



MUSIC AND THE MAKING OF
MODERN JAPAN
JOINING THE GLOBAL CONCERT
MARGARET MEHL





<https://www.openbookpublishers.com>

©2024 Margaret Mehl



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). This license allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the work for non-commercial purposes, providing attribution is made to the author (but not in any way that suggests that she endorses you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information:

Margaret Mehl, *Music and the Making of Modern Japan: Joining the Global Concert*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0374>

Copyright for the reuse of the image included in this publication differ from the above; this information is provided in the caption.

Further details about CC BY-NC-ND licenses are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at <https://archive.org/web>

Any digital material and resources associated with this volume will be available at <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0374#resources>

ISBN Paperback: 978-1-80064-252-2

ISBN Hardback: 978-1-80064-839-5

ISBN Digital (PDF): 978-1-80064-384-0

ISBN Digital eBook (EPUB): 978-1-80064-705-3

ISBN HTML: 978-1-80064-927-9

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0374

Cover illustration: 'Picture of the Tokyo Youth Band', *Fūzoku Gahō* (8 October 1895), p. 4.

Public domain

Cover design by Jeevanjot Kaur Nagpal

Introduction: Music and Japan

The word ‘Music’ has a special ring to it [...] When I teach a class at university with ‘music’ in the title, [...] this gap [between music-lovers and those who feel less strongly about music] seems to widen. From my perspective, I do not intend to delve deeply into a discussion of ‘music’ itself, using specialist terminology. Rather, I am simply treating music as a theme for thinking about questions like the cultural circumstances of an age; the processes through which culture is formed and transformed, and the mechanisms behind them. But my aim is not understood.¹

Although Western intellectuals love music, they claim that it’s difficult to understand and draw a sharp line between ‘musicians’ and others.²

Japan’s enforced opening to the West by the American naval officer Commodore Matthew Perry and his fleet was accompanied by music. Not only did his show of military strength in 1853 and 1854 include a military band: his men also entertained their reluctant hosts with an ‘Ethiopian concert’ of popular American plantation songs that were by no means militant in content. Some of these later found their way into the Japanese song repertoire.³ Whether the Japanese audience enjoyed the sounds they heard is doubtful. As a German observer wrote two decades later, ‘If I had to describe the effect of European music on the Japanese, I think I should be right in saying that they find our music still more horrible than we find theirs.’⁴ Illustrations preserved in Japanese

-
- 1 Hiroshi Watanabe, *Saundo to media no bunka shigengaku: kyōkai senjō no ongaku* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2013), 5.
 - 2 Bruno Nettl, *Encounters in Ethnomusicology: A Memoir* (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2002), 64.
 - 3 On plantation songs, see Chapter 2. For details about the musical encounter, including programmes, see Kiyoshi Kasahara, *Kurobune raikō to ongaku* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001).
 - 4 Quoted in Alexander J. Ellis, ‘Appendix to Mr. Alexander J. Ellis’s Paper on “The Musical Scales of Various Nations” Read 25th March 1885’, *Journal of the Society of the*

archives, however, show that the musical performances were at least regarded with interest.

Music, in other words, was introduced as part of the modernization package from the beginning of Japan's enforced opening in the mid-nineteenth century. Even today, visitors from Western countries arriving in Tokyo for the first time often express surprise at how 'Western' music seems to dominate the musical landscape. Japan is widely perceived as a country that has managed to preserve its cultural traditions even while becoming one of the most modern nations in the world. Music, however, does not seem to conform to this perception. European art music, popularly referred to as classical music, is now more widely enjoyed in Japan than even in the part of the world where it originated. For decades, Japanese and other East Asian musicians have won prestigious international competitions, performed on the world's most famous stages, and populated leading symphony orchestras.⁵

Back in Japan, even indigenous genres such as J-pop sound familiarly 'Western'. Traditional genres survive, but have been relegated to a niche existence. In the realm of popular music (in the widest sense), the boundaries between 'Western' and 'Japanese' are not clear-cut. This is especially the case in vocal music, where 'folk songs' (*min'yō*) might be older or more recent, and the sentimental *enka* ballad, perceived as expressing the Japanese soul, mixes traditional Japanese and Western musical elements. Among the instrumental genres, there are *tsugaru-jamisen*, a modern style of *shamisen* music that can have an almost jazz-like flavour, and *taiko* drumming. None of these modern Japanese genres is free from the influence of Western music.

Arts 33, no. 1719 (30 October 1885): 1109, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41335239> For the original German, see Leopold Benjamin Karl Müller, "Einige Notizen ueber die Japanische Musik", *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* (MOAG) 1, no. 6, 8, 9 (1873–76): 13.

5 See Nicholas Cook, 'Western Music as World Music', in *The Cambridge History of World Music*, ed. Philip Vilas Bohlman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHO9781139029476.005> While Cook does not discuss Japan explicitly, his main argument certainly applies to that country. On the music scene in contemporary Japan, see Bonnie C. Wade, *Music in Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). For a recent comment on Western art music in Japan, see Lasse Lehtonen, 'Western Art Music Taken to Heart by the Japanese', *Finnish Music Quarterly* [online], 2 April 2020. <https://fmq.fi/articles/western-art-music-japan>

In this, Japan is merely an extreme example of a general trend: European expansion and the accompanying dissemination of European music left no part of the world unaffected. Japan was the first non-Western country to transform into a modern nation that could compete with the Western powers on their terms. After its complete defeat in 1945, Japan again astonished the world with its rapid recovery and so-called economic miracle. This was paralleled by the country's equally spectacular rise to become a major player on the stage of Western classical music. The worldwide reach of Western music, including European art music, cannot be denied, but neither can its dominance in modern Japan. 'Modernity' as a concept will be discussed in the following chapter, but as one scholar has observed, the modernization process involved the absorption and, indeed, the indigenization of Western music.⁶ One of the most remarkable aspects of this process is the complete change in musical sensibilities that the Japanese people experienced within a few decades. A liking for alien-sounding music does not usually develop quickly or easily. As Bruno Nettl, one of the pioneers of ethnomusicology, noted:

In my experience of them, American and Western European university professors in all fields oscillate between cultural relativism and ethnocentrism. But among those domains of culture that are importantly aesthetic [...] they tend to be particularly ethnocentric about music and food. They will gladly have African sculptures in their living rooms, but they shy away from trying the recipes in Jessica Kuper's *Anthropologist's Cookbook*. They read *The Tale of Genji* but don't want to hear *gagaku*.⁷

Nettl's assertion about alien music, including *gagaku* (Japanese court music), still stands and does not apply exclusively to university professors (indeed, these days Western intellectuals may well be more inclined to eat sushi than to read *The Tale of Genji*). We can, moreover, assume that Nettl deliberately selected the most rarefied of Japan's music genres to make his point. In fact, most Japanese do not want to hear *gagaku* either, nor most of the other traditional genres. The musicologist Watanabe Hiroshi, discussing the nature of Japanese culture, points out the contradiction between what many Japanese perceive as Japanese music

6 Bonnie C. Wade, *Composing Japanese Musical Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 4, <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226085494.001.0001>

7 Nettl, *Encounters*, 64.

(*Nihon ongaku*) writ large and the music they actually listen to. Many foreigners, including myself, have experienced the kind of Japanese host described by Watanabe: one who takes their guest to a performance of ‘Japanese culture’ they themselves are barely familiar with.⁸

In *Music and the Making of Modern Japan*, I argue that musical modernization, including the importation and adoption of European music, played an essential role in Japan’s modernization following Western models. Music was part of the action on centre stage, an important vehicle for empowering the people of Japan to join in the shaping of the modern world. In order to understand the process in which Western music came to play a dominant role in the making of modern Japan, five points must be kept in mind. First, music became a focus of both official and non-official attention not because of its intrinsic merits but because of its functions within the modern state. Second, while strengthening the nation and moulding its citizens was at the heart of their efforts, most of the actors introduced in the following pages were acutely conscious of being part of a global community of nations in which they wanted Japan to be accepted as equal by the leading powers. Third, while traditional music was ultimately relegated to a niche existence, it was simultaneously accorded a vital role in the re-imagining of Japanese culture: this development was a result of the first two points. Fourth, ‘Western music’ is a blanket term, and European art music as we know it today was, arguably, the least important genre to be introduced, at least initially. And fifth, while neither the effects of the music itself nor of active music-making are easy to assess—much of the literature on the subject appears to be based on personal experience, anecdotes, and speculation—there is good reason to accept that many of the effects described in the research literature are real. These effects support the argument that engaging with Western music (as well as approaching indigenous music in a new way) was a means for Japanese people to engage with global modernity itself and to play an active part in shaping it.

Music and the Making of Modern Japan covers the period from the 1870s to the early 1920s. During this period the foundations for Japan’s contributions to the global music scene were laid. This is all the more

8 Hiroshi Watanabe, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2002), 5–6.

remarkable since, for most of this period, recordings were unavailable and the only way Japanese people could hear Western music was through live performance or by attempting to play it themselves. Nevertheless, by the end of this period, Western music was widely heard and played in the country. The standard of musical performance ‘was approaching that of some of the musically less-developed countries in Europe’.⁹ Meanwhile, modern popular song, whose development is closely linked to the growth of the global record industry, successfully blended inspiration from the West with musical characteristics perceived as Japanese.¹⁰ In music, as in other areas, the ambitions of the political reformers who strove to modernize Japan following the Meiji Restoration of 1868 had largely been fulfilled, albeit not quite in the way they had envisaged.¹¹

The period under examination here coincides roughly with the period highlighted by Osterhammel in his outline of the global contexts of European art music, 1860 to 1930. In terms of musical globalization, the period is marked by European musicians extending their activities overseas thanks to the increase in passenger ships, culminating in the massive overseas migration of musicians fleeing from Nazism. As a result, Europe lost any claim to a monopoly in determining musical standards.¹² Even before the Nazis came to power, in the wake of the Russian Revolution, refugees were leaving Europe and, although only a few of them ended up in Japan, they contributed significantly to the rapid rise in musical standards in the period between the world wars. Arguably, it was in the decades treated in this book that the foundations

9 Luciana Galliano, *Yōgaku: Japanese Music in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Martin Mayes (Lanham, Maryland, and London: The Scarecrow Press, 2002), 94.

10 See, for example, Toru Mitsui, *Popular Music in Japan: Transformation Inspired by the West* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501363894>.

11 For a comprehensive introduction to the history of modern Japan, see Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present (4th International Edition)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

12 See Jürgen Osterhammel, ‘Globale Horizonte europäischer Kunstmusik, 1860–1930’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 38, no. 1 (2012): 89. <https://doi.org/10.13109/gege.2012.38.1.86> The first travelling violin virtuoso to arrive in Japan, in 1863, was Augusto Robbio, who claimed to be a student of Paganini. See Margaret Mehl, *Not by Love Alone: The Violin in Japan, 1850–2010* (Copenhagen: The Sound Book Press, 2014), 40.

were laid for Japan's significant contribution to what might be dubbed the 'musical provincialization' of Europe.¹³

Japan, as should be clear from this brief outline, must be examined in the context of global modernity, which is one of the aims of *Music and the Making of Modern Japan*. This wider context is discussed in more detail in the following chapter. First, however, a brief justification for choosing music as the central subject of an exploration of Japan's modern history seems in order. As Michael P. Steinberg, whose scholarship spans both the discipline of history and that of music, has observed that 'the case for music as a dimension of history, and therefore as a concern of professional historians, seems still to require special pleading'.¹⁴ Certainly, music has not received the attention from historians that it deserves. In historical works not explicitly dealing with music, it tends to be treated as a side show, if at all. When I first contemplated writing a book about the history of music in Japan, my limited musical expertise made the idea seem presumptuous. Then I began to question the prevailing assumption about music as a field of inquiry being particularly 'difficult' and best left to the experts. Nettl, quoted above (in the second epigraph), is not the only one to have drawn attention to the notion. The musician and neuroscientist Daniel Levitin has observed that '[t]he chasm between musical experts and everyday musicians that has grown so wide in our culture makes people feel discouraged, and for some reason this is uniquely so with music.' He adds that this phenomenon seems to be 'cultural, specific to contemporary Western society'.¹⁵ Susan McClary, writing thirty years earlier, expressed the paradox even more sharply: 'Now it is quite clear to most listeners that music moves them, that they respond deeply to

13 For East Asia as the new centre for European art music, see Nicholas Cook, 'Western Music as World Music', in *The Cambridge History of World Music*, ed. Philip Vilas Bohlman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). For a similar periodization, with the focus on musical globalization in the United States and Europe, see Harry Liebersohn, *Music and the New Global Culture: From the Great Exhibitions to the Jazz Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 3, 18–19, <https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226649306>

14 Quoted in Julian Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 6, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190233273.001.0001>

15 Daniel Levitin, *This Is Your Brain On Music: Understanding a Human Obsession* (London: Atlantic, 2008 (2006)), 194.

music in a variety of ways, even though in our society they are told that they cannot know anything about music without having absorbed the whole theoretical apparatus necessary for music specialization.' Music, she observed, has long been treated as self-contained, and 'Musicology remains innocent of its own ideology'.¹⁶

Others, too, have commented on the peculiar position of music as a field of inquiry. The ethnomusicologist Bell Yung has remarked on the relative isolation of musicology as a discipline, although with the possible exception of ethnomusicology: 'Music research continues to be relatively isolated from cognate disciplines.'¹⁷ While ethnomusicologists have borrowed ideas and methods from the social sciences, social scientists, according to Bell, are not aware of advances in ethnomusicology. The same applies to other disciplines: scholars who are neither professional musicians nor musicologists seem hesitant to make music part of their investigations. Even historians, while generally eclectic both in their choice of methods and subjects, have long been reluctant to include music in their examination of the past. Celia Applegate, a historian of Germany who has pioneered the inclusion of music as a central theme of its history, writes, 'I came to musical investigations as a historian of modern Germany who had some limited musical training. I wondered why so few of my fellow German historians, many of whom I knew to be passionate about music, "classical" and otherwise, wrote about it in their scholarship.'¹⁸

Recent years have seen what Applegate describes as 'a kind of Schengen zone of scholarship'¹⁹: musicologists have branched out considerably, into a variety of disciplines, while historians are venturing into musical investigations. Even so, music is noticeably absent in most historical writing. What is true of history in general is also true of the relatively new field of global history, which, as two scholars remarked

16 Susan McClary, 'Afterword: The Politics of Silence and Sound', in *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 150, 153.

17 Bell Yung, 'The Nature of Chinese Ritual Sound', in *Harmony and Counterpoint: Ritual Music in Chinese Context*, ed. Bell Yung, Evelyn S. Rawski, and Rubie S. Watson (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 14.

18 Celia Applegate, *The Necessity of Music: Variations on a German Theme* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 4.

19 Applegate, *Necessity*, 4.

recently, has so far largely been a 'silent undertaking'.²⁰ Ironically, the same scholars use the visual metaphor of the lens, which seems symptomatic.²¹

The tendency among researchers to privilege the visual is pointed out and called into question by the proponents of another relatively new field: that of sound studies, which represents an attempt to remedy the perceived neglect of the auditory. The editors of *The Auditory Culture Reader* note that '[i]n the hierarchy of the senses, the epistemological status of hearing has come a poor second to that of vision'.²² Attributing this relegation to the nature of modern scientific approaches, they write, 'Both the impetus to objectify and to universalize appear to be rooted in the historical ascendancy of visual epistemologies in Western culture.' They even claim that 'Western narratives of sound are associated with dominance, exoticism and Orientalism.'²³ In a similar vein, the editors of *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies* state that science tends to be associated with seeing rather than hearing and pose the question whether listening can produce new knowledge. They do not answer it directly, but suggest several potential lines of inquiry.²⁴ Sound studies, for them, is by definition an interdisciplinary undertaking that aims to study 'the material production and consumption of music, sound, noise, and silence, and how these have changed through history and within different societies'.²⁵

It may be that scholars who shy away from music because they feel they lack relevant expertise are less inhibited when it comes to sound in general. Some musicologists, meanwhile, have embraced sound studies in reaction to the perceived shortcomings of musicology, which has too often concentrated on the pantheon of European art music, or else, in the case of ethnomusicology, on the exotic other. Music is, of course,

20 Martin Rempe and Claudius Torp, 'Cultural Brokers and the Making of Glocal Soundscapes, 1880s to 1930s', *Itinerario* 41, no. 2 (2017): 223, <https://doi.org/doi:10.1017/S0165115317000420>

21 Rempe and Torp, 'Making of Glocal Soundscapes', 223.

22 Bull, Michael, and Les Back. 'Introduction: Into Sound', in *The Auditory Culture Reader*, ed. Michael Bull and Les Back (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 1.

23 Bull and Back, *Auditory Culture Reader*, 4, 8.

24 Trevor Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld, 'New Keys to the World of Sound', in *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies*, ed. Trevor Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld (Oxford University Press, 2012), 3–36, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195388947.001.0001>

25 Pinch and Bijsterveld, *Oxford Handbook Sound Studies*, 6–7.

sound—‘humanly organized sound’, to be more precise²⁶— although not all organized sound is recognized as music. A wholly satisfactory definition of music is elusive, although most people tend to recognize music when they hear it, even when they profoundly dislike what they are hearing. This is the case with the sonic events discussed in this book. Definitions, then, need not detain us, as long as we keep in mind that music is, among other things, a social construct. The Italian composer Luca Lombardi (b. 1945) has expressed this succinctly: ‘Music is that which a sufficiently large number of listeners regard as music.’²⁷ Similarly, Watanabe Hiroshi, musicologist scholar of cultural resources studies (*bunka shigen gaku*), has summed up his premise that music is a social construct by observing that music (*ongaku*) is not so much *aru mono*, something that is, but *naru mono*, something that comes into being, that is constructed.²⁸

Watanabe might have added that music is *yaru mono*, that is, something we do. The abstract term ‘music’ tends to obscure this. The music-related activities humans engage in are, however, arguably more accessible to historians and other scholars concerned about their perceived lack of musical expertise. The musicologist Christopher Small emphasized activity by resurrecting the verb ‘musicking’ from its forgotten existence in dictionaries.²⁹ His proposal does not appear to have caught on; perhaps his definition, taking part in a musical performance in any capacity, seemed too unspecific. A more manageable concept was introduced by the musicologist Tsukahara Yasuko, in her groundbreaking account of how Western music was introduced into Japan in the nineteenth century. She uses ‘music-related activities’ (*ongaku katsudō*) to describe the support system that enables the creation, performance, and reception of a given type of music, including the places and occasions, actors, and systems of preservation and transmission.³⁰

26 John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), 10.

27 Luca Lombardi, ‘On the Meaning of Music’, online essay, [n.d.], <http://lucalombardi.net/pdf/Text%20Lombardi%20Meaning.pdf>

28 Watanabe, *Saundo to media*, 39.

29 Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998).

30 Yasuko Tsukahara, *Jūkyū seiki no Nihon ni okeru Seiyō ongaku no juyō* (Tokyo: Taka Shuppan, 1993), 9–10.

Musicking or music-related activities, then, are just particular forms of human activity; and human activity of any kind is the object of history as a field of inquiry. There are good reasons why historians would do well to pay more attention to such activities. As Applegate so rightly argues in summing up her reasons for venturing into music in the 1990s:

The enormous range of ways in which people have made and made use of music over the centuries represented a rich source of knowledge about how people lived, the beliefs they held, and the means they devised to express themselves, both in public and in private. Historians could look to musical life as a way to understand more fully the other aspects of the past we had long studied—social classes and gender roles, parliaments and protest movements, wars and revolutions, religions and ideas, and identities of all kinds.³¹

Another historian, Jessica Gienow-Hecht, describes music as ‘part of the fabric of history’ and mentions historians who have treated music as ‘an instrument to analyse questions of power, political hegemony and cultural change’, in other words, as ‘a tool to reconstruct the past by shedding light on groups, individuals, organizations, events, objects, actions and phenomena’. She adds, however, that ‘historians are called upon to investigate music not simply as a tool, but as a forum of values, customs, and ideas’.³² In a similar vein, Jane Fulcher, in her introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of the New Cultural History of Music*, describes music as ‘a privileged point of entry’ for, among other things, ‘questions of cultural identity and its expression, or its constructions, representations, and exchanges’.³³

The Oxford Handbook deals almost exclusively with Europe, but the non-verbal nature of music and the vagueness and mutability of musical meaning mean that these questions are particularly interesting when asked about cultural interactions across the globe. Jürgen Osterhammel describes music as the globalized cultural resource *par*

31 Applegate, *Necessity*, 4.

32 Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, ‘Introduction’, in *Music and International History in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht (New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), 4, 12.

33 Jane F. Fulcher, ‘Introduction: Defining the New Cultural History of Music, Its Origins, Methodologies and Lines of Inquiry’, in *The Oxford Handbook of the New Cultural History of Music*, ed. Jane F. Fulcher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9, 10.

excellence and highly suited to globalization because of its mobility.³⁴ Likewise, the editors of a special issue entitled ‘Cultural Brokers and Glocal Soundscapes, 1880s to 1930s’ for the journal *Itinerario* highlight the significance of music in global history when they argue ‘that a musical lens provides fresh insights into the history of global cultural exchange.’³⁵ A related argument is made by the editors of *The Auditory Culture Reader*: ‘Listening to music offers new opportunities to address issues of globalization, place, identity, belonging, history and memory.’³⁶ Increasingly, there is a perception that music is far too important to be left to the musical experts alone and deserves—even demands—the attention of scholars of several disciplines.

Of course, it would be foolish to ignore the work done by musical specialists. Nor is it possible or desirable to separate the activity entirely from the music itself. As Nettl states, ‘It seems that, for whatever reason, a special relationship exists between a society and the special musical language of its culture.’³⁷ This begs the question: What happens when society changes and, in particular, when change includes encounters with the musical language of another culture? More broadly, what is it that makes music and musicking special and more than worthy of attention from non-specialists? The links between social and musical change will be examined with Japan as a case in the course of this book. As for the broader question, three possible answers are attempted here.

First, music or ‘musicking’ is a human activity—or, rather, a cluster of activities—found in all known human societies and throughout recorded history. Music-making, like dancing (which is inseparable from music in many cultures), can thus be regarded as a ‘microcosm of holistic culture’ and as reflecting ‘powerful social forces that demand explanation’.³⁸ Both music and dance are expressions of human

34 See Jürgen Osterhammel, ‘Globale Horizonte’, 86-87. I am not sure I agree that music does not require translation, but this might be a question of how ‘translation’ is defined. At the very least, European art music demands a degree of literacy.

35 Rempe and Torp, ‘Making of Glocal Soundscapes’, 223.

36 Bull and Back, *Auditory Culture Reader*, 14.

37 Nettl, *Encounters*, 70.

38 Joann Kealiinohomoku, ‘Dance Culture as a Microcosm of Holistic Culture’, in *New Dimensions in Dance Research: Anthropology and Dance - The American Indian. Proceedings of the Third Conference on Research in Dance*, ed. Tamara Comstock (New York: Committee on Research in Dance, 1972), 99; Paul Spencer, *Society and the Dance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 2-3.

behaviour, and their various forms are unique to the culture they are part of.³⁹ Studying the music and dance of other cultures ‘can help us achieve a balance between understanding cultural difference and recognizing our common humanity’.⁴⁰

Second, music as an activity (musicking) expresses the whole of our nature as humans—spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical.⁴¹ Music, or more broadly, ‘ritual sound’, is associated with religion and with the spiritual more generally in many, if not most, cultures.⁴² The history of European art music is closely linked to that of the church. Even when the authority of the church was increasingly challenged, composers still wrote sacred music, and, in the increasingly secularized society of the nineteenth century, art music took on the role of a substitute religion.⁴³ In Japan, Buddhism and Shinto each have their own musical genres.

Music also engages the intellect. Indeed, it has at times served primarily as an intellectual preoccupation. In ancient Greece it was the subject of mathematical investigation. According to one historian, ‘The oldest law of “science” is the law of music.’⁴⁴ Greek theories were received and transformed both in Western Europe and in the Arab world. In China, too, music was the subject of mathematical investigation. Common to ancient Greece and China was the idea of music as the manifestation of an ordered world that could be understood in terms of mathematics. In Europe, this concept is known as the Harmony of the Spheres. Although European music came to be thought of primarily as an art in modern times, it continued to be the subject of scientific investigation, and the fact that European music was perceived to be

39 Judith Lynne Hanna, *To Dance Is Human* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980).

40 Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 3.

41 Several parts of the human brain have been shown to be involved in the processing of music. See Levitin, *This Is Your Brain On Music*.

42 On ritual sound, and distinguishing musical elements, see Yung, ‘The Nature of Chinese Ritual Sound’, 17. In order to distinguish music from sound in a complex ritual Yung suggests eight possible musical elements in a sonic event, each of which are typically subject to prescription (p.18).

43 Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 31–38; Tim Blanning, *The Triumph of Music: Composers, Musicians and Their Audiences, 1700 to the Present* (London: Allan Lane (Penguin), 2008), 135–39.

44 Rens Bod, *A New History of the Humanities: The Search for Principles and Patterns from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015 (2013)), 37.

rooted in scientific laws of harmony was a major reason for its appeal to reformers in Japan and elsewhere.

The emotional power of music is universally recognized. For Gienow-Hecht, this is a major reason why historians should include music in their examination of the past.⁴⁵ The effects of different kinds of music on those who listen are, however, far from universal. Music is not a universal language in the sense that any kind of music can be understood by a listener who is not familiar with it; nor will it arouse the same emotions as it would in a listener who is.⁴⁶ One only has to listen to music from different cultures to realize that, like a foreign language, foreign music requires some degree of learning or at least habituation. Moreover, even listeners familiar with a given piece of music and its characteristic idiom might experience a variety of emotions.

There are several reasons for this. Musical meaning, in the succinct wording of Alex Ross, is ‘vague, mutable, and, in the end, deeply personal’.⁴⁷ It is also strongly dependent on the context in which it is performed and heard. This is true even of a work by a known composer, written down and including detailed instructions for the performer. The circumstances under which a certain piece of music was heard for the first time may have a profound influence on the way the listener experiences the same music on a subsequent occasion. Music has the power to evoke other times and places in the mind of the listener; ‘musical experience incites us to respond as if to a whole perceptual world.’⁴⁸ Ultimately, the listeners themselves find their own meaning.⁴⁹ This does not preclude a piece of music from acquiring a particular emotional significance for a group or even a whole society’s collective experience.

45 Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, *Sound Diplomacy: Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations, 1850–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 10.7208/chicago/9780226292175.001.0001

46 For a discussion of the question, see Kathleen Marie Higgins, *The Music between Us: Is Music a Universal Language?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 10.7208/chicago/9780226333274.001.0001

47 Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Picador, 2007), xvii.

48 Higgins, *Music between Us*, 106. Higgins describes the phenomenon as ‘musical synesthesia’; Higgins, 106–118.

49 See also Andrew Gant, *Music, Ideas in Profile: Small Introductions to Big Topics*, (London: Profile Books, 2017), 91.

Emotions are associated with physical actions and reactions in complex ways that are only partially understood. Music, as well as engaging the emotions, stimulates physical responses in listeners. The bodily practices demanded from those who perform it are often so complex that they require years of training, starting in early childhood. In other words, like dance, or sports, learning to sing in a certain way or to play a musical instrument depends on the transmission of particular techniques of the body, and the same kind of questions may be explored in relation to music-making as to the more obviously physical activities, including the concept of 'embodied identities'.⁵⁰ The notion of learning with and through the body forms an integral part of training in the traditional arts in Japan, perhaps more explicitly so than when, for example, learning a musical instrument in Europe.⁵¹ And if we accept that the human body is both an object of social construction and that bodily practices can reshape social lives, we need to treat music-making as a bodily practice.⁵²

Of particular interest in the context of music's role in shaping (and re-shaping) a society is the significance of synchronized physical movement in groups, whether marching to the sounds of a military band, playing in a musical ensemble, dancing, or singing. In *Keeping Together in Time*, William H. McNeill argues that such rhythmical movement as part of a group gives most people pleasure and results in what he calls 'muscular bonding', and that communities and societies that have learnt to make use of this have reached a high level of cohesion and power.⁵³

This certainly applies to modern Japan. Given that military drill is one of McNeill's prime examples, and that military bands were one of the first paths for Western music to be introduced to non-Western countries,

50 Noel Dyck and Eduardo P. Archetti, *Sport, Dance and Embodied Identities* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

51 On learning and remembering with the body (*karada de oboeru*), see, for example: Yasuo Yuasa, *The Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory*, trans. Thomas P. Kasulis and Shigenori Nagatomo (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987); Tomie Hahn, *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture through Japanese Dance* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2007).

52 Dyck and Archetti, *Sport, Dance and Embodied Identities*.

53 William McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

including Japan,⁵⁴ the bodily practices involved in the adoption of Western music surely merit more attention than they have received so far. We might even ask whether the Japanese were so enthusiastic to form bands and later orchestras because it enabled them to bodily enact Western civilization and Western-style modernity, even to create a piece of it: music, after all, exists in the performance. Another question might be whether the Japanese group mentality, insofar as the stereotype has any basis at all in fact, might be a result of the time devoted to singing together and to movement games with music in the country's modern education system.

A third reason why music merits the attention of historians, besides its ubiquity and ability to express all aspects of our human nature, is that music can be related to all areas of human existence and activity. Music-related activities always take place in a political, economic, and social context, and developments in music are related to developments in other areas. Musical performance has even been described as a microcosm for social interaction.⁵⁵

The potential for studying and gaining a better understanding of society by examining connections between music and activities in other fields has yet to be fully explored, but the following examples suggest that such efforts are likely to be fruitful. Pioneering work in the fields of social and economic history was done by an economic historian, Cyril Ehrlich, who published books on the social and economic history of the piano and on the history of the music profession in Britain.⁵⁶ Music has, in fact, been claimed to have a particularly strong affinity with economics, 'with which it shares a peculiar ultimate object which

54 Not only Japan of course: see Martin Rempé, 'Cultural Brokers in Uniform: The Global Rise of Military Musicians and Their Music', *Itinerario* 41, no. 2 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0165115317000390> Besides, the first Japanese efforts to learn drum rhythms to accompany Western-style drill were not perceived as music: see Yasuto Okunaka, *Kokka to ongaku: Isawa Shūji ga mezashita Nihon kindaika* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2008).

55 Giacomo Novembre Alessandro D'Ausilio, Luciano Fadiga, Peter E. Keller, 'What can music tell us about social interaction?', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 19, no. 3 (2015): 111, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2015.01.005>

56 Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History. Revised edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990 (1976)); Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century: a Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

is *number*'.⁵⁷ More obviously, the attention given to music might reflect a society's economic prosperity (or lack thereof). Purchasing a piano, for example, represents (among other things) a significant economic investment. The economic boom Japan experienced as a result of the First World War was cited by Kate Ingeborg Hansen, a music teacher and long-time observer of the progress of Western music in Japan, as a major reason for the rapidly rising standards of musical performance after 1918.⁵⁸

A recent exploration of the of the relationship between music and changes in several areas of society in modern times was presented by the historian Tim Blanning, who argued that music benefited more than any art from several of the major changes that characterize the period from around the 1700s to the present and especially the nineteenth century: status, purpose, places and spaces, technology, and liberation.⁵⁹ Blanning's theme of 'liberation' includes 'nation, people, sex'. Of these, the nation will receive particular attention in the following chapters. Music played and plays an important role in the process of shaping the imagined community that forms the basis of any nation.⁶⁰

The examples named here justify Rens Bod's claim that musicology 'can be called the most interdisciplinary humanistic discipline'.⁶¹

The question remains: what exactly can historians gain from examining musicking and music (for the one can hardly be separated completely from the other) that might not be gained from studying other areas of human activity? Musical activities are accessible enough, but their product is elusive compared to those of other activities: Applegate refers to the dilemma as the 'problem of music's fleeting existence', which poses a challenge to historians quite apart from their perceived

57 Frederic Jameson, 'Foreword', in *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), vii. (The emphasis is Jameson's.)

58 See Chapter 10.

59 Blanning, *Triumph*. See Chapter 1.

60 See, for example, Turino, *Music as Social Life*, 142-47, 210. That Benedict Anderson's much-cited work on imagined communities barely mentions music (except for a brief reference to singing national anthems) is symptomatic of the reluctance of non-specialists to address music, even when it is highly relevant. See *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), 145.

61 Bod, *New History*, 310.

lack of specialist competences.⁶² Can we ‘hear’ the past through its music, as Alex Ross implies with his subtitle to *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*?⁶³ Even if the answer is yes, what exactly is it that we hear? And what do we do about most of the nineteenth century, for which we have no recorded music and therefore no way of hearing how contemporary performers played it? Equally significantly, we have no way of hearing a piece of music in the way contemporaries would have heard it at its first performance, so our experience will always be different from theirs.

Perhaps the only way to find out what we might learn from including music in our investigations is to actually do it and see, or, whenever possible, hear, where it leads us. Perhaps it is only when we have multiple investigations relating to music that we will know why they were worth the effort. While writing *Music and the Making of Modern Japan* I have given considerable thought to these questions, and I believe that I have at least demonstrated that the activities that involved singing and playing music had a vital role transforming the Japanese people into modern citizens of the nation and the world. I have also—tentatively—concluded that the act of making music was more significant than the standard of any resulting performance. But that does not mean that the music itself was of no significance at all. Government officials and intellectuals who advocated the introduction of Western music, for example, while interested chiefly in music’s functions, comment on the character of Western and Japanese music respectively in their discourse. I include only limited discussion of music itself; nevertheless, I hope to have demonstrated that the topic is worth exploring further.

Overview and Chapters of the Book

As mentioned previously, a major aim of this book is to situate the history of music in Japan in the context of Western expansion and globalization, which was accompanied by the worldwide reach of Western music. Japan absorbed and even indigenized Western music as part of the nation-building process. There is, therefore, some justification for a

62 Celia Applegate, ‘Introduction: Music Among the Historians’, *German History* 30, no. 3 (2012): 330–31, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gerhis/ghs039>

63 Ross, *The Rest is Noise*.

strong focus on the introduction of Western music in any narrative about music and modern Japan. But what about indigenous Japanese music? Existing literature has tended to focus almost exclusively on either Japanese music (*hōgaku*) or Western music (*yōgaku*). This poses practical challenges for researchers attempting to give equal weight to both, as they are faced with a situation similar to that of moving between different disciplines. More significantly, it reflects the separation of Western and traditional indigenous music that characterizes contemporary Japan. Practitioners of traditional musical genres tend to move in a world of their own, one dominated by a system of transmission which severely limits influence from other musical styles and genres. There appears to be a tacit assumption that the separation was in effect from the time when Western music was first introduced in the nineteenth century.⁶⁴ This, however, was not the case: the separation was only cemented after 1945.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, as will be shown, the tendency to distinguish sharply between Western and Japanese music was already discernible by the end of the period examined here. In practice, even advocates of music reform, who had in mind some sort of fusion between both musical worlds, tended to privilege Western music.

I have made every effort to pay attention to the changes that affected traditional Japanese music, including the relationship between Western and indigenous musics. I believe that I have at least succeeded in demonstrating the importance of this line of inquiry. Other previously neglected topics I discuss are the global context of developments in Japan; the influence of Confucianist ideas about the role of music in government (*reigaku* or the 'Rites and Music' concept of music) on Japan's intellectual and political leaders; and the role of non-state actors, including local actors, on the Japanese musical landscape. The Tokyo-centeredness of much research means that we still do not know enough

64 This may be changing. See Watanabe, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi*; Yūko Chiba, *Doremi o eranda Nihonjin* (Ongaku no Tomosha, 2007); Yasuto Okunaka, *Wayō setchū ongakushi* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2014). For a short treatment of traditional music after 1868, see Eta Harich-Schneider, *A History of Japanese Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

65 See Watanabe, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi*.

about the way musical life was transformed in other parts of Japan; what we do know suggests that there were wide variations.⁶⁶

The main section of the book is divided into three interconnected parts, relating to the global, the national, and the local level. Globalization and nation-building were two major trends in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and music played a major role in global as well as national integration. A nation state has to unite the entire people within its borders. In Japan, as in many other emerging nations, this meant transcending considerable regional and local differences.⁶⁷ Indeed, it is at the local level that we see most clearly the vital role played by music in drawing together the Japanese people in order to actively participate in the nation, as well as experiencing themselves as part of a world of nations. It is also at the local level that the importance of individuals demonstrating personal initiative is most evident.

Part One: Global History, Modernity, and the Spread of Western Music situates the theme of the book both conceptually and historically.

Chapter 1, 'Global History, Musical Modernity, and the Globalization of Western Music' discusses the concepts of global history, globalization, modernity, and musical modernity, and relates these to the themes explored in this book. The global historical context is then described in more detail. The introduction of Western music to Japan has usually been treated in isolation, or from a bilateral perspective, rather than as a part of a global process. While Western music was disseminated to varying degrees in most parts of the world in the nineteenth century, Japan was unique in that its government took the adoption of Western music to the extreme of privileging it over indigenous music, which was increasingly marginalized.

66 See Chapter 3 for references to previous research. Research on regions outside Tokyo has often focused on the Kansai region. See, for example, Watanabe, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi*; Hugh De Ferranti and Alison Tokita, eds., *Music, Modernity and Locality in Prewar Japan: Osaka and Beyond* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013). A number of (usually narrowly focused) articles on local musical culture have been published in the in-house journals of universities in that region. A recent book with a focus on Northern Japan (particularly Akita) is Kanako Kitahara and Kenji Namikawa, eds., *Kindai ikōki ni okeru chiiki keisei to ongaku: tsukurareta dentō to ibunka sesshoku* (Kyoto: Mineruba Shobō, 2020).

67 This is true even without considering the Ryukyu Islands and Hokkaido (formerly Ezo), which were only incorporated into the Japanese state in the Meiji period. The music of the Ryukyuan people and the Ainu are beyond the scope of this book.

Chapter 2, 'Under Reconstruction: Japan, the United States, and the European Model' examines similarities between two nations whose relationship is usually regarded as asymmetrical. The United States played a dominant role in forcing Japan to give up its isolation policy in the mid-nineteenth century. Culturally, however, there were remarkable parallels as well as synchronicity in the two countries' efforts to develop a national music. Post-Civil-War America and Meiji Japan both engaged in an intense process of nation-building, and the creation of their own musical identity was part of the process. Although both countries treated European music as a model, they endeavoured to develop a distinctive national music by merging local and imported musical elements. While a full-scale comparison of these countries' musical developments is beyond the scope of this book, the chapter shows one of the most powerful Western nations in a position of perceived cultural inferiority compared to European nations and thus challenges facile assumptions about 'the West'.

The main intention with Chapter 3, 'The Case of Japan', is to position Japan in the wider field of musical encounters and to provide readers unfamiliar with Japan with the necessary context for what follows in the other parts of the book. No comprehensive survey is attempted, as this would fill a book in its own right, but a brief outline of developments after the period treated in this book is included. Particular attention is given to the effects of post-1868 social transformations on indigenous musics and on the relationship between Japanese and Western music.

Part Two: Music for a Modern Nation zooms in on Japan in order to shed light on specific aspects of the country's musical modernization that illustrate its global dimension and the role of music in nation-building.

Chapter 4, 'From Rites and Music to National Music', illustrates how 'music' is about much more than music. In both Europe and the Sinosphere (that is, the East Asian cultural sphere), of which Japan is a part, concepts of music were intimately linked to concepts of civilization. When Japan embarked on re-inventing itself as a modern nation—one modelled on the most powerful Western nations—Eastern and Western conceptions of civilization became intertwined. The first book-length history of music in Japan, *Kabu ongaku ryakushi* (A concise history of singing, dancing and music in Japan, 1888), represents a landmark in the

epistemic transformation that resulted from these geopolitical changes.⁶⁸ In effect, this work both legitimized musical borrowing, whether from China in the past or the West in the present, and elevated the music of the common people of Japan to a national asset.

Against this backdrop, the introduction of Western music into the education system is discussed in Chapter 5, 'Isawa Shūji: Music, Movement, Science, and Language'. His pivotal role in this process is well known, but it can only be fully understood in the context of his other concerns, particularly language reform and moral and physical education, as well as his preoccupation with the scientific basis for musical harmony. For Isawa, music was part of what in modern parlance might be called holistic education. Combined with language and physical movement, music became a powerful tool for educating the citizens of the new nation state.

Isawa was, moreover, one of the advocates of music reform, which is treated in Chapter 6, 'Civilizing Citizens: Music Reform'. Influenced by their education in the Chinese classics (*kangaku*), reformers argued that improving music (*ongaku kairyō*) was an essential means of refining the manners and customs of the people. Japanese music was perceived to be unsuited to this purpose, while Western music was perceived to have desirable—civilizing—characteristics that Japanese music lacked. Reform was to be achieved by blending elements of Western and Japanese music, but the official reform efforts were short-lived, and the dominance of Western music in the education system continued into the twenty-first century.

Compared to Isawa, the role of non-state actors in the dissemination of Western music has received relatively little attention. Chapter 7, 'Shikama Totsuji: Music Reform and a Nationwide Network' introduces one of them, Shikama Totsuji, whose importance is equal to Isawa's. In 1890 Shikama founded Japan's first magazine devoted to music: *Ongaku zasshi*, which had the additional English title *The Musical Magazine*. His stated purpose for the publication was to promote music reform. In addition, Shikama engaged in several other music-related activities to further this agenda. These underline the scope of his ambitions and

68 Kiyonori Konakamura, *Kabu ongaku ryakushi* (Tokyo: Konakamura Kiyonori, 1888).

illustrate the way individual actors, despite minimal training in Western music, contributed to transforming Japan's musical culture.

Unofficial efforts to reform music, by Shikama and other individuals, continued after official efforts had ceased. Chapter 8, 'Playing Modern: Blending Japanese and Western Music', examines the widespread, albeit short-lived, fashion for performing Japanese music (chiefly *koto* and *shamisen* genres) on Western instruments; a practice known as *wayō chōwa gaku* (music harmonizing Japanese and Western elements, which I will refer to as 'blended music').⁶⁹ The propagators of the practice can be categorized loosely as 'reformers' and as 'entrepreneurs'. The second group, people who promoted the practice of playing blended music, was particularly significant for transforming musical practices. It included enterprising musicians, often performers of indigenous music. Their activities included the publication of sheet music for traditional and modern Japanese-style composition in Western staff notation. As a result, traditional repertoire that previously would have been confined to particular regions and only available for study by direct transmission through personal contact with a teacher, became widely available. The popularity of performing blended music, moreover, suggests that the strict separation between Western and Japanese music (which, from around 1900, began to be called *hōgaku*) was not a foregone conclusion, despite the privileging of Western music by the Meiji government.

Part Three: The World, Japan, and Sendai focuses on the northern provincial city of Sendai, placing the transformation of local musical culture in the context of globalization and national unification. Detailed local studies are almost non-existent, although the region around Osaka and Kobe has received a fair amount of attention. Like Tokyo, however, it is exceptional: Osaka is another metropolis, and Kobe is a major port town.⁷⁰ The choice of Sendai may seem somewhat arbitrary. My main reason for selecting it was the surprising number of reports on musical activities in the city that appear in *Ongaku zasshi*. The magazine's special attention paid to the place was soon explained when I learnt that its editor, Shikama Totsuji, was himself from Sendai and that his brother

69 Also known as *wayō setchū* (mixing Japanese and Western elements) or *wayō gassō* (Japanese-Western ensemble playing).

70 Watanabe, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi*. De Ferranti and Tokita, *Music, Modernity and Locality*.

Jinji was one of the principal actors in the local music scene. Shikama Totsuji thus represents a link between the national and the local level. As will be explained in the introduction to Part Three, there are a number of reasons that make Sendai a good case study, offering the opportunity to examine what kind of conditions were necessary to enable the musical transformations that occurred in the capital to reach a provincial town.

Chapter 9, 'Local Pioneers', highlights the decisive role of determined individuals, including Shikama Totsuji and his brother Jinji, in promoting music in general and disseminating Western music in particular. Having received the bare minimum of musical training in the capital, these local pioneers taught music, wrote songs, helped establish local associations for the promotion of music, and organized concerts.

Although the decisive reforming initiatives came from locals, foreign actors were indispensable in the years around the turn of the century, when levels of knowledge and skill among the Japanese were low. The most notable foreign actor in Sendai is discussed in Chapter 10, 'Foreign Actors: Kate I. Hansen'. Hansen, a missionary, was both typical and unique. Missionaries played an important role in introducing basic Western musical education, and in Sendai Hansen stands out as the most significant of them. Not only did she have professional training as a musician: she spent most of her working life in Sendai, where she was instrumental in building a music department at Miyagi School for Girls. It offered training at conservatoire level at a time when few schools outside Tokyo did so. Hansen was, moreover, an astute observer of musical life, and her detailed descriptions of local concerts as well as of the methods she developed in order to teach her students Western-style singing give unique insights into the changing musical landscape.

But what kind of 'Western music' was actually performed in concerts in Sendai? This is the main theme of Chapter 11, 'The World in Sendai'. Based on the programmes of local concerts between 1907 and 1921 published in the magazine *Ongakukai* (Music world), this chapter shows how local concerts, in which different groups came together to perform an eclectic repertoire to a mixed audience, helped transform the people of Sendai into members of a nation within a wider world of nations. The modern institution of the public concert represented a space where Japanese and foreigners met and played and listened to music that was being performed and heard worldwide. The repertoire included a wide

range of genres and countries of origin. Together, this variety, and the locations, scenes, and stories evoked by the pieces reveal much that is obscured by the blanket term 'Western music'. Works from the narrow canon of the 'great masters' of European art music, in fact, represented only a small fraction of what was performed.

The Conclusion, after briefly outlining how the changes in musical culture in the 1920s made themselves felt in Sendai, returns to the larger framework. It places the emergence of a new musical culture in Sendai in the context of national consolidation, as well as of Japan's growing importance on the international stage after the First World War. This discussion leads back to the question posed in this introduction: what can music contribute to our understanding of history?

Examining musical practices can greatly enhance our understanding of historical developments, provided that these practices are examined in their wider historical context. The case of Japan demonstrates that music and musical modernization were an integral part of its transformation into a modern nation. This transformation was motivated in large part by the need to respond to Western dominance and was inspired by Western models. Traditional genres of Japanese music flourished in the period examined, but, ultimately, they were relegated to a niche existence. Arguably, official neglect at the time when Western music was systematically adopted ensured their preservation as (supposedly) unadulterated elements of traditional culture. In this way, Western and indigenous music each played (and still play) their part in defining modern Japan.

Japan successfully negotiated two significant global transformations in the late nineteenth and into the twentieth century: nation-building and globalization. Its ability to do so was in part due to the ability of officials and non-state actors to harness the power of music in support of their aims. The commonalities between European and East Asian, including Confucian, ideas about music as a civilizing force made it possible to accept European claims to universality without fully appreciating the epistemological gap between those concepts. Western music was perceived by Isawa and other political and intellectual leaders to be based on universal scientific laws and to represent an assumed universal modernity. Combined with two other powerful tools for building community—synchronized movement and language – and

promoted in modern institutions, namely the school and the army, the performance and reception of Western music promoted national bonding. At the same time, learning to listen to and perform Western music linked the Japanese people, even those who lived in provincial towns and cities such as Sendai, to the global circulation of music and enabled them to join in the global performance of modernity.

Finally, I hope that my detailed treatment of this decisive phase in Japan's musical modernization will help to deepen our understanding of the process and thereby dispel the stereotypes about Japanese (and, by extension, Asian) musicians that prevail to this day. There is still widespread ignorance of just how deeply rooted in Japanese history and culture is the music that we tend to describe as 'Western'. As my draft for this book was nearing completion, this ignorance was demonstrated at a masterclass at the Juilliard School of Music. The world-famous violinist Pinchas Zukerman employed cultural stereotypes while addressing two American students with Japanese ancestry. He reportedly told them that their playing was too perfect and lacked expression, advising them to add 'a little more vinegar—or soy sauce!' to their performance and topping these remarks with 'I know in Korea they don't sing.'⁷¹

The example of Sendai suggests that such stereotypes could pass for accurate characterizations of performances in Japan in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There is good reason to believe that Kate Hansen's assertions about her students were based on accurate observations. Western music was still unfamiliar and, before commercial recordings became available, opportunities to hear it performed well were extremely limited. By the end of the few decades examined here, however, the situation had changed completely; by the latter half of the twentieth century, earlier assumptions about the ability of the Japanese to understand and master foreign music had been proven wrong.

71 The class took place on 25 June 2021. For a report by a violinist who witnessed the class, see Laurie Niles, 'Juilliard acts after Pinchas Zukerman uses "offensive cultural stereotypes"', *Violinist.com* (blog), 27 June 2021, <https://www.violinist.com/blog/laurie/20216/28825/>. The case was widely reported. See, for example, Javier C. Hernández, 'Violinist Apologizes for "Culturally Insensitive" Remarks About Asians', *The New York Times*, 28 June 2021 (updated 11 November 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/28/arts/music/pinchas-zukerman-violinist-asians.html>

A Note on Terminology

I have aimed to use English translations for some central Japanese terms to avoid confusing readers without knowledge of Japanese. Many terms, however, including musical instruments and genres, defy easy translation. The following terms have for the most part been rendered in English, but require explanation.

The term ‘music’, although common to many European languages, did not have an obvious equivalent in Japanese in the nineteenth century. The term *ongaku*, in general use today, was used from the Tokugawa period (1603–1868) to translate ‘music’, but it did not attain common currency until well into the Meiji period (1868–1912). Music imported from the West was referred to as *yōgaku* (Western music) regardless of genre. Today, (Western) classical music is referred to as *kurashikku*. I have used ‘European art music’ for classical music, since the music originated in Europe.⁷² ‘Western music’ includes all genres that are perceived as ‘Western’ (which usually means European and North American) in origin.

Japanese musical genres were known by their individual names: a blanket term only became necessary in order to distinguish all indigenous music collectively from that imported from the West. From the early twentieth century, *hōgaku* (indigenous Japanese music) came into use. Then, the term referred to the traditional genres (unlike today, when *hōgaku* can also refer to modern genres such as J-pop). In this book, ‘Japanese music’ refers to traditional musical genres unless otherwise stated.

The music of the common people, primarily for entertainment, was known as *zokugaku*, translated here as ‘common music’. Eta Harich-Schneider, pioneering author of Japanese musical history, states that Western music was initially ranked with *zokugaku*.⁷³ Given the circumstances of its introduction, this would not be surprising. But in the debates of Meiji reformers, *zokugaku* often implied a moral judgement. ‘Common’, which in some contexts can imply contempt, therefore seems a fitting translation.

⁷² See Osterhammel, ‘Globale Horizonte’, 96.

⁷³ Eta Harich-Schneider, *A History of Japanese Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 546.

A musical genre popular in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Japan was *minshingaku* (literally ‘Ming and Qing music’; Ming and Qing dynasty music) or *shingaku* (Qing music), a regional style of popular music from China that was first transmitted to Japan by Chinese merchants in the Tokugawa period.

The custom of playing pieces from the *hōgaku* repertoire on Western instruments was referred to as *wayō setchū gaku* (music mixing Japanese and Western elements), *wayō chōwa gaku* (music harmonizing Japanese and Western elements), or *wayō gassō* (Japanese-Western ensemble playing). I have translated this as ‘blended music’ or ‘blended performance’.

A term I have left untranslated is *shōka*. It has sometimes been translated as ‘school songs’, but this invites confusion with the songs celebrating a particular school (*kōka*). The basic meaning of *shōka* is ‘song’, but its use is more specific. The term was initially used mainly for Western-style songs imported, or composed by Japanese, for use in education. Many of these songs achieved popularity outside the school system. Several of the early *shōka* feature in the Collection of 100 Japanese songs (*Nihon no uta hyakusen*) published by the Agency of Cultural Affairs in 2007.⁷⁴

Japanese Names

Japanese names in the main body of the book are given in the conventional Japanese order, that is with the surname first. In the footnotes, bibliography, and index they are given in the same order as the Western names in order to avoid confusion.

74 Bunkachō (Agency of Cultural Affairs), ‘Nihon no uta hyakusen’, *Bunkachō geppō* 2007, no. 2 (2007), https://www.bunka.go.jp/tokei_hakusho_shuppan/hakusho_nenjihakokusho/archive/pdf/93732401_03.pdf

