and, quite often, the motives of these artists might initially seem unrelated, there is nevertheless evident a number of fundamental, distinctive underlying

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characteristics underpinning their work, and binding it explicitly within a common avant-garde lineage. The protagonists of this fifty-year legacy of experimental Japanese music have consistently defied conventional artistic, political and social hegemonies, developing soundworks within an autonomous sphere which is (in the spirit of *Jiko Hon'I*) free from both the total adherence to Euro-American trends, and slavish regurgitation of traditional Japanese styles – twin poles between which mainstream Japanese music, and culture, has consistently fluctuated not only in modern times, but throughout the centuries.

Japanese avant-garde music at it's most experimental and confrontational, essentially, can be defined by this Independence: it's autonomy from Japanese tradition and Western mimicry. While often referencing and bringing together various forms of Japanese and western convention, Japanese experimental music is, and has remained throughout its multiple incarnations over the last fifty years, a statement of the new, the contemporary and the independent. What the free jazz of Masayuki Takayanagi, Minimalism of Taku Sugimoto, and psychedelia of Kawabata Makoto, for example, all share, is that they are the exclusive product of the time and place in which they were created. Such works were motivated not by devotion to existing music, be it Western or Japanese, modern or Ancient, but by a need to speak, and express, and respond to contemporary Japanese life in a way that is inherently individual, relevant, and personal (whether consciously or intuitively).

Toru Takemitsu: 'I have been trying not to view Japan as an absolute identity but as a duality, otherwise the tradition does not come alive but remains a meaningless antique... In the near future there may appear a new culture with a new universal scope, but it will take time and, as I mentioned earlier, we should take our time. Too rapid a change may result in something lopsided.' (Takemitsu, 1995, p.67)

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Afterword:

Although contemporary Japanese experimental music has received notable and increasing critical attention over the last ten to fifteen years, and research into the work of individual composers and musicians continues to burgeon, it is nevertheless the case that substantially fewer attempts have been made to explore the wider history of avant-garde music in Japan as a whole.

Having completed *Towards a Universal Language*, I would obviously be keen to see further research undertaken to pursue many of the various ideas, problems, questions and observations raised and presented throughout the course of the study. I firmly believe that publication of this study could positively contribute in helping to instigate further discourse on the subject, acting as a catalyst for future discussion and research. In attempting to engage with such an extensive subject matter within the strict confines of this study, it was of course necessary to explore the history of Japanese experimental music within a very specific context and set of parameters. Each chapter presents the opportunity for further investigation and expansion.

The proposed subject of Cultural Mimicry is one such issue which extends not only to the relationship between Western and Japanese music, but rather that of the former to the music of most non-Western cultures. In most of the instances discussed within the context of this study - whether modernist Composition, jazz, or psychedelic music for example - the work of avant-garde artists either emerged directly from, or in opposition to, popular Japanese trends which, in themselves, merely sought to mimic and recreate current Western styles. Further research into the interplay between Western and non-Western music could look to address not simply the issue of Cultural Mimicry itself, but perhaps also the way in which (as in the case of 1960s G.S music) misinterpretations of Western musical trends have often lead to a version or interpretation of that trend which is wholly unique to Japan. That so many Western avant-garde artists and musicians have often taken insight from non-Western culture is one issue (be it, for example, in the Indian music of La Monte Young, or Zen Buddhism of

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John Cage), but that these artists have often provided the lead for Japanese artists to diverge and experiment is another issue worthy of further investigation.

As a practising sound artist I have, for the past several years, been closely engaged with the possibilities presented by limited or reduced approaches to sound, experimenting with imposed restrictions to both the form and means by which a piece is created. In 2002 my work in this area culminated in the Sound Installation *Ode to the Ballad of a Thinman*, presented at the Liverpool Biennial for Contemporary Art. The methodologies and values expounded by artists such as Taku Sugimoto have continued to be something with which I strongly identify with, not only in the Reduced or Minimal aesthetic of the Soundworks themselves, but the principles underlying them – most notably in attitudes towards the conventional demarcation of Sound, music, Noise and Silence.

‘At present it seems that silence is still regarded as sort of a horrible thing in music... there are even a lot of critics who never talk about silence and space. All they care about and report on is the development of music as music.’

(Taku Sugimoto, 2002, p.69)

It remains absolutely essential to me, as it was throughout the duration of this research programme, that my work within both practical and academic frameworks continues to inform one other. Recent opportunities I have had to explore these ideas within the context of popular music will result in a number of audio releases this year, and have continued to inform and fully compliment my future plans for both Post-Doctoral research and continuing experimental Soundwork.

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APPENDICES

Glossary of Terms

A

Absolute Antenna

Live music event organised by Atsuhiko Ito, owner of Tokyo's influential *Off Site gallery/performance space. Held at weekends in tandem with the improvisational night **Meeting at Off Site*, *Absolute Antenna* first took place in 1999 at the Kawaguchi Contemporary Museum of Art – an event repeated at the same venue again in 2000. Its residency at Off Site began June 2000.

Abstract Electronica

Term sometimes used to describe the **Ambient*-like music of groups such as *Dowser*.

Acceleration

Concept conceived by Keiji Haino, which asserts that the Zen state of **Ma* can be attained through music, by way of both extreme Volume (playing with pure intensity and force) and complete Silence (i.e. allowing space to dominate a composition by *not* playing, in the way associated with the **Silence* John Cage).

The volumatic, **Noise*-based work of Masami Akita (a.k.a. Merzbow) has been ascribed with such qualities, and his performances described by some critics as immersive, meditative-like experiences, evocative of a 'noise nirvana'.

As Edwin Pouncey explains, '...it is that feeling – after overcoming the shock of the sheer volume – which gradually takes over after prolonged listening, to allow a strange kind of calm to descend as another sound dimension aperture slowly opens up.' (Pouncey, August 2000, p.28)

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Acid Folk

The uneasy political situation that so aroused Japan's radical Left-wing during the late 1960s and early 1970s, demanded a musical outlet that, unlike the politically-neutral pop music of the era, epitomised the dire unease felt by many of the country's youth. Even the music of the Protest Folk movement often failed on this account, with many of its members simply copying the acoustic style of Dylan, and applying political rhetoric as an hollow aesthetic. With the exception of Protest Folk's few central figures, many within the movement have been accused of merely practising style over substance, lacking the conviction that should have been at the core of the radical Left-wing during this time.

Relating to artists like Kenji Endo, Masato Minami, and groups like *Brast Burn*, **Acid Folk* was more sharp and intense in its approach. This, in particular, was characterised by the music's far more direct and abrasive lyrics which, according to writer Alan Cummings, 'became more personal and intensely introspective, and the music made a corresponding shift towards the dark and hallucinatory.' (Cummings, *The Wire*, Issue 186, p.32)

Ajia ichi

First coming to the fore around 1887, *Ajia ichi* ('Pan-Asianism') can generally be seen as the Nationalistic backlash to Japan's wholesale **Westernisation* during the **Meiji Restoration*. In contrast to the previous era's subscription to **Datsu-A ron*, the concept that had advocated Japan's 'disconnection from Asia', *Ajia ichi* promoted the pursuit of national strength through traditional Japanese culture, marking a significant shift in the Nation's collective attitude.

Aketa-no Mise

Renowned Tokyo jazz club. In January 1985, *Aketa-no Mise* played host to a series of events held by the notable (and often controversial) **free-jazz* guitarist Masayuki Takayanagi.

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During the workshops, Takayanagi explained some of the methods and processes underlying his improvised works.

Akushon

Active during the early 1920s in Japan, *Akushon* ('Group Action') was a visual-arts collective largely remembered for its formal reflection of **Futurist*, **Dadaist* and Cubist aesthetic sensibilities. Numbering amongst its members were artists such as Kanbara Tai and Yabe Tomio.

Amae

Japanese term meaning 'love' or to be 'loved'. Its inclusion within this glossary relates to the observations of Endymion Wilkinson who, in his study of Japanese Economics, discusses the Nation's history of cultural mimicry and supposed penchant for the Western way of life. Citing the work of psychiatrist Dr Takeo Dōi, Wilkinson argues that seeking the love, approval, and respect of another culture or Nation (one, essentially, that it aspires in certain ways to emulate) is a fundamental characteristic of the Japanese psyche. According to Wilkinson's interpretation of Dōi (in *Japan Versus the West: Image and Reality*), this search for *Amae* equates to the search for approval and a 'sense of belonging' to counteract an inherent and historical sense of isolation. '...[T]he fundamental characteristic of the Japanese is his desire, his need, to be loved (*amae*) by an understanding and respected parental or big brother figure on whom he can depend.' (Wilkinson, 1991, p.40)

Ambient

While Ambient music might not necessarily constitute a hugely influential chapter in Japan's musical avant-garde history, there were nonetheless a number of musicians who, towards the late 1970s, experimented with the type of music pioneered by Brian Eno and Steve Reich in the West.

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The term *Ambient* was first applied to describe a specific approach to music, in which sounds were composed and created to act in complete sympathy with the everyday phonic environment (i.e. the ongoing sounds of everyday life).

According to Brian Eno's famous anecdote, he first became aware of the potential for ambient music when confined to his sick bed. When the sound of heavy rain outside partially drowned out the music playing on his stereo, Eno, unable to reach the volume control, had no option but to listen to both simultaneously.

This experience, the artist has claimed, fostered his interest in music as ambience, and led him to consider the possibilities presented by real life interaction between musical and non-musical sounds.

I realised that this was what I wanted music to be – a place, a feeling, an all round tint to my sonic environment. (Eno, 1993, p.295)

Unlike canned-music or Muzak (with which it is now commonly confused) Ambient music, by its original definition, interacted sympathetically with natural environmental sounds rather than simply smother them. Eno's *music For Airports* (1978), for example, was not only devised to encourage both passive and attentive modes of listening (just as environmental sounds do naturally), but also 'to be able to accommodate all the noises that airports produce.' (Eno, 1993, p.295)

While important parallels can be drawn between ambient music in Europe/America and Japan, particularly with some Japanese artists taking the lead from Western forerunners, this approach to sound nevertheless did develop as an Autonomous, independent phenomenon in Japan also. Inoue Makoto and Yamashita Yasushi, for example, members of the band

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Hikashu, to this end formed the experimental ensemble *Inoyamaland* in 1978, releasing work on the Yen label (a subsidiary of Alpha Records¹¹⁸).

Other Japanese artists associated with ambient music include: *Dowser*, *Maju*, *Maticomi*, *Mon.Goose*, *Neina*, and *Tamaru*.

Analogue-electronic

As the designation implies, this stream of New music is born from a digital-age curiosity and, quite often, nostalgia for outmoded analogue technology. While some musicians such as Kazunao Nagata content themselves by producing music based wholly upon the aural output of obsolete and defective synthesisers, others, like Utah Kawasaki, extend the boundaries of their analogue orchestras to include audio cassette players and portable radios.

Anode

Although fully realised for the first time in 2002 during a series of recording sessions at GOK Sound Studio, *Anode* forms part of a natural progression of ideas developed by Otomo Yoshihide, which began firstly with *Filament* in 1998 (a collaboration with Sachiko M) and *Cathode* in 1999.

Anode represents an approach to music that, according to Otomo Yoshihide, attempts to eliminate *time* as the central factor of a composition or performance, focusing instead upon a consideration for *space*. Fundamental to *Anode*, is Otomo Yoshihide's attempt to deconstruct the role of the musician, not only focusing upon space rather than time but, in doing so, confounding expectations in terms of the musicians' physical and expressive participation.

¹¹⁸ Alpha Records was established by Hosono Haruomi, a member *Yellow Magic Orchestra* with Ryuichi Sakamoto.

Removing sound systems and P.A.s was the first step to this. Rather being situated on stage, musicians were placed in a large circle around the chosen venue, and any player needing amplification given his or her own individual speaker system. In addition, Otomo issued every musician a set of rules: -

1. *Do not react to the sounds that others make.*
2. *Do not use musical vocabulary such as phrases or rhythm.*
3. *Do not create a "story."*

(Otomo Yoshihide in *Improvised music from Japan*, 2003, p.E-16)

Essentially, these rules constitute Otomo's attempt to prevent participants from resorting to their habitual reliance upon time-based arrangements. The removal of a designated performance space (stage), or single sound source (PA system) also meant that listeners would hear different versions of the same performance, depending upon where they were in the room.

From a certain perspective, this might be seen in relation to Roland Barthes' theory of the 'Death of the Author'¹¹⁹, since the nature of each performance is determined by the experience of the audience, and the act of discovery each individual undertakes when listening, rather than the intent of the performer or composer. Despite this however, Otomo is keen to point out that he is not opposed to artistic self-expression (as many *Onkyo artists are presumed to be), and in fact asserts his belief that it is a musician's responsibility to be expressive. (Yoshihide, 2003, p. E-17)

¹¹⁹ Published in Roland Barthes 1977 volume *Image, Music, Text*, the Death of the Author represents Barthes' Post-Structuralist theory that the author is 'dead'. According to Barthes, the author exists as a result of the text, rather than the text being product of the author – or, in other words, the author's aims upon writing are irrelevant when it comes to reading and interpreting a text. A piece of writing should be unbound and unhindered by the intentions of the author, free to be interpreted by the reader, whose own individual experiences and understanding of language inform their personal perception of the text. 'To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing... Words, like music, have no set meaning, and are open to infinite interpretation and ambiguity.'

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In many ways, Anode might be perceived to inhabit the grey area between improvisation and composition, and has been likened by Otomo to the methodology employed by Sachiko M on their Filament project.

Anpo

Amongst the many social and political tensions present in Japan during the early 1960s, issues surrounding the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty (Anpo) were perhaps paramount. The renewal of Anpo in 1960 brought public frustrations to a climax, particularly amongst members of the New Left, and triggered a series of student-led protests and riots of an unprecedented scale and ferociousness in Japan.

For many Japanese, renewing Anpo was enough to quickly snub out any glimmer of hope, however slight, that had been fostered during the course of the Nation's recuperation in the 1950s.

For those opposed to its restoration, the continuing presence of Anpo undermined any sense of progress Japan had begun to make as a new, independent country. Feelings of social and political 'impotency' gave rise first to frustration, and then to anger, as a growing number of radicals took to the streets, disillusioned by the extent to which the US still held sway over Japan¹²⁰.

Anti-music

Developed as a key principle of **Group Ongaku*, the notion of Anti-music is clearly mirrored in the work of an array of pre-eminent western avant-gardists, ranging from John Cage to Brian Eno, the **Fluxus* group to Sonic Youth. In broad terms, Anti-music represents the frustrated convictions of certain artists to challenge the prevailing, unthinking acceptance of age-old musical conventions. Why should music be ensnared within the confines of scales and standardised notational practise? What is the real difference between sound and noise, or

¹²⁰ Despite the official withdrawal of Occupying U.S. troops in 1952.

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noise and music? Why should noise not be received as music, or music be apprehended in the same way as everyday environmental sounds.

*Indeterminacy, *Chance Operations, *Automatic Systems, *Graphic Compositions, Generative music, Short Form and Instructional Notation illustrate some of the approaches to sound that might be regarded as part of the century-long history of anti-music. The concept of Anti-music, is one that attempts to raise questions, undermine academic and popular complacency, and shift the boundaries and expectations that inhibit an understanding of music, sound and noise.

Art-Punk

Contemporary Japanese music influenced by UK bands such as *The Fall* and *The Swell Maps*. Includes bands such as *Puka Puka Brains*.

Asakusa Opera

Generic term for popular Japanese opera during the Taishō period.

Aural Iconography

Primarily, the concept of *Aural Iconography* relates to the use of (musical) sound within a composition to represent, symbolically or metaphorically, a physical attribute or object.

Modernist composer Toru Takemitsu, for example, based the structure of his composition *Arc for piano and orchestra*¹²¹ upon the content and layout of a traditional Japanese garden.

¹²¹ Toru Takemitsu's *Arc* cycle for piano and orchestra (1963-76), in its final incarnation, consisted of six movements: *Pile* (1963), *Solitude* (1966), *Your Love and the Crossing* (1963) [all of which formed Arc Part I], *Textures* (1964), *Reflection* (1966) and *Coda...Shall begin from the end* (1966) [Arc Part II]. While *Pile* and *Your Love and the Crossing* were first played in 1963 by pianist Yuji Takahashi (to whom they were also dedicated), and *Textures* in 1964, it nevertheless took until 1977 for *Arc* to be performed in its entirety.

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While the features of the garden are represented by various elements within the orchestra, the central sound of the piano describes the physical movement of pianist Yuji Takahashi as he strolls, metaphorically through the grounds.

Elements of the garden such as rocks, trees, flowers, sand, and even the particular manner in which Takahashi walks¹²², are all represented aurally throughout the course of the piece by various tonal and compositional motifs.

Arc is also divided into two distinct sections, denoting the point at which 'Mr Takahashi' reaches one side of the garden, turns around, and comes back the other way. This about turn and change of direction is marked, compositionally, by the fact that features heard throughout the first section (elements in the music that represent a certain rock or tree, for example), are revisited in reverse order on the way back. Symbolically, the walking figure of the pianist is now on his way back, going passed things he saw on his way into the garden.

The concept of Aural Iconography might also be applied to the *Sadomasochistic imagery employed by **Japanoise* artists such as *Merzbow*, *Masonna* and *The Gerogerigegege*. Beyond simply constituting a sensationalist album-cover-aesthetic, it has been argued by artists and critics alike that the link between Noise music and S&M or bondage is much more profound - symbolic, perhaps, of the sadomasochistic relationship shared between noise musicians and their audience.

Automatism

Improvisational method first practised in Japan by Takehisa Kosugi and other members of **Group Ongaku* during the early 1960s. Fundamentally the practise of **Indeterminate* methods in performance and composition, *Automatism* has been identified closely with **Surrealism* (automatic writing), modernist art music (the **Chance Operations* of John Cage, for example) and Abstract Expressionist painting (e.g. Action Painting).

¹²² 'He has a unique way of walking that resembles limping, which is important in this piece.' (Burt, 2001, p.103)

Avant-Folk

Artists: *Yuji Katsui; Vita Nova*

Avant-pop

Artists: *Adi; After Dinner; Katra Turana; Wha-Ha-Ha; Haniwa Chan; Arepos; Haco; Happiness Proof; Hikasu; Yuka Murakami; Mishio Ogawa; P-model*

Avant-Rock

Artists: *Dowser; Norman Yamada*

Avant-Weirdness

Artists: *Violent Onsen Geisha*

B

Banjin

Translated to mean ‘barbarians’, *Banjin* was a word used to describe Westerners during the nineteenth century.

Beat-Hippie

Proposed genre from the Nagano Mountain region of Japan. Includes artists: *Nanao Sakaki; Nipponia Nipon; Buzoku; Jiyu Minken; Freakout*

Bishū-itchi

Arata Isozaki¹²³ describes the concept of *Bishū-itchi* in relation to the art of Tarō Okamoto, and the “bipolar oppositionalist” approach to painting he developed during the early 1950s. Accordingly, Bishū-itchi is said to be, ‘...the simultaneity of beauty and ugliness ...one of the traditional senses of beauty.’ (Arata in Monroe, 1994, p.28)

Biwa

Traditional four stringed lute-like instrument played with a large triangular pick, which provides a melodic line to musical performances of the **Gagaku* ensemble. Also central to performances of the **Heike Monogatari*.

¹²³ In Alexandra Monroe’s (ed.) publication *Scream At the Sky: Japanese Art After 1945*.

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Bugaku

Japanese orchestral music which, void of any vocal melody, is used as a traditional accompaniment for dance. When performed in a solo context (i.e. as music in its own right, without dance) this same music is known as *Kangen*.

Bunraku

Like *Noh* and *Kabuki*, *Bunraku* is a traditional form of Japanese drama performed with musical accompaniment. The predominant form of Bunraku is **Joruri*.

It was, by the artist's own admission, his witnessing a *Bunraku* performance for the first time, that led composer Toru Takemitsu to consider Japanese music in a favourable light. Until then, as a young man, he had purposefully avoided any contact with his country's traditional musical heritage.

Having being called into National service at the age of fourteen (serving in a military mountain base), the composer's wartime experiences had left him fiercely bitter about Japan's wartime government, and his country's participation in the Pacific war. The aggressive promotion of traditional Japanese culture by the Nationalist regime, and its propagandistic control of artistic production, meant that for a long time Takemitsu avoided any contact with this musical heritage, looking longingly to the West instead, and defining his own expressive language through the music of Debussy and Messiaen.

According to a number of accounts¹²⁴, however, it was at some point in the 1960s that the young composer came across a *Bunraku* performance, and found himself – in spite of his prejudices – attracted to its music: particularly the melodic and tonal qualities of the *futazao shamisen* – an instrument integral to the *Bunraku* orchestra.

Bunraku-like (or *ningyo-joruri*) performances of the **Heike Monogatari*, can be traced back a number of centuries to traditions maintained by travelling minstrels. Just as these wandering musicians would travel the country relating old folk tales to **Biwa*

¹²⁴ For example, see Noriko Ohtake's *Creative Sources for the music of Toru Takemitsu*, 1993.

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accompaniment, so too did puppeteers, in a similar tradition, trek the land performing their dramas. While it is widely thought that the two traditions converged at some point, just when exactly isn't quite clear. What evidence there is, suggests the first Bunraku theatre was established by Takemoto Gidayu in Osaka, 1684, and the centuries that followed, the tradition has enjoyed a number of revivals – notably during the **Edo* period.

In 1966 the *National Theatre* in Tokyo gave the genre its own dedicated residence which, in 1985, was relocated to Osaka with the opening of the *National Bunraku Theatre*¹²⁵.

Bunten

Japanese Ministry of Education, responsible for the teaching of music and the arts in Japan. By the 1920s Bunten had established a moderate, traditionalist, and largely inflexible European-style Salon system for fine art.

Butoh

A number of popular ideas exist in relation to Butoh: -

- That the imagery and emotions conjured up by *Butoh*, are redolent of an earlier, darker, pre-modern time in Japan.
- That, in line with the ideas of **Obsessional Art*, the enigmatic nature and dark characteristics of *Butoh* performance reflect, to some extent, the loss and anxiety experienced by its founder, Tatsumi Hijikata. The death of his sister as a child in particular, had a profound effect upon Hijikata, and upon his approach to movement and dance. As the artist himself explains: 'I keep an older sister inside my body ... When I am immersed in creating a dance, she scratches away the darkness inside me.' (Hijikata, cited in Monroe, 1994, p.192)

¹²⁵ Useful Resource: <http://www.sagecraft.com/puppetry/definitions/Bunraku.hist.html>

One of the key founding principles of *Butoh*, is to transcend the constraints of both Japanese traditional and Western modern dance alike.

The drive to enforce, establish, and reaffirm self-identity remains at the core of *Butoh*, just as it does the other Japanese **Obsessional Arts* - all of which focused upon the need to define and re-state a sense of *personal autonomy*.

Butoh, like other forms of underground and avant-garde performance, can be regarded as a reactionary development on a number of levels: -

1. As a reaction against Western cultural and political hegemony, and the imposition of foreign power in Japan.
2. In relation to the Cold war fears of nuclear war posed by the USSR and USA during this period. The Japanese had particular justification to feel uneasy, given the number of key US military installations that were stationed in Japan.
3. The effect of Western technology and industrialisation, as it threatened to disrupt the traditional unity between nature and mankind that many felt existed in Japan.

In a recent review of the *Improvised music From Japan* box set¹²⁶, critic Biba Kopf drew attention to the work of Kazuo Imai – a musician whose exemplary musical background has seen him study under the tutorship of seminal improvisers Takehisa Kosugi and Masayuki Takayanagi. The dark ‘primitive longings’ induced by Imai’s use of found materials were, according to Kopf, akin to the primordial emotional and physical characteristics of *Butoh*. (Kopf, in *The Wire*, Issue 216, February 2002, p.50).

¹²⁶ A limited edition ten CD set, released in 2002 on the ‘Improvised Music From Japan’ label (IMJ-10CD). Only 800 were issued.

C

Canterbury Bands

British progressive rock genre, encompassing bands such as *Caravan*, *Hatfield and the North*, and *Soft Machine*, who, along with other similar artists, came from the Canterbury area of England during the late 1960s. As with several entries in this glossary, Western commentators, in attempting to get to grips with certain facets of Japanese New music, have found it necessary to draw direct comparisons with (outwardly similar) movements from Europe and America.

Whether based upon aesthetic, formal, factual, or superficial assumptions, Japanese bands that for one reason or another have been associated with this British prog-rock sub-category, include *Masque*; *Soft Weed Factor*; *Piranezi*.

Cathode

Collaboration (1999-2000) between Otomo Yoshihide, Ko Ishikawa (player of the traditional *Sho) and Sachiko M. Inspired by the latter's so-called **Subtraction Concept*, Cathode was also the springboard for later Otomo Yoshihide releases/projects, including **Ensemble Cathode* and **Anode*.

Chamber Rock

Artists: *Pou Fou*; *Lacrymosa*; *Zypressen*

Ch'an

Religious sect that developed in China around the early sixth-century, centred upon the teachings of Indian Monk Bodhidharma. It was Bodhidharma who applied the name *Ch'an*, which derives etymologically from the Sanskrit word for meditation: *Dhyana*. During

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the late twelfth century, *Ch'an* was welcomed into Japanese culture by the ruling military Shogunate, renamed **Zen* with reference to both its *Ch'an* origins, and the principle of **Zazen* (a Japanese term for meditation).

Chance Operations

While studying music, things get a little confused. Sounds are no longer just sounds, but are letters: ABCDEFG.' (Cage, 1973, p.165)

Highlighting what might be thought of as the semantic differences between sound and music, the quote above by John Cage outlines the very musical conventions he sought to displace throughout his creative life: the structuring, restraining, and limiting of sound through its confinement within a language-based system. Emphasised in particular, was his dissatisfaction with the way in which dominant modes of listening to and making music remained largely unchallenged. Traditional score was posited as a restrictive convention, partly responsible for the blinkered, culturally conditioned ways of listening that result.

In attempting to break down musical conventions in the mid-twentieth century, a number of experimental composers in Europe and America confronted traditional compositional methods by removing intention and control from the process of making music and sound.

Christian Wolffe, for example, wrote score vertically down the page, while asking musicians that they be read and played (as convention dictates) horizontally, while Cage himself produced pieces governed *Chance*, **Indeterminacy*, and his views on **experimental music*.

Chance Operations - developed through his experience of the **I-Ching* and classes he attended under the tuition of Zen master Daisetz T. **Suzuki* - removed the pre-determined nature of music traditionally enforced by song structures and musical notation. Through this, not only was sound lifted out of its musical context, and the semantic influence of written

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music devalued, but removed also was the potential for artistic self-expression. *Chance Operations* essentially cut off the influence of the author by removing the rules and principles of authorship.

Chikuzenbiwa

Closely related cousin of the lute-like **Biwa* instrument, designed during the **Meiji* era.

Chipangu

Name by which Japan was known in Europe during the middle ages – a period¹²⁷ when the Nation was in the midst of self-imposed isolation, refusing any contact with the outside world save the country's small community of Dutch settlers.

From the time of its writing during the Renaissance, until the latter part of the nineteenth-century, Marco-Polo's (1254-1324) account of his Oriental journeys continued to have profound influence upon Western perceptions of the East. Published and edited by nineteenth-century Orientalist Henry Yule (1820-1880), *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, remained for many years one of the few texts to offer any prolonged account of Asia, despite being written in the thirteenth-century. Shaped by the author's wonderment at the material riches he finds, and mystical otherness of the lands he encounters, it is clear why the chronicle of Marco Polo was so popular amongst the Orientalists and Exoticists of the nineteenth-century.

While the fundamental characteristics of Chipangu are based upon fantasy and predominantly fetishistic, its ideals nevertheless still mark an insidious presence in the writings and perceptions of Japan in the West. Chipangu, primarily, is a make-believe oriental land of rich and fabulous wealth; mysterious, ancient and wise, yet naive and unacquainted

¹²⁷ The Tokugawa era

with modern ways. Appearing in the Third Book of The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the author's description of Chipangu appears at the start of Chapter Two¹²⁸: -

Chipangu is an island towards the east in the high seas, fifteen hundred miles distant from the continent; and a very great island it is.

The people are white, civilised, and well favoured. They are idolaters, and are dependent on nobody. And I can tell you the quantity of gold they have is endless; for they find it in their own islands, and the king does not allow it to be exported. Moreover few merchants visit the country because it is so far from the mainland, and thus it comes to pass that their gold is abundant beyond all measure.

I will tell you a wonderful thing about the palace of the lord of that island. You must know that he has a great palace which is entirely roofed with fine gold, just as our churches are roofed with lead, insomuch that it would scarcely be possible to estimate its value. Moreover, all the pavement of the palace, and the floors of its chambers, are entirely of gold, in plates like slabs of stone, a good two fingers thick; and the windows also are of gold, so that altogether the richness of this palace is past all bounds and all belief.¹²⁹

Christian Devotional music

From the rise to power of Japan's first sovereign in 1603, Ieyasu Tokugawa, until the final demise of the Takugawa Shogunate over two hundred and fifty years later (the *Meiji Restoration of 1867), Japan's self-enforced isolationism and military rule was coupled with an aggressive stamping out of Christianity. However, with the revocation of anti-Christian

¹²⁸ Chapter II: Description Of The Island Of Chipangu[16], And The Great Khan's Despatch Of A Host Against It.

¹²⁹ Go to: http://www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/Polo.html. Excerpt from Marco Polo, *The book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, concerning the kingdoms and marvels of the East*, Henry Yule, tr. (London, J. Murray, 1871.)

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laws in 1873, Christian devotional songs became one of the key sources by which western music flooded into Japan, at a time when extreme enthusiasm for any manifestation of occidental culture dominated.

Conservative Style

A term used by Yoko Narazaki¹³⁰ to refer to the later work of composer Toru Takemitsu, dating from around the 1970s. In contrast to his more openly avant-garde and experimental compositions of the previous decade, these *conservative* works tended, superficially at least, to favour a more melodic form – a tendency which Peter Burt¹³¹ identifies in some of the composer's much earlier scores for film and TV (giving strength to the idea that for Takemitsu, film and TV commissions were seen as an opportunity to experiment with ideas he would later use in concert pieces). [See also **Eroticism* and **Stoicism*]

Co-Prosperity Sphere

See * *Dai Tōi Kyōeiken*

Crystal Generation

The term Crystal Generation was coined by writer Yasuoka Tanaka in his 1981 text, *Somewhat Like Crystal*. It refers to a new generation of young Japanese that emerged during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Unlike the young students of the previous decade, for example, this generation had no overt interest in politics, and no express affiliation to any one cause or trend. It might be said that the idea of the Crystal Generation was one of a fickle, primarily postmodern group: deftly consumerist and fashionably uncommitted.

¹³⁰ See Burt, 2001, p.1

¹³¹ *The Music of Toru Takemitsu*, 2001

D

Dada

The formation of groups such as **Akushon*, **Gekijō no Sanka*, **Mirai-ka Bijutsu Kyōkai*, and **Jikken Kobo* stands as evidence at the extent to which Dada directly influenced the early development of Japan's avant-garde.

Dai Tōi Kyōeiken

'The Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere'. From around the time of the 1920s, Japan began to move significantly away from the Euro/American model it had previously aspired to, and embrace more Pan-Asian (**Ajia ichi*) sensibilities. The events of World War One played some part in this shift, as did growing concern and discomfort regarding the previous **Meiji-era* push for Westernisation.

In addition to this, European nations had themselves begun to recognise and discuss the problems of their weakening and degeneration on the World stage. Europe's resignation at its self-diagnosed decline contributed to the growth of Nationalism and Pan-Asianism in Japan. It seemed unacceptable that these **OuBei* nations, now so weak, had essentially colonised South East Asia for so long.

Although portrayed as 'empire building' in many Western historical accounts, *Dai Tōi Kyōeiken*, or 'The Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere', was regarded by the Japanese during the late 1930s and early 1940s as the blueprint by which Japan would achieve autonomy for South East Asia, removing the ruling presence of Europe and America.

During the 1930s, it seemed vital that Asia be reclaimed and Western Imperialist influence displaced. The kind of equality Japan pledged to bring to the area, however, was in reality only 'equal' for the Japanese, who widely dismissed other East Asian Nations and deemed them too weak to merit peer status.

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Ultimately, Japan regarded its Pacific conquest not as a series of invasions, but as a course of action essential for the liberation of South East Asia from the West. It would place itself at the centre of *Dai Tōi Kyōeiken*, undertaking the self-assigned role of protector of East Asian culture - the leader and pioneer of its future.

For countries such as The Philippines and Burma, however, (who, as members of the 'Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere', should have prospered) 'liberation' simply equated to their changing status from a Western colony to a Japanese one. Needless to say, the extremely vague and woolly details of *Dai Tōi Kyōeiken* explained little, and meant even less, given the reality that most of the 'Sphere' would simply be ruled by Japan.

Dantai

Japanese term meaning 'Arts Association.'

Datsu-A ron

Term meaning 'disconnection from Asia'. Refers to the period in Japan during the mid-late nineteenth century (i.e. the **Meiji Restoration*), when for the first time in centuries national borders were once again opened, and international isolationism was replaced by a period of fervent **Westernisation*.

Debayashi

One of the two musical ensembles (together with **Gezabayashi*) used to accompany performances of *Kabuki theatre. Utilising a range of music performed on drums, *shamisen and flute instruments, *Debayashi* performers, unlike those of the *Gezabayashi* group, actually play on the stage and are visible to the audience.

Detachment

Concept related to *Zen-Buddhism, and the attainment of enlightenment through a realisation of absence, space, and emptiness. See: **Mu*, **Ma*, **Zazen*, **Zen*

Diagetic music

Type of 'on-scene' music, evident in performances of traditional theatrical tales such as the **Heike monogatari*. In contemporary terms, Diagetic music fulfils a role that might be regarded somewhere in-between the realms of **Incidental music* and sound effects.

Whereas Diagetic music is directly linked to events occurring within the performance space (e.g. the screen of a film, or stage of a play), non-diagetic music is that which exists more-or-less as an external entity, set apart from on-stage/on-screen action (and is more akin, therefore, to incidental music).

Distance

Within the context of New music (in particular, live electronic and computer music), *Distance* describes the supposed psychological space between music and performance: separating the act of making sound, from any personal involvement on the part of the artist – whether emotional or physical.

The lack of interaction, movement, or outward engagement on the part of the artist, is common in performances of laptop computer music (e.g. recent *Merzbow* work) just as it is in **Onkyo* (e.g. Sachiko M and Toshimaru Nakamura). It might be argued that this on-stage non-performative stillness, parallels the sense of nullification generated by the soundworks themselves. It is a *Distance* between sound and expression; music and musician; performance and performer.

Dualism

Speaking purely in terms of post-war Japanese music (its reception, development, and relationship to music history worldwide), it might be useful to simply define dualism as the well-practised, all-too-easy division of things between east and west.

There are countless examples of how this has played itself out in practise, although, in the main, Dualism is chiefly derived from decades of European colonialism: a residual mind-set which sees East divorced from West, and regarded as a mystical far-off land, civilised and ancient, yet fundamentally less well developed. As Alexandra Monroe points out in her essay, *Scream Against the Sky*, 'Implied in this perception was that modern civilisation was the sole prerogative of the West,' (Monroe, 1995, p.21). True modernity was something which, at the most fundamental level, would always be regarded by Europe and America as being beyond the reach of the Orient.

However, not only might it be said that that such perceptions of 'The East' remain insidiously present within contemporary Western society, but, also that the perceived inseparability of *Westernism* and *modernism* continues to exist within the psyche of many Japanese artists.

According to Monroe, not only does the West have a long history of misunderstanding, diminishing, and discounting Japanese modernism, but, furthermore, Japanese artists themselves have also demonstrated a very dualistic understanding of modernity. It might be suggested that the feeling of many Japanese has been that, since modernism developed in Europe and America, it is only European and American artists that are capable of actually *being* modern. From this perspective, *modernity* and *The West* are regarded to be one and the same thing: 'From the Japanese point of view, the problematic issue is the ambiguity of the term "modern" in a non-Western context.' (Monroe, 1995, p.21)

The automatic distinguishing of both cultural and geographic boundaries by way of a simple dualistic East/West split is, in fact, too readily and too easily done, and demonstrates an absence of any real engagement with the context in which a piece of music or art was produced.

Dutch Boom

Japanese exoticist craze for imported Dutch products during the latter part of the eighteenth-century. Analogous to the so-called *nanban boom nearly three hundred years earlier.

E

Eastern Buddhist, The

English language journal first printed in 1921, which was edited and included a significant number articles contributed by Daisetz T. *Suzuki. The Eastern Buddhist ceased publication due to the events of World war Two, and returned once again in 1965 at a time of heightened interest in *Zen Buddhism, particularly on the East and West coasts of America. The Eastern Buddhist journal is the twice-yearly journal published by The Eastern Buddhist Society, which was also established by Suzuki in 1921, and is now based on the campus of Otani University, Kyoto.

Electronic

Artists: *Agencement; Animo Computer; Arow Tour; Asteroid Desert Songs; Bambi Synapse; Calculated; Ryoji Ikeda; Sunao Inami; Chu Ishikawa; I.S.O.; Takashi Kokubo; Microstar; Seiji Nagai; <O> Blaas; Yasuhiro Otani; Pneuma; Minoru Sato; Shida*

Electronic Improv.

Artists: *Almá Fury/Otani/Otomo/Charles* (Franco-Japanese electronic improvisational collaboration).

Electronic psychedelia

A genre which, according to writer Paul Collett, developed through the amalgamation of Tokyo's *Noise and *electronic/Techno scenes, and includes artists and bands such as 'Nagata Kazunao, Dub Sonic, Nerve Net Noise, [and] Hado-Ho.' (Collett, 2001, p.30)

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Electro-Noise

Artists: *Inoue Masa; Nerve Net Noise*

Electro-pop

Artists: *Shi Shonen; Yellow Magic Orchestra (YMO)*

Electro-Punk

Artists: *Dousser; Peregrini*

Eleki

Genre of Western-style popular music in Japan, fashionable prior to the *GS-boom during the early-mid 1960s. Influenced by US band The Ventures' 1965 tour of Japan, eleki was defined by its copycat echo-guitar driven, instrumental surf sound, performed as closely to The Ventures' model as possible. Many groups who began their careers performing eleki music, such as Sally and the Playboys (renamed The Tigers), later evolved and changed their style with the upsurge of GS music.

Emptiness

See **Ma* and **Onkyo*

Enka

That Enka has been referred to as Japan's answer to Country and Western, probably has much to do with the fact that the songs are predominantly so melancholic in theme. Tales of lost love, heartbreak, and emotional turmoil run through the lyrics of most Enka songs, and while melodically the music takes its lead from Western music, tonally the characteristic vibrato of the vocals has its origins in traditional Japanese folk.

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While the origins of the genre can be traced back to the late nineteenth-century, the evolution of Enka into its now recognisable form took place towards the end of the Taishō era, and into the 1930s. The palpable sense of loss and anguish that permeated Japan after World war Two, perhaps gave the lamenting sounds of Enka heightened appeal. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, and until the start of the country's convalescence the following decade, Enka was one of the most popular forms of mainstream music in Japan.

Ensemble Cathode

Extension of Otomo Yoshihide's 1999 *Cathode project which, in comparison to its predecessor, had a stronger improvisational element. Ensemble Cathode was also a forerunner to the innovative *Anode project of 2002.

Eroticism

A term used by Jun-ichi Konuma to describe the 'second period' of Toru Takemitsu. According to a scheme that divides the creative career of the composer into three identifiable periods¹³², *Eroticism* refers to his most identifiably modernist and avant-garde phase during the 1960s, when the work of contemporaneous Western modernist composers influenced him most greatly.

In more general terms, according to the 'Words of Art' web site, Okanagan University College, (<http://www.arts.ouc.bc.ca/fina/glossary/gloshome.html>), 'erotic' in art historical terms is defined as: -

Pertaining to sexual love or desire. Although one commonly finds "erotic" distinguished fundamentally from pornography, the dividing line between the two is by no means as clear as etymology would suggest (i.e., erotic from Eros [love], pornography from porne [sexual

¹³² An idea most recently supported by Peter Burt in *The Music of Toru Takemitsu* (2001)

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servitude])). As a result, there is considerable debate regarding the definition and role of the erotic in such things as appetitive drive, the critique of representation, the erotics of engagement, people who are libidinally driven, and so on.

Experimental music

In his seminal 1957 essay, *experimental music*, John Cage describes his initial objections at critics' early reference to his work as 'experimental'. The word, he felt, implied that his music was somehow incomplete and unfinished, like the rough sketches made by painters - preliminary trials rather than complete compositions.

However, upon formulating his now-established definition of experimental music, Cage embraced and reclaimed the phrase on his own terms. Removing the pre-determined nature of music traditionally enforced by Western musical conventions (like song-structure and notation), he redefined experimental music as '...an act the outcome of which is unknown.'

Cage believed that, by reclaiming the phrase with his own explicit definition, critics (still suspicious of his work) no longer owned or felt able to use the term 'experimental', and instead resorted to words such as 'controversial' to question its place as music altogether.

As Cage himself declared, '...in this new music nothing takes place but sounds: those that are notated, and those that are not.' (Cage, 1973, p.7)

Experimental Workshop, The

See **Jikken Kobo*.

Expo '70'

By 1970, Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu had become a well-recognised member of the international avant-garde, and in collaboration with contemporaries such as Iannis Xenakis and Yuji Takahashi, was closely involved with events at Japan's extravagant world fair, *Expo '70* in Osaka. The festival provided the opportunity for all manner of collaborations and exchanges, with contemporary proponents of Japanese avant-garde music getting the chance to meet and work with their acclaimed Western counterparts (amongst them, for example, Karlheinz Stockhausen).

The festival is often recounted as a seminal moment in modern Japanese history, noteworthy not only for its influence upon the arts in Japan, but in that it symbolised Japan's post-war industrial and economic reconstruction, providing a showcase to the rest of the world.¹³³

¹³³ Symbolised by its famous Festival Plaza.

F

FBI (Festival Beyond Innocence)

Taking place annually since 1996, the FBI is a two day avant-garde music festival, which aims to bring together some of the world's most renowned cutting edge musicians with those from Japan, whether up-and-coming or internationally acclaimed. Organised by Kazuhisa Uchihashi, the festival is housed every autumn at Port Island's Xebec Hall in Kobe. In some respects, FBI can be seen as a response to the attitude of distrust and suspicion experimental music is generally met with, both by the artistic institutions of Japan and the wider public at large (despite the fact that Japanese avant-garde music has, in recent years, enjoyed a vastly increasing international audience). FBI epitomises attempts now being made to redress this domestic imbalance, and develop channels through which to introduce their work to the public of Japan.

Feedback Loop

In *The music of Toru Takemitsu* (2001), historian Peter Burt draws attention to a concept which - while discussed specifically in relation to the proposed influence of John Cage upon Toru Takemitsu – applies to the wider historical relationship between avant-garde art in Japan and the West. The basis of Burt's observations concerning the Feedback Loop, centre upon the argument that many of the stylistic features shared by Takemitsu and Cage, were evident in the work of the former *before* their supposed 'meeting of minds' (i.e. before the working methodologies of Takemitsu were radically altered by his discovery of Cage).

In this context, the Feedback Loop refers to the re-importation of native cultural ideas through an interest in foreign imitations of that culture, rather than the direct revival of native traditions. In Japan, for example, this might be seen in the work of post-war Japanese

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composers who, rather than investigate traditional Japanese music directly¹³⁴, did so circuitously by studying the work of Orientalist composers like Debussy (i.e. Western composers who, a century earlier, had looked to the East for inspiration).

It seems that by aspiring to emulate Western works which, in the first place, were essentially influenced by Japanese and Asian sensibilities, Japanese composers found a way to delve into their own cultural heritage, without directly being seen to do so. Exploring Japan's musical history via the works of the Western Orientalists ultimately relieved composers (such as the young Toru Takemitsu), knowingly or otherwise, of the Nationalistic baggage such traditions carried during the sensitive post-war period.

It betrayed a fundamental fear of misrepresentation or misinterpretation on the part of Japanese musicians, who – through western Orientalism - saw a back door way to reference their musical ancestry 'legitimately', free from historical, political or nationalist-associated stigma.

Cage's influence upon Takemitsu during the late 1950s/early 1960s, provides a prime example of how this 'loop' takes effect. The inspiration the former found in the Zen Buddhist teachings of Daisetz Suzuki, (particularly in relation to *Indeterminacy) was emulated by artists such as Toru Takemitsu, who rediscovered and applied Zen-art principles to their work principally as the result of this Western influence.

Folk

Artists: *Kan Mikami; Masoto Minami*

Folk-improv

Artists: *Kazuki Tomokawa; Kumio Kurachi*

¹³⁴ Owing to the atmosphere of anti-Nationalism and Westernisation that prevailed after world war two.

Folklorism

Coming on the back of the early post-Meiji uncertainty that permeated much Japanese culture at the turn of the nineteenth-century, a new musical outlook developed in total contrast to the Meiji hunger for Westernisation. Becoming gradually more apparent as World war Two loomed and the social climate of Japan perceptibly altered, the mandate of these Nationalist composers was primarily to shun western practices and influences. Rather than strive to emulate European models – the predominant trend in Japan at that time - the gaze of these artists was focused intently upon their own cultural heritage, and the indigenous Japanese musical.

It is with this in mind that nationalist composers such as Kishio Hirao, Fumio Hayasaka, and Yasuji Kiyose, amongst others, have been compared to the Folklorists of Europe. Folklorism in the West, like the music of Hungarian Bela Bartok, was based upon the juxtaposition of various local, national, and international folk traditions, engendering quite cosmopolitan sensibilities in its attempt to create a broader, universal context for traditional indigenous music.

Despite sharing a mutual concern for their respective national musical traditions however, Japanese Folklorism differed most prominently in the insularity of its convictions. As a new sense of isolationism insidiously crept into Japan at the fall of the Taisho Era, composers began to produce music that reflected the nationalist sentiments being expressed throughout Japan, inverting their collective attention, and ceasing to study in Europe.

Folk-psych

Comparable to the work of Western musicians such as Tim Buckley, Tim Hardin, and Nick Drake: *Ghost*; *Masuki Batoh*; *Ché-Shizu*; *Chie Mukai*; *Nagisa Ni Te*; *Shogo Nari*

Folk-punk

Artists: *Aoki Mari; Toshiyuki Takahashi*

Folk Rock

Artists: *Lucifer; Tombi*

Free Improvisation

Group Ongaku are commonly held to be the founders of Japanese free improvisation, active between 1958 and 1962, and co-founded by Takehisa Kosugi – later member of the free improvisational ensemble *Taj Mahal Travellers*. While Kosugi has been keen to distance his music from what he regards as the ‘illusional’ and ‘psychological’ realms of Japanese psychedelia, his work has nevertheless influenced a number of notable Japanese psych musicians. Amongst these were Mukai Chie, Imai Kazuo, *Fushitsusha* bassist Ozawa Yasushi, and members of *East Bionic Symphonia* who followed Kosugi’s example in rejecting ‘standard Western forms in favour of collective improvisation.’ (Collett, 2001, p.29)

Artists associated with free Improvisation include: *Exias-J; Takashi Kasamaki; Toshiori Kondo; A-Musik; Toshimaru Makihara; Taj Mahal Travellers; Koichi Watanabe*

Free Jazz

Genre initially pioneered in the US during the late 1960s by musicians such as Albert Ayler, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, and Chick Corea.

While the influence free jazz amongst many Japanese avant-gardists is unquestionable, it is perhaps worth considering an important distinction made by contemporary musician Otomo Yoshihide. As an artist whose own personal grounding in music owes much to free jazz, Yoshihide differentiates between free jazz-proper, and the free jazz-aesthetic. Commenting upon the genre’s history in Japan, he suggests that one significant

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problem is that many artists superficially imitate free jazz as an aesthetic or style, without ever really capturing the essence or level of intuition the music demands. As is often the case with improvised music around the world, the difference or failure can sometimes be seen in players' use of a prescribed and rehearsed improvisatory language, rather than an engagement with the unknown possibilities of *actual* improvisation: -

...Of course I like some of the music, but some of them just don't understand what free improvisation is. 70 per cent of Japanese free jazz musicians just play in a kind of 'imitation free jazz' style. (Yoshihide in The Wire Issue 202, August 2000, p.41)

Artists - late 60s/early 70s: *Yamashita Yosuke* (piano); *Abe Kaoru* (alto sax.); *Togashi Masahiko* (drums); *Takayanagi Masayuki* (guitar) [Takayanagi's free-style guitar playing influenced other younger notable musicians such as Haino Keiji and Otomo Yoshihide]; *Yoshizawa Motoharu* (bass); *Takagi Mototeru* (tenor sax); *Sato Masahiko* (piano); *Arakawa Yasuo* (bass); *Abe Kaoru* [alto sax, bass clarinet, harmonica - died 1978, drug overdose]

Other new music artists associable with free-jazz include: *Aoki Tatsu*; *Actual music*; *COA*; *Distocation*; *Ground Zero*; *Shoji Hano*; *Dai So-on Gakudan*; *Yoriyuku Harada*; *Junji Hirose*; *Kazuo Imai*; *Keizo Inoue*; *Kunihiro Izumi*; *Hiroaki Katayama*; *Masahiko Kono*; *Kyoko Kuroda*; *Live Under the Sky*; *Nonaka "Goku" & Nongenkokuko*; *Akira Sakata*; *Jyoji Sawada*; *Kasuhisa Uchihashi*; *Motoharu Yoshizawa*

Free Rock

Artists: *Chan Mami*

Fūkyoku Kyōhei

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The aspiration to become *fūkyoku kyōhei* (a wealthy, robust and formidable nation) is largely what underpinned Japan's drive for Westernisation during the Meiji era, progressing from mere military modernisation, to the adoption of wider social and cultural Western ways.

Funk-Thrash

The Jasons, described as an energetic Tokyo Funk-Thrash band, are a fine example of the type of band able to develop through the underground *live house scene of Japan – a scene which, through its independent nature, has enabled a plethora of multidisciplinary, genre-defying music, to evolve.

Writing in *Billboard* magazine (June 15th, 1996), journalist Steve McClure described Funk-thrash band *The Jasons* as follows: -

A typical Jasons show sees drumsticks flying out over the mosh pit as drummer Chatani works himself into a dervish-like fury, while Daisuke attacks his upright acoustic bass like a man possessed. Guitarist Hiroki cranks out killer riff after killer riff, and singer Hide climbs up on a speaker and screams out the song "Everybody Wants His Hair" as if it were his last message to the world.

Fusion

Melding of rock, jazz and pop, influenced partly by the early 70's 'electric' ensembles of Miles Davis, *Return to Forever* and *Weather Report*. Tours by these bands 'shocked' jazz players in Japan, and led to artists such as Sakata Akira, Chakra, and Mariah with Shimizu Yasuaki to help 'create a new direction for jazz music' in the late 70s and early 80s.

Prism has been cited as the first Japanese Fusion-style band [feat. *Watanabe Ken*, Kume Daisaku, Aoyama Jun and Morizono Katsutoshi].

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Futurism

To those familiar with the work of Luigi Russolo, images of the infamous *Intonarumori* ('noise intoners'), and the pioneering sentiments expressed in his *Art of Noises* (1919) manifesto epitomise the considerable role he and the Italian Futurists played in the development of experimental music and sound art.

While perhaps not inspired directly by *The Art of Noises*, the Futurists' demand that people nurture within themselves a more unconstrained, open awareness of the everyday aural environment, has been a repeated concern of sound artists since. Even on the most superficial level, Russolo's call for artists to 'break out!,' look beyond 'paltry acoustic results,' and conquer the 'infinite variety of *noise-sound*', can be seen in everything from **musique concrete* to **Japanoise*; the 4'33" **Silence* of John Cage, to the scratching and mixing of turntablists.

It's no good objecting that noises are exclusively loud and disagreeable to the ear.

It seems pointless to enumerate all the graceful and delicate noises that afford pleasant sensations.

(Russolo, *The Art of Noises*, 1919,

<http://www.unknown.nu/futurism/noises.html>)

Future Pop

Artists: *Demi Semi Quaver*

G

Gadan

Art institution of Japan founded during the *Meiji period. In its harbouring of conformist, traditional and officious values, *Gaden* became the focus of opposition and abhorrence for *Taisho-era *zen-ei bijutsu artists.

Gagaku (Imperial Court music)

Translated as ‘graceful’ or ‘elegant music’, the Imperial *Gagaku* ensemble, with its unique range of instruments (zither, drums, flutes, mouth-organs and ‘flageolite-type’ instruments), is visually as well as aurally unique. Over the last 1000 years very little has changed about either the distinctive make-up of the *Gagaku* ensemble, or the music it performs, partly owing to its recent placement under the protective watch of the *Imperial Palace music Department*’s guild musicians. Much, however, also owes to the fact that *Gagaku* has been preserved as an oral tradition, with conventions passed down from generation to generation. For centuries, members of the same group of families, the most notable of which is the Togi family, have continued to populate the ensemble.

Often cited for its influence upon Western avant-garde musicians (e.g. New York minimalist La Monte Young), Japanese *Gagaku* music, as it is today, evolved through the culmination of three separate sources: Chinese *To-gaku* (from the Tang Dynasty of the fifth-eight centuries); Korean *Komagaku* music; and traditional Japanese song from the Shinto religion, occasionally performed outside of the Imperial Court at Shinto shrines and temples.

Gaihatsu-teki

Translated to mean ‘outer-directed’, *gaihatsu-teki* was a term first used by Natsume Sōseki in 1911 to explain what he perceived as the differing nature of cultural development in Japan and the West. While in Europe and America ‘enlightenment’ was, according to Sōseki,

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**naihatsu-teki* (inner-directed), in Japan it had long been 'outer-directed', and shaped by observing the ways of other cultures: -

*By 'outer-directed' (gaihatsu-teki) I mean the moulding of a shape
by means of external forces imposed from outside (Sōseki, cited in
Wilkinson, 1991, p.40)*

Gallery 8

Gallery 8 was one of the first ever Live Houses to be established in Tokyo, opening in the Ginza district during 1964.

Garage (Tokyo)

Artists: *Bidziliba; Broomdusters; Gaseneta; LuLu's Marble*

Gekijō no Sanka

Dada-inspired avant-garde collective founded during the mid-1920s. *Gekijō no Sanka* existed as a number of intermittent collaborations and performances organised by several independent avant-garde artists and collectives. While the events of *Gekijō no Sanka* were challenging in the creative and formal sense, adopting many identifiably Dada-esque strategies, there were nevertheless concerns raised by some participants about the group's lack of social/political engagement.

Gendai bijutsu

Japanese term meaning *contemporary art*.

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George Kawaguchi's Big Four

From around the mid-1950s, *George Kawaguchi's Big Four* (est. 1954) was one of the most popular native Japanese jazz ensembles. Adapting popular tunes of the time to sound like jazz standards, their notoriety was aided by the approximate 170 performances they made on Bunka hōsō's *jazz at the Toris* (one of Japan's most popular radio shows). *Rhythm Hour* on NHK, as well as programmes on a number of private radio stations, were other sources through which jazz music could be heard.

Gezabayashi

The second of two ensembles traditionally accompanying *Kabuki performances (see also **Debayashi*). Whereas the *Debayashi* group performs *shamisen, flute, and drum music within the actual performance space itself (i.e. the stage), the *Gezabayashi* ensemble is hidden away from sight, providing what might be described as *diagetic music (music accompanying the on-stage action) and sound effects. In relation to the latter, *Onomatopoeia plays an important function, with instruments and objects from the Gezabayashi's collection used to mimic natural ambient sounds (e.g. environmental elements like the falling of rain, or diagetic sounds such as the tolling of bells).

Gidayū

Traditional form of indigenous Japanese music

Gradual Direction

A style of play developed by free-jazz pioneer Masayuki Takayanagi, *Gradual Direction* is essentially a quiet and pensive improvisational approach, which stands in complete contrast to the artist's alternative **Mass Projection* style. According to Kazu

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Yasutani of *Jinya Disc*¹³⁵: '[Takayanagi] ...said that when one listened to a Gradual Direction piece, the listener's sense of time and space would be torn apart.'

Contemporary avant-gardist Otomo Yoshihide, a self-proclaimed admirer of Takayanagi's, has offered his own thoughts on *Gradual Direction*, affirming the importance of **Space*: -

This was a method that sheared off sounds, a spatial style which was at times performed acoustically. And parallel to this, he had a Tristano-style four-beat jazz guitar combo, and an orthodox free jazz guitar trio. This variety often threw his audiences off. Too extreme for jazz fans, and too inconsistent for fans of free music.

Graphic Compositions

Pioneered by modernist composers like John Cage, Graphic Scores represent another attempt to evade conventional Western modes of composition, incorporating notational instructions within pictorial and diagrammatic designs.

Many of the Graphic Compositions produced by John Cage were exhibited in galleries throughout New York, purely for their visual aesthetic qualities. Similarly, the designs of Japanese modernists such as Takahashi Mayazumi, Toshi Ichianagi, and Toru Takemitsu (e.g. *Corona II* for string(s), 1962¹³⁶) were also exhibited at a number of Tokyo Museums, 'exactly,' according to historian Peter Burt¹³⁷, 'in accord with the Japanese penchant for imitation.' (Burt, 2001, p.95)

Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere, The

See * *Dai Tōi Kyōeiken*

¹³⁵ Jinya Disc, an independent record label dedicated to the music of jazz guitarist Masayuki Takayanagi.

Greater Japan Industrial Patriotic Association

The Japanese government's concern for *leisure* during the time of the Pacific war, was driven by a concern that workers were not receiving the necessary 'cultural training.' Ultimately, 'leisure' itself was defined as non-working time during which state politics could be enforced.

Through state-founded organisations like the *Greater Japan Industrial Patriotic Association*, the government sought to try and promote 'cultural consciousness' by getting musicians, artists and theatre groups to visit factories, even encouraging factory workers, etc, to start their own groups.

The use of 'appropriate theatrical scripts for factory use', related to the use of plays that were contrived not only to carry an underlying Nationalistic message, but also inspire growth in productivity, helping to 'nurture the consolidation of a work ethic.' (Robertson, 1998, p.294)

Grotesque, The

From **Edo period* themes in **Kabuki* drama, to those present in woodblock and **Ukiyo-e* imagery, images of *The Grotesque* have long pervaded the history of Japanese art.

There developed during the 1960s a certain artistic fascination with subjects considered both repulsive and disturbing by the public which, just as in the Edo period, occurred at a time of perceived social oppression and political unease in Japan. The appearance of *The Grotesque* at moments when the nation was uneasy has thus, perhaps speculatively, led to it being evaluated historically as a form of social protest.

¹³⁶ *Corona II* for string(s) (1962): a series of overlaying coloured circular patterns on transparent sheets.

Group Sounds (GS)

Following the excitement of The Beatles' 1966 performances at Tokyo's Budo Kan Hall, Japan's teenagers, like those in the US, began to gleefully succumb to the sounds and fashions of the British Invasion. Bands like The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Zombies and The Small Faces became the focus of new youth cultural trends in Japan, inspiring young Japanese musicians to abandon the Ventures-like instrumental music of **eleki*, in favour of Beat and R&B-influenced pop. It is in this shift away from the surf-sound of solo performers and instrumentalists, that the group sounds (GS) genre derived its name, as Japanese groups sought to emulate the vocally-led music of British and American bands. As a fundamental catalyst to it all, Beatlemania helped in particular to create a new template for teen-image and youth culture, which was simulated not only in Japan, but throughout Europe and the America as well.

The GS era is generally thought to have lasted between 1966 and 1969, during which time the tastes and fashions of fans and musicians alike were modelled as closely as possible upon those of their Western peers. Bands such as The Tempters, The Carnabeats, and The Jaguars, were idolised by Japanese teenagers with the same frenzied enthusiasm as many famous visiting Western groups, owing in large part to their well-crafted image, and faithfulness to Western musical models.

¹³⁷ *The Music of Toru Takemitsu* (2001)

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It is with GS bands such as The Dynamites, The Golden Cups, The Mops and Jacks during the late-1960s, that the roots of psychedelic music in Japan can be traced, emulating Western pioneers of psychedelic and Garage-Punk music like The Creation, The Thirteenth Floor Elevators, The Pretty Things and Jefferson Airplane.

Unlike in the US and UK however, drug-culture was notable only by its absence, and the mind-altering effects of LSD and other narcotics played no part in forming the psychedelic sound of the music in Japan. It was only with the passing of the GS-boom and the end of psychedelia in the West, that psychedelic music in Japan began to truly develop, continuing to evolve to the present day as an independent, avant-garde, autonomous art form.

Gutai Group

Multidisciplinary art movement founded by Jiro Yoshihara in Ōsaka during the 1950s, featuring artists such as Akira Kanayama, Sadamasa Motanaga, Shuso Mukai, Saburo Mirakami, Shozo Shimamoto, Kazuo Shiraga, Atsuko Tanaka, Kudo Tetsumi, Tsuruko Yamasaki, and Minuro Yoshida.

In parallel with their New York Fluxus contemporaries, the Gutai Group can be regarded as innovators of Happenings and Intermedia-related performances in Japan.

Gyaku Yunyu

Gyaku Yunyu is a term used to define the cultural phenomenon of ‘reverse importation’, which proposes that artists have to first achieve recognition or fame outside of Japan, before gaining the respect of audiences at home. As historian Endymion Wilkinson suggests¹³⁸: -

¹³⁸ *Japan Versus the West: Image and Reality* (1991)

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...it is not enough for individual Japanese artists to win the esteem and affection of the domestic audience, but they must seek recognition and awards from Europe and the USA. The pursuit of fame beyond one's own country is common, and in today's global markets almost automatic, but for a Japanese, unless you first gain recognition outside Japan, you will find it harder to be accepted at home (a phenomenon known as 'reverse imports', gyaku yunyu).

(Wilkinson, 1991, p.41)

H

Hakurai Hin

Meaning ‘merchandise brought by boat’, *Hakurai Hin* refers to goods imported to Japan from Europe. The phrase reflects the idea that, while many Japanese consider America to be the world’s superpower (despite often surpassing it in terms of trade), Europe, on the other hand, represents little more than the remnants of a once-powerful empire, long since declined.

With this in mind, *Hakurai Hin* have come to be regarded as rich and lavish items (depending, of course, on exactly what they are): -

In line with the view of Europe as a historic source of high culture, European goods are considered especially modish... it is almost as if European imports were regarded as a sort of expansive garnish to complement the basic fare of Japanese industrial products.

(Wilkinson, 1991, p.85)

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Han-geijutsu

Japanese **Anti-Art* trend that emerged during the first half of the 1960s. Historian Alexandra Monroe has described these artists as the “post-Hiroshima generation”, brought up amongst the rubble and death of the post-war, post-Atomic-Holocaust environment. She describes the lives of *Han-geijutsu* artists as being shaped by the societal turmoil that pervaded Japan during this time, and their position as anti-artists a first-hand response to ‘this state of absolute void.’ (Monroe, 1994, p.189)

Hard Core

Artists: *Panicsmile; Paradise Alley; Screaming Pinch Hitter; 54-71; Cocobat*

Hard-Funk Noise

Artists: *Funhouse*

Hard-Prog

Artists: *Providence; Sillfeed; Terra Rosa*

Hard-Psych

Artists: *Sweet & Honey*

Harsh Noise

Artists: *Monde Bruits; Noise Ramones*

Harshtronic

Artists: *Astronics; Aube; Fumio Kosakai; Ikuro Takahashi; Pain Jerk*

Heian Period

The Heian period in Japan (794 - 1185) is notable partly in that it marked the birth of many of Japan's indigenous cultural traditions. Corresponding with the repositioning of the capital city from Nagaoaka to Heian (now Kyoto) in 784, the influence of other Asian countries, particularly China, began progressively to wane, and many previously imported cultural ideas were 'Japanised'.

This was seen in the gradual changes undergone by Japanese Buddhist sects¹³⁹, for example, or milestones such as the introduction of Kana syllables, which marked the foundation of Japanese literature. musically also, many of the styles and methods appropriated from neighbouring cultures underwent similar processes of revision and customisation. Gagaku court music, for example, evolved predominantly through a combination of Chinese and Japanese folk traditions.

Heike Biwa

Lute-like string instrument derived from the traditional *biwa. The *Heike Biwa* (also *heikyoku/heike shikyoku*) was developed during the thirteenth-century for performances of the classic Japanese *Tale of the Heike* (*Heike Monogatari*), which tells of the great twelfth-century war between two mighty rival families – the *Taira* (or *Heike*) and the *Minamoto* (*Genji*).

Heisei Era

1989 to present.

¹³⁹ Originally derived from China

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Herodianism

A notion developed by Alfred Toynbee in *Civilisation On Trial* (1952) which has been used¹⁴⁰ to describe Japan's initial reaction to the forcible arrival of Western travellers in the 19th Century. The 'Herodian Principle' essentially describes a situation whereby a culture, when faced with or challenged by a technically superior enemy, discards its own traditions in order to learn those of its adversaries, and therefore challenge the enemy on its own terms. [See also *Zealotism]. With this in mind, the appearance of foreign war ships during the mid-nineteenth century, can be seen as a highly influential factor in instigating the *Meiji Restoration. The defeat of a number of Japan's Pacific neighbours by the industrialised West, was enough to make many Japanese leaders and academics covet Western military, scientific and industrial technology – if only, initially, as a matter of self-protection.

Hibiki

One of Tokyo's seminal and most distinguished jazz kissas. The *Hibiki* was closed down in December 1993 causing widespread public uproar.

Hip-Hop/Trip-Hop Derived

Artists: *Audio Sports; D.J. Krash; Goddess in the Morning;*

Hogaku

Word meaning or referring to traditional Japanese music.

Honne

The reverse of **Tatamae*, *Honne* is a Japanese concept which represents a person's inner thoughts, feelings, and intentions. *Honne* represents the things usually concealed

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beneath the facade of **Tatamae*, so as to avoid inadvertently appearing discourteous, affecting an uncomfortable social situations, or causing insult or offence.

Horogai

Conch shell-type wind instrument.

¹⁴⁰ Peter Burt (2001) *The Music of Toru Takemitsu*.

I

I-Ching

The *Chinese Book of Changes* was imported to the West from China early in the twentieth century, and has had a notable impact upon the development avant-garde practises in music and the creative arts.

Evolved over thousands of years, the *Chinese Book of Changes* - known in the West as the *I Ching* - forms a complicated system of divination. According to writer Steven Ericsson Zenith¹⁴¹, if given ‘...a set of correctly identified circumstances it provides us with the means by which we may determine the likely outcome of any given situation.’ (Ericsson Zenith, www.TheTemple.com/TheBookofChange/Preamble.html)

During the mid-twentieth century, the *I Ching* was adopted by modernist composer John Cage, who sought through Indeterminacy to challenge the hegemony of compositional methods, and the way in which musical conventions inhibited peoples perception and understanding of sound.

It was Cage's intention to propagate less discriminate modes of producing and listening to music, rejecting the preconditioned values that unnecessarily classified sound as either noise or music. Through his adoption of the *I Ching*, applying its system of foretelling to the act of composing music, Cage was able to use sound in a way that was not bound by the traditional conventions and values of Western music.

Ikaten (Ikasu Band Tengoku)

Mainstream television programme in Japan (during the 1960s/1970s?) which featured new Japanese bands and acts. Contemporary sound artist Sachiko M appeared on the show with a high school covers band.

Imperial Theatre

The Imperial Theatre was established in 1911 to promote the development of Western-style music

Impressionism

The significance of French Impressionist music in this context, is that it illustrates what might be seen as the *Feedback Loop between Japan and Europe – the re-importation into Japan of traditional Japanese culture, through an interest in Japanese-inspired Western art.

For example, while Debussy was influential to many Japanese composers around the turn of the nineteenth-century, he himself had sought inspiration in the art and music of Japan and other Eastern nations. By importing the ideas of Debussy, Japanese musicians were, in a sense, re-importing traditional Japanese ideas - safe in the knowledge that such actions could be deemed neither nationalistic nor backwards looking.

Improvisation

Whether in relation to jazz, psychedelia, electronic music, or modernist composition, improvisation has remained a central factor throughout the historical development of avant-garde music in Japan.

Describing an early collaboration he undertook with *The Boredoms*' Yamatsuka Eye during the late 1980s, avant-gardist Otomo Yoshihide looks upon improvised music as a kind of haphazard, chance-like operation. As a sound artist or musician, he believes Improvisation provides an opportunity to take away the safety net, and enjoy mistakes and awkward moments just as much as those that were planned or composed in the conventional sense.

¹⁴¹ Author of *The Temple of the Immortal Spirit*

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*I like this kind of mistake combination together, this kind of risk, otherwise improvisation is just going to be safe. I love improvisation, but I'm not interested in that sort of typical improvising style. (Yoshihide in *The Wire* Issue 202, August 2000, p.41)*

Improvised Music

Artists: *Altered States; Taj Mahal Travellers; Ché-Shizu; Shuichi Chino; Cobra; Susumu Congo; Nao Takeuchi; Dai-Sanmyaku X; Drop Pow.+; Exploded Toys; Gnu; Ground Zero; Gyaatees; Keiji Haino; Poly Breath Percussion Band; Takeharu Hayakawa; Akira Iijima; Jutoku Kaneko; Yuriko Mukojima; OAD; Pa-Pa; Samadhi; Michihiro Sato; Seikazoku*

‘Improvisation’ (Derek Bailey)

Seminal book written by improviser and free jazz guitarist Derek Bailey, first published in Japan around the time of the author's second performance there in 1980. See also: **free jazz*

Incidental Music

Generally speaking, incidental music refers to those compositions produced specifically to accompany films, television productions, theatrical performances and plays, etc.

Independent Rock (early 1970s)

Early 1970s Western-style Japanese rock music to Japan, influenced by the likes of Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Yes, etc. Artists: *Flower Travelling Band; Blues Creation; Fried Egg; Yanagida Hiro; The Folk Crusaders; Jacks; Happy End; Zuno Keisatsu*

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Indeterminacy

An indeterminate piece...even though it might sound like a totally determined one, is made essentially without intention so that, in opposition to music of results, two performances of it will be different. (Cage in Goldberg, 1988 p124)

By first adopting Indeterminate procedures during the 1950s and 1960s, Minimalist composers, artists and choreographers sought not only to explore new degrees of flexibility, fluency and change within the creative process, but also to remove the influence - and therefore control - of the artist. It is a method often related in the West to *Oriental* philosophy, particularly Zen Buddhism, and can be seen to have been re-imported by composers such as Toru Takemitsu (e.g. in *Ring*, 1961), who were largely influenced by John Cage's Zen-inspired works.

Indie-Rock

Artists: *Shonen Knife*; *Tennis Coats*

Influence

Deriving from the 4th century Latin term *influxus (stallanum)*, which refers to matters of an astrological nature (the exhalation of power and light from the stars), the word *influence* became attributable to people also from around the thirteenth century onwards. In relation to performance, music, and the creative arts in general, it is often quite easy to say that one artist was *influenced* by the work of another, or that a particular style was strongly based upon other extraneous cultural *influences*. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, *influence* can be:

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The inflowing, immission, or infusion (into a person or thing) of any kind of divine, spiritual, moral, immaterial, or secret power or principle; that of which thus flows or is infused.

Influence can imply anything from mere aesthetic appropriation, to the holistic adoption of a whole new cultural, philosophical and spiritual outlook, of which the resulting artwork is merely a consequence. Beyond using the word as merely a convenient, yet vague, way to link two disparate things however (i.e. avoiding any real attention as to *how* or *why*), considering the actual form or extent of *influence* can be an insightful exercise to both audiences of art, and artists themselves.

In her study entitled *Zen in the Fifties: Interaction in art between East and West* (1997), Helen Westgeest outlines a number of significant issues to be faced when examining the history of cross-cultural exchanges between Japan and the Occident. Outlining in the introductory chapter some of the problems she herself confronted in her own research, Westgeest also succeeds in underlining the ambiguous nature of *influence*: -

The Scant enthusiasm to study the scope and nature of modern artists' interests in the Far East is probably due to the fact that influences from the East are hard to prove. (*Westgeest, 1997, p.8*)

Influence is, when imposed in any context, a potentially misleading and reductive notion, particularly since it is a term so commonly used as a woolly and vague substitute for genuine insight/explanation. In this sense, attempting to explain-away specific historical instances where East and West have influenced each other is, as with anything else, far from straightforward. Even defining music and culture as products of East or West should be something now called into question. At a time when global communication technology and the ease of international travel has made the *globalised* world a much smaller place, there is

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certainly a case to suggest that what cultural boundaries still exist, are determined by more than just geographical location determined.

Innere Klang

A German term meaning ‘inner sound’, the concept of *Innere Klang* was conceived by artist Wassily Kandinsky, featuring strongly in his study *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* published in 1912. Following an exhibition of Asian art in Munich, 1910, Kandinsky began to be profoundly interested by what he saw as the underlying ‘inner’ life possessed by these works – an essence he believed was not present in the art of his Western contemporaries. *Innere Klang* is an attempt to sum up this infusion of spirituality in art (its importance of over mere aesthetic considerations), and relates closely to Kandinsky’s series of *Improvisations*, which consisted of 35 paintings produced between 1909 and 1914. In the spirit of musical improvisation, or even later surrealist automatic writing, Kandinsky attempted to paint ‘automatically’, without any assertion of forethought or consciousness: a pursuit of spiritual expression through nothingness, essentially striving towards the *Zen-Buddhist state of *Satori.

Inside Piano

Self-made instrument played by Andrea Neumann, a frequent collaborator with Sachiko M. Neumann’s *Inside Piano* is made from the extracted innards (the strings, and frame holding them taught) of a real piano.

Intermedia

Introduced in Dick Higgins’ 1966 essay, Intermedia focuses upon the idea that just as there are no boundaries between art and life, neither should there be between art form and art form.

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I find I never feel quite complete unless I'm doing all the arts--visual, musical and literary. I guess that's why I developed the term 'intermedia,' to cover my works that fall conceptually between these. (Dick Higgins in Hoffberg 1998)

According to various musicologists and historians, there exists a traditional, almost inseparable historical relationship between music and theatre in Japan. In *Bunraku*, *Gagaku*, and *Noh* Theatre (to name but three examples), sound plays a pivotal role - far exceeding that of mere *Incidental music - and provides cues for both audience and actor, as well as a range of other symbolic and narrative functions.

In this sense *Intermedia* has long been a part of Japanese culture, even if only because the hierarchies placed in the west between various art forms, are traditionally alien in Japan.

As a consciously employed avant-garde strategy however, the introduction of *Intermedia* in Japan came almost directly from Higgins and the New York Fluxus collective. Takehisa Kosugi, a pivotal figure in the history of avant-garde Japanese music (and an artist of international renown from the early 1960s), was a founder member of both **Ili Red Centre* and **Group Ongaku*. Linked closely to Kosugi's own friendship with artists related to the New York Fluxus movement (such as David Tudor and John Cage), **Ili Red Centre* and **Group Ongaku* both explored the possibilities of *Intermedia*, simultaneously combining music, performance, visual arts and improvisation within single performances.

Internationalism

Internationalism relates closely to the *Fluxus* idea of *Globalism* – the breaking down of National and Global cultural boundaries. As Dick Higgins explains: -

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*It is not simply the realization that boundaries don't count, but
that in the most important issues there are no boundaries.*

(Higgins, Dick in Munroe 2000 p19)

Illustrated by the emergence of avant-garde composers like Toru Takemitsu and collectives such as **Jikken Kobo*, it can be seen how the late 1940s and early 1950s saw the emergence of a new generation of Japanese radical artists.

For centuries, Japanese culture had been caught up in a cycle, characterised by dramatic fluctuations between Westernisation (and the mimicry of Western culture) on the one hand, and the reactionary re-absorption of its own folk heritage (i.e. Nationalism) on the other. Particularly notable amongst the emerging generation of Post-war avant-gardists, was the urgency with which they sought to reject this dominant cycle of mainstream culture in Japan.

The principle aim was to develop an approach to music and art (and therefore a body of work) that was autonomous, independent, and representative of contemporary Japanese life. In relation to the early compositional approach of Takemitsu, for example, this did not so much represent an overt binding together of Western and Japanese musical conventions, but rather a kind of cultural independence - the production of music that *escaped*, rather than reconciled, these disparate traditions. Identifying him as a Japanese composer working within the 'realm of Western modernist art music,' Peter Burt has characterised the music of Takemitsu as adopting a distinctly 'international musical vocabulary to express an indigenous aesthetic goal.' (Burt, 2001)

J

Japan Bashing

Name generically given to a perceived tendency within certain factions of Western economic and political media (particularly the USA during the 1970s and 1980s) to convey misgivings and feelings of distrust towards Japan.

Many Japanese have interpreted this as a kind of institutional racism on the part of America who, during Japan's economic boom of the 1980s, frequently rounded accusations of unfair trade and unethical behaviour to explain her success on the international market. For both parties concerned, the tensions underlying accusations of *Japan Bashing* (whether founded or otherwise) are deeply rooted within the history of the two nations.

Japaneseness

How often is a painting or composition or song from Japan discussed purely in terms of its *Japaneseness* – as the product of a Japanese artist, or it's relation to the 'cultural tensions'¹⁴² that are presumed to underpin contemporary Japanese life? While not denying that these tensions exist, (just as they do in most free-market, capitalist societies) what I am suspicious of is the extent to which they are so widely and readily applied to any contemporary artistic product leaving Japan, no matter what the motive or medium.

A vast number of curators and critics, etc, seem satisfied to make *The Japaneseness* of a particular thing the central focus of critical engagement, although one gets the impression that there are some contemporary artists from Japan quite happy to field this kind of conjecture: content to be perceived as the 'other'; regarded with intrigue; misunderstood; speculated over; perceived as mysterious and unfathomable.

¹⁴² E.g. conflicts between progression and the preservation of tradition; the ancient and the futuristic; spirituality and consumerism?

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The West, it seems, often projects an idea of contemporary Japanese culture onto Japan that matches all the stereotypes and satisfies its own historically loaded preconceived ideas of Japan (i.e. the perception of it as a confusing and paradoxical nation, both defined and split by these tensions).

However, a number of contemporary Japanese artists have now become quite adept at holding the mirror up to such projections, and reflecting them back to the West - happy to maintain, and even capitalise upon, the mystique that such speculation and misunderstanding breeds.

One such example of this might be found somewhere in the underlying motives or underpinning ideas of recently released movie *I.K.U.*, (2001) a kind of soft-porn-science-fiction-parody, for which Hoppy Kamiyama¹⁴³ provided the soundtrack and score. Takashi Asai, who co-wrote and produced the film, implies that somewhere within *I.K.U.* there dwells a certain understanding or acknowledgement of how some Japanese feel they are perceived in the West. The film, in this sense, self reflexively picks up on popular Occidental notions of Japan, caricatured as an ultramodern futuristic playground, paradoxically built upon the austere foundations of its history and tradition.

As Sugawara to some extent clarifies: -

In the West these days it seems there is a lot of interest in Japanimation
...Tokyo is viewed as a futuristic city, abroad you see all these flashy images of
Shibuya or hyper-technological scenes quite frequently. Thus I thought I'd give
people around the world what they were looking for with this sci-fi porn film
that incorporates digital effects, animation, and an obsession with technology.

According to the producer, the film takes on and goes along with these popular misrepresentations of Japan, amplifying and reflecting back the West's long-standing,

¹⁴³ Working with his *Saboten* ensemble.

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already-distorted understanding of Japaneseness. It is not so much the acknowledgement, as the calculating parody of how Japan and Japanese identity is perceived in the West.

Japanoise

Artists: *Merzbow; Masonna; Incapacitants; Niku-Zidousha; Hijo Kaidan; Hentaitenno; Government Alpha; The Gerogerigegege; C.C.C.C.; Aube; Omoide Hatoba; Violent Onsen Geisha; Hanatarash; Jurajium; Umbilico Eppure*

While much noise music, according to Michel Henritzi, can be regarded as ‘extreme versions of psychedelia’ (e.g. Akita Masami and Merzbow), Japanoise bands such as Hanadensha and the Boredoms purportedly ‘took their cue from Techno and Krautrock.’ (Henritzi, 2001)

Japonisme

Term credited in its origins to French art critic Philippe Burty around the time of the World Exhibition in Paris, 1867. *Japonisme* was used in reference to a style of European painting that was inspired, aesthetically, by Japanese wood blocks and prints. Katsushika Hokusai’s (1760-1849) **Manga* series, for example, is thought to have profoundly interested a number of artists as diverse and high profile as Whistler, Manet, and Toulouse-Lautrec.

Jazz at the Toris

During the 1950s, Bunka Hōsō’s *jazz at the Toris* was one of the most popular radio programmes in Japan.

Jazz Café Circle

Association whose history is closely bound with that of the jazzu kissas and Japanese jazz-boom of the 1950s and 1960s. In 1970, the organisation banned dissident jazz guitarist

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Takayanagi 'Jojo' Masayuki after he made a number of controversial comments in *jazz Magazine* (e.g. 'It's my obligation to play requiems for a bunch of losers').

Jazz-Core

Artists: *Korekyojin; Puzzle Punks; UFO or Die*

Jazz Fusion

A Paragon of Beauty; Toshimaru Nakamura; Kaneko Aska; Motor Humming; Wappa Gappa

During the 1970s, Japan's *jazz kissas underwent a notable period of change. As a new generation of students and attendees began listening heavily to *jazz Fusion*, owners of the old jazz Cafes were faced with a choice: either reinvent their establishments to meet the tastes and demands of the new dominant audience, or face possible extinction. The price of not catering to this change in trends and fashions was clear, for example, in the media, as newly established free jazz journals such as *jazz* and *jazzland* fell swiftly by the wayside.

Consequently, with the fashionable rise of *Fusion*, came radical changes to the jazz scene in Tokyo. jazz kissas were no longer the strict, austere places of musical contemplation they had been during the 1950s; nor were they dark, meditative temple-like spaces, as late-1960s *free jazz trends had determined they be.

By the early-1970s, buying music in Japan had not only become more affordable, but there were also an increasing number of music festivals, *Live Houses, and foreign musicians available for Japanese jazz fans to hear and indulge in.

Some (but *only* some) jazz kissas of Tokyo quickly adapted to these new tastes and changes in habit. Alcohol began to find its way onto the coffee menu; the blacked-out walls were un-blackened and given a coat of colour; *jazz Fusion* music found a place on the turntable; and the heavy volume levels (previously a feature of free-jazz jazz kissas) were substantially reduced.

Jazz King Series

During the first half of the 1950s, jazz records were particularly scarce. In 1956, King Records established the *jazz King Series*: a succession of releases dedicated entirely to Japanese jazz bands.

Jazz Rock

Il Berlione; Kehell; Kenso; *Mull House*; *Side Steps*; *Tipographia*.

Tipographica, a six-piece band featuring lead guitarist Tsuneo Imahori, have been described as follows: -

The band is entertaining, yet rhythmically the music is like a kaleidoscope of constantly shifting patterns, with some fine drumming by Akira Sotoyama. Tipographica is as complicated or as fun as you want it to be, taking you through mazes of jazz and heavy rock at times reminiscent of the Henry Kaiser band, Hendrix or Fred Frith. (Mark Robinson, 'The God Squad', Tokyo Journal, 06/93, p.52).

Jazz kissa

The extortionate price of collecting jazz records meant that, in the main, only radio stations and jazz kissas could really afford to indulge.

The jazz kissas were officially coffee shops, although in the main, coffee drinking was very much a secondary concern – an excuse to immerse oneself in music and Manga. During the 1960s, personal audio technology had not yet made music and popular entertainment as accessible as it would become a decade later. In the jazzu kissas of Tokyo, not only were the records of western artists like Eric Dolphy and Ornette Coleman played, but –due to limited funds and space – Japanese Improvisers would also often play solo, yielding performances

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that, according to contemporary sound artist Otomo Yoshihide, were 'more abstract and extreme' than those of a band. (Yoshihide, Iss.185, p.34)

jazz cafes during the 1950s were frequented by enthusiasts as places of knowledge and learning, and, as Eckhart Derschmidt explains, patrons were expected to 'be able to tell white from black players,' if they wished to be thought of as 'real jazz fan[s].' (Derschmidt, 1998, p.308)

These early jazz kissas were serious places of learning. Due to the high cost of importing records from the US, they took on the ambience of jazz appreciation classes, even to the extent where customers would take notes and address the owner as sensei. The serious, academic-like nature of the jazz cafes was paralleled by the tone of popular jazz publications, such as *Swing Journal*. This kind of authoritarian disseminating and dedicated appreciation of jazz, while perhaps contradictory to the nature of the music itself (particularly in its popular Western context), reflects the studied seriousness it demanded as an almost sacred, highbrow product.

By the 1960s, although records had become a little easier to get hold of, they were nevertheless still sufficiently rare and expensive to ensure jazz kissas maintained their indispensable cultural role. Late night radio shows still remained one of the best ways a listener could get to hear jazz at home, although in 1969 the first dedicated jazz program also appeared on television, hosted by Watanabe Sadao.

The development of Live Houses in the Shinjuku district of Tokyo from around 1965, corresponded with a notable change in the collective attitudes of the student population. It was around this time that students began to turn away from the consumerist rewards and trappings of economic growth, and develop an empathy with free jazz musicians in America who, in ways to which they could relate, had also suffered at the hands of state repression.

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jazz kissas, or jazz Cafes¹⁴⁴, were a popular phenomenon between the 1950s and 1970s in Japan. At a time when personal audio technology had not yet made music and entertainment as accessible as it would become a decade later, jazz kissas created an environment where one could be immersed in music and Manga.

Virtually all jazz kissas boasted a vast collection of jazz records (often imported from America) which would be listed for proprietors to choose from. Not only were the records of western favourites like Eric Dolphy and Ornette Coleman played, but many cafes also put on performances by visiting Western acts. Due to limited funds and availability however, the majority of live jazz performed at the jazz kissas featured Japanese artists who, owing to the lack of space, would often perform solo.

Jikken Kobo

The *experimental Workshop*, formed in 1951, was an interdisciplinary collective of artists, musicians and performers whose predominant aim, set out in manifesto-style declarations, was to see ‘the experimental domain of new art ...infinitely expanded.’ (cited in Burt, p.40). Despite being unaware of their existence, such declarations invite inevitable parallels to be drawn between *Jikken Kobo* and their Western Dada, Surrealist, and Fluxus counterparts.

Members of the group included composers Toru Takemitsu, Hiroyoshi Suzuki, Joji Yuasa, Kazuo Fukushima and Keiji Sato, writer Kuniharu Akiyami, stage producer Takahiro Sonada, artists Shozo Kitajiro, Katsuhiro Yamaguchi, Hideo Fukushima and pianist Noaji Ima.

Jiko hon’I

Translated to mean “Autonomy”, Jiko hon’I is a fundamentally crucial idea in terms of the development of avant-garde music Japan. Written about at length by turn-of-the-

¹⁴⁴ Kissaten being the Japanese word for café.

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century Meiji commentator Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916), this notion is centred around the realisation that what are taken to be universal cultural values (which, for Sōseki, were those belonging to the nineteenth-century), were actually values enforced by a patriarchal west, and should not be recognised or accepted in Japan. Japanese artists should reject the unquestioned imposition of Western genres and classifications, seeking to create and apprehend works within an autonomous context – assessing each piece in terms of its own individual qualities and characteristics (rather than within the confines of a ‘universalised’ Western classification system).

Joruri

Principle type or style of music used to accompany Bunraku puppet theatre.

Junk music

Artists: *Our Hour; Pugtus; Super Nudist; Theremin Orchestra; Violent Onsen Geisha*

K

Kabuki

A traditional form of theatrical performance in Japan, *Kabuki* is notable partly for the fact that, in 1629 (during its relative infancy), women were banned from taking part. The attention afforded them by male members of the audience was, it seemed, too much for the refined sensibilities of Japan's seventeenth-century authority figures. The ban, which lasted around 250 years, led to the development of *onnagata* (men cast to play the female roles), which, subsequently, has now come to be a fundamental characteristic of *Kabuki*.

One set of important factors in the development of the art form, were the social tensions that shaped and underpinned many of the 300 traditional plays in existence. Despite possessing considerable wealth and economic power, merchant classes during the Edo period were nevertheless regarded as subordinate to the warrior classes. The stringent enforcement and oppressive presence of such feudalistic values was often addressed in the content of *Kabuki* plays, most of which were unsurprisingly the product of these mercantile peoples.

The formal elements of *Kabuki* draw heavily upon the characteristics of other traditional Japanese performance types, particularly *Bunraku*, *Kyogen*, and *Noh* plays (for example, the waggish intervals often sandwiched between *Noh* performances).

Amongst instruments most commonly associated with *Kabuki*, is the Shamisen, with 'Shamisen music' often used to describe the musical accompaniment of *Kabuki* performances. Taking the form of several recognisable categories, including *naguata*, *kiyoto* and *tokiwazu*, music is essential to *Kabuki*, although sound also (e.g., effects like those supplied by wooden clappers) contributes significantly, providing cues for both actor and audience (the example above being used to signal the beginning and end of a play).

Two separate musical ensembles are used to accompany *Kabuki* performances, each performing a distinctly different function: **Debayashi* and **Gezabayashi*.

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Kagura

Collective name for the musical styles and conventions derived directly from the Shinto religion, originating from the mid-late eighth-century in Japan.

Kakko

Double-headed barrel-shaped drum belonging to the *Gakaku* ensemble.

Kakushin-shugi

Summed up not only as an avant-garde and liberal way of thinking, but also one that was centred upon Western learning, *Kakushin-shugi* was targeted during the Showa period as a dangerous phenomenon that would ultimately lead the youth of Japan astray. It is no fluke of history that the identifying and stamping out of *Kakushin-shugi*, corresponded with the subsequent promotion of **kokutai*, and rise of Nationalism leading up to World war Two.

Kansai Underground

Important movement in Japanese independent music which owes its name to the District of Osaka from which it arose. Includes bands and artists including *Idiot O'Clock*; *Zushi Naoki*.

Karōshi

Death caused by excessive overwork, often associated with working bee/salarymen-types in the Megalopolises of Tokyo and Osaka.

Kayōkyoku

Popular music genre developed during the Taishō period.

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Ke

Term used to define ordinary working time in Japan.

Kimi ga yo

Japanese national anthem composed shortly after the **Meiji Restoration*, which, to a large extent, explains its recognisably western character – despite being co-composed by Japanese musicians.

Kindai Hihan

Intellectual movement in Japan most notable for its activities during the 1970s. One of their notable concerns, expressed in member Karatani Kōjin's *analysis The Origin's of modern Japanese Literature*, was in striving to establish a sense of modernism in Japan that was detached – critically, theoretically, and in practice - from associations with that of Europe and the US. According to Karatani, there is/was a tendency in Asia to associate *modernity/modernism* with *Westernism*, which – despite the fact that it was derived from there – nevertheless leads to fundamental misapprehensions (the primary being that, because Japan is obviously not Western, it therefore cannot subsequently be truly modernist).

Many of the principles of *Kindai Hihan* reflect a desire to see a perception of, and approach to, creative art that is fundamentally *autonomous*: not regressive in the Nationalistic sense, enforcing traditional folk culture as popular culture; nor always assessed in terms of its adherence with, or departure from, dominant western artistic models. Parallels Natsume Sōseki's concept of **Jiko Hon'I* (autonomy) several decades earlier.

Kindai no chōkoku

Translated roughly as 'overcoming modernity', *Kindai no Chōkoku* was the title of a significant academic conference held in Kyoto, 1942. Essentially, the central aim of the forum was to evaluate the nature, and future development, of modernity in Japan – looking to

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establish a future that neither blindly followed the lead of the West, nor simply resisted modernisation as a western danger (in favour of the restoration of indigenous folk tradition). Attendees at the conference sought to pioneer a future for Japan that was both forward looking and modern, yet autonomous in its independence from Western development: representative only of contemporary and future life in Japan.

As Alexandra Monroe explains in her opening chapter to *Scream at the Sky*: -

The Kyoto debate was the culmination of decades of intellectual protest against Western political, economic, and cultural influence in Asia. On one hand, this movement grieved the passing of traditional Japanese values in the wake of industrialisation ...on another hand, it was related to leftist revolutionary ideals which defended a modernisation process that relied neither on Western models nor reified traditional forms. (Monroe, 1994, p.23)

In relation to this, see also **Autonomy* and **Jiko hon'i*.

Kitsch pop

Artists: 00100

Koan

An important facet of Zen is in learning how to rise above perceptions of every day logic and reason and, ultimately, realise that the only way to truly understand the world is through illogical, enlightened means – by realising that the world *cannot* be understood. *Koan*, the illogical or paradoxical question, is an essential way of learning how to attain this outlook.

Kōba (kōjo) Engeki

Kōba (kōjo) Engeki (Industrial Drama). The ‘industrial drama’ genre of theatre emerged during the early 1940s as a way to try and inspire a ‘communal work ethic’, and increase productivity levels towards Japan’s war effort – a further example of the State using art to fulfil its own ends.

Kokufu Kabu

Also known as ‘Pure Japanese music’ and ‘Japanese Song Dance’, *Kokufu Kabu* is linked traditionally with both Shrine and Court ceremonies, and is music featuring both vocal and instrumental elements.

Kokugaku

Term meaning ‘National music’.

Kokumindōtoku to Naru Tehon

During World War Two, the theatre was charged with the responsibility of helping to turn citizens away from the West and towards the tenets of Japanese Nationalism, becoming what has been identified as *kokumindōtoku to naru tehon* - a shining example of public probity and honour.

Kokusaika

Japanese term translated into English to mean ‘Internationalisation’.

Kokutai

This idea, meaning *National Polity*, became increasingly important during the **Showa* period, when the fear of foreign influence and progressiveness (**kakushin-shugi*)

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became a cause for panic and deep concern amongst the ruling state authorities in Japan.

Kokutai centred upon the centrality of state, and led to the imposition of the strict Nationalist regime dominant throughout Japan's World war Two campaign.

Kokyu

Bowed string instrument

Koto

Derived from the Chinese *Cheng*, a zither-like instrument imported into Japan around the time of the eighth-century, the *Koto* was first commonly played by blind musicians in the courts of the Edo Period (1603 – 1868). It was during this time that Yatsushashi Kengyo (1614 – 1685), a master of the *Koto*, utilised it for the first time as a solo instrument, and by the end of the **Edo* period two major schools of *Sokyoku* (Koto music) had been established: the *Ikuta* and the *Yamada* schools. The *Koto*, which has thirteen strings and thirteen movable bridges to alter pitch and tone, also became required learning for women of the Samurai class.

Ko-tsuzumi

Type of drum. One of the four instruments that make up the musical ensemble used in *Noh* theatre.

Krautrock

As if the application and legacy of the Krautrock designation was not stretched far beyond all usefulness anyway, commentators, writers, and other's 'in the know' have also found it necessary to tar Japanese artists with this already over-used brush (when, perhaps, the effort to find both a new brush and whole new variety of tar should have been made). As it stands, the term Krautrock, familiar as it is, is already traditionally applied with reference to a range of bands and musicians whose pioneering work, across a hugely diverse spectrum,

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defies such bland and easy categorisation. To look at Japanese bands such as *Bambi Synapse* and *Sunao Inami*, as being Krautrock inspired, therefore, gives way to more questions and issues than it usefully resolves - evidence primarily not only of the unimaginative laziness of those wielding such easy, all-encompassing classifications, but also that the Eurocentric tendency to assess products of its cultural 'other' according to its own conventions, practices, and traditions (a long practised Western modernist tendency).

L

Language

There's very little to dispute about the fact that, if one were to make a number of assertions about the approximate fifty-year history of popular music, they would almost certainly include the following: -

- pop music is predominantly song-based.
- pop-songs are predominantly language-based (i.e. have words/lyrics)
- The language predominant in the most popular pop-songs is English (or, for quibblers, American-English).

For non-English speaking musicians wanting to emulate English/American rock and pop trends, it's not difficult to see how significant their chosen lyrical-dialect might be – especially for those with one an eye on global success.

These issues were particularly well debated in Japan during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The main question being asked was, essentially, whether or not the Japanese language could accommodate Euro-American pop: was it capable of being moulded and squeezed to fit the standard melodic requirements, and eight-beat structures, that had evolved from the completely dissimilar linguistic sensibilities of English-speaking pop?

Predictably, the answer to this was, and still is, no answer at all. Whereas a number of 1960s *GS bands (e.g. *Happy End*), for example, stuck by their native language (modifying only by way of an added English-style lilt), the majority of others opted to write and sing wholly in - sometimes quite awkward - English.

The fact that this adoption of the English language is highlighted here for its occasional awkwardness, however, is by no means an attempt at derision, or the product of some Eurocentric, Westernist conceit. Conversely, what it seeks more usefully to draw

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attention to is the frequently voiced argument from within Japan, concerning the negative impact of Occidental culture, and its mass-importation, upon *indigenous* Japanese modernism.

While the scope of this issue is exceptionally broad, and the arguments deep-rooted, perhaps the criticism most relevant here concerns the perceived incompatibility of certain uniquely Japanese sensibilities, with those of the foreign culture it imports. Again, this idea can be applied on a number of different levels, but in the least abstract sense, the proposed insensitivity of modern hi-fi technology (with the focus upon optimising Western sounds, supposedly rendering it deaf to the tonal subtleties traditional Japanese music) offers one example.

With this in mind, the influence of the English language has been regarded as a similarly invasive presence, partly responsible for preventing Japanese pop music from following its own independent course - developing, instead, after Western models. Notorious sound artist Keiji Haino is one notable proponent of this critique, stating in an interview for music journal *The Wire*: -

If they sang in Japanese just once, they'd soon realise that rock 'n' roll won't fit into eight-beat rhythms. And if they'd realised that then I believe that all they could do would be to develop new rhythms. That would have created Japanese rock. (Haino, in Cummings, July 2002, p.36)

In the non-pop realms of the avant-garde, however, the centrality of spoken language and linguistics is not so much an issue for concern, as it is the subject of exploitation, subversion and evasion.

As can be paralleled elsewhere in the world of experimental sound, Japanese New musicians have employed a plethora of strategies and techniques to nullify language as a restrictive convention, and create new modes of personal, independent and automatic

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expression (whether, for example, in the **Dada*-inspired **noise* music of Masimo Akita's *Merzbow*, or the physicality of Keiji Haino's vocal and instrumental exploits).

Leisure (Etymology of Leisure in Japan)

While *yoka* comes from China, another Japanese word for leisure (*rejā*) is derived from English, leading some academics to claim that the Japanese possess no inherent sense of leisure.

For older generations in Japan, historian Sepp Linhart identifies what is described as *rejā mondai* or *yoka mondai* – 'the problem of leisure' (Linhart, 1998, p.2). Here, leisure is somehow posited as a Western construct – a 'disease' that the Occident wants to infect Japan with, in order to make them as lazy as they are.

Conversely, it is suggested here that Western nations are of a mind that Japan is not acting as a proper civilised, modern, post-industrial society should, because its people do not spend enough time counter-balancing the demands of work through the pursuit of pleasure. (i.e. the **working-bee* analogy).

Live Houses

Small, broom-cupboard-sized venues, at the centre of much of Japan's contemporary underground scene. Certain parallels might be drawn between these hives of diversity, experimentation, and alternative musical activity, and the popular **jazzu kissas* (jazz Cafes) of the 1960s and 1970s.

The development of Live Houses in the Shinjuku district from around 1965 corresponded with a notable change in the collective attitudes of the student population.

It was around this time that students began to turn away from the consumerist rewards and trappings of economic growth (e.g. '...the three C's – car, cooler, colour TV...'), and discover that they felt an empathy with free jazz musicians who, in ways to which they could relate, had also suffered at the hands of 'oppression' and aloneness.'

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As the author explains, in free jazz they saw kindred spirits expressing comparative experiences to their own: -

In the musicians of the free jazz movement – John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor – they found powerful allies expressing their common experience of oppression and solitude (Steinhert 1992:212; Nakano 1984:86). There are several accounts of how closely the student movement and the intellectuals related the musical expression of free jazz to their own situation (e.g. ...a short citation from a small literary magazine in 1970: “The New Left is New jazz. And we are Ayler.”)

(Derschmidt, 1998, p.307)

Whether free jazz musicians themselves had political motives is described here as less important than the fact that this, nevertheless, is how the students chose to relate to this work.

Lo-Fi

Artists: *Pukapuka Brains; 2M*

Lydian Chromatic

Involving use of the Lydian Diminished scale, the Lydian Chromatic concept was pioneered by jazz musician George Russell in the publication *Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organisation for Improvisation*. Reading the book in 1961, Toru Takemitsu's use of Lydian in compositions such as *Coral Island* for soprano and orchestra (1962), further implies the importance and depth of jazz and improvisation influences in both western avant-garde practice, and the legacy of Japanese *new music*.

M

Ma

Translated literally to mean ‘gap’ or ‘pause’, the concept of *Ma* engenders a perception and relationship with **space* that is central to **Zen Buddhist* philosophy. For the traditional arts of Zen, *Ma* can be the spiritual, psychological, and physical space between musical notes, paint strokes or (as in the horizon-less images of **Sumi-e*) the evocation of boundless, illimitable, *space*.

In focusing specifically upon music, however, *Ma* is quite often regarded as an ambiguous and difficult to define term, although it has been proposed that perhaps the writing of Kenjiro Miyamoto offers the most lucid and useful explanation. In discussing the work of Toru Takemitsu, Miyamoto suggests that the presence of *Ma* can be interpreted in two distinct ways: firstly to describe the ‘simultaneity of tempi’ his compositions engender, creating parallels with the music of *nō* drama; and secondly – and most usefully – to define the cross pollination Eastern and Western sources in the composer’s work. In this latter sense, *Ma* refers to the silence that exists between notes in traditional Japanese music: *silence*, that is, in the specific sense of that explored by John Cage - not a moment empty of sound, but rather one in which all other ongoing sounds and aural possibilities become palpable. These are not musical voids, but rather instants within a composition ‘...filled with the numberless tones or noises of space.’ (Miyamoto, 2001, p.237).

The music of alto saxophone player Masayoshi Urabe illustrates perfectly the enormity and presence space can possess within a composition. For Urabe, the balance between not-playing and playing is often equal, evoking comparisons to be made with the Zen-derived traditional illustrative genre of **Ukiyo-e*, where the areas of the canvas untouched by the artists’ brush are the most important. Without emptiness and space, there would be no balance; no harmony.

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Another notable figure to have consciously engaged with *Ma*-as-sound, is multi-disciplinary musician and sound-artist Keiji Haino (who, coincidentally, as a young man had himself worked with Takemitsu on a film score commission). On one hand, his awareness of *Ma* can be seen in his perception of, and sensitivity to, the balance and space present during moments when no musical notes are played.

Haino, however, also believes that the realisation of *Ma* can also be achieved by striving towards the opposite extreme: not space through absence (not playing), but rather intensity (extreme playing). As he explains in an interview with Alan Cummings, Haino describes this inversion of *silence* as **Acceleration*: -

When you really want to communicate something, talking turns to screaming, and if that desire becomes even stronger then you end up praying. That's what I mean by acceleration. (Haino, in Cummings, July 2002, p.32)

The occurrence of *Ma* in this context, offers an interesting relationship to be developed between trends in *New music* that, superficially at least, appear odds. While **Onkyo* and **Noise*, for example, remain formally at opposite ends of the aural spectrum, there is nevertheless justifiable cause to speculate that they share, through their possession (of sorts) of *Ma*, a much more fundamental bond. Whether by means of abstinence or overload, nullification and space are crucial underlying factors in both, as is their key reliance upon improvisation (which, without being contrived, also has foundation in Zen Buddhist thought).

Major Underground

This term, coined by Hoppy Kamiyama, founder of independent label God Mountain, reflects an attempt to both shake off and challenge the negative, connotative, baggage that

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accompany too-easily-used headings like 'underground' and 'alternative.' Suggesting in a 1993 interview for Tokyo Journal that much of the apparent, so-called underground was distinctly average (not so much 'underground' as 'not good enough'), Hoppy underlined his intent at the time in trying to provide an outlet for the vast number who, nevertheless, were truly radical, defiant, and boundary breaking - hitting a rich vein of new and avant-garde musicality, residing somewhere in the middle ground between dominant hyper-commerciality, and the 'ghetto' of the *underground*: -

I think we've got the best bands and units in Japan right now - alternative and radical-style bands ... There are so many musicians here, but I think only 10 percent of them are artistic, and they are all poor. We have to change the spirit and the stance of the audience. We have to change a way of life ... Maybe our policy is Major underground.

Manga

In Japanese, the word Manga roughly translates as 'art'. However, historically speaking, the term was first applied with specific connotations with the publication of Katsushika Hokusai's (1760-1849) fifteen volume sketchbook series known as *The Hokusai Manga*.

Mass Direction

Takayanagi, ...in the 50s to early 60s was a well-known cool jazz guitarist, by the 70s became the guitarist who played the loudest volume and noisiest feedback in Japan. I doubt that he had heard of AMM or Derek Bailey then, and he did not follow any rock style in his performance. ...[T]his method ...he himself termed "Mass Direction". (Otomo Yoshihide)

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The theory of Mass Projection, developed exclusively by free-jazz guitarist Masayuki Takayanagi, off-set his altogether more restrained *Gradual Direction approach with its loud, aggressive, and chaotic dynamics. According to Jinya Disc's Kazu Yasutani, Takayanagi once said that when he played a 'Mass' piece, his aim was to project the imaginary sound of blood bursting and flowing from a suddenly cut artery - in an abstract sense, attempting to express some perception of life itself.

Matsuri

Traditional Japanese term for festival.

Meeting at Bar Aoyama

Original name for the regular improvisational night now held at the gallery/performance space *Off Site (re-named accordingly **Meeting at Off Site*). Established by Tetuzi Akiyama, Taku Sugimoto, and Toshimaru Nakamura in the late 1990s, the decision to move away from Bar Aoyama seemingly came as the result of the musicians' desire to move away from traditional bar-like performance spaces, and into something more closely approximating a gallery.

Meeting at Off Site

Meeting at Off Site is the monthly improvisational night held at Atsuhiro Ito's *Off Site Gallery, organised by Tetuzi Akiyama, Toshimaru Nakamura, and Taku Sugimoto, although the latter's involvement lessened after 2000.

While the importance of Off Site as a venue cannot be underlined quite strongly enough, Meeting at Off Site has come to epitomise many of the reasons for this. Confined

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within the necessarily quite space of the venue, which is flanked on either side by residential neighbours, it was here that artists such as Nakamura, Sugimoto, and Otomo Yoshihide, amongst others, consciously moved into an environment that demanded volume levels be kept low. Self-limitation, constraint, and the exploration of minimal means have, of course, long been a key focus of exploration for successive generations of experimental and improvisational musicians. As much as anything else, however, it could nevertheless be argued that it was not so much this, as the necessity to keep the noise down and appease neighbours, that ultimately gave rise to one of the most significant (and Internationally recognised) areas of contemporary Japanese New music.

Frequently referred to as Onkyo (much to the chagrin of artists like Sachiko M) the approach to sound pioneered by the likes of Taku Sugimoto and Toshimaru Nakamura is one of minimal means, and minimal volume. However, while space, silence and reduction might be regarded as key aesthetic characteristics of such work, this constant search for less is something that pervades every aspect of the music: the mindset of the artist; the methodologies used to produce sound; and the resulting nature of the compositions.

Megalopolis

Term used by artist Furudate Tetsuo (in *Art Zero Magazine*, October 1998) to not only describe the vast and unprecedented growth of Japanese cities such as Osaka and Tokyo, but also connote certain negative features. One criticism Tetsuo strongly propounds is that as such cities have developed at an increasingly accelerated rate, so too has its citizens' penchant for, and acceptance of, 'standardised' and 'reproduced' models. In other words, the great Japanese Megalopolis in this rather bleak and despairing sense becomes a place where both the individual, and individuality itself, is lost and replaced by bland homogeny and commercial/corporate collectivity: -

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Tokyo, with its 10 million inhabitants provides a dull and monotone life, where one rejoices at small pleasures without glory.(Furudate Tetsuo, cited in *Independent Japanese music*, p.17)

Meiji Period (1868-1912)

‘Heavy political pressure’ eventually led to the end of the *Tokugawa* era in the years 1867-68, restoring the Emperor Meiji to power. While the Meiji Restoration saw power returned to the emperor, and the capital of Japan shift from Kyoto to Tokyo, actual political power was given to ‘a small group of nobles and former samurai.’

The dawn of the Meiji restoration was marked by a determination in Japan to catch up with the more powerful Western countries, and strive for a more equal status that, for the moment, was undermined by ‘one-sided’ treaties they (along with other Eastern Nations) were forced to sign by their occidental neighbours. Together with other radical reforms, the whole social canon of Japan was restructured, as the new administration sought to establish an equal and democratic state – with the samurai, perhaps more than any other social group, coming off sore losers. The establishment of new (basic) human rights, such as freedom of religion in 1873; the introduction of compulsory education; and the return to the emperor of lands belonging to former daimyo (feudal lords), were all amongst some of the big changes implemented during the initial stages of the Meiji Restoration.

Westernisation seems to have been the by-word of the Meiji period, with Japan’s military forces re-built according to Prussian and British models, and a period of intellectual cross-pollination with the West. Many of Japan’s brightest scholars travelled to Europe in order to develop a greater understanding of its languages and sciences, just as outstanding western academics were invited to teach in Japan. The large costs such drastic and wholesale reforms inevitably incurred, led to great financial problems throughout the mid-1880s, and the Bank of Japan was also now forced into an act of modernisation, this time of the country’s currency system.

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After the first 10-20 years of such a fervent embracing of Western ideas however, an insidious counter-reaction began to take a hold. The educational system of Japan began gradually to pay more attention to Shinto and Confucianism, as well as emperor worship, in their curriculum, as feelings of a conservative and predominantly nationalist sentiment grew in reaction to the process of Westernisation.

1889: Japan's first 'European-style' parliament established (The Diet), although the emperor retained sovereignty and headed 'the army, navy, executive and legislative power.' This, plainly, is something that would not have been allowed in the traditional political set-up of Great Britain – too much power, over too many crucial areas, to be safe in the hands of just one person.

1894-5: The Sino-Japanese war over interests in Korea, in which Japan defeated China to win Taiwan – which, subsequently, it was forced by the West to return. Intense rearmament ensued.

1904-5: The Russo-Japanese war over interests in Korea and Manchuria, in which Japan defeated Russia, 'gaining territory and finally some international respect.' By 1910, as Japanese confidence grew together with its intensifying nationalistic outlook, it seized control of Korea altogether.

1912: Death of emperor Meiji.

Military music

Together with the legalisation of Christian devotional music and the return of music classes to schools, the introduction of military music marked another important step in the westernisation of Japanese culture during the Meiji Restoration. The first marching band was established under the guidance of Irish bandmaster John Fenton Williams around 1870, and, through the gradual evolution of Western-led military music in Japan, not only did public concerts and performances become popular. Another notable by-product of this was the composition of a new Japanese national anthem, *Kimi ga yo* which, according to Peter Durt,

represents ‘one of the earliest examples of “Western-style” composition to involve at least a partial Japanese input.’ (Burt, 2001, p.9)

Minimalist

Ammakasie Noka; Koji Asano; Kikuchi Asao; Hata Aki; Kozo Ikeno; Kazuhiro Nishiwaki; Toshiya Tsunoda.

In addition to these artists, you could also argue that artists associated with Onkyo, even if only in aesthetic, formal terms, bear resemblance to the Minimalist drone music pioneered throughout the 1960s by loft-scene multimedia shamans like La Monte Young, Tony Conrad and Charlemagne Palestine. Despite whether or not, in real terms, these Japanese no-inputters have actually looked at all to the drone-based work of these minimalist pioneers, there are still very interesting points of confluence – and shared interest – between the two, as well as obvious disparities. On one level, both are formerly focused upon somehow harnessing or utilising sine waves. However, while the early down-town Minimalism of the 1960s reflected a genuine preoccupation with Eastern philosophy and religion, Japanese Onkyo does anything but.

Minimalist electronic

Artists: *Yuko Nexus6*

Mimesis

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, mimesis can be interpreted as one of the following:-

- 1. A figure of speech, whereby the supposed words or actions of another are imitated*
- 2. Mimicry*
- 3. The deliberate imitation of the behaviour of one group of people by another as a factor in social change.*

It is maybe in this latter sense that Mimesis most poignantly applies to Japanese society, both during the Meiji Restoration and post war years beginning with American occupation. Of course, on a much more specific level, mimesis occurred culturally also, no more notably than in music, with traditional Japanese traditions rejected in many post-nationalist circles in favour of occident-derived musics.

Minzokugushi

Strongly nationalist school of composers that emerged against the occidental trends embraced throughout the Meiji period. Including composer's such as Akira Ifukube, Fumio Hayasaka and Yasuji Kiyose, this brand of music was popular throughout the pre-war and wartime periods in Japan, although it has since – particularly in the West – received ruthless criticism for the overpowering and brash way traditional Japanese folk material was used. *Minzokugushi* literally translates as 'nationalism', deriving from the word *minzoku* meaning "folk" or "race". (Burt. P.15)

Mirai-ha Bijutsu Kyōkai

Formed in 1920 fuelled, in part, by the arrival of Russian Futurist David Burluik in Japan. *Mirai-ha Bijutsu Kyōkai* ('The Futurist Art Association') included amongst its numbers poet Yasuyoshi Hirado, together with a group of visual artists such as Seiji Tōgō, who had broken away from **Nika-kai*. Disbanded after two years in 1922.

Mono-ha

Japanese avant-garde art movement whose work sought to oppose the tendency of the large number of artists working contemporaneously, whose work merely imitated, on a most superficial level, Western anti-art methods.

Mu

A Zen Buddhist term relating to space and absence – the freedom it's possible to attain through the realisation of true nothingness. This idea of space and reduction can [like other similar notions – e.g. **Ma* or **Zazen*) be said to find formation of some sort in a range of contemporary and modern avant-garde music from Japan. **Onkyo*, for example, through it's preoccupation with the removal of sources, sounds, principles and expressive content of music, finds its definition through absence and **detachment*.

Mu no basho

Phrase accredited to Japanese *Nihonga* (Japanese-style) painter Kakuzō (Tenshin) Okakura (1862-1913), which describes Japan as a “place of Nothingness” – an attempt to explain Japan as a place of constant change, a vacuous space, in accounting for its long tradition of mass cultural importation.

Music

*I have no idea what you term 'music' and 'noise' ...it's different
depending on each person. If noise means uncomfortable sound,
then pop music is noise to me.*

(Masimo Akita, in Pouncey, August 2000, p.26)

See also **Noise*.

Musique Concrete

With the advent of audio magnetic tape from around 1947, French artists Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry worked experimentally with what came to be known as *music Concrète*. Essentially, *music Concrète* was primarily concerned with exploiting the possibilities offered by the tape, which enabled sound not only to be recorded, but

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furthermore for the recordings themselves to be manipulated. With its artists cutting, rejoining, and juxtaposing a multifarious range of found sounds from various sources, and playing them back at different speeds, Etc., audio tape was to *music Concrète* both the raw material and the technological means for creating these first ever works of audio collage. While the legacy of Schaeffer and Henry can be traced through a lineage in the West ranging from John Cage to John Lennon, a number of modernist-inspired Japanese composers including Toshiro Mayazumi and Toru Takemitsu were also to experiment. However, unlike Schaeffer, Takemitsu's preoccupation with this method focused upon his attempts to utilise the imagery associated with a particular found sound, rather than 'abstract ...[it] from its dramatic context' as the Frenchman had, treating sound as a 'quantitative', mathematical substance. (Burt, 2001, p.43)

Relief Statique (1955) was Takemitsu's first musique concrete piece, first produced to provide incidental music for the 1955 radio production *Hono* ('Flames'), and premiered at a *Jikken Kobo* concert in 1956.

N

Nagauta

Traditional form of Japanese music

Naihatsu-teki

Term coined by writer Natsume Sōseki in 1911 which, translated into English as ‘inner-directed’, refers to the idea that unlike Japan (see **gaihatsu-teki*), the West is more self-determined in inspiring its own cultural development: -

I mean spontaneous growth like the process by which a flower

blossoms with its bud opening and its petals growing outward

(Sōseki, cited in Wilkinson, 1991, p.40)

[N.B. Wilkinson references Sōseki as follows: Natsume, Sōseki, ‘The Enlightenment of modern Japan (*Gendai Nihon no Kaika*), a talk given in 1911, quoted in Yamanouchi, 1978, p.77; Yamanouchi, Hisaki, *The Search for Authenticity in modern Japanese Literature*, Cambridge, 1978]

Nanban Boom

Name given to the fetishistic or exoticist collecting of Western cultural products in Japan during the sixteenth century.

Nanbanjin

Translated into English as ‘Southern Barbarians’, this Chinese-derived term was first used in Japan to describe Westerners during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Naniwabushi

Traditional form of Japanese music

Nationalism

While politically Japanese nationalism was a much more serious business with obvious far reaching repercussions, musically it is best represented by musicians of the *Minzokugushi school (a term which literally translates as *nationalism*). Nationalist music represented a reaction against the intense importation, adoption and veneration of Western musical idioms that so epitomised the Meiji era. Very much in keeping with Toynbee's tenet of *Zealotism, nationalist composers looked strictly to Japan for their sources, adopting and mixing a range of materials from current popular styles, to rural folk, and ancient high-cultural forms such as *Gagaku – often treating both the same (i.e. not acknowledging the varied cultural significance of each musical form, but rather seeing them purely in terms of their Japaneseness).

Neo-Dada Organisers

Japanese group established by Ushio Shinohara in 1960, strongly inspired by the later Dada trend of New York.

Neo-Traditional

Artists: Ayuo Takahashi

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New Age

Artists: Gontiti; Ichiko Hashimoto

New Artist Organisation

Renamed *Ren Juku* in 1975, this school or workshop series was established in 1968 in association with renowned table-top jazz guitarist, social activist and writer, Takaynagi 'Jojo' Masayuki, 'to teach and inspire young musicians.'

New Japan

The idea of New Japan was developed ultra-nationalist pre-war and wartime Taisho period. In devising the vague concept of a '**Greater South-East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere*' to justify its territorial conquest throughout the Pacific, Japan also theoretically re-invented itself. The concept of 'New Japan' was devised to validate its role at the centre of the 'Sphere', (which, in any case, it would impose through force), although this new national persona was in many ways contradictory. On the one hand, it chose to use, and was perhaps reliant upon, certain facets of Western culture, particularly in terms of things it would need in the battle against the US and Allied forces. However, 'New Japan' considered itself as the central superior force within Asian culture: crucial both to the preservation of its ancient past, and creation of its future legacy.

New Music

It is no great revelation that, throughout the last fifty years or so, cutting-edge Japanese artists have expressed the need to reject the imposition of foreign genres and classification-types upon their work. To my mind, the importance of this lies not only in the move actually made by these musicians to create work within an autonomous context, but also promote the wider development of an appropriate critical language – a methodology whereby each piece can be assessed according to its own individual qualities and

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characteristics (rather than within the confines of a 'universalised' Western classification system, evolved principally through Western culture).

Whether in terms of the 'Internationalist' aspirations of Ryuichi Sakamoto, the anti-nationalism of Toru Takemitsu, the political activism of Masayuki Takayanagi, or multi-faceted genre-defiant outlook of Hoppy Kamiyama, an underlying feature remains, in one sense or another, the impulse to achieve some aspect of cultural, personal, political or historical autonomy. Loosely speaking, I have adopted the term *New music* as a (rough) generic way to refer to the work of Japanese avant-garde musicians who are allied, in one way or another, by this common characteristic.

The musical range to be discussed under the *New music* banner, therefore, focuses upon a diverse line of music and sound art from the late 1950s to present, indicative of a long-standing engagement amongst Japanese underground with issues of independence and identity. Something, fundamentally, which is far removed from the prevailing social and cultural mainstream, both nationally and globally.

New Rock

One band most notably associated with the idea of New Rock, and which perhaps best incorporate every facet of what this rather ambiguous category might relate to (with their diverse blend of Hoppy Kamiyama-induced miscellany and unpredictable, cross-genre, guitar-based music) is all-female trio *eX-Girl*. Formed in 1997, the group define what New Rock might mean: an essentially conventional 'rock band' format, working exclusively with tools of the trade most commonly associated with 'rock' (guitar, drums, bass and lead/backing/harmonising vocals).

The 'new' in 'new rock' then, comes not from the 'what', but rather from the 'how' – in other words, from how the conventions, tools, instruments and methods of 'rock' music are appropriated and subverted, made to incorporate juxtapositions of tongue-in-cheek opera, jazz, lo-tech 80s-style analogue-pop, and high brow avant-garde experimentalism (not to mention the frog masks, fluffy toys, and dada-esque sound-lyrics). The scope for all of this to

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be contained from song-to-song, bar-to-bar, all within the vague but recognisable conventions of distortion-pedal-driven guitar music, lays an inclusive foundation for the potential meaning of New Rock.

New Wave

Artists: *Totsuzen Danball*

NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai)

National broadcasting service of Japan who, since its establishment, has been responsible for commissioning numerous works by some of Japan's up-coming and leading musicians and composers (e.g. two early commissions to a young Toru Takemitsu – *Tableau Noir* and *Solitude Sonore* - aired in the July and November of 1958 respectively).

Nichi-Bei

Contemporary music festival at which, in 1948, nationalist composer and only recognised tutor of Toru Takemitsu, introduced his young student to two more composers of a nationalistic bent: Yoritsune Matsudaira and Fumio Hayasaka.

Nihonga

Traditional conservative arts association of Japan

Nika-kai

Translated into English as 'Second Section Association', this *dantai* (Japanese arts association) was founded by Ishii Hakutei and Yamasita in 1914, as protest against the rigid conservatism **Bunten*. Criticised during the mid-1920s by Tomoyoshi Murayama (founder of

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**Sanka Zōkei Bijutsu Kyōkai*) for its imitation of European avant-garde styles, *Nika-kai* nevertheless still exists in some form today.

Nihon-teki naru mono

Translated literally as ‘Japanese or Japan-like things’, *Nihon-teki naru mono* refers to an architectural inclination of the 1930s, which applied modern Western principles to re-define age-old Japanese conventions. In broader terms however, the rise of this concept reflects some of the more fundamental tensions associated with the development of Japanese modernism, particularly during the pre-war Showa period. As stated elsewhere, it is often said by critics the extent to which the early Japanese avant-garde were unable to perceive modernism and Westernism as two separate entities – since both, presumably, had come to Japan together as an interrelated whole. This, to some extent, has been said to account for the frantic assimilation of Western culture commonly regarded as a feature of Japanese society, particularly during specific historical periods of accelerated modernisation (e.g. Meiji Era; immediate post-war/Showa era, etc).

As in the case of *Nihon-teki naru mono*, the attempted search for a modern Japanese self-identity, has often followed the format of applying Western-derived modernist ideas to conventional Japanese practices.

Nitten

Official Japan Art Exhibition – traditionally academic and salon-based. As a bastion of conservatism, became one target of intense opposition from the *Taisho era *zen'ei bijutsu.

NMA (New music Action)

‘Workshop for improvisers that was begun following the Kobe earthquake and continues at present ...[including] musicians such as Inada Makoto, Ezaki Masafumi, Kinoshita Kazushige, and Iwasaki Tetsuji.’ (Uchihashi, 2001, p.41-2).

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Set up by organiser of the Festival Beyond Innocence (FBI), Kazuhisa Uchihashi, the NMA involves several young musicians participating in monthly improvisational workshops, and over time attracted several hundred participants. One of the driving motives behind its establishment has been the current apathy and lack of interest in new music by the Japanese public.

Members of the NMA have also been influential in helping to organise the annual Festival Beyond Innocence (FBI) held at Port Island, Kobe. (see p.44)

Noh (Nō) Drama

Combining its own elements of dance (*Shinai*) and music (*Nohgaku*), *Noh* drama is characterised commonly by the masks worn by its all-male performers, the style of which often reflects the nature of each character being portrayed. The origins of *Noh* theatre, which by towards the end of the Muromachi Period (1338 – 1573) had become a more distinctly artistic practise, are thought to have been in the dances performed both by peasant rice-planters, and at certain Shinto shrine rituals.

(B.P.45)

Nohgaku

Nohgaku, the musical accompaniment to *Noh* theatre, is divisible into two distinct parts, the first of which is *Utai*: the vocal section. Developing out of traditional Buddhist *Shomyo* chants, *Utai* provides the narrative, and is often sung or spoken without musical accompaniment by the actors, as well as a small male chorus. *Hayashi*, the instrumental element of *Nohgaku*, is predominantly made up of percussion instruments with the three drums *ko-tsuzumi*, *o-tsuzumi*, and *taiko*. The *nohkan*, a traditional Japanese bamboo flute, is the only instrument in the ensemble to provide melody, although *kakegoe* – the shouts made by drummers – also contributes significantly to the music.

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Noise

*I have no idea what you term 'music' and 'noise' ...it's different
depending on each person. If noise means uncomfortable sound,
then pop music is noise to me.*

(Masimo Akita, in Pouncey, August 2000, p.26)

Etymologically, *Noise* derives from the Latin terms *nausea* and *noxia*, implying a repellent, harmful and unpleasant. While, in general social terms, musical sound is usually apprehended and appreciated as something of an advanced cultural product (evidence that humankind is, indeed, superior to the beastie brethren with which it shares the planet), noise-sound, on the other hand, has come to represent its unbridled and uncultivated antithesis – culturally undesirable and void of any expressive, communicative or consonant value.

*Artists: Akaten; Astro Satori; Astronics; Aube; Boris; Bustmonsters; Chaos of the Night;
Contagious Orgasm; Dislocation; Dissecting Table; Tetsuo Ferudate; Hair Stylistics;
Hatohan; Hijokaidan; Incapacitants; Kazuya Ishigami; Jelly; Jojo Hiroshige; K2-Kusafoka
Kimihide; Mainliner; Melt Banana; Ryosai Solo; Shizuka; Solmania*

Noise Ambient

Artists: Guilt Connector

Noise Rock

Artists: Spear Men

Noise Terrorism

Artists: Filament

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Nothingness

Nothingness, as a principle, permeates many facets of the Japanese art, on a number of different levels. Japanese gardens, for example (which, notably, have much to do with the work of Takemitsu), are built around spaces, and according to Japanese painter Ikeno Taigado (1723-1776) the parts of a painting where nothing exists to paint, are the most difficult parts to do.

See **Ma* and **Onkyo*

No Wave

Artists: *Harpy; Reiko Kudo; Melt Banana*

Now Music

Now music is a long standing music festival which, first appearing in the early 1990s, takes place annually in Sapporo, Hokkaido.

O

Objectivity

Perhaps a strange term to include, but as a British writer examining the music of Japan, I have been confronted by the same dilemma faced by all those seeking to engage with a non-native culture: namely, the difficulties of deciding how to approach such a subject, from the perspective of a writer, researcher, or commentator.

Historian Helen Westgeest, in her introductory chapter to the book *Zen in the Fifties: Interaction in art between East and West* (1997), makes a number of notable remarks here that acknowledge (although by no means resolve) some of the problems issues of objectivity, context and perspective posed to this kind of study.

Japanese art has been studied, as has Western Art, from a Western viewpoint, since it is impossible for a western art historian to consider the works from a Japanese viewpoint. (*Westgeest, 1997, p.8*)

However, while it is undoubtedly true that westerner's can't necessarily see with Japanese eyes, the question is whether this would necessarily provide the ticket to objectivity in any case. Perhaps in terms of critical writing, **autonomy* and objectivity cross-over, since the importance lies not in the cultural prejudices one can claim to be informed by, but rather the individual's ability to escape prejudice, and exchange prejudice for independence. This is not to suggest that it is possible to simply be rid of the social/cultural influences that fundamentally shaped us (as Otomo Yoshihide observes, '...I'm Japanese and it's difficult to see Japanese culture from a distance' [Yoshihide, *The Wire*, Issue 202, December 2000, p.42]), but rather that these things can be used and contextualised as an initial reference, or point of departure, from which some measure of objectivity can ultimately be sought.

Obsessional Art

Term itself credited to Yayoi Kusama, which, referring partly to a long history of mental illness, she used to describe her 'expression of personal neurosis' through art.

Obsessional Art, however, relates more widely to a specific artistic tendency during the 1960s, which can be said to include the work not only of Kusama, but also Toshio Miki, Tetsumi Kudō, Yukio Mishima, Eikō Hosoe, and the Ankoku Butoh of Tatsumi Hijikata.

See also: **Butoh*

Occidental

(Oxford English Dictionary)

A. *adj.*

1. Belonging to, situated in, or directed towards, that part or region of the heavens in which the sun sets; of or in the west, western, westerly; *spec.* in *Astrol.* said of a planet when seen after sunset, or when in the western part of the sky.

2. Belonging to, found in, or characteristic of, western countries or regions of the earth (i.e. usually, those west of Asia; also formerly, Western Europe or Christendom; occas., America or the Western Hemisphere); belonging or situated in the West; Western. Also, of, belonging to, or characteristic of the United States.

3. Applied to precious stones of inferior value and brilliancy, as opposed to oriental.

B. n.

1. a. A western country or region

b. A native or inhabitant of the West

2. An artificial language, based chiefly on the Romance languages, invented by E. J. de Wahl (1867-1948), an Estonian, in 1922.

Occupation

Historically, socially, politically and culturally, the years of occupation by Allied forces in Japan (1945-52, although Okinawa wasn't returned by the US until 1972), were, as with many of the other major countries defeated during the war, dominated by the need to recover and reconcile with the past on one hand, and look to building a new future on the other. The collapse of industry and transportation, as well as severe food shortages, all highlighted the absolute devastation of Japan.

Overseen predominantly by MacArthur's US forces, the first half of the occupation was highlighted by strict media censorship, which outlawed any materials deemed to be controversial or evocative of anti-Allied feelings. As the cold war ensued, the US received criticism from certain quarters for acting primarily in its own self-interest.

To many budding musicians and composers growing up in Japan at this time, there was a general feeling that anything inherently Japanese-by-definition should be rejected, and any product of the western world embraced. America's occupation of Japan provided plenty of exposure to Occidental culture, with large libraries (e.g. in Tokyo) enabling artists such as the young Toru Takemitsu to study the scores of US composers – explaining why he gained exposure to their work long before that of pre-eminent Europeans such as Schoenberg or Webern, etc.

It was also through a job obtained at a US army camp in Yokohama, that Takemitsu, in exchange for DJing jazz 78s for the G.I.s at night, was able to gain daytime access to an old unused piano in the recreation hall. Giving him the chance for the first time to regularly test any new compositions, such an opportunistic, yet seemingly innocuous event, is nevertheless widely regarded as constituting something of a life-shaping landmark event on his road to composerhood.

Octatonic Scales

Associated commonly with the scores of Olivier Messiaen (e.g. 8 preludes), Octatonic scales – perhaps as a result of his exposure to the French composer's music – became a lifelong feature in the work of Toru Takemitsu, evident in such early pieces as *Lento in Due Movimento* (1950), and its 1990 re-score *Litany*.

Off Site

A converted wooden house sandwiched between domestic residencies, unsoundproofed, and limited to a capacity of around fifty. By this description, Off Site might seem an unlikely place to have birthed one of the most significant approaches to contemporary New music in Japan. Yet, as the testimonies of key artists continue to attest, and contemporary critics begin to craft and weave its burgeoning folklore, this is exactly the role for which this venue will most notably be credited.

A venue defined by understatement, the unique conditions that characterise Off Site have significantly contributed to the development of what is commonly (although questionably) referred to as ‘*Onkyo’ - essentially because it provided a space wherein artists had no choice but to engage with the possibilities of reduction, silence and space. In particular, this refers to events such as ‘*Meeting at Off Site’, a monthly improvisational night first organised by Toshimaru Nakamura, Taku Sugimoto and Tetuzi Akiyama.

Situated in the Yoyogi quarter of Tokyo, Off Site was established by visual artist Atsuhiko Ito and opened to the public in June 2000, one of a new generation of Art Gallery in Tokyo which seeks to sidestep both the conventions of more traditional Gallery types, as well as the financial problems many such institutions now apparently face.

While it may not seem particularly groundbreaking that Off Site was set up to function both as an exhibition space for visual art, and a performance space for radical, improvisational, and experimental music, it is for very unique and specific reasons that – in

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this latter role – it is regarded as so important. Prior to its conversion in 2000, the building now known as Off Site was simply a small, detached, residential wooden house, flanked almost within touching distance by other domestic residences. The very fact that these neighbours remain, coupled with the unsoundproofed, thin wooden walls of the building, made it necessary that any music played or performed at off Site had to be done at the utmost minimal volume.

Such practical and geographical everyday restrictions are, however, exactly what are regarded to have helped set artists such as Taku Sugimoto, Toshimaru Nakamura and Sachiko M on the path they now follow. Playing in such a small, intimate space, where the sound of everyday life outside, and breathing of the small, intimate, tightly packed audience within can at times both be heard, clearly had a substantial impact upon such artists, whose work has come to explore and exploit the possibilities of space, silence, and reduction – external restriction married with self-restriction.

Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari

The music Study Committee established in 1879 by Shuji Izawa of Japan's ministry of Education, to formulate a plan for the future of musical education in Japan. The three point scheme applied by Izawa, who had been sent to America for a number of years to study their musical education system, exists as perhaps one of the first outright, identifiable attempts to actively blend traditional Japanese music with that of Europe and the USA. His decision to centre this plan around a number of songs primary school children, however, had predictably limited success.

Ongaku

Upon being asked to identify how Japanese new music differs from the avant-garde practices of the West, Tanabe Tomohiro answers:

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We must create a new personal style of music. Of course, it turns out to be a new sound that has no equivalents in other countries. We call it “ONGAKU”. (Tanabe cited in De Lauretis, 2001, p.48)

Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari

Another initiative put in place during the Meiji era. Following a Western model, Japan’s Ministry of education (1872) ruled that primary school children should all partake in singing classes a part of their curriculum, followed by instrumental tuition at middle-school level. A distinct lack of resources, it has since been recognised however, proved to be the essential flaw of this ambitious and pretty optimistic plan. Responsibility was placed in the hands of Ministry member Shūji Izawa, who spent 1875 in America studying their musical education system. In 1879 he established Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari (music Study Committee), and formulated a plan for the future of musical education in Japan which would pioneeringly seek to blend the country’s own indigenous musical heritage with that of other (primarily Western) countries, creating a music representative of contemporaneous Japan.

In trying to put these theories into practise, however, Izawa took what writer Peter Burt has described as an ‘embarrassingly naïve’ approach. (Burt, 2001, p.11). Believing that Eastern and Western music only differs the more sophisticated the formal qualities become, he regarded the children’s music of both traditions to be extraordinarily alike. Thus, his plan involved developing three separate sets of young children’s songs: the first drawing upon *Gagaku* tradition; the second being wholly new and progressive songs; the third containing well-known Western melodies sung in Japanese. While this final set of songs should have epitomised the notion of new music - drawing upon both international and traditional Japanese sources - the naïve execution of Izawa’s admirable, yet fundamentally crude concept, left most succeeding critics and commentators laughing up their retrospective sleeves.

Onkyo

Aube; I.S.O.; Filament; Kiyoharu Kuwayama; Taku Sugimoto; Toshimaru

Nakamura; Otomo Yoshihide; Sachiko M; Utah Kawasaki

Although it has recently been said that the interest of listeners has begun to wane somewhat, in terms of artistic production and engagement, Onkyo has become the focus of increasing development and experimentation.

Quite appropriately, the word Onkyo has been said to translate closely as ‘sound’ ‘echo’, or ‘reverberation’, and it is with the texture, absence and isolation of sound - rather than in expressive noise or music - that that artists associated with Onkyo can be said to find preoccupation with. Primarily, it relates to the ‘no-input’ concept – removing all but the most minimal, residual, fundamental elements of the sound source at hand: i.e. a sampler without samples (Sachiko M); a self-contained mixing desk using its own output as input (Toshimaru Nakamura); A turntable without records (Otomo Yoshihide); or aural spaces between the striking of guitar notes (Taku Sugimoto).

In many instances, Onkyo-related work is often discussed within the sphere of three main notions: -

1. As an oppositional gesture to the ‘information overload’ many artists feel they are forced to suffer as subjects of contemporary urban life, rejecting and cutting out aural stimuli (the kind of stimuli-saturation summed up by the overcrowding and noise of cities like Tokyo). In some ways this approach bears some relation to the Cagean notion of Silence, and, in turn therefore, the Zen Buddhist philosophies to which he looked. Here, Onkyo (or ‘*music Without Memory*’) draws parallels with architecture and traditional Japanese interiors, where the lack of décor is not regarded as emptiness, but rather its opposite: the wealth of unbounded possibilities. Just as modern Japanese architects such as Katsuo Shimohara and Tadao Ando have responded to the problems of overcrowding, space and disorganisation by building ‘their own private vision (a silence, pause, or inward looking gesture’, detached from

the encroaching tumult), so too have these no-input sound artists been said to create a music 'of denial': 'a response to a world overloaded with trivial forms and chaotic shapes that cancel each other out.' Otomo Yoshihide has also supported the idea of *Onkyo* as some kind of reaction against this saturation of stimuli, suffered by many inhabitants of the great Japanese **Megalopolis*. The idea that this multi-faceted assault upon the senses, can somehow be combated by finding a single point of focus – counter-balancing chaos with concentrated singularity.

2. As 'non-music' – a rejection of self-expression through music, and attempt to remove it from associations with music, and the processes of music making. This is explained most usefully by the account of Toshimaru Nakamura himself, who rejects almost wholly the relevance of the 'politics of technology', artistic intentionality, or music as self-expression: 'Who cares how I think or feel? I just want to play an instrument that has no connection to inner emotion.'

(www.avantofestival.com/2001_live/lp_otomo.html)

3. From a purely aesthetic point of view, *Onkyo* has also born comparison to the work of many key figures from the history of sound art and experimental music: from the compositions of Xenakis, to the drone inspired lower east side minimalism of La Monte Young, Tony Conrad, or Charlamagne Palestine. Formerly, this no-input has been defined according to its specific treatment of tone, sonic-texture, and spatiality, deriving from a legacy somewhere between that of improvisation and electronic music.

However, as with any such designation, there are inherent and predictable problems surrounding the invention of a term such as *Onkyo*: problems which, primarily, relate to the word being overused and misunderstood by 'outsiders' (i.e. critics, artists, historians and listeners not directly part of the group to which it is applied). This kind of problem is, of course, a familiar point of contention within any stream of art history or criticism.

While designations such as *Fluxus* or *Minimalism* (to name but two examples) are handy as a matter of convenience to everyone else - a kind of historical abbreviation – they

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frequently wrangle with artists unwittingly branded thus. musicians and artists alike have often expressed their aversion to this kind of critical/historical typecasting, not only in that it reduces their work to simply a specimen of some larger (more vague) 'movement', but also that the connotations and characteristics invested in such labels are often misleading and inaccurate – essentially because they acquire a 'meaning' outside of the sphere within which these artists worked.

With this in mind, Sachiko M has been one notable artist to reject her branding as Onkyo, arguing not only that she has never wanted to be part of any one movement or school, but also that those in Europe now using the word Onkyo, are doing so in a somewhat misguided and inaccurate way. In a recent interview with Takashi Azumaya, published in *Improvised music from Japan*, the self-appointed 'queen of the sine wave kingdom' asserts herself accordingly:

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'Lately in Europe hey talk about "Tokyo Onkyo" and "Japan Onkyo," but I think the people who refer to the word and the people who actually made up the word are different. After Otomo used it to simplify things, it became a catchword. I never thought of myself as Onkyo, and I didn't get my start in that scene. I don't think I'm in the Onkyo school or that I'm an Onkyo musician...' (Sachiko M, 2003, p.E-14)

Onomatopoeia

One traditional example of the long history of onomatopoeia in Japanese music, is in the diagetic music and sounds provided by the gezabayashi ensembles, hidden away from the stage to provide on-scene music and diagetic sounds in Kabuki theatre. The instruments that make up the gezabayashi produce diagetic noises and sound effects, whether natural or man-made, that accompany and enliven the events being portrayed on the stage.

Open Court Publishing Company, The

Publishing company in Chicago who, on the recommendation of Japanese Zen Master Soen Shaku (1859-1919), employed the services of Daisetz T. *Suzuki to translate into English traditional Zen Buddhist texts. It was through this initial work for *Open Court* that Suzuki began his own prolific writing career, subsequently influencing a great number of artists and musicians in the West.

Osaka Contemporary Music Festival

In 1961, Toshi Ichyanagi's return to Japan was marked by an appearance at the Fourth Osaka Contemporary music Festival, held in the August of that year. Having spent the past nine years in the US working and studying, and, for a time, attending the Compositional classes of John Cage at the New School, Ichyanagi performed Cage's Concert for Piano and Orchestra to the widespread approval of Jikken Kobo members such Shuzo Takiguchi and Toru Takemitsu. For the latter, in fact, attending Ichyanagi's performance constituted something of a seminal moment in the young composer's career, with the 'shock' he felt upon hearing the work of Cage something he would still recall over thirty years later.

Otō suraido

Devised by Shūzo Takiguchi, pioneer of *Jikken Kōbō* (the 'experimental Workshop') the ōto suraido, or 'autoslide', was premiered and featured in numerous recitals and activities undertaken by the group throughout the 1950s. The machine basically aimed to bring together sound and image through the use of metal strips attached to the underside of normal magnetic tape. The metal would serve the function of a switch, allowing recorded audio and visual elements, in quite a simple way, to be brought together.

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O-tsuzumi

Type of drum conventionally part of the Noh theatre musical ensemble

OuBei

Term used in Japan to collectively refer to Europeans and Americans – ‘EucAm’.

P

Pitt Inn, The

Renowned Tokyo Live House established in 1965 and located in the Shinjuku district.

Despite being re-located, *The Pitt Inn* still open and active.

Pop-New Age

Artists: *Yoko Ueno*;

Pop-Noise

Artists: *Ex-Girl*; *Machine Gun TV*

Pop-Psych

Artists: *Vega pop*

Post-Bop Jazz

Artists: *Fishermen Titlot*

Post-Classical

Artists: *Happy Family*; *Yoshiaki Ikeda*

Post-Garage (see Psycho-Rock)

Post-Hippie

Artists: *Acid Mothers Temple*; *Antique Folklore*

Post-Industrial

Artists: *K.K. Null*

Post-Meiji

In the twilight years of the Meiji Era (late nineteenth/early twentieth-century), and those that closely followed, a number of commentators have pointed to a prevailing sense of cultural anxiety in Japan. In many ways, this can be seen in what Peter Burt has referred to as the 'Feedback Loop'. The work of 'impressionistic' French composers, for example, that many Japanese artists of this Post-Meiji sought to emulate, was itself born of Western *Orientalist* preoccupations (E.g. the work of Debussy, who had found himself profoundly awakened by the Asiatic music he was exposed to at the Paris Exposition of 1889). The importation of this western *Orientalism* amounts to, essentially, a re-importing of Japan's own cultural heritage which, given an occidental seal of approval, becomes free of the trappings and associations of the country's past. It is through this that Post-Meiji Japan is characterised by uncertainty and, in cultural terms, a lack of self-confidence.

Postmodernist Revisionism

There is a certain school of thought which exists to suggest that interest in Japanese art and culture has increased over the past decade, partly as a result of post-modern revisionist trends born from a fundamental dissatisfaction with 'modernism's Eurocentric assumptions.' However, isn't turning to Japanese art as an answer to Western modernism's shortcomings, itself another symptom of Eurocentric behaviour?

Japan's fashionable projected identity as a centre of 'transculturalism', is said by historian Alexandra Monroe to be another reason for the recent interest in re-assessing Western historical perceptions of Japan's art and cultural history. This, she proposes, goes hand in hand with the decentralisation of the world economy (within which Japan is a major world

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force), and the general change in perception of global borders through the burgeoning of the information age (i.e. distance/“geography” no longer a boundary). (Monroe, 1994, p.19)

Post-Rock

Artists: *Tortoise; Gaji*

Post-war Nationalism

Just as the Meiji era in Japan, ending centuries of military rule and global isolationism, was characterised by wholesale attempts at radical westernisation, so too did the conclusion of World war Two, with another fall of nationalism, render the cultural practices of Japan's past yet again undesirable.

By the early 1950s, it became possible for the nation to again afford serious time and effort to the study of music, with composers once again casting an academic eye over to Germany (e.g. Yoshiro Iniro, Makoto Moroi, and Minao Shabata – pupils of Saburo Moroi) and France (e.g. Akio Yashiro - pupils of Ikenouchi), seeking to assimilate the latest developments in European music. However, since European music had long since departed from Impressionistic and Romanticist trends from the turn of the century, Japanese musicians of this period (e.g. Shibata throughout the 1950s) began imitating practices such as Twelve Tone Composition, musique concrete and electronic music. By the early 1970s, musicians such as Irino (e.g. *Wandlungen*, 1973) and Shibata (e.g. *Leap Days Vigil*, 1972) had begun to experiment, combining these modernist avant-garde methods, devices and systems, with traditional Japanese instruments.

Nevertheless, despite these widely prevailing Occidental tendencies, a minority of post-war nationalist composers still resisted the temptation to wholly disregard the folk heritage of Japan. Unlike pre-war nationalists however, who looked no further than to basic re-workings and unsophisticated orchestrations of traditional Japanese songs, this post-war generation – like their academic counterparts – also sought to explore more widely new

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sources of musical production now at their disposal. Groups such as *Yagi no Kai* /‘Goat Group’ (featuring Hikaru Hayashi, Yuzo Toyama and Michio Mamiya) and *Sanin no Kai* /‘Group of Three’ (Yasushi Akutagawa, Ikuma Dan, and – most famously – Toshiro Mayazumi), both formed in 1953, respected the work and ethos of Bartok and, to one degree or another, employed avant-garde strategies while still seeking to create a predominantly nationalist music.

Prepared Piano

Pioneered by modernist composer John Cage, ‘preparation’ of a piano sees its transformation from being a piano into something else altogether – an entirely new instrument which, while encased within a familiar body, and containing all of the internal components and gubbings one would expect to find within a piano, nevertheless behaves in a most unpiano like way. Used famously by Cage in a countless number of compositions and performances, the alterations made to the instrument by the artist result in its subsequent capacity to produce an unpredictable array of sounds and keys.

In 1961 Toshi Ichianagi returned to Japan from America, where he had studied composition for a time at the New School under Cage. Although preparation time and cost made it difficult at that time in terms of live performance, Ichianagi, along with artists such as Toru Takemitsu, nevertheless continued to work intermittently with prepared pianos during the throughout the early 1960s. Two featured in the latter’s 1962 score for the film *Otoshiana* (‘The Pitfall/Cheap, Sweet and a Kid’) played, in accompaniment to Takemitsu’s own Harpsichord part, by Yuji Takahashi and Ichianagi himself, as well as later films including *Ansatsu* /‘The Assassin’ (1964), and *Kwaidan* /‘Ghost Story’ (1964).

Pretty Noise

Artists: *Billy*

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Progressive

Artists: *Bi Kyo Ran; Black Stage; Concerto Moon; Fairy; Gerard; Happy Family; Harpy; Mongol; Mr Sirius; Novela; Nuovo Immigrato; Rosalia; Motoi Sakwaba; Scope; Social Tension; Starless; Surgery*

Progressive Rock (Mid-1970s)

Inspired by Frank Zappa, Tangerine Dream, Soft Machine, etc. Artists: *Serenade; Hal; Mandrake; Bikyoran; Kenso; Tenchi Sozo; Datenryu; Kigadomei.*

Progressive Rock (1980s)

Little innovation here, but merely re-workings of, or left-overs from, Japan's prog-rock ideas of the previous decade. Most of these bands in the 80s produced little in the way of innovation, and were of little consequence to the more avant-garde factions of Independent Japanese music.

It's also worth noting that, throughout this glossary, a number of entries have been made under the headings of western, predominantly British or European, progressive rock sub-categories (e.g. *Canterbury; *Krautrock; *Rock in Opposition; *Space Rock; *Zeuhl music, etc). In most of these cases, a brief suggestion of how the heading might be defined is accompanied by two short lists: (western) bands to whom the classification was first applied; and Japanese bands, for one reason or another, since likened to them.

Projections

I have used the term *Projection* here with very specific connotations in mind. Principally, its application in this context is intended to help establish a discourse by which common presumptions and preconceptions of Japanese music - evident in many Western critiques - can be described, and thus drawn attention to.

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Patent in any analysis of these cultural projections, is the extent to which dominant Euro-centric and Americanised narratives have, in one way or another, widely subscribed to an idea of Japan as somewhere mentally and spiritually beyond Western understanding: unfathomable, mystical and quirky. Maintaining and supporting a kind of abstract and typecast perception of **Japaneseness*, these ideas represent a tendency in the West to project the image of Japanese society onto Japan that it *believes* exists.

As has regularly been the case with other avant-garde arts, it is not uncommon to come across Western critics seeking purely to engage with Japanese **New music*, in terms of its *Japaneseness*. Largely speaking, such critiques focus primarily upon the Nationality of the artist, and the assumption that as a cultural product of Japan, such work must be born of the same cultural tensions, which (according to Western *Projections*) contemporary Japanese life is built.

Without question, mechanically subscribing to such preconceptions only ever prevents any useful, appropriate, or inventive critical interaction from taking place. In the absence of such, projected ideas of contemporary Japanese culture are simply renewed, and a perception of Japan commonly maintained that satisfies foreign expectations and curiosity. Subsequently Japan, by popular definition, continues to be held up as a confusing and paradoxical nation; a society both defined and divided by its inability to reconcile past and present, history and modernity.

One of the aims in first highlighting the concept and nature of these *Projections*, is to encourage a new type of critical language to be developed, centred upon finding more useful and stimulating criteria to engage with Japanese sound art, other than the projected ideas of *Japaneseness* (even if this, as for eighteenth-century Orientalists, is its attraction for many in Europe and the US).

Protest Singers (late 1960s)

Okabayashi Nobayasu, Takada Wataru, Takaishi Tomoya

Psychadelic (Overview)

Japanese bands in the 1960s that sought to assimilate, not only the musical styles of UK and US-based bands, but also the fashions and image. It is with GS bands such as the *Dynamites*, the *Golden Cups*, the *Mops* and *The Jacks* that the roots of Japanese psychedelic music can be traced, emulating from the time of the late sixties onwards, the original Western form of the genre. Unlike US and UK psychedelic music however, LSD and other mind altering drugs were not intrinsically a part of this music and, as a matter of fact, many musicians involved in Japan's latter day and contemporary psychedelic scene, such as Nanjo Asahito of *High Rise*, have taken a very clear and public anti-drugs stance.

Psychedelic (late 1960s)

Following on from early GS psychedelic bands, groups such as Les Rallizes Danudes and Haino Keiji's Lost Aaraaff can perhaps be regarded as the real pioneers of the genre as it exists in Japan (and, in the case of Haino for example, have been quite scathing about GS psychedelic music). Not only cutting edge in a purely musical sense, these bands changed the face of the genre, moving beyond simple mimicry of its Western namesake, to engaging with radical socio-political content, and elements of avant-garde theatre and performance (e.g. *Les Rallizes Danudes*' association with the underground *Gendai Gekijo* theatre group).

Psychedelic (1970s)

While bands such as *Les Ranizes Denudes* and *Lost Aaraaf* (Haino Keiji's first professional band) were prominent throughout this decade so too were other, more Western influenced groups (e.g. by The Byrds, Jefferson Airplane, The Fugs, Hawkwind, etc) such as *Murahachibu*, *Takayanagi Masayuki*, *DEW*, and *Zuno Keisatsu*. Other notable psychedelic bands of the 1970s include *Stomu Yamash'ta and the Horizon*, *Taj Mahal Travellers*, *Acid Seven*, *Minami Masato*, *Food Brain*, *Speed Glue*, and *Shinki and the Flower Travellin' Band*

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(Collett, P.27). A number of bands released on the PSF label were synonymous with the Minor - a live performance space [in Tokyo?] – and would continue from the 1970s onwards play an important role in the development of Japanese psychedelic music. Amongst such proponents are included: 'Keiji Haino, Kudo Tori, Shiraishi Tamio ["early member of Fushitsusha"], Nanjo and Narita from *High Rise/musica Transonic/Mainliner* etc...'.

Psychedelic (Contemporary)

While both initially pioneers of Japanese psychedelic music, *Les Rallizes Danudes* and *Lost Aaraaff* were eventually to undertake different musical directions, although it appears that, particularly in the case of Keiji Haino, they nevertheless remained united in their disregard for GS bands. With this in mind, Paul Collett, in his essay *Spacious Paradise: Psychedelism in Japanese music*, cites an interview with the owner of modern music/PSF label (after which **psychedelic Speed Freaks** named themselves) who propounds that groups from the 1960s were not truly psychedelic in the Japanese sense of the genre (Collett, P.27). Listing an array of bands mostly active during the 1990s, Ikkeezumi Hideo instead extends this title in its truest sense to the likes of *High Rise*, *Keiji Haino*, *Fushitsusha*, *White Heaven*, *Takayanagi Masayuki*, *musica Transonic*, *Kosokuya*, *Maher Shalal Hash Baz/Kudo Tori*, *Urabe Masayoshi*, and *Ishihara Yu*.

Psychedelic Funk

Artists: *Optical*8*

Psycho-Rock

See also ***Post Garage***. Artists: *High-Rise*; *Overhang Party*; *psychedelic Speed Freaks*

Punk

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Punk music in Japan has played a vibrant and significant role in the history of avant-garde Japanese music. As in the West, the moment of definitive moment of Japanese Punk occurred during the late 1970s, with leading bands such as Tokyo's *Friction*, as others of equal influence in Osaka and other areas, inspiring a number of artists of later notability (e.g. Otomo Yoshihide) to form bands, pick up guitars, or simply express themselves through **Noise*.

There is also, it has been argued, a second-wave of Japanese punk to have emerged during the late '80s and early '90s. Involving bands such as The Boredoms, while possessing a similar energy and angst to the music of its '70s archetypes, this next generation of punk (if punk is, indeed, the appropriate way to describe it) is altogether more transcultural, eclectic, and postmodern in its influences and its sound.

Artists: *AAA; Abnormals; Boredoms; Cibo Matto; Droop; Friction; The Genbaku Onanies; Zuno Keisatsu; Leningrad Blues Machine; Lifeball; Nalit; Rise From the Dead; Tamio Shiraishi*

Punk and New-Wave: *Pass Label*

Signings to the Pass label, a subsidiary of Trio Records, were commonly classified as punk and new-wave, and included bands such as *Friction, Totsuzen Danboll, Phew*, and *Gunjogacrayon*. Hikashu and P-model, groups of a comparable nature, were able to apparently 'conceal their true natures' and find release on larger, more mainstream labels.

Punk, New Wave and Techno-pop

Reflecting trends in the West which saw 'dinosaur'-branded prog-rock exponents ousted out by an injection of the fresh and raw by punk and new wave bands. Japan's version of this genre, like many of those preceding it, evolved on the whole as one purely imitative of its western model, although the bands listed, it is suggested, were amongst the most original. Included artists and bands such as: -

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Artists: *Lizard; Stalin; Inu; Hikasu; P-model; Totsuzen Danball; Aunt Sally; (featuring Phew); Friction.*

Pure Existence

Unlike most other religions (especially those popular in the West), Zen is primarily concerned with focusing upon the here and now – the present -, rather than the future or past.

With regard to this, there are two key principles mentioned here, the first of which being the realisation of ‘Pure Existence’: living purely in the present, and experiencing every moment as a moment in itself – without thinking about anything else at the same time: -

*When they eat, they do not eat, but are thinking of various
other things, thereby allowing themselves to be disturbed;
when they sleep, they do not sleep, but dream of a thousand
and one things. This is why they are not like myself. (Suzuki,
in Westgeest, p.22)*

This concept of ‘Pure Existence’ could be seen in relation to the approach to **Onkyo* adopted by Sachiko M: i.e. just wanting to make sound - nothing more, nothing less.

The second is the idea of ‘Purposelessness’: -

*In a well-known anecdote from Zen literature, the story is told of
three men who ask someone why he was standing on top of a
mountain. That person replied: “I am just standing here.”
(Westgeest, p.22)*

R

Rangaku

‘Dutch Studies’. See **Rangakusha* below.

Rangakusha

‘Dutch scholars’ during the reign of Shogun Yoshimune – Japanese academics who, during Japan’s isolationism, began during the 1700s to translate Dutch writings into Japanese. The first Western book fully translated into Japanese was a medical/anatomy text, in 1774, symbolic of a growing trend towards Westernisation that would be a central concern during the Meiji era.

Reaction

As with the production of any avant-garde, cutting edge art throughout history, the development of the many various forms of New music over the past fifty years, has to one extent or another been born of a reactionary gesture to some element of dominant mainstream culture.

In relation to **New music*, a starting point in this area of the investigation might be identified in the early work of Toru Takemitsu, produced in a spirit of anti-nationalism during a period of political despondency and post-war social unrest in Japan.

The development of **New music* has, throughout history, been driven by multiplicity of responses and reactions to prevailing mainstream cultural factors.

- Reaction to dominant social/political events (*music as reactionary message*):

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As implied above, the origin of New music can be said to have been the early 1950s, with a number of artists and musicians expressing, through the avant-garde nature of their work, strong anti-Nationalist/anti-Japanese feelings.

One notable symptom of Postmodernism has often been seen as the distinct move away from the politicisation of art. With this in mind it should come as no surprise that, according to a number of recent observations, the phenomenal economic growth enjoyed by cities like Tokyo during the 1980s, has been paralleled by the oppositional demeanour of Japan's Independent music greatly diminishing.

Examining, for example, the correlation between the student riots of the 1960s, and the development of an underground avant-jazz and free-improvisation scene - both of which took place during the same period in the *Shinjuku* District of Tokyo - one key figure upon which this area of research might well focus upon is Masayuki Takayanagi. Overtly engaged with social and political issues in both his writing and, most significantly, his career as a controversial and pioneering free-jazz guitarist, Takayanagi's work epitomises the directly political and reactionary development of New music, prior to Japan's economic boom. The work of other politically active artists and movements, such as *Zen'ei Bijutsu-Kai*, can also be considered in a similar regard.

It is also important, too, that the work of contemporary sound artists be examined in this context. Much scope certainly exists for examining the social climate in which these artists currently work, and thus identifying works for which some evidence of social/political engagement can be found. One point of emphasis here is that, just as specific political and economic conditions have changed dramatically over the past half-century, so too has the nature of any reaction to them - resulting not so much in an outright loss of oppositionalism in *New music*, but rather a series of strategy changes relative to the subject of opposition (i.e. the thing being reacted against).

- Reaction to dominant musical/artistic trends (*music as Reactionary Sound*):

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While the objective of the section above will be to examine the reactionary nature of New music in a social and political capacity, this parallel area of investigation focuses instead upon the factors underlying its history of resistance to dominant trends in Japanese music.

One key contemporary example are those artists and groups, sometimes referred to playfully as 'Japanese genre jumpers', whose work flits dramatically between genre-types and styles, mixing and matching influences as diverse as opera, heavy metal, hip-hop, Japanese folk, etc. With this in mind, what is of importance here goes beyond simply the way in which this *New music* exists as a reactionary force to mainstream music in Japan. The most interesting line of investigation relates, more specifically, to its ability to evade and frustrate Western critical discourses, where the assignment and designation of styles, schools, classifications and genre-types is a much relied upon convention.

There have been attempts to categorise the work of a number of these artists, applying designations like *New Rock* to the projects of 'genre-jumpers' including, for example, Ilaco (*After Dinner*) and Hoppy Kamiyama (*The Saboten*, *eX-Girls*, and others associated with his *God Mountain* label). In the case of such music, however, the fact is that foreign culture is often borrowed from and recycled without any concern for the specific cultural connotations these things possess in their native context.

The specific dress codes and musical, political and social conditions related to any style of Western music, whether it be punk, garage, protest-folk or krautrock, for example, have often have little relevance to the appropriator (just as the cultural context of objects looted from African and Asian communities in the eighteenth-century, was of little consequence to European colonial collectors).

Much of the Western music imported by Japanese artists, therefore, is done so purely as 'Western music' in the broadest sense, and not in relation to a specific style or fashion. It is partly through this, that the cross-genre work of many *New music* artists has frustrated the efforts of commentators and critics in the West, attempting to apply adequate Western-derived headings and titles, familiar to Western-bred understanding.

Reception

The reception of new music in its native country of Japan has, from the 1950s up until the present day, continued to be largely reliant upon the nature of its reception abroad. Just as the critical perception of composers such as Toru Takemitsu for a number of years differed greatly in Japan than in the West, so too have contemporary bands such as The Boredoms only gained widespread recognition at home after cracking the US and Europe. There are a number of possible reasons why this might be the case: it could, for example, indicate that the cultural insecurities of post-Meiji Japan never really diminished, leaving the work of contemporary artists still very much dependent on success abroad; or maybe because much of this music has its roots so firmly established in Western cultural history, it is somehow felt that it is primarily by western culture that it should be judged. Either way, the underlying fact of the matter is that – as in Europe and America – widespread popularity belongs to popular music, and artists functioning in opposition on the edge of this should, really, expect no more than their rightful (and, perhaps, *select*) place on the periphery.

Rejā

Japanese word for 'leisure.' See **Yoka*

Rejā mondai

Term meaning 'the leisure problem'. See **Yoka*

Religious music

Both dominant religions of Japan, Shinto and Buddhism, possess their own musical forms, traditions and histories. While Kagura (Shinto music) has been dated to the second half of the eighth-century, the chants and musical forms belonging to Buddhism have been accounted for several decades earlier, in the early 700s.

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Ren Juku

See New music Organisation.

Rhythm Hour

Radio programme transmitted by National Broadcasters NIKK during the mid-1950s: one of the first few sources by which jazz music could be widely heard in Japan.

Rinkogun

Tokyo-based theatre company which, inadvertently, was responsible not only for Otomo Yoshihide meeting Sachiko Matsubara (a.k.a. Sachiko M), but also for the latter ever buying a sampler.

At broadcasting school, the a tutor responsible for Sachiko M noticed the young student's interest in using audio tape, and invited her to help out with sound effects for a theatre production she was involved in.

Otomo Yoshihide had provided the music for a number of Rinkogun productions, and in this way met with Sachiko M, finally convincing her in the summer months of 1993 to buy a sampler and join with his radical Ground Zero ensemble.

Rinzai

One of the main sects of Zen Buddhism in Japan, *Rinzai* Zen derives from the teachings of Chinese Ch'an Master Huai Jang (677-744), and his school of *Lin Ch'i* Zen. Associated strongly with the teachings of Daisetz T. *Suzuki (**Suzuki Zen*), *Rinzai* departs from other notable Zen Buddhist practices (e.g. **Sōtō*), in the importance it places in the practice of the arts.

Rock

Rock: one of those words that has enjoyed reinvention and renewed credibility thanks to a line of notable avant-garde artists in Japan - renewed, that is, when compared to the laboured, somewhat clichéd connotations, the idea of Rock conjures up for contemporary gurus of Euro-American mainstream youth culture.

For artists such as Keiji Haino (*Fushitsusha*) and Makoto Kawabata (*Acid Mothers Temple*), Rock extends beyond its conventional application as a mainstream genre: a type of music which, despite its many incarnations, can always be said to have followed certain predictable melodic formats and rhythmic control structures (e.g. identified by Chris Cummings as ‘the 12 tone, eight beat and 12 bar structures.’ (Cummings, July 2002, p.34).)

Apart from the influence many Western ‘Rock’ acts had upon the development of young artists in Japan (Haino, Kawabata, and Masimo Akita, for example, have all recalled their high-school impact of Hendrix and The Doors), it is perhaps the more abstract elements of Rock that have been retained within New music, and become the focus of its re-invention within this specific avant-garde context. The noise and confrontationalism that co-existed with regular musical structure in mainstream Rock, here become the primary focus – detached and unrestrained by musical convention.

Bands: *The British Bulldogs; Corrupted; Danse Macabre; Differance; Doosy Cookie; Joichiza; Libido; Mad 3; Margelitch; Matilda Rodriguez; Phew; YBO2*

Rock in Opposition

According to, Fred Frith former member of ‘70s ensemble *Henry Cow*, the concept or category of Rock in Opposition grew directly as the result of the brief, underground, momentarily coherent, and influential Rock in Opposition movement.

By Frith’s account, by 1977 *Henry Cow*, owing to their past, recent, and present positions, were in a unique situation: while having had recent success on the *Virgin* label, they

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were no longer signed up to, or associated with, a major corporation. Of enough note to be invited to tour and play venues throughout Europe, they were nevertheless free of the trappings, associations, and ensuing baggage of commercialism.

The bottom line is that, in coming into contact with a wealth of unsigned, ignored, largely unrecognised creative artists, they were exposed to a wholly original and creative musical underground rarely afforded even a fraction of the commercial exposure directed at British and American artists.

On March 28th, 1978, the first Rock in Opposition event was staged – a evening-long festival at the New London Theatre (billed as presenting ‘The music the record companies didn’t want you to hear’), featuring performances by Belgium’s Univers Zero, Stormy Six of Italy, as well as a number of other underground bands from Europe.

Following the disbandment of Henry Cow, Rock in Opposition (RIO) became a tangible cooperative, complete with its own manifesto-style list of objectives, and principles for the acceptance of new members: -

- 1. That of musical excellence. This depending on our collective evaluation of same – a source of much fruitful discussion*
- 2. That of working actively outside of the music business*
- 3. That of having ‘a social commitment to rock.’*

(Chris Cutler, <http://www.ccutler.com/bands/group03.shtml>)

Despite it’s presence as a coherent and consciously defined collective was only short-lived (when arguments arose over social, rather than musical, commitments), Rock in Opposition has nevertheless been maintained as an idea, a genre, a proposed outlook or approach to the production of music, with various connotations and usages. In relation to new and independent Japanese music, artists and groups such as *A Paragon of Beauty*, Toshimaru

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Nakamura; *Soh Band*; *Djamra*; Fomoflo; *King Joe*; *Lacrymosa*, have, at one time or another, been associated with the concept of Rock in Opposition.

Romanticism

Towards the turn of the century during Meiji Restoration, almost all of the tutors at Tokyo's music School (the music Study Committee until 1887) were from Germany. German musical conventions – particularly late German Romanticism – were, during this time at least, of foremost influence in Japan beyond any other, whether native or Western.

Ryūteki

Similar to the *shinobue* used in the music of Kabuki drama, the ryūteki is a slanting bamboo flute used, this time, as part of the Gagaku ensemble.

S

S20

Type of sampler used by contemporary sound artist Sachiko M, who manipulates the particularly clear sine waves it produces when used without recovering memory.

Sadomasochism

The links between sadomasochism and Japanese noise music are, to one extent or another (depending upon the listening preferences of the individual), fairly straightforward, both aurally and visually.

In sonic terms, this relationship plays itself out in the enforced player-listener dynamics, where the musician role-plays as the dominatrix, doling out excesses of aural punishment to a willingly submissive audience, all of whom attend so as to be bullied, dominated and forced into a position of passivity by the overwhelming barrage of noise.

The idea of this supposed passive/aggressive relationship between audience and sound performer, has been further exploited by affiliates of the noise scene, by way of relative visual imagery. Battered, bonded, bruised, bound and fetishised, pictures of compromised young Japanese women adorn the covers of countless noise-related albums and compilations - acting both to enforce the sadomasochistic nature of the music, and, by doing this, attract a bit of sensationalist public attention. [Although, in relation to this last point, Masami Akita - a.k.a. *Merzbow* - has sought to defend his use of S&M imagery as surmounting to more than mere superficial shock tactics. A self-proclaimed serious scholar, as well as frequently published writer, of matters pertaining to sadomasochism, Akita argues that his deep knowledge of the subject qualifies his use of such imagery as being indicative of something much more profound, informed and meaningful.]

Sakoku

Term used to define the closing of international borders in Japan which, as during the centuries prior to the *Meiji Restoration, as well as under the ultranationalist regime dominant during the Pacific war. Sakoku equates to almost complete international isolation, with both the importation of foreign people and culture, as well as exportation of anything Japanese, outlawed.

Sampling Virus Project

Instigated by Otomo Yoshihide in 1998 (?), the *Sampling Virus Project* existed almost quite literally as a kind of musical bacteria or bug, mutating and spreading as it made its way from one host to another.

Beginning as a series of sampled musical works, the project was given life as it was passed around by Otomo from one artist to another, each of whom would add to, or transmute the sounds received in one way or another. The piece thus took on the living guise of a constantly evolving phonic virus, metamorphosing as it in turn infected – and was infected by – artists such as Hoppy Kamiyama, Bob Ostertag, Kato Hideki, and Yamatsuka Eye.

Sanka Zōkei Bijutsu Kyōkai

‘Third Plastic Arts Association’. Constructivist-styled visual arts group formed in 1925, involving the work of members Tōki Okamoto and Tomoyoshi Murayama – the latter of whom is notable for his widespread criticism of groups like **Nika-kai* (Second Section Association), whom he rebuked for their aping of European modernism. With this in mind, *Sanka Zōkei Bijutsu Kyōkai* was perceived to be more forward thinking and independent in its search for an autonomous, intrinsically Japanese, avant-garde identity.

Sannin noKai

See Post-war Nationalism. Like Yagi no Kai, this group of nationalist musicians were founded in 1953 at a time when nationalist tendencies were, to say the least, out of fashion.

Sannin no Kai translates as 'Group of Three'.

Satori

The state of enlightenment reached through the practise of *Zazen, and has been cited by a number of musicologists and art historians as one of the key *Zen Buddhist ideals to have influenced, and been interpreted by, post-war artists around the world. As a philosophy, Satori epitomises the Zen maxim that the 'here and now' is what is important, focus the concrete and the real - the actual experience of every moment.

For examples and suggestions regarding links between Satori and the arts/music, see *Zen and *Suzuki Zen.

Sawari

Derives from the Japanese word *sawaru*, meaning 'to touch', and relates to the style or method used to play instruments such as the *biwa* and *shamisen*. Combined with the actual design of the instrument itself, this mode of playing is said to produce a complex sound that encompasses, rather than seeks reduce (as is usually the case in Western music) pronounced noise elements. It is in reference to this that David Toop cites Toru Takemitsu, in his reference to '*beautiful noise*'.

Scum music Scene

Artists: *Shincho 2M*; *Ultra Fuckers*

Seiyō

Term used to refer to the West/the Occident – translates into English as ‘Western Ocean.’ Opposite to **tōyō*.

Self

According to the teachings of Zen Master Daisetz T. Suzuki, in Zen personal-experience is deemed to be vital, although the dangers of mistaking self-experience with *self-as-a-place-of-refuge* are clearly warned against – the latter being a sure way to fail on the path to Enlightenment.

Not only a key principle in the attainment of *Zen enlightenment, *Self* is also a useful way to sum up what it was that many avant-garde artists and musicians in Japan sought to represent in the years immediately following the Second World war.

Self, in this sense, could mean the very personal self (the artist, and his/her experiences) or, indeed, could refer to their sense of the National self in the contemporary sense – the representation or expression of Japan at that single moment in time.

Analogous, then, with notions such as *autonomy* and *music Without Memory*, what the representation of self in this sense refers to, is the attempt made by artists (e.g. **Gutai Group*, **Zen'ei Bijutsu-kai*, **Group Ongaku*) to find a new alternative as members of contemporary Japanese society, and depart from the two dominant historical modes of artistic production: i.e. the recycling of old folk traditions, and imitation of Western styles. Not so much an endeavour to oppose the West per say, but rather to oppose those Japanese artists content to settle for such mindless mimicking of foreign or conventional trends.

Serialism

Although usually associated with Arnold Schoenberg's Twelve-Tone system, wherein the composer basically chooses notes according to a pre-formulated numerical structure (involving the twelve tones of the chromatic scale, each of which can only be

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repeated after the other eleven have already been heard), serialism also applies more widely to composition. A radical departure from conventional compositional techniques, music is not arranged in relation to the traditionally prevailing concepts of rhythm, harmony, and scale-based melodic ascention, but by mathematical numerical series. This serialisation can determine how any element of the music is formed, such as pitch, duration, tone, etc, although despite the often-scientific precision such systems offer the composer, the results (when compared to conventionally written pieces) might give the impression of being somewhat disorganised and haphazard to anyone engaging casually. Fundamentally, serial music defied the conventional expectations of the listener, just as it eluded traditional techniques of composition.

It is the predominantly mathematical nature of serialist technique that prevented it from being a wholly desirable method for artists such as Takemitsu. Despite a number of Webernian influenced pieces composed at the start of the 1960s, it is widely felt that this quantitative approach to sound wasn't really in keeping with Takemitsu's more romantic sensitivity to the unique tonal and timbral qualities of individual sounds – a penchant for aesthetics over mathematics in music.

Shakuhachi

Deriving from the services and traditions of Zen Buddhism, the Shakuhachi still has very meaningful religious associations. Shakuhachi, also since assimilated into popular and folk music, evolved during the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1573 - 1603) from the basis of traditional ancient recorders.

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Shamisen

Like the Koto and Shakuhachi, the Shamisen rose to the peak of its popularity during the Edo Period (1603 - 1868), used to accompany styles of melodic (e.g. *Juita* and *Naguata*) and story-telling (e.g. *Gidayu-Bushi* and *Shin'naï*) music.

Sankyoku

Traditional genre of Japanese chamber music, named literally to refer to the 'collection of three' musical instruments of which it is consisted - the shakuhachi, shamisen and koto.

Sannō-Yōi

When, in the mid nineteenth century, foreign ships first began steaming their way to Japanese shores, there were two schools of thought within Japan as to how the nation should react to the potential threat they posed: *Sannō-Yōi* and **Wakon Yōsai*. Those aligned with the *Sannō-Yōi* mentality, believed the best hope for the nation was for the Japanese people to concentrate their support and strength behind the emperor, and wholly resist the newly arrived Western **banjin* ('barbarians') with all resolve.

Shakuhachi

Japanese flute-like instrument. Used to interesting effect in Toru Takemitsu's landmark composition *November Steps*, and by New musician Akikazu Nakamura. The latter, not only a contemporary master of traditional shakuhachi music, has also pushed out the boundaries of the instrument, applying it across a range of jazz, rock and experimental performances.

Shimedaiko

Form of traditional drum, played alongside the **Tsuzumi*

Shingakugekiron

. In 1904 future artistic director of the **Tsubouchi* theatre company, Shikō Tsubouchi, argued in his text *Shingakugekiron* ('Theory of a New music Theatre') that the development of a New National music Theatre was essential if Japan was ever to have what other 'civilised nations' had. It was his belief that such theatre should seek both to please and enlighten people.

Tsubouchi outlined that that the music used in New National music Theatre should neither rely upon traditional Japanese conventions, nor simply copy Western styles, but develop as an appropriate 'National music' for Japan (although Western music could be used at certain specific points – e.g. to stress the dramatic points in the production).

Shingeki

Form of Japanese Theatre developed during the Taisho period, notable for its adoption of certain facets of Western theatre and music conventions to achieve distinctly Japanese sensibilities.

Shinjuku

A district of Tokyo, the character of Shinjuku can best be defined by a kind of schizophrenic duality present in both its history and its appearance. The West of Shinjuku largely dominates the skyline of Tokyo, with its extensive complex of towers housing a mass of offices, apartment blocks and department stores. While thousands of salarymen, shoppers and commuters travel daily over the Shuto Expressway, paying the obligatory nine hundred yen toll to access the western side, the east of Shinjuku is a place of primarily nocturnal vibrancy. Here, below and away from the high-rise architecture of the neighbouring

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metropolis, a low, dense network of buildings constitute the sizeable bar districts of Eastern Shinjuku.

Far from the bustling cosmopolitanism of latter day Shinjuku however, throughout *Bikyoran*; *Kenso* [both described as ‘King Crimson-styled’, (Shigetoshi, p.20)]; *Novela*; *Vienna*; *Teru’s Symphonia*; *Starless*; *Gerard*; *Pagent*; *Outer Limits*.

the 1960s the area was synonymous with what were the first ever scenes of Western-style public protest in Japan. Angered by both the situation in Vietnam and the prolonged occupation of American forces in Japan (particularly in places such as Okinawa), the students, radicals, and social dissidents of the district, not only demonstrated in its streets and squares, but famously set out from Shinjuku to overrun Tokyo’s Parliament building.

By the 1970s however, plans to redevelop the area began to take dramatic effect. The district’s bohemian countenance was gradually diminished by the emergence of skyscrapers and business complexes, consequently displacing the non-conformist, revolutionary contingent it had for a decade sheltered.

Shinobu

Slanting flute-like instrument, the origins of which lie with Kabuki drama performances.

Shinpa

Japanese Theatre genre which, like **Shinjeki*, developed during the Taishō period, using a number of carefully adapted Western music theatre principles to create a performance type that was characteristically Japanese.

Shinsakkyokuha

Including members such as Fumio Hayasaka, Yasuji Kiyose, and (between 1950 and 1952) Toru Takemitsu, Shinsakkyokuha (‘New Composition Group’) were a collective

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exclusively and conservatively dedicated to the academic pursuit of music – particularly nationalist music.

Shirakaba

Shirakaba ('White Birch'), a periodical literary text, was first circulated in Japan around 1910. Promoting principles of free creative expression, it corresponded with the underground development of Japan's first community of avant-garde artists – flourishing in earnest only following the fall of and Emperor Hirohito's Nationalist military regime after 1945.

Shizo Music

Artists: *Kangaroo Paw; Pirami*

Shō

Mouth organ-type instrument constituting part of the Imperial Gagaku ensemble, used to produce chords containing of five or six notes through its seventeen bamboo pipes.

Has been juxtaposed against differing western instruments and contexts in modernist compositions such as Toru Takemitsu's *Distance* for oboe and *shō* (1972)

Shomyo

Like *Gagaku*, *Shomyo* is a traditional form of Japanese music pioneered during the Heian period although, unlike the Imperial Court music, the origins of this vocal genre are in chants and music intoned during Buddhist services.

Showa Period

1926 - 1989

Silence

If phrases and titles were to be taken at their absolutely most literal, then John Cage's popular association with *silence* would perhaps be seen as the most minimal gesture of them all. The fact is however, that Cage's 4'33" (his *silent* piece), which consisted of four minutes and thirty-three seconds of someone not playing the piano, was fundamentally a gesture intended to denounce the idea that silence - as it is popularly conceived - exists at all. By presenting them with 4'33" of no piano music, Cage did not subject his audience to a moment of silence, but rather one in which they were given the opportunity to listen to the sounds around them - their ongoing aural-ambient environment - and realise that silence in a piece of music was wholly different to silence in real terms which, in fact, did not and could not ever really exist.

With this said, the links that can be drawn between Cage and early minimalist music are, as might be expected, many and varied. With his obvious notoriety, and classes taught at the New School, John Cage and New York in the early 1960s were as synonymous with each other as they are now. Teaching for a time at the Black Mountain College, Cage's work as a solo musician, as well as collaborations with key figures such as Merce Cunningham and the Fluxus group, had fundamental bearing upon the early development of artists such as La Monte Young and John Cale (with his presence in New York, and the active group of artists of which he was a part, largely fuelling their move to the city). Just as the former studied the compositions of Cage at Stockhausen's summer school, so too did Cale's early noteriety in New York come from an eighteen hour performance of John Cage's *Vexations* (by Erik Satie), in September 1963.

Through his adoption of methods evolving from the I CHING (*The Chinese book of Changes*), John Cage developed a system of composition that marked a complete departure from Arnold Schoenberg's highly mathematical Serialist technique. Using chance operations and indeterminacy, experimental musicians such as Cage, Carl Ruggles and Christian Wolffe, sought to challenge the restrictive way in which music was created and received: the

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boundaries commonly drawn between sound, music and noise; the rigidity and limitations maintained through the conventional role of the composer, and traditional values of Western composition.

However, it is important in this context that one should look to a number of age old Japanese principles, particularly those derived from Zen Buddhism (E.g. *Ma, *Mu, *Satori, *Zazen, etc) to see just how influential the teachings of Daisetz T. Suzuki were to John Cage. This application of essentially Zen-derived principles takes on even further significance, when one considers just how they were re-imported (see **Feedback-Loop*) by Japanese artists like Toru Takemitsu, via an interest in Zen-inspired Western artists (e.g. John Cage).

Another notable New musician to engage with the notion of space and silence was Takehisa Kosugi, founder member of *Taj Mahal Travellers* during the 1970s. Emanating a distinct kind of philosophical, Japanese beat-hippie persona, Kosugi also explored the relationship between **Noise* and *Silence* in music, leading – albeit through alternative means – to the now popularly Cage-associated conclusion that both are one in the same.

Another interesting feature of Kosugi's music is his removal, in a sense, of *Self. In a way that is analogous, perhaps, to the non-expressionism now practised by **Onkyo* sound artists, Takehisa Kosugi sought through improvisation create a boundary between music and self, removing any trace of personal identity.

S-Mail

First devised for the 1998 FBI (Festival Beyond Innocence), the S-Mail (Sound Mail) project involved a number of artists performing what might be described as *indirect* duos. In a series of musical 'blind dates', foreign (occidental) artists were each invited to produce a piece of music recorded onto audio tape, and send it in to the festival. Each recording was made in the knowledge that, on the night of the festival, it would be used in a duet with another artist - who, for his or her part, would perform a live improvisation to one of the respective recordings, having never heard it until then. The only details given to the live

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collaborators of each duet was the length and instrument used in the piece to which they would be improvising, and the name of the artist who produced it. In contrast with the dismissive Cagean attitude towards recorded music (i.e. once a piece of music is recorded, it is fundamentally dead), S-Mail bears some comparison with the multi-tape ambient installations of Brian Eno such as *Discreet music* (1975). Just as the 'Automatic Systems' employed here allowed multiple tape recordings, in combination, to constantly evolve and become something new, so too does the addition of live improvisation enable recorded music to become more than a just an infinitely repeatable, single moment in time. As Kae Uchihashi explains:

These will be incomplete improvisational duos for which some kind of disparity in time and space existed. ...[S-Mail] will prove that there are still ways to breath new life into recorded works.

(Uchihashi, 2001, p.42-3) (See also p.44-5)

Sōtō

One of the central schools of *Zen Buddhism, Soto developed as the Japanese interpretation of China's Ts'ao Tung Zen sect, associated with the Master Hsing Sze during the mid eighth-century. Unlike *Rinzai Zen, the direct importance of art and music is overshadowed by almost complete devotion to, and focus upon, *Zazen.

Sound Sculpture

Artists: *Aube*

Space

See **Ma* and **Onkyo*

Space Rock

Another example of Japanese underground bands being applied with the tag of a traditionally European, progressive rock sub-category (e.g. bands like *Amon Duul* and *Hawkwind*). The appropriateness of its employment to describe the music of new Japanese music exponents such as *Kadura* and *Kosokuya* must purely be left at the discretion of the individual listener.

Spatial Notation

There are perhaps two ways in which Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu has explored the notion of space in his compositions. In *Distance* for oboe and shō (1972), spatiality was explored physically in terms of how the musicians of the two instrument-types were positioned. Exploring the title motif of distance, the oboist and shō player face each other, a fair distance apart, and as one of the two instruments stops playing a certain phrase, the other continues it. The idea of *Distance*, however, is also referred to in relation to the cultural and historical distance that exists between the two instruments, with Takemitsu setting up a similar binary opposition between the traditional conventions of East and West.

In common with *Distance*, the composer's later piece *Waves* for clarinet, two trombones, horns and bass-drum (1976) also incorporates elements of a spatial nature by arranging the instruments at various points around the stage. Despite other such similarities however, perhaps one of the most notable differences between the two pieces relates to the varying levels of determinacy and prescription in the notation of each. In contrast to the painstakingly precise music of *Distance*, *Waves* incorporates a series of notated and verbal instructions of a much freer, almost improvisational, sort, exploring spatiality in terms of the creative freedom and space the notation affords each musician.

Stoicism

Applied by Jun-Ichi Konuma [see Burt, p.1], this term refers to the work composed by Takemitsu during what, according to the popular tripartite division of his musical career, is regarded as his third and final period. Proposedly dating from the early 1970s, Takemitsu's work during phase has also been described by Yoko Narazaki as constituting a **Conservative style*. See also **Eroticism*.

Subtraction Concept

Principle developed by sound artist Sachiko M during her participation on projects such as *Filament* (1998) and **Cathode* (1999), which essentially worked towards deconstructing the habitual musical and compositional baggage carried by her collaborator Otomo Yoshihide. According to the latter, it was Sachiko M's Subtraction Concept that ultimately lead to his own development of projects such as **Cathode* and **Anode*.

Sumi-e

A style of traditional monochrome ink painting that arrived in Japan during the twelfth-century, evolving from the Ch'an monks of China, and since referred to primarily as a form of art related to Zen Buddhism.

The key reason for its inclusion here is the fact that a number of its principles, as a Zen art, can be likened to fundamental characteristics of **New music* that have recurred, independently, throughout the twentieth-century.

One of the most notable examples of this is the importance of **Improvisation* to Sumi-e, explained, for example, in the observations of Daisetz T. **Suzuki*: -

The inspiration is to be transferred on to the paper in the quickest possible time. The lines are to be drawn as swiftly as possible and the fewest in number, only the absolutely necessary ones being indicated. No

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deliberation is allowed, no erasing, no repetition, no retouching, no remodelling.

(Suzuki, 1970 (1934), p.351, in Westgeest, 1997, p.12)

A concern for space and spatial characteristics is also important to Sumi-e artists, again begging both formal and theoretical comparisons to be made with a range of new music from Japan's post-war underground and avant-garde. Composer Toru Takemitsu's *Arc* for piano and orchestra (1963), for example, makes musical allusion to a walk through a Japanese garden and, as such, observes the same concern for spatiality, absence, and the spaces between objects, as do these carefully constructed traditional miniature landscapes.

See also: **Mobile Compositions; *Improvisation; *Ma; *Mu; *Onkyo; *Zen*

Suzuki Zen

...Following the conclusion of World war II, Suzuki returned to America in 1949, even though at the time – so close to the war's end – US feelings towards the Japanese were still not altogether warm. Taught at Colombia University as a visiting lecturer between 1952 and 1957. His classes were attended by the likes of Ad Reinhardt, Abram Lassow, Philip Guston and John Cage, as well as other's who, according to historian Helen Westgeest: -

...were 'arty' (artists and devotees of art) and psychologists, in particular psychoanalysts. (Westgeest, 1997, p.52)

Both the personal tuition and many writings of the Zen master enabled him to successfully pass on the difficult ideas of Zen. Even though many pupils at the Columbia University classes didn't subsequently become extremely knowledgeable about Zen, even a small amount of contact with Suzuki's teachings was often enough to prove a great stimulant. [Westgeest, p.52]

Swing Journal

Influential Tokyo-based jazz journal established during the 1960s.

Symphonic

Artists: *Hikyo String; Asturias; Cinderella Search; Sakoto Fujii; Natsuki Tamura; Masahiko Hosokawa; Makoto Kitayama; Midas; Sirius*

Symphonic Rock

Artists: *Ars Nova; Damian Hamada; Pageant; Ikko Nakajima; Mugen; Katsuhiko Hayashi; Ie Rai Shan; Outer Limits; Teru's Symphonia; Vienna; Wuthering*

T

Taiko

Taiko drumming has a place in the ancient history of Japan, originally used centuries ago as a means of communication – to tell the time, etc – before it was eventually adopted by the Samuri as a war drum, similar to those used by Western armies. Certain commentators have noted, however, that a ‘special respect’ exists for in Japan for Taiko, due to the drum’s place in Shinto tradition where they are used to summon and return Kami (deities) in certain ceremonies. While many Taiko pieces still played can be traced back over 400 years, there has also developed in recent years a new genre of so-called *Creative Taiko*. This contemporary style of Taiko playing assimilates and ‘updates’ traditional rhythms, adapting them, according to one commentator, to reflect and in reaction to the ‘fast pace’ of modern-day life.

Taiko drums sometimes appear in *Nohgaku*, the musical accompaniment of *Noh* theatre, although while these are played using two sticks, the other drums in the ensemble – *ko-tsuzumi* and *o-tsuzumi* – are performed with bare hands.

Taisho Era

Following immediately the death of the Emperor Meiji, the Taisho Period (1912-26) saw political power drift increasingly into the hands of the Diet and its democratic parties, and away from the ‘weak’ emperor Taisho.

After playing a cameo role in WWI on the side of the allies, Japanese authorities were infuriated at having a “racial equality clause” rejected by nations such as USA, UK and Australia at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. This, as well as other policies such as the US 1924 Exclusion Act, passed to prevent further immigration from Japan (and described as

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illustrating a long-standing 'racist arrogance and discrimination towards the Japanese'), contributed heavily to the deterioration of Japan's relationship with Western powers.

Takarazuka

All-female theatre troupe founded by Ichizō Kobayashi in July 1913. In 1918 Shikō Tsubouchi was employed as artistic director of the group, which proved an important step in determining the future growth and development of the group. (1873-1957).

Of notable consequence was Tsubouchi's belief that the two most important functions of theatre were to entertain (*goraku kikan*), and to be a conduit for moral teaching (*fūkyō kikan*). Even more notable, however, was that it was not merely theatre alone to which Tsubouchi assigned the role of 'organ of social management,' but art in general: -

Tsubouchi perceived theatre, or art as a whole, as an organ (kikan) of social management (shakai keiei), which, like religion or education, causes a powerful spiritual as well as material response. For him theatre fulfilled two important functions, namely amusement (goraku kikan) – to entertain, comfort and console the people – and improvement and propagation of public morals (fūkyō kikan). (Domenig, 1998, p.269)

Kobayashi promoted his all-female Takarazuka revue, by presenting it as a form of theatre that fully embodied the ideologies of **New Japan*. Whereas Kabuki was written off as being 'antique', Takarazuka was seen to epitomise a more complete 'social reality.'

Detractors of the revue however, still pledged their support to kabuki, dismissing Kobayashi's all-female troupe as a 'superficial fad.'

Tatamae

According to a vast number of writers and experts commenting upon life in Japan, the ritual of public pretence and façade is something that dominates everyday social behaviour. *Tatamae* is the word used to describe this supposed inherent public-face or play-acting, and the very thing which successive lines of avant-garde artists and musicians have, through their work and their way of life, stood in vehement opposition to.

The very presence of *Tatamae* within Japanese culture is accounted for as the product of a unique, historical, and unspoken societal pressure. Born of an obligation towards social duty, one explanation places the roots of the concept back centuries to Japan's military *Shogun* era, as a safeguard against anyone causing offence by saying the wrong thing, and thereby provoking societal disharmony.

In terms of contemporary avant-garde culture in Japan, this notion of *Tatamae* attracts parallels with a number of artists' knowing - yet hidden - 'playing-up' to Western projections of what they assume Japanese culture to be.

For the counter-principle of *Tatamae*, see **Honne*.

It is also worthy of mention that, in his feature article on Masimo Akita dated August 2000, Edwin Pouncey proposes that the artist's stance against such 'public play acting', is evidenced in his long-standing *Merzbow* project. In a statement that could easily apply to the historical line of avant-garde New musicians in Japan, Pouncey places Akita's rejection of dominant musical practice as a direct rejection of *Tatamae* – an outright refusal to don the expected public façade.

What is particularly significant about this, is that it draws what might be described as a direct 'causal link' between, not only the rejection of mainstream society, but a specific historically-embedded code of behaviour, and the creation of a culturally-autonomous creative identity: -

*By unshackling himself from the restrictions of Japanese
society, Akita set out on a quest to create a new music that*

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*shunned conventional instrumentation, ignored the regulatory
three-minute sound barrier and banished melody. (Pouncey,
The Wire 198, August 2000, p.29).*

[see also **Japaneseness* and *Japan Today* discussion on 'Leaving Japan' book review].

Technoid (electronic Experimentation)

Artists: *Matsumae Kimitaka*

Techno/Jungle

Artists: *Boredoms; Dot; Dub Sonic; Jigen; Ryuta Kawabata; Nasca Car; Off Mask*

00

Teigeki

See **Teikoku gekijō*

Teikoku gekijō

Imperial Theatre founded in 1911 with the purpose of aiding the development of modern Japanese theatre. The emphasis placed upon theatrical forms such as Opera, however, illustrates how the theory/process of 'modernisation' was quite often confused for one of 'westernisation'.

Teiten

The Imperial Fine Arts Academy of Japan.

Theosophical Society

Founded in 1875 Henry Steel Olcott and Helena Blavatsky, a Russian living in America, the society demonstrates an early example of Western interests in the East and Eastern philosophy, that burgeoned through modernist pursuits, particularly in the USA, after the Second World war.

Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō

Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō (the “Tokyo School of Fine Arts”), differed from many other such institutions at the time of its establishment in 1889, by virtue of the importance its curriculum placed upon the traditional arts of Japan. Although later Westernized, the traditional content of the institution’s initial teaching programme is particularly surprising, considering its historical placing within the midst of frantic early Meiji Era modernising (Westernising) reforms.

Tokyo electronic/Techno Scene

Labels: *The Sonic Plate; Meme; Zero Gravity.*

Tokyo Ongaku Gakkō

Formerly known as **Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari* (music Study Committee), established in 1879, *Tokyo Ongaku Gakkō* (or ‘Tokyo music School’) was symptomatic in its curriculum of the strong position maintained by so-called **Westernisationists* during the **Meiji Era*.

After centuries deprived of contact with the outside international world, the termination of the Edo Period brought with it a hunger in Japan for foreign culture – as well as an equal negation of its indigenous cultural heritage.

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Following a consciously Western-like model, Japan's Ministry of Education began, from around 1872, to usher a number of radical reforms, that enforced the exclusive teaching of European-style music in schools. From Primary School age, youngsters were compelled to partake in singing lessons as part of their weekly curriculum, followed by the introduction of instrumental tuition at Middle School level.

Renamed in 1887, *Tokyo Ongaku Gakkō* was unswervingly zealous in its promotion of European musical conventions, late German Romanticism in particular (mainly because, as historian Peter Burt points out, 'all but one of the teachers ...were of German extraction.'). French composition was also shown to be of some influence to a number of *Tokyo Ongaku Gakkō* attendees, with the popularity of Debussy, for example, proving somewhat ironic: namely because such work was largely derived from some interpretation of tradition 'Oriental' music (in the case of Debussy, the Asiatic music he was exposed to in the Paris Exposition of 1889). See **Feedback Loop*.

Tokyo Underground

Artists: *A-Musik; Brast Burn; Karuna Khyal; Tori Kudo; Viddkazz*; (also Nakano record shop in Tokyo)

Tōyō

Translated to mean 'Eastern Ocean', *tōyō* is the Japanese term for the 'East' or the 'orient'. Opposite to **seiyō* (the West).

Trad-Derived music

Artists: *Yukihiro Issu; Masashi Kikuchi; Reiko Kikuchi; Miya Masaoka; Tetsu Saitoh; Kazue Sawai; Shirazu Shibusa; Kazutoki Umezo; Kazuhide Yomaji*

Trance Rock

Another loosely defined genre-type that encompasses bands such as *Acid Mothers Temple*, *Demi Semi Quaver*, *Rovo*, *Boredoms* and *Omoide Hatoba*. Like a number of other similar classifications, it refers to a certain brand of contemporary Japanese *New music* that combines spatial improvisations with Western Space Rock, Prog Rock, and psychedelic influences. When reading about any of the groups or artists related to this area of music, more often than not some parallel will usually be drawn, or some reference made, from amongst a range of supposed Western antecedents such as *Hawkwind*, *King Crimson*, *Amon Duul*, *Frank Zappa*, *Tangerine Dream*, *Soft Machine*, *Gong*, etc.)

Tsugaru

One-hundred year old style of shamisen playing named after the region of Japan where it developed firstly as a folk tradition. The emphasis placed upon **improvisation*, however, meant that *Tsugaru* soon developed into something unlike folk-based shamisen styles, played predominantly by professional *Tsugaru* musicians, rather than everyday people.

As a renowned contemporary musician, Michihiro Sato has attained his position of notoriety the only way a *Tsugaru* shamisen player can – by being different. To truly gain respect, *Tsugaru* demands that musicians push out existing boundaries through improvisation and exploration, and develop an individual style. As Sato himself explains: -

...a Tsugaro shamisen is not regarded as an established musician as long as he or she plays like someone else. We have to acquire a unique style unlike any other... You can do whatever you like so long as you play good music. (Sato, in linear notes to Independent Japanese music box set, 2002)

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It can clearly be seen, therefore, that although the means of the music itself (the shamisen) is grounded in folk tradition, the century-old defining ethic of *Tsugaru* nevertheless epitomises the concept of Japanese **New music* in many ways: primarily, through the focus upon progression, independence from tradition or convention, and the constant emphasis upon each musician to find an individual, representative, expressive language.

Tsuzuki

A traditional Japanese instrument, this pair of drums belong to the small musical ensemble used to accompany the masked performances of Noh theatre.

Tsuzumi

Another traditional drum, played along together with the Shimeshaiko

U

Ukiyo-e

A traditional form of genre painting, *Ukiyo-e* was one of the first indigenous Japanese styles to be studied by Western artists. Specifically interested in the convention of *Ukiyo-e Hanga* (*Ukiyo-e* genre-based prints) as opposed to *Nikuhitsu Ukiyo-e* (hand-painted images), American artist James McNeill Whistler was amongst the first on the Occident to study and appropriate aspects of traditional Japanese culture, as centuries of international isolation ended in 1868 with the Meiji Restoration.

Undefined

Artists: *Ground Zero; Heretic; Keiji Haino; Ili-Speed; Hoahio; Yoshimitsu Ichiraku; Furudate Tetsuo; Hoppy Kamiyama; Killing Time; Magic Power Mako; Asahito Nanjo; Aki Onda; Optical*8; Otomo Yoshihide; Pugs; Ruins; The Saboten; Taku Sugimoto; Tairikuotoko Vs. Sanmyakuonna; Vajra; Satoru Wono; Eye Yamatsuka*

V

Vinyl records

In the early days of the **jazz kissa*, perhaps due to their rarity and difficulty to obtain, vinyl records were widely accepted and apprehended in the same way as live performances.

It has been suggested that the contemporary jazzu-kissa that remain have taken on something of the air of relics or museums: remnants of a bygone era, to which LPs now add an aura of authenticity.

W

Wakon Kansai

Old slogan that sums up the penchant throughout Japanese history to seek to base its own national development upon lessons learned from abroad – in this case during a period when Japan looked to China as a model. *Wakon Kansai* literally means ‘Japanese Spirit, Chinese Techniques.’

Wakon Yosai

Translated to mean ‘Japanese Spirit, Western Techniques’, this slogan illustrates how the Japanese moved away from the ideals of **Wakon Kansai* (see above), replacing its reverence of China with that of Europe and America. It represented the opposite to the hostile and isolationist policy of *Sannō-Yōi*, encouraging the Japanese not to resist and distrust Western ways, but learn and benefit from these new military and industrial methods.

Westernisationists

Term applied retrospectively to account loosely for those artists, politicians, critics, etc, who – particularly during the Meiji era – sought widely to exile almost all elements of traditional culture from everyday life in Japan, embarking instead upon a game of ‘follow my leader’ with Europe and America.

After centuries of *Edo Period isolationism, many in Japan during this time greatly coveted the kind of modernism they saw evident in the military, arts, and industrial technology, newly arriving from the Occident. As a number of historians have observed, however, this frenetic urge to play cultural catch-up was fundamentally marked - and flawed - in its infancy, by a supposed inability to see ‘The West’ and ‘The modern’ as two separate entities. In other words, Westernisation and modernisation were seen to be one in the same thing, since it was in the West that the latter had been created.

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For Japan's so-called Westernisationists, therefore, it stood to reason that if Japan were ever to attain the status of 'modern', and reap the newly realised benefits this would bring, the Nation must first fashion its new Post-Edo society upon that of the West. This, for the duration of Meiji Westernisation, would naturally also mean the abandonment of traditional Japanese culture – the isolated enforcement of which, it was felt for a time, had allowed Japan to be overlooked by the modern world in the first place.

Poignantly, however, it was in reaction to this fervent assimilation of Western culture, that growing concern for the preservation of Japan's indigenous culture began to cultivate. With the dawn of the Pre-war Showa Era in 1926, a new and deeply intense Nationalism would preside over life in Japan, and all cultural products of West derivation (Military marching music excepted) be proscribed as property of the enemy.

White Noise

In scientific terms, white noise refers to a phonic situation wherein all perceptible sound waves occur at the same time, and in which the frequencies are dispersed evenly and randomly. As a more general term however, white noise has often been used to describe the forceful and almost sado-masochistic music of bands such as *Merzbow*, *Masonna*, and *Gerogerigegege* – practitioners of so-called *Japanoise* music. In this context, white noise generically represents what might be described as a wall of sound: music which, through its volume and intensity, is forceful, concentrated and - to some listeners - often extreme.

Worker-Bee

Common metaphor used to illustrate stereotypical Western perceptions of the Japanese 'salaryman' - city office workers caricatured for working long hours, having disregard for leisure time, and an almost fanatical dedication to work.

The USA, it seems, is ill at ease with the emergence of this burgeoning economic superpower, with the added salt in the wound being that Japan seems to have beaten America

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at its own game on a number of different levels. While, specifically speaking, this includes the success of the Japanese motor industry, in more general terms it appears that the Japanese have come to more successfully embody values and ethics (such as the rewards of hard graft) which were traditionally held up as integral to the 'American Way'.

At times when competition on the international markets was high, it is in the direction of these *working-bees* of the Japanese megalopolis that Americans prone to **Japan Bashing* often pointed an accusatorial finger. After all, how could US businesses possibly compete with the Japanese, while ever they continued to trade so unscrupulously? (i.e. employing staff who were willing to work improbably long hours, for comparatively little money.)

It goes without saying that the Japanese found such claims of foul play increasingly tiresome, particularly as national self-confidence grew with economic success throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Much of what constitutes this office employee *working bee* stereotype, owes its origin to more subversive typecasting of the Japanese: namely, stock images derived from both the 14th century and second World war eras, which portray Japan as a nation populated by ruthless and efficient warriors, bent on world domination.

Such rhetoric, dating back to the US during the 1980s, has recurrently found its way into accounts and perceptions of Japanese businesspeople, depicting Japan's economic success as a continuation of its war against the rest of the world: a trade, rather than military, war.

World Parliament of Religions

Symposium organised as part of the *World's Columbian Exposition* in Chicago, Illinois, May-October 1893. As has been well documented, interest in Eastern philosophy was prominent amongst a number of artists and academics throughout the first half of the twentieth-century. The *World Parliament of Religions* marks one of the first occasions where *Zen Buddhism was introduced formerly (although briefly) to the US, by a Zen Master – Soen Shaku (1859-1919).

Y

Yobikō

Japanese 'cramming schools' common to large cities such as Tokyo.

Yagi no Kai

Translated as 'Goat Group', a musical nationalist collective formed in 1953. See Post-war Nationalism.

Yōga

Conservative arts association in Japan

Yogaku

Japanese term which describes 'Occidentalised Japanese music' (In *Japanese Independent music*, p.9)

Yoka

According to some Western commentators, the concept of *Yoka* (leisure) is a strange one in Japan, and means 'time left over.'

Yoka mondai

Term meaning 'the leisure problem'. See **Yoka*

Yomiuri Indépendant

Post-war avant-garde Japanese art movement which, far from being anti-western, nevertheless represented the central tenets of **jiko hon'i* in its opposition to the Japanese cultural propensity to passively replicate, on a superficial basis, formal elements associated with specific Western art movements. While a number of similar underground movements have appeared throughout Japanese art history (motivated by the same drive for cultural autonomy), Yomiuri Indépendant was specifically opposed to the dominant painterly trend of the late '50s, which centred around the blind assimilation of French *Art Informel* techniques.

Z

Zazen

Zazen, an ancient Japanese term, refers to the practise of meditation central to the forming of Zen Buddhism. See *Zen definition below for examples, not only of how Zen Buddhism in general, but meditative concepts have been applied to certain forms of Japanese New music (whether the application of these terms was bound directly with the production of the music itself, or installed as a retrospective afterthought by critics).

Zealotism

Devised by Alfred Toynbee in *Civilisation on Trial* (1952), this term sits in polar opposition to his Herodian principle, and in some way explains the fervent nationalism that followed on from the Meiji Restoration of 1867. Beyond the initial *Herodian* reaction (appropriating western ideas – particularly medical and military – in order to play the west at their own game), Japan's more widespread and long-term response to the threat of occidental powers, and the influence of occidentalism upon its own culture, was to turn more closely to its own heritage and traditions with, as Toynbee explains, "...abnormally scrupulous exactitude." (Toynbee cited in Burt, 2000, p.7)

Zen

Twelfth Century: imported by Chinese Monks dedicated to the Ch'an sect (derived from the teachings of sixth-century Indian monk Bodhidharma, who named the sect Ch'an with reference to the Sanskrit word for meditation, *Dhyana*). Name Zen applied upon its arrival to Japan, and acceptance by the military Shogun regime: Zen itself being something of a combination of the words Ch'an and Zazen (the Japanese verb for meditation).

The extent of Zen's influence in Japanese culture and society, is described here as being a subject over which opinions are divided. While Alexandra Monroe in *Scream at the*

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Sky, for example, condemns the superficial Western tendency to see Zen as a central aspect of much Japanese art, the opinions of Ryosuke Ohashi are posited here to present an alternative view. Discussing the work of this Japanese philosopher, whose research examines 'the role of Zen in Japanese culture, Westgeest explains: -

*Ohashi believes that many Japanese underestimate its influence,
since they are inclined to see the flowers and not the roots.
Moreover, he compares Zen with an explosion which sets things
in motion, but is not itself visible. (Westgeest, 1997, p.11)*

There seems to be a notable difference here between tendencies in the West attribute Zen-influence too readily, and those in Japan to dismiss, with comparable haste, any trace of its presence.

Contemporary musicians/bands associated directly as having some Zen-like attributes:

Cinorama; Mekong Zoo; Hiroki Okano with Tenkoo Orchestra; Pocopen; Toho Sara

Zen Aesthetics

7 Aspects of Zen Art: These points formulated as 'Zen Aesthetics' by Shin'ichi

Hisamatsu in the text *Zen and the Fine Arts*: -

1. Asymmetry
2. Simplicity
3. Naturalness
4. Tranquility
5. freedom of Attachment
6. Subtle Profoundity
7. Austere Sublimity

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The crucial element here is seen to be a favouring of the 'irregular and seemingly unfinished', which Hisamatsu himself saw paralleled in Western modern abstract art (e.g. in the removal of form and figurative representation).

(Westgeest, p.16)

Zenboom

Phrase coined by academic Rick Fields in 1981 to account for the mid-century explosion of interest in Zen Buddhism, no-matter how superficial, throughout the USA. While, according to Fields, Suzuki's lectures during the 1950s greatly accelerated the *Zenboom* spread, a number of artists including Mark Tobey were highly sceptical about the superficiality of Zen's mainstream popularity.

Westgeest, in her book *Zen in the Fifties: Interaction in art between East and West*, cites the three underlying factors identified by F. Vos for the rise to popularity of Zen: -

1. The fact that, as a result of America's **occupation* in Japan, many young men returned to the states familiar with many facets of Japanese culture.
2. Zen provided an as-before-unknown alternative to Western cultural practices, with which many artists and intellects had become profoundly dissatisfied.
3. That it's more general appeal came from the simple fact that it was 'new and unknown.' (Westgeest, 1997, note 49, p.89).

The *Zenboom* era, however, was also marked in its popular context by widespread superficiality. Throughout the course of fifties America, Zen Buddhism, and its terminology, was widely appropriated by the US public without any real understanding of its specific cultural and philosophical implications. According to Westgeest: -

...Zen had ...become an adjective for everything, varying from painting styles to personality types, from verse forms to states of

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awareness. Words like Koan and Satori were apparently being banded about everywhere. (Westgeest, 1997, p.53)

She goes on to cite a comment made by artist Philip Guston, which seems to underline the casual and insensitive use to which the terms and philosophies of Zen, were being assimilated often even without the pretence of understanding: -

Sometimes I think of the Zen Koan. I know very little about Zen, but I think somehow I am undergoing the Koan. (Guston cited in Westgeest, 1997, p.53)

Zen'ei bijutsu

Japanese word for *avant-garde* which, like its European correspondent, is derived from the military term meaning forward or advanced guard. Came into popular use between 1912 and 1926, during the *Taisho* period.

Zen'ei bijutsu-kai

The *avant-garde Association*, founded by muralist Maruki Iri and painter Yamashita Kikuji in 1947. Renowned not only through an approach which, in formal and aesthetic terms, was regarded as *avant-garde*, but also because of the contentious and intensely political subject matter broached – particularly images related directly to the atomic genocide at Hiroshima, and subsequent occupation by American forces.

Significant as a group of early *new artists*, whose goal it was to represent their own impressions of, and feelings towards, contemporary Japan – to portray their own individual experiences, in their own unique, individual way, and break away from both Japanese tradition and the mimicking of Western styles. In other words, to project and express autonomy.

Zeuhl

Originally another European prog-rock-related genre, Zeuhl music (pronounced ‘tsoil’), has been mentioned in relation to the work of Japanese bands and artists including *Bondage Fruit; Coil; J.A. Caeser; Pochakaite Malko; Rinnesya; Rovo; Yuki Saga*. In terms of its original, proper, application, zeuhl referred an jazz/fusion-related approach to music that both derived from and centred around, the eccentric, innovative, and highly influential French band *Magma*.

Year	Life	Art
1900	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start of the Boxer Rebellion, as eight countries mount assault on North China. Conflict eventually resolved, but Russia continue to Occupy Manchuria• Protests held over pollution at the Ashio copper mine	
1901		
1902	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Japanese government controversially seizes control over the production of text books for schools, in order to 'rid corruption'.• Start of the Japanese literary trend of naturalism, which continues until around 1911• Anglo-Japanese Alliance signed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The word <i>jazz</i> is supposedly first used by the pianist Jelly Roll Morton.
1903	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Ideals of the East</i> published – Tenshin Okakura's remonstrance against Western cultural hegemony.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Major Opera production performed in Japan: <i>Orfeo et Euridice</i> by Gluck.
1904	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflict of interests over Korea and Manchuria sparks war between Russia and Japan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shōyō Tsubouchi formulates his <i>Shingakugekiron</i> ('Theory of a New Music Theatre'), in which he postulates that to bring Japan into line with other 'civilised nations', a new national theatre had to be founded, based on principles of 'dance drama'.
1905	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Japan defeats Russia, gaining territory in Korea and Manchuria.	
1906	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calls come from certain factions in Japan for the overthrow of China's Ch'ing Dynasty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shōyō Tsubouchi, father of future artistic director of the <i>Takarazuka</i>, Shizō Tsubouchi, founds the pioneering modern theatre group <i>Bunel Kyōka</i>.
1907		
1908		
1909		
1910	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Japan seizes full control of Korea as both political Nationalism and, with it, National confidence rise.• Literary Board established by the Japanese Ministry of Education, its role to counteract the politicisation of literature.• Writer Kōtoku Shūsui accused of plotting to assassinate the Emperor in what came to be known as the 'Great Treason Incident'• Korea deemed to be a Japanese colony by the government of Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kōtarō Takamura publishes his essay <i>Midori-iro no taiyō</i> ('The Green Sun'), which underlines the creative importance of 'self' over imposed national identity. Text appears in <i>Subaru</i> journal
1911	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kōtoku Shūsui hanged after the 'Great Treason Incident' of the previous year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teikoku Gekijō/Teigeki ('Imperial Theatre') founded in order to promote

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- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| | | the development of a new modernised/westernised Japanese music theatre. |
| 1912 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death of Emperor Meiji (age 61). Wife and General Nogi Maresuke comply with tradition and, on the day of the funeral, commit ritual suicide. • Taisho Era begins • Start of economic problems that dominate Japan until around 1925 • Revolution in China leads to the overthrow of the Ch'ing Dynasty, and establishment of the Chinese Republic. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First ever native Japanese Symphony conducted by Kōsaku Yamada (1886-1965) |
| 1913 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The word <i>jazz</i> seen for the first time in a printed text. • The all-female <i>Takarazuka</i> theatre troupe founded by Ichizō Kobayashi |
| 1914 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outbreak of the First World War | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ishii Hakutei and Yamasita found the Japanese arts association <i>Nika-kai</i> ('Second Section Association') |
| 1915 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kōsaku Yamada founds Japan's first (albeit short-lived) Symphony Orchestra. |
| 1916 | | |
| 1917 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made illegal for Japanese currency to be taken out of the country • Kawakami Hajime's best selling text <i>Tales of Poverty</i> published. Outlines the author's own travel experiences in Europe, and the surprisingly widespread poverty he witnessed in so-called 'civilised countries' such as the UK, USA and Germany | |
| 1918 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread riots take place throughout Tokyo, which come to be known as the Tokyo Rice Riots | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ichizō Kobayashi undertakes a number of measures to raise the profile and standards of the <i>Takarazuka</i> female theatre collective. These include founding the <i>Takarazuka Yōseikai</i> (training association); building a new theatre; and, significantly, employing Shizō Tsubouchi as artistic director. |
| 1919 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zen Master Soen Shaku dies • Rejection of a racial equality article at the <i>Paris Peace Conference</i> angers Japanese authorities • Japan forcefully suppresses anti-Japanese protests in Korea, which called for independence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After being recognised as an official school by the Japanese Education Ministry, the <i>Takarazuka Yōseikai</i> ('Takarazuka Training Association') is renamed <i>Takarazuka ongaku kageki gakkō</i> ('Takarazuka Music Academy') |
| 1920 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strikes held by both the Iron and Ship industries, as economic recession takes hold • Formation of the League of Nations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation of <i>Asiata-ha Bijutsu Kyōkai</i> ('The Futurist Art Association') • Japanese Futurist Tai Kanbara proclaims his first manifesto |

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- 1921
 - Assassination of Japanese Prime Minister Hara Kai
 - Taisho Emperor deemed to be mentally unwell, resulting in Hirohito undertaking role as Regent
- 1922
 - *Mirai-ka Bijutsu Kyōkai* ('The Futurist Art Association') disbands after two years.
- 1923
 - Great Kanto Earthquake causes devastation
- 1924
 - US pass the *Oriental Exclusion Act*, which actively bans not just Japanese, but all Asian immigrants from entering the country. Inevitably results in indignation and claims of racism from Japan.
 - Kōsaku Yamada founds Japan's second Symphony Orchestra, after the first disbanded shortly after its formation.
- 1925
 - *Sanka Zōkei Bijutsu Kyōkai* ('Third Plastic Arts Association') founded: a constructivist inspired arts association.
- 1926
 - End of Taisho Era as the Emperor dies
 - Showa Period begins with the instatement of Emperor Hirohito
 - Chiang Kai-Shek, leader of the Chinese National Party (*Kuomintang*), instigates actions to try and establish a solid political foothold in the Yangste Valley.
- 1927
 - *Kuomintang* (Chinese National Party) under Chiang Kai-Shek, makes Nanking the centre of his operation
 - Seminal fictionist Ryūnosuke Akutagawa commits suicide.
- 1928
 - Japanese forces go into China.
 - Biography of Mussolini becomes best-seller in Japan
- 1929
 - Global depression sparks fear of a new economic 'Yellow Peril', with Japanese trade thought to be capable of overshadowing that of the West (through what was seen in Europe and, particularly, the US as unfair advantage)
- 1930
 - Japanese Military hold control over most seats of government during what has been seen as a period of political oppression
 - Composer Toru Takemitsu born in the Hongo district of Tokyo.
- 1931
 - Japan reacts to challenge of Chinese Nationalists (protesting against unfair treaties imposed by Japan) by invading Manchuria and mounting aerial attacks on Shanghai
 - December 22: Masayuki Takayanagi born in the Shiba district of Tokyo
 - League of Nations calls for Japanese troops to withdraw, though Japan refuses.
 - Global depression reaches new heights
- 1932
 - Aerial attacks continue over Shanghai

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- **League of Nations unified in its condemnation of Japan's hostile actions**
- **Rebel civilian factions in Japan, angered by the vast decline of rural communities, instigate a series of aggressive actions in protest. At the most extreme level, these were capped by a string of murders and assassinations carried out upon government ministers and state officials by the blood brotherhood of Inoue Nissho.**
- 1933
 - **Rise of National Socialist party results in Adolph Hitler becoming German Chancellor. Shortly afterwards, jazz music outlawed by radio stations in Berlin.**
 - **Japan walks out of the League of Nations, after it condemns Japan's actions in China and Manchuria**
- 1934
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- 1935
 - **Japanese government officially outlaws the *Oomoto* sect – a cult religion whose beliefs foresaw the coming of a 'new world order.'**
- 1936
 - ***Anti-Comintern Pact* results in Germany and Japan joining forces**
 - **Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Chinese Nationalists (*Kuomintang*), forms settlement with the country's Communist party to form common allegiance against the threat of Japan.**
- 1937
 - **Outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese war results in China conceding defeat**
 - **Rape of Nanking**
 - **Aerial attacks carried out over Canton**
 - **Japan seizes control of Guangjou, Shanghai, and Beijing.**
 - **Incident near Peking, at the Marco Polo Bridge, sparks a major conflict between Japanese forces and the Chinese. Japan forms a special corpse, the North China Army, in direct response to this.**
- 1938
 - **Japanese Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe makes public speech discussing 'New Order in East Asia.'**
 - **Japanese troops on the Yangste join forces with its North China Army to invade Canton and Hankow**
- 1939
 - **Outbreak of World War II in Europe. Germany forces invade Poland**
 - **Japanese occupation of Hainan**
- 1940
 - **Japan Occupies French Indonesia (Vietnam), prompting the USA and UK to impose oil sanctions. Japanese**

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- government remedies its fuel crisis by invading the oil-rich Dutch East Indies (Indonesia)
 - Agreement made between Japan, Germany and Italy, *The Tripartite Pact*, results in agreement that East Asia should be the province of Japan
 - 2,600th anniversary of Japan celebrated
 - Translation of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* tops the Japanese best-seller's list.
- 1941
 - Japanese attacks upon Allied forces in the Pacific are marked by the bombing of Pearl Harbour. While Japan's territorial expansion continues (reaching from the Indian border to New Guinea), Allied forces officially declare war on Japan.
 - Non-aggression pact between Japan and Russia
 - Surrealists Shūzō Takiguchi and Ichirō Fukuzawa arrested under suspicion of political sedition – victims of the Ultra-Nationalist regime ruling Japan
- 1942
 - Japanese war campaign extends to Malaya, the East Indies wages, and Burma.
 - Turning point in the conflict comes with the Battle of Midway, after which Allied forces begin to regain territory captured by Japanese forces.
- 1943
 - Agreement made between Britain, the US and Chiang Kai-shek regarding how territory, taken by Japan during the War, will be re-distributed afterward
- 1944
 - Japanese military employ policy of national 'Mobilisation'
- 1945
 - Japanese government make plans to drop 'Dirty Bombs' on US (bubonic-plague infested warheads designed by Ishi Shirō)
 - US take Japanese Ryukyu Islands
 - Russia, US and Britain sign the *Yalta Conference Agreement*, deciding how invaded territories will be divided and distributed after the war
 - Air Raid over Tokyo takes approximately 125, 000 lives.
 - On July 27 Allied powers issue the *Potsdam Declaration*, ordering Japan to offer its immediate and unconditional surrender, 'or destruction would continue.'
 - August 6: The United States makes the civilian population of Hiroshima the first
- Academic conference entitled *Kindai no Chōkoku* ('Overcoming Modernity') held in Kyoto, which looked to assess the nature/problem of modernity in Japan.
 - Toru Takemitsu has to leave school early to work at a military mountain provisions base, as part of the war effort
 - Modernist Composer Anton Webern killed in unintentional shooting by military police.
 - Folklorist composer Bela Bartok also dies

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- ever target of a Nuclear assault.
- August 8: USSR joins War against Japan.
- August 9: Nagasaki the target of the second Atomic bomb.
- August 14: Emperor Showa announces the unconditional surrender of Japan.
- German army surrenders as Russia storms Berlin.
- Harry Truman becomes US President
- Commencement of United States' Occupation of Japan, overseen by the appointed Supreme Commander, General MacArthur.
- All territory gained by Japan after 1894 lost: the USSR take possession of the Kurile Islands, and the USA of the Ryukyu Islands (which include Okinawa)
- 500 Japanese commit suicide immediately following Japan's surrender
- 1946 • Emperor makes declaration announcing his existence, not as a God, but as a human
- 1947 • New constitution in Japan reduces the Emperor merely to a symbol of the state, with no military or political power.
- Strict media censorship enforced, with any material deemed to be anti-Allied outlawed.
- Establishment of an education system based upon the US model
- 1948 • Korean People's Democratic Republic of North Korea established
- 1949 • *Nichi-Bel* festival of contemporary music.
- First meeting between established Nationalist composer Yasuji Kiyose and the young Toru Takemitsu
- Zen Buddhist Master Daisetz T. Suzuki returns to America.
- 1950 • *Shirakaba* ('White Birch') first circulated: periodical journal promoting principles of free creative expression
- Kōsaku Yamada founds Japan's first (albeit short-lived) Symphony Orchestra. Hiroyoshi Suzuki and Toru Takemitsu join *Shinsakkyokuhō* ('New Composition Group')
- Toru Takemitsu's premiere takes place in Tokyo, with the debut performance of 'Lento in Due Movimenti'. Also produces composition 'Distance de Fée'
- Akira Kurosawa's film *Rashōmon* released, with accompanying score produced by Toru Takemitsu.
- 1951 • *Jikken Kōbō* ('The Experimental Workshop') founded.
- Ridgeway replaces MacArthur as Supreme Commander
- Attendees from around the world at the

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- Venice Film Festival reportedly wowed by Akira Kurosawa's motion picture *Rashomon*.
- 1952
- U.S. Occupation of Japan brought to an end.
 - Two participants killed in the May Day protests at Imperial Park, after armed police intervene.
 - Oriental Exclusion Act in the USA revoked
 - Daisetz T. Suzuki begins teaching part-time classes at Columbia University, USA. Continues until 1957.
 - Hiroyoshi Suzuki and Toru Takemitsu leave *Shinsakkyokuha*, two years after joining
 - *Gene Kruper Trio* become the first US jazz musicians to play in front of Japanese audiences.
- 1953
- Korean War ceasefire
 - Trend of accelerated economic growth begins in Japan, partly as a result of its marginal contribution to America's war in Vietnam. Growth continues until around 1975
 - Survey carried out shows that around 80% of those Japanese asked, believed that 'Western' culture was superior to their own
 - *Sannin no Kai* ('Group of Three') founded: Nationalist collective of musicians.
 - Another Nationalist-style music group *Yagi no Kai* ('Goat Group') also founded.
 - Japan's first musique concrete piece produced by composer Toshiro Mayazumi: *Oeuvre pour Musique Concrete x, y, z*.
 - *Louis Armstrong Allstars* perform concerts in Japan.
- 1954
- Establishment of Japan's Self Defence Force illustrates the so-called 'reverse course' of the Occupation, where points mapped out in the anti-war article of the constitution were overruled.
 - At the conclusion of the Korean War Japan begins to flourish both economically and, through the stability of its ruling Liberal Democrat Party, politically.
 - Release of the popular movie *The Glenn Miller Story*
 - Inoshiro's film *Gojira* ('Godzilla') released
 - Release of *The Seven Samurai* by Akira Kurosawa. Film score by Toru Takemitsu
 - Masayuki Takayanagi forms *New Direction Quartet*, featuring Takimoto Tatsuro, Harada Kanji and Sugiura Ryozeu
 - Highly popular radio programme *Jazz at the Toris* begins broadcasting.
- 1955
- Composer Toru Takemitsu produces his first musique concrete piece, 'Relief Statique' (1955), as incidental music for the 1955 radio production *Hono* ('Flames')
 - Toshiro Mayazumi produces 'Shusaku', thought to be one of the first elektronische musik compositions produced by a Japanese artist
 - Shūzo Takiguchi releases manifesto-style declaration, outlining the aims of *Jikken Kobo*.
 - Death of composer and *Shinsakkyokuha* member Fumio Hayasaka
- 1956
- Japan accepted as member of the UN
 - Overtakes UK as world's leading ship manufacturer
 - Toru Takemitsu musique concrete composition, *Relief Statique* (1955), premiered at Jikken Kobo concert.
 - Masami Akita born in Tokyo
 - King Records start to release recordings of contemporaneous Japanese Jazz

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| 1957 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan becomes biggest manufacturer of steel • President Eisenhower of the US convinces Japan to agree to <i>VERA</i> – an agreement to control and limit Japanese textile exports | <p>artists on the <i>King Jazz Series</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Train album recorded by Jazz Saxophonist John Coltrane • Jazz pianist and arranger Toshiko Akiyoshi awarded prize by the Berkley College of Music • Toru Takemitsu produces composition 'Requiem', commissioned by the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra |
| 1958 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Group Ongaku</i> founded – arguably the first free-improvisational collective in Japan • Masayuki Takayanagi forms <i>Shinseiki Ongaku Kenkyujo</i> ('New Century Music Laboratory') • Rockabilly music becomes popular with Japanese public |
| 1959 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kinjiki</i> ('Forbidden Colours') performed on 24 May by Tatsumi Hijikata. Recognised as the first performance of <i>Ankoku Butoh</i> by its founder (1932-1986). • Igor Stravinsky visits the NHK in Tokyo, and is impressed Toru Takemitsu's composition 'Requiem' • Otomo Yoshihide born |
| 1960 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Anpo</i> ('U.S.-Japan Security Treaty') controversially renewed, causing eruption of student demonstrations and protests • Controversial arguments break out concerning the Japanese National language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ornette Coleman-influenced jazz album 'Avant-Garde' recorded by Saxophonist John Coltrane and trumpeter Don Cherry |
| 1961 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the Berlin Wall • John F. Kennedy voted in as US president. • US undertakes war in Vietnam, through which Japan profits financially by agreeing to serve as a depository for American military. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toshi Ichihyanagi returns from America after studying composition at the New School in New York under John Cage. • Osaka Contemporary Music Festival • Toru Takemitsu produces the graphic score 'Ring' • Series of avant-garde concerts organized in Tokyo by Toshi Ichihyanagi and Yoko Ono, involving the participation of notable artists including Yasunao Tone and Takahisa Kosugi of <i>Group Ongaku</i>. • Performances by US jazz stars in Japan become more frequent. |
| 1962 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuban missile crisis • Official controls placed over the exportation of textiles by developing countries under the <i>MFA</i> ('Multi-Fibre Agreement'), to which Japan never signs up. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concert series of Toshi Ichihyanagi and Yoko Ono, begun the previous year, continues. • Yasunao Tone undertakes first solo performance, which lasts over six hours, and sees debut of his piece 'Anagram for Strings'. This composition was also performed at the <i>Copenhagen Fluxus Festival</i> of the same year. • Tone also exhibits sound installation at |

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| | | the annual <i>Yomiuri Independent</i> art show |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Group Ongaku</i> effectively disband. • Toru Takemitsu writes <i>Nature and Music</i>, a collection of thirteen essays, and composes score for Masaki Kobayashi's film <i>Ilara-Kiri</i>, which features the biwa. Under the influence of John Cage, also writes the two graphic compositions 'Corona and Crossing' |
| 1963 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John F. Kennedy assassinated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composer Toru Takemitsu produces 'Arc for piano and orchestra' • Toru Takemitsu's graphic score for 'Corona II' exhibited as a work of visual art at the Tokyo Gallery. • 'The Twist' dominates popular mainstream tastes in Japan • Filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu dies |
| 1964 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tokyo Olympics • Japan becomes member of the OECD • 'Bullet Train' put into operation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Ghosts' album recorded by avant-garde jazz saxophonist Albert Ayler • <i>Sapporo Contemporary Music Festival</i>, at which John Cage made his second ever visit to Japan to perform 'Atlas Eclipticalis' (1961) • Toru Takemitsu meets John Cage • <i>III Red Centre</i> undertake a number of subversive (although playful) avant-garde performance pieces in the public spaces of Tokyo to correspond with the Olympics. Taking place respectively on a commuter train, the streets of Ginza, and a Tokyo gallery space, these events included: 'Yamate Loop Train Event'; 'Cleaning Piece'; and 'Closing Event'. • Takehisa Kosugi leaves Tokyo for New York • <i>Gallery 8 Live House</i> opens in the Ginza district of Tokyo |
| 1965 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malcolm X assassinated • National survey in Japan indicates popularity of USA in Japan at its highest point | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental free-jazz album 'Ascension' recorded by John Coltrane records (influenced, again, by Ornette Coleman) • Makoto Kawabata born • Yasunao Tone organises Tokyo's first Fluxus week • <i>The Pitt Inn Live House</i> opens in the Shinjuku area of Tokyo • Further Live Houses begin to develop |
| 1966 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Race riots in Cleveland, Chicago, and New York. • Chinese Cultural Revolution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Theatre in Tokyo gives permanent residence to Bunraku • Essay discussing Intermedia published by Dick Higgins • Formation of the GS ('Group Sounds') pop group <i>Jacks</i> |
| 1967 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Kennedy assassinated • Martin Luther King assassinated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Les Rollizes Denudes</i> form while students at University in Kyoto |

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- Renowned Jazz artist John Coltrane dies
- 1968
 - October: violent student protest riots take place on the streets of Shinjuku, Tokyo.
 - In the midst of public protests against the renewal of *Anpo*, students seize control of the main lecture hall at Tokyo University in July. It was not until January 1969 that riot police managed to force them out
 - *Beheiren* ('Vietnam Peace Coalition') formed by writers and students in protest against US military action in Vietnam
- 1969
 - Toru Takemitsu composes 'November Steps'
 - *New Artist Organisation*, a workshop to bring youngsters into improvisation, founded by free-jazz guitarist Masayuki Takayanagi
 - Avant-garde jazz collective, *The Art Ensemble of Chicago*, founded by Trumpeter Lester Bowie
 - Peak of popularity for so-called GS ('Group Sounds') bands in Japan (groups such as *Jacks* and *The Mops*, who sought primarily to mimic the sounds and styles of psychedelia in the UK and US)
 - Takehisa Kosugi (*Group Ongaku* member) returns to Japan from New York, going on to form *Taj Mahal Travellers*.
 - Masayuki Takayanagi forms *New Direction*, marking a new musical direction in the prolific artists career away from standard jazz, to intense live improvisation.
 - Yosuke Yamashita founds free-jazz trio, occasionally joined by Kaoru Abe.
 - First Television programme dedicated to Jazz hosted by Sadao Watanabe
 - Protest concert organised by student dissidents at Kyoto University: 'Barricades A-Go-Go'. Participants include *Les Rallizes Danudes*.
- 1970
 - Drug overdose kills Jimi Hendrix
 - Influential Jazz musician Albert Ayler dies
 - 'Yodo-Go Hijacking': *Sekigun* ('Japanese Red Army') hijack aircraft bound for North Korea
 - So-called 'Kozu Incident' occurs in American-controlled Okinawa. Mass riots break out, during which US Military Police are issued with the illegal order to shoot any citizens who enter military complex. Incident sparked by military vehicle striking a civilian
 - World Exposition, Expo '70, takes place in Osaka
 - Text written by Herman Khan, *The Emerging Japanese Superstate*, marks growing recognition in Europe and USA of Japan's growing International profile
 - Roland Barthes influential text *Empire of Signs* published
 - Murray Schafer, Canadian composer, formulates his Soundscape concept.
 - World Exposition, Expo '70, held in Osaka
 - Jazz Café Circle ban Masayuki Takayanagi, after controversial comments made in *Jazz Magazine*.
 - Atonal jazz experiment *The Song of Singing* recorded by Pianist Chick Corea
 - Keiji Haino co-founds *Last Aarnaf*
 - Renowned (and equally controversial) free-jazz players Masayuki Takayanagi (guitar) and Abe Kaoru (saxophone) undertake series of performances together
 - *Happy End* form, featuring later member of *Yellow Magic Orchestra*, Haruomi Hosono
 - *Les Rallizes Danudes* move to Tokyo.
- 1971
 - First so-called 'Yen Shock', which saw currency of Japan dramatically re-evaluated.
 - Government abandon their plan to enforce the compulsory teaching of traditional Japanese instruments in

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schools, due to the lack of teacher expertise.

- Takayanagi Masayuki *New Direction* formed.
- *Gen'yasai Festival* involves participation of Japanese New Music artists including Keiji Haino's *Lost Aaraanf*, Masayuki Takayanagi, and *DEW*. Event organised to correspond with protests about the new Narita Airport.
- *Love Live Life + 1* release classic psychedelic album 'Love Will Make a Better You' – their only ever release.
- The *All Japan Folk Jamboree* held.
- *Les Rallizes Denudes* form.
- Yasunao Tone undertakes year-long project to chronicle the history of the Japanese avant-garde from 1916 to 1968. Published over twelve instalments of the journal *Bijustu Techno*

- 1972
- Occupying U.S. forces finally withdraw from Okinawa.
 - Relationship with China normalised
 - Emperor Hirohito visits seven countries throughout Europe
 - Start of a two year spate, which saw student riots occur on over three hundred separate occasions – usually involving violent conflicts with the Japanese police.
 - Suicide raid undertaken by the Japanese Red Army against Israeli Airport in Tel Aviv

- *Taj Mahal Travellers* release album
- Kazuo Imai commences lessons under Masayuki Takayanagi
- Yasunao Tone moves to New York from Tokyo

- 1973
- End of Vietnam War. US maintains financial aid to Southern Vietnamese, but pulls out troops.
 - Japanese Oil Crisis sparked by war in Israel, and its subsequent effect upon the US economy. Rapid inflation ensues. Economy of Japan recovers quicker than that of any other nation, including Japan.
 - Visit to China of US President Nixon stirs feelings of distrust amongst Japanese officials, who express dissatisfaction at not first being consulted
 - Contrary to the poll of 1965, National survey now implies popularity of US and US culture now at its lowest ebb since the conclusion of World War II.

- *Headhunters* album recorded by fusion/jazz-rock Keyboardist Herbie Hancock to popular acclaim
- First ever *Music Today* festival organised by Toru Takemitsu at the Seibu Theatre in Tokyo
- *Magical Power Mako* releases first solo album.
- Japanese free-jazz scene thought to have peaked with *the Inspiration and Power 14 Festival*. The event, which took place in the Shinjuku district of Tokyo, featured performances by the likes of Yoshizawa Motoharu and Masayuki Takayanagi
- Hijikata's final Butoh performance
- Fusion-style Jazz gains an increasingly notable following, signalling the beginning of the end of free-jazz dominance within the Jazzu-Kissa.

- 1974
- Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Prime Minister Sato Eisaku

- *Taj Mahal Travellers* release album
- Takemitsu Festival held at the Nissei

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- Japanese Prime Minister's tour of South East Asia marked by anti-Japanese protests and disturbances
- 1975
 - Saigon occupied by North Vietnamese troops
 - Many European and American commentators begin to hold Japan up as a model for their own societies and social structures.
- 1976
 - Theatre in Tokyo.
 - First of numerous collaborations between Yasunao Tone (now living in New York) and Merce Cunningham, results in video piece 'Clockwork Video'
 - Masayuki Takayanagi's workshop for young musicians, the *New Artist Organisation*, renamed *Ren Juku*.
 - Kazuo Imai studies under Takchisa Kosugi, before featuring with *Taj Mahal Travellers* and Masayuki Takayanagi's *Action Direct* the following year.
 - Toru Takemitsu begins visiting professorship at Yale University
 - Masayuki Takayanagi undertakes his only ever performance outside of Japan at the *Moers Jazz Festival*. Plays with his *New Direction Unit*, which included Akira Iijima.
- 1977
 - The *East Bionic Symphonia* release live album
 - Ami Yoshida born
 - Takechisa Kosugi replaces David Behrman as musical director of Merce Cunningham dance company.
- 1978
 - Earthquake in Fukushima
 - Signing of the Japan-China treaty of peace and friendship, which sees the normalisation of relations between the two countries.
 - Inoue Makoto and Yamashita Yasushi form *Inoyamaland*
 - Death of free-jazz saxophonist Kaoru Abe from drug overdose, age 29
 - Haruomi Hosono, Yukihiro Takahashi and Ryuichi Sakamoto form *Yellow Magic Orchestra* (YMO)
 - Tamio Shiraishi and Keiji Haino form *Fushitsusha*
- 1979
 - First edition of Edward Said's text *Orientalism* published.
 - Launch of the first Sony Walkman
 - Leading economic powers of the world suffer second 'Oil Shock'. Japan's relatively speedy economic recovery contributes to National self confidence.
 - Mounting frustration amongst Japanese commentators and intellectuals at why 'the West' has been considered superior for so long (notably, since the Meiji Restoration).
 - Junji Hirose founds *Free Expansion*, a free improvisational trio
 - Toru Takemitsu publishes collection of letters entitled *Ota, Kotoba, Ningen* ('Sound, Word, Man')
 - Otomo Yoshihide moves to Tokyo from Fukushima in Northern Japan
 - First performance of Merce Cunningham's dance *Roadrunners*, featuring the composition 'Geography and Music' by Yasunao Tone
 - Second 'Oil-Shock' occurs, from which, again, Japan recovers from with comparable smoothness.
- 1980
 - John Lennon murdered
 - Japanese translation of James Clavell's *Shōgun* (1975) reaches number eight in the country's best seller's list.
 - Derek Bailey's book *Free Jazz* published around the same time as his second visit to Japan
 - Masami Akita begins *Merzbow* project,

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- and launches his makeshift cassette mail order label, *Lower Arts and Music*.
 - Masayuki Takayanagi appears at the *Moers Jazz Festival*
 - Otomo Yoshihide meets Masayuki Takayanagi for the first time, undertaking lessons as part of the celebrated jazz guitarist's clique
 - Ryuichi Sakamoto releases early solo album, 'B2 Unit'
- 1981
 - Tanaka Yasuoka's novel *Somewhat Like Crystal* published, describing his hypothesis of what he saw as Japan's contemporary consumerist and politically indifferent 'crystal generation'.
 - Akira Kurosawa's film *Kagemusha* enjoys enthusiastic reception and critical acclaim throughout Europe and the USA
 - Keiji Haino first solo release
 - *Incapacitants* begin as the Solo project of Toshiji Mikawa
 - *After Dinner* form with Haco as singer/performer/writer
 - Otomo Yoshihide began playing free-improvisation on a professional basis.
 - Toru Takemitsu takes up visiting professorship in San Diego at the University of California. Also publishes collection of essays *Kotoba to Sekai* ('Word and World')
- 1982
 - Movie released entitled *The Great Japanese Empire*, which portrays Japan's treatment of China during World War Two in an unproblematic light.
 - Plans made by the Japanese Minister of Education to amend the Nation's text books, in a way that would re-present Japan's wartime aggression against China in a less problematical way (its assault upon the whole of South East Asia, for example, was described merely as an 'advance' rather than 'invasion'). These revisions to the National teaching programme later scrapped, following increasing protests from within China.
 - Best-selling book in Japan, Kenji Suzuki's *Advice on Being Considerate*, advocates that a woman's place is in the family home as obedient wife and mother.
 - CDs arrive on the market
 - Music survey undertaken by the NIKK indicates that Japanese youths between the ages of fifteen and twenty-nine are the biggest consumers and users of music.
- 1983
 - Four South Korean politicians killed after bomb explodes in Rangoon
 - Survey in Japan shows increasing return to what were seen as traditional Japanese values, like honour for the family, accordance with nature, and social compliance/homogeneity. Interest in these thought to be at their highest levels since the 1950s.
 - Poll conducted in Japan indicates that 53% of those asked felt that Japanese citizens were generally better than their counterparts in Europe and the US (compare this to 1953 survey).
 - Masami Akita (*Merzbow*) establishes second label, *ZSF* (taken from the Japanese for 'Magnetic', pronounced Zu Su Fu), for the release of both his own material, and that of other artists.
 - First non-cassette vinyl release by *Merzbow* (Masami Akita) on the *Chaos/Eastern Works* label, entitled 'Material Action 2 (NAM)'
 - Ryuichi Sakamoto of *Yellow Magic Orchestra* (YMO) stars alongside David Bowie in Oshima's film *A Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence*, providing the film score and soundtrack.

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| 1984 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Apple Macintosh Computer introduced. • According to questionnaire carried out by <i>Le Monde</i> and <i>Asahi Shimbun</i> newspapers, only 60% of those asked could locate Japan on a world map. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asuka Kaneko forms Aska Strings. • Ryuichi Sakamoto releases album <i>Illustrated Music Encyclopedia</i> • <i>Ché-Shizu</i> release debut L.P. 'Yakusoku wa Dekinai' on <i>Zero Records</i> • Multimedia collective <i>Dumb Type</i> form at City Art College in Kyoto |
| 1985 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister Nakasone controversially visits the Yasukuni Shrine, offering his blessings to those lives there lost during World War Two – including characters since branded War Criminals • Second 'Yen Shock', as in the case of the first in 1971, results in notable shift in the currency's value. Japan's swift recovery signifies its escalating self-confidence as a market economy. • Japan becomes the world's main creditor nation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central home of Bunraku relocated from the National Theatre in Tokyo to the new National Bunraku Theatre in Osaka • Re-launched of the <i>Blue Note</i> Jazz label • Kazuo Imai successfully graduates from the guitar school of Masayuki Takayanagi • Former pupil of Masayuki Takayanagi, Akira Iijima, contributes to the third of Fred Frith's 'Guitar Solos' compilations • Yasunao Tone produces music for <i>Techno-Eden</i>, a dance performance by Kay Nishikawa. This marks Tone's first notable work using 'prepared CD' method. • Exhibition: <i>Reconstructions: Avant-garde Art in Japan 1945-1965</i>, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford • Noise ensemble <i>The Gerogerigegege</i> form, releasing two notable albums on two labels: the self-titled 'Gerogerigegege' (ZSF) and 'This is Shaking Box Music/You Are Noise Maker' (Shitake) |
| 1986 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing argument to have the Yasukuni shrine declared <i>kokka goji</i> (under the National Protectorate) begins. • Nakasone, the Japanese Prime Minister of the day, publicly rubbishes the achievements and status of the US on racially discriminate grounds (namely because America is made up of such multicultural elements and communities). Nakasone celebrated Japan's accomplishments on the Nationalistic grounds that they were the product of a more 'racially pure' society. • Japanese Government present <i>White Paper on Youth</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Boredoms</i> officially founded as a band, featuring Yamatsuka Eye, Mara Tabata, Taketani and Hosoi. Release first album 'Onanie Bomb' • <i>Ruins</i> release first album • <i>Adi</i> formed by Asuka Kaneko, Masaharu Sato, Hitoshi Watanabe and Satoru Shionoya • Kazuhisa Uchihashi begins undertaking collaborative work with <i>Ishinha</i>, the avant-garde theatre group. • Exhibition: <i>Japon des Avant-gardes 1910-1970</i>, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris |
| 1987 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey indicates around only half of those school children questioned could find the position of Japan on a map of the world. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Otomo Yoshihide's interest in live performance intensifies, and he becomes more active in this respect. • Tetuzi Akiyama forms improvisational ensemble <i>Madhar</i> |
| 1988 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japanese government concede that it undertook widespread trials and experiments into means of chemical warfare | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoshimi P-We joins <i>The Boredoms</i> as new drummer • <i>The Boredoms</i> support <i>Sonic Youth</i> in Japan |

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- South Korean Olympic Games commence
 - Comments of Cabinet Minister Okuno Seisuke give rise to controversy and severe public response. Accusations of residual militarism and Nationalism are launched, after he defends Japan's World War Two offensives throughout South East Asia, not as an act of aggression, but rather as a War of liberation against oppressive white colonisers.
- 1989
- End of Showa Period as Emperor Hirohito dies.
 - Start of Heisei Era marked by the inauguration of Emperor Akihito
 - AUM sect undertake Sarin Gas attack on Tokyo Underground
 - Kobe suffers the Great Hanshin earthquake
 - Fall of the Berlin Wall
 - Military violently quash protests held in Tien An Men, China, to widespread International condemnation.
 - In terms of assets, nine of the world's ten biggest banks are Japanese
- 'Naked City' album released by John Zorn
 - First *Fushitsusha* album released on PSF
- 1990
- Otomo Yoshihide forms *Ground Zero*
 - Haco (then of *After Dinner*) appears in the Fred Frith documentary 'Step Across the Border'
 - First *Merzbow* CD release 'Cloud Cock OO Grand', on ZSK Produkt
 - Exhibition: *Japanische Kunst der achtziger Jahre*, Frankfurter Kunstverein
 - Aki Onda, Yamatsuka Eyo and Takemura Nobukazu form *Audio Sports*
 - Formation of so-called Japanese 'reuhl' band, *Bondage Fruit*
- 1991
- Gulf War ends.
 - Japan hit by minor recession, the effects of which are primarily felt until around 1994
 - Start of economic recession.
- Masayuki 'Jojo' Takayanagi dies, age 58
 - The group *After Dinner* disband
 - Aki Onda begins working under the title *Audio Sports* continuing the project until 1996.
 - Exhibition: *Gutai: Japanische Avantgarde 1954-1965*, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt
 - Exhibition: *A Cabinet of Signs: Contemporary Art from Postmodern Japan*, Tate Liverpool
 - Exhibition: *Zones of Love: Contemporary Art From Japan*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
 - The first *Nippon Contemporary Art Fair* (NICAFA) established in Yokohama, to promote contemporary

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| 1992 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Japanese Art on an International level Akifumi Nakajima emerges on the noise scene in Kyoto, producing work under the pseudonym <i>Aube</i> <i>Ground Zero</i>'s first album, 'Ground Zero', released on God Mountain (independent label founded by Hoppy Kamiyama). The group also tour in support of John Zorn 'Music For Bondage Performance' released by <i>Merzbow</i> on Australian label Extreme <i>Audio Sports</i> release debut album 'Era of Glittering Glass' So-called 'noise' ensemble C.C.C.C. ('Cosmic Coincidence Control Centre') release self-titled debut album on the Endorphine Factory label |
| 1993 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> YMO fleetingly re-form, performing two shows in Tokyo, and releasing an album Closure of the <i>Iibiki</i>, a small but renowned Jazzu Kissa in the Jinbo-chō district of Tokyo, causes uproar amongst certain sections of the public. <i>The Boredoms</i> support <i>Nirvana</i> in the US |
| 1994 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 5,000 deaths caused by Kobe earthquake. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tetuzi Akiyama and Taku Sugimoto form <i>Hikyo String</i>. Taku Sugimoto radically changes approach to guitar playing, from previous noise-based to style, to that now commonly associated with Onkyo (based upon space and silence) Japanese National broadcasting corporation NHK host <i>Video Opera</i>, a live performance event which the network intended to televise. Despite featuring performances by artists including Nam June Paik, Takehisa Kosugi, and <i>The Boredoms</i>, however, the recorded event was ultimately never broadcast. Second <i>Audio Sports</i> album released, entitled 'Strange Fruits' |
| 1995 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controversy in Washington over Enola Gay exhibition at the Air and Space Museum, organised to commemorate fifty year anniversary of Hiroshima Nuclear Holocaust. Smithsonian Institute cancel exhibition after curators portray America's role in the Pacific War as problematic: poses serious questions motives behind US military action, and the supposed justification for Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent film released based upon the life stories of Abe Kaoru and writer Suzuki Izumi (his wife), directed by Wakamatsu Kohji. Haco releases first solo album. Kazuhisa Uchihashi establishes the <i>New Music Action</i> workshop, which evolved into the Festival Beyond Innocence Otomo Yoshihide makes his London debut with Yamatsuka Eye at New Auras concert series, organised by LMC (London Musicians Collective) |

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| 1996 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor techno music event, Rainbow 2000 Festival, held near Tokyo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ground Zero</i>, featuring Otomo Yoshihide, release album 'Null and Void' on Tzadik (label founded by John Zorn) • First FBI (Festival Before Innocence) held at Xebec Hall, Kobe. • <i>Japanese Free Improvisers</i> web site launched (later re-named <i>Improvised Music From Japan</i>) • 'Music for Bondage Performance II' released by <i>Merzbow</i> on the Extreme label • Composer Toru Takemitsu dies of Cancer • Yasunao Tone undertakes epic <i>Man'yōshū</i> CD ROM project • <i>ARS NOVA</i> release third album, 'The Goddess of Darkness' |
| 1997 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>S-Mail</i> project instigated at the second FBI (Festival Beyond Innocence) • Toshimaru Nakamura discontinues his guitar playing career, pursuing work on the so-called 'no-input' mixing desk. • Otomo Yoshihide's group <i>Ground Zero</i> disbanded |
| 1998 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of female trio <i>eX-Girl</i> • <i>Sampling Virus Project</i> initiated by Otomo Yoshihide • Makoto Kawabata officially leaves <i>Mainliner</i>, despite playing guitar on tour the following year • The twelve members of <i>Ground Zero</i> re-unite briefly for a final performance on 8th March. |
| 1999 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controversial sex trial involving charges against the Mayor of Osaka who, as a result, resigns. • Vastly declining birth rate leads Japanese government to conclude that, in order to maintain the population, approximately 600,000 immigrants must be accepted into Japan annually. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keiji Haino forms <i>Athyo</i> • Otomo Yoshihide forms his <i>New Jazz Quintet</i> • Tetsura Yasunaga begins performing electronic music, age 23. • Phew and Hiroyuki Nagashima form <i>Big Picture</i> • <i>Merzbow</i> (Masami Akita) releases album 'Door Open' at 8am as a personal tribute to free jazz music. |
| 2000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series of controversial statements made by Japanese Prime Minister, Yoshiro Mori, result in his having the lowest popularity ratings of any post-war Japanese leader. • In a string of verbal public speeches, Mori betrays both anti-American and Japanese-Nationalist tendencies (resurrecting the term Kokutai which, not used since World War II, attests to the divinity and political centrality of the Emperor in Japan) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masami Akita (<i>Merzbow</i>) releases <i>Merzbox</i>: limited edition 50CD box set. • Michiyo Yagi and Haco collaborate on the 'Ohayo! Hoahio!' release. |

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