

新しいジャズ文化 - A New Jazz Culture

The foundation of **Jazz in Japan** can be traced back to early Filipino migrants and visiting North American Jazz troupes to the islands. Following the Philippine-American war (1902), the First Philippine Republic was overthrown, and a American civilian government was established. Effectively rendering the country an American colony, the Philippines found itself to be a site of cultural exchange as it became home to many American Army bases. These bases had many G.I.s and families in need of entertainment, and so Jazz became popular genre in the country. Following years led to large amounts of Filipinos migrating to Japan, and they brought Jazz with them.



The S.S. *Chiyo Maru* in 1911

Sites such as Dance Halls in **Kobe** and **Osaka** become important in the spread of American Jazz music in Japan. Considered to be the first Japanese Jazz band, the *Hatano Jazz Band*, played regularly in Dance Halls and on Trans-Pacific liners such as the ***Chiyo Maru***. It's worth noting that this initial Japanese Jazz troupe came from a more traditional background, being graduates of the Tokyo Music School, but the desire of their audience members for forms of music such as the foxtrot, one-step, and two-step led to them performing Jazz numbers to rapturous Japanese audiences.

Jazz became popular in Japan in the 1920s. The phenomenon of Jazz was popular due to several factors; the most important of which was the social aspect of the genre in the form of dancing in Dance Halls. Following the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, Japan was increasingly becoming the dominant imperial power in the East – attempts to be culturally significant as an imperial power led to a wider proliferation of outside cultural forces than had been in Japan until any moment up until this point. Indeed, the concept of ***Sakoku***, or an attempt to insulate Japanese culture from the rest of the world, could not hold up against the country's newfound place on the world stage. Trends of globalisation and the advent of immigration to the islands that made up the Japanese Empire led to new forms of music, particularly Jazz, becoming immensely popular in Japan.



The *Hatano Jazz Band* in 1912

One of the first All-Japanese Jazz groups, the *Hatano Jazz Band* found success in playing American standards.

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鎖国 - Closed Country

Sakoku 鎖国

“Closed Country” - a Japanese policy consisting of a series of directives implemented over several years during the Edo period (also known as the Tokugawa period; 1603–1867); It enforced self-isolation from foreign powers in the early 17th century. World War Two led to an outright ban on what was referred to as “Enemy Music” by the State, however, this was less than effective due to pirate radio stations and a general enthusiasm for Jazz in Japan.



Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604-1651), the third shōgun of the Tokugawa dynasty, was responsible for the Sakoku Edict (Sakoku-rei, 鎖国令) of 1635. This would greatly curtail foreign influence in Japan until the Post War Period.

Middle Class enthusiasm for Western ideals in Japan had led to the popularity of cafés in the country during the pre-war period, and with this came the development of the **Jazz Kissa (ジャズ喫茶)** – Cafés that exclusively played Jazz music for its clientele. Indeed, coffee and small talk remain secondary to music in Jazz Kissas even today. The Conservative Elite of the pre-war period made attempts to suppress the spread of Jazz music in Japan – favouring traditional Japanese culture that would be more in line with the concept of **Sakoku**. However, the external forces of culture proved too strong to completely hinder the spread of the genre. Around this time, the Dance Halls of Kyoto, Kobe and Osaka were indeed vacated for a more liberal move to the centre of international culture in Japan: Tokyo.

In the 1930s, composers such as **Ryoichi Hattori** attempted to merge traditional Japanese music with Jazz elements. Despite adhering to aspects of Sakoku - Hattori's music was controversial and satirical. His 1940 *Shortage Song* banned by the government shortly after its release.



Jazz Kissa Eigakan, a modern Jazz Kissa. Photograph: Katsumasa Kusunose

戦後 - Post War Period

The post war period in Japan saw the nation under Allied military occupation from 1945 to 1952. While nominally under the jurisdiction of the **Far East Commission**, (US, Soviet Union, China and the Commonwealth Countries) the occupation of Japan and reestablishment of its economy was very much an American affair. The occupation represented an era of unprecedented social, economic and political change in Japan. The post war political landscape placed sovereign power in the hands of the people, rather than the crown, and the modernization of the economy saw a massive movement of population from the countryside to urban centres such as the **Tokyo-Osaka Industrial Corridor**.

Baseball, like **Jazz**, had become extremely popular in Japan before being banned by the government during the War period. General **Douglas MacArthur**, head of the allied occupation of Japan, quickly re-legalized baseball in Japan post 1945.

The free development of both Jazz and Baseball in post war Japan would be fundamental in opening up the country, in both an economic and cultural sense, to the West.



A colourised photo of the **Wako Building at Ginza Crossing**, c. 1948, during the occupation when the store served as the US Army PX. The Post War Period saw a huge influx of people move from the countryside into districts such as Ginza.

Anti-Japanese sentiment in North America during WW2 led to huge, illegal internment camps for Japanese living abroad. Here, the popularity of Baseball is evident with **The Farmers**: an internment camp team in BC, Canada. 1940s



The occupation of Japan ended on April 28th, 1952 - when the **Treaty of San Francisco** took effect. This led to massive reforms in Japan; including demilitarizing the country, preserving the emperor, and enfranchising women. Importantly, it strengthened Japan's economic position, leading it to be an important ally to the US in the years to follow during the Cold War. Indeed, the US Cultural Imperialism spread by the likes of Jazz and Baseball would ensure close ties between the two nations.

Prime Minister of Japan **Shigeru Yoshida** signs the **Treaty of San Francisco** September 8, 1951



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日本のジャズ - A Jazz Of Their Own



Pianist Toshiko Akiyoshi in 1958. Akiyoshi moved to Tokyo in 1948 from Beppu - There she would meet Oscar Peterson, who was instrumental in her development as an artist. *Photograph: Everett Collection Historical/Alamy*

As the Japanese economy flourished, so too did their forays into the creation of their own form of Jazz music. The 1960s saw huge cultural upheaval in Japan, and with this came the attempt to create a **National Jazz Music** - Japanese forms of Jazz music that veered away from Blue Note mimicry.



Toshiko Akiyoshi/Lew Tabackin Big Band
- Long Yellow Road

Artists such as **Sadao Watanabe**, **Toshiko Akiyoshi**, and **Masabumi Kikuchi** experimented with using different instrumentation in their own Jazz music. In the West, pioneering musicians such as **Miles Davis** and **Herbie Hancock** added *Funk* and *Soul* aspects to their music. In Japan, the use of new technologies such as analog synthesizers, improved recording facilities, and a move toward individualism in music led to a huge volume of high quality, uniquely Japanese, Jazz records. This was the start of **Free Jazz in Japan**.

Vinyl recordings from Mid-20th century Japan remain highly coveted by collectors. A flourishing economy at the time led to consumers with expendable money for much higher quality goods. Vinyl records produced in Japan, as a result, were of much higher quality than their Western counterparts.

Sadao Watanabe's debut *Sadao Watanabe* was released in 1961. Pictured here is the record sleeve with attached Obi Strip. This iconic piece of parchment is synonymous with Japanese vinyl and features detailed information about the recording.



This era of **Free Jazz in Japan** led to a wide variety of subgenres that would dominate Japanese cultural discourse over the next few decades: Genres such as *City Pop*, *Japanoise*, *kankyō ongaku* (Ambient), *Rockabilly*, and *Psychedelic Rock* became popular both nationally and internationally.

高度経済成長 - Japanese Economic Miracle

The period of Japan's rapid economic growth from the end of WW2 to the end of the Cold War is known as the **Japanese Economic Miracle**. During this time, Japan's GDP expanded rapidly, and it became the world's second-largest economy. External forces such as Western Capitalism led to changes in Japanese society - A new middle class desired Western goods, and special districts such as **Shibuya** in Tokyo became synonymous with shopping culture.

New forms of music became increasingly popular in urban centres in Japan. **City Pop**, **Japanoise**, and **Shibuya-Kei** became synonymous with Japan's economic boom, and City-Pop groups such as Yellow Magic Orchestra, Casiopea, and Mariya Takeuchi became the sound of a modern, commercial Japan



Artists such as Yellow Magic Orchestra (Above) and Tatsurō Yamashita and Mariya Takeuchi (Below) were pioneers of City-Pop



Shopping districts featured Shibuya-Kei (渋谷系) or "Retail Music" - infectious poppy music that would attract potential customers to shops. The genre is named for Tokyo's famed Shibuya shopping district.

In recent years, City-Pop and other Japanese music that experienced immense popularity has undergone a renaissance. Tiktok and YouTube algorithms have led to an explosion of popularity of the genre on the platforms - so much so that Japanese Record Labels are reissuing records for retail that have not been available since their debut in the 1980s.



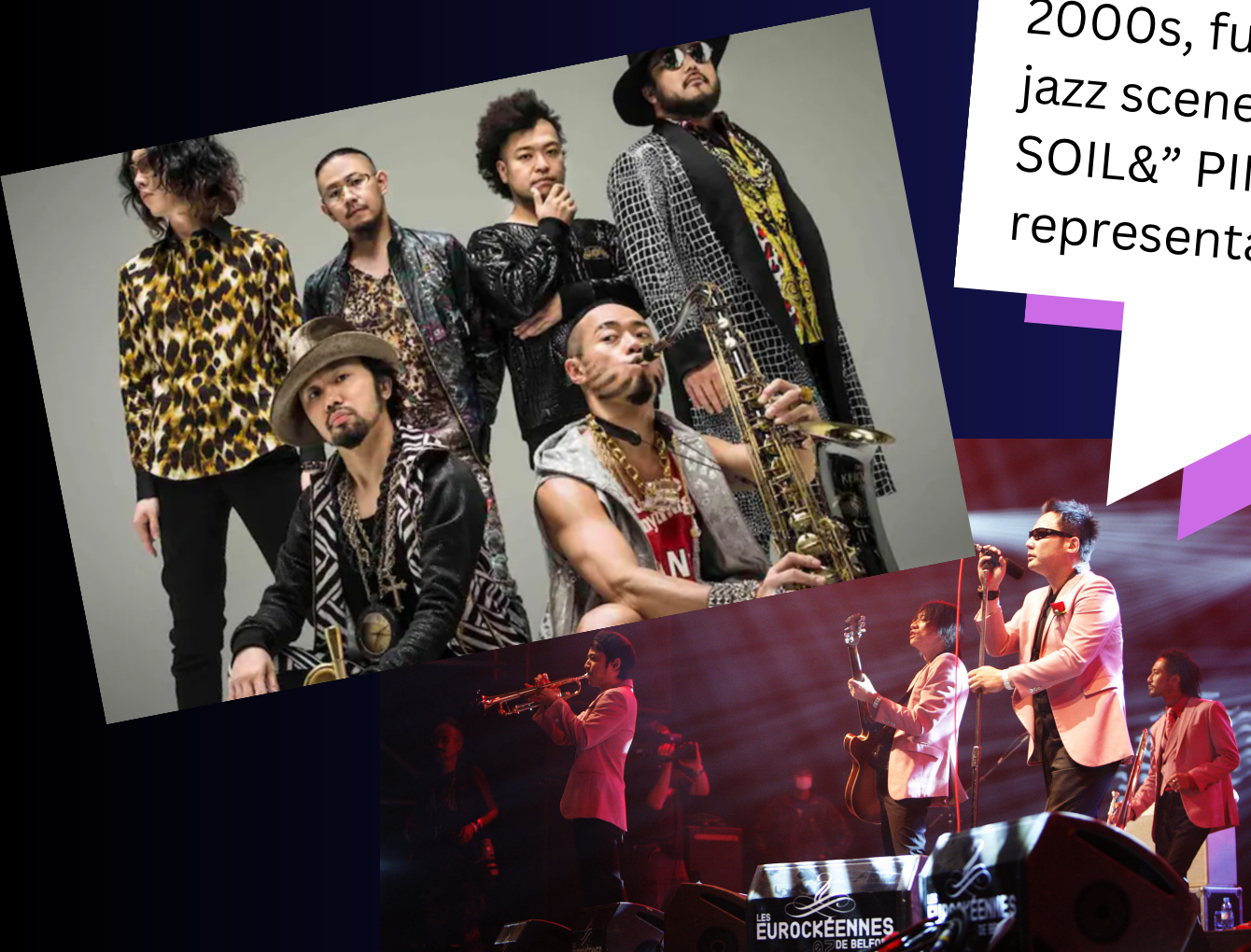
Tokyo's famous Shibuya Crossing at night

現代ジャズとJPOP - Contemporary Jazz Music and JPOP

Japanese jazz musicians continued to innovate and explore new sounds. Japanese jazz has diversified and been classified into various genres such as fusion jazz, modern jazz, bebop jazz, and straight jazz. In recent years, it has gained renewed attention from audiences around the world. Many Japanese jazz musicians are known for their unique style that blends traditional Japanese music with jazz.



Furthermore, from the late 1990s to the 2000s, fusion jazz gained popularity in Japan's jazz scene. Tokyo Ska Paradise Orchestra and SOIL&" PIMP"SESSIONS are some of the representative bands of this genre.



There are many jazz events held in Japan. Jozenji street jazz festival, one of the biggest Jazz events, is held in Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture every September. The festival started in 1990 and features various genres of music such as jazz pop, rock, and more.

From 1990 to now, J-pop has continued to dominate the Japanese music scene and diversified further. Now, it covers all popular music such as idols, groups, rock bands, solo artists, city pop, Anime song.

