

Analysis on the effect of Cultural Emotional Expression on the State of Jazz and Pop in the Far East

Joshua Kim¹, Stacy Gil[#], and Talia Dardis[#]

¹Edgemont High School

[#]Advisor

ABSTRACT

Music and the ability to express emotions are deeply connected and this connection is a universal phenomenon. The recent meteoric rise of the Asian music industry and genres such as J-pop (Japanese pop), C-pop (Cantopop), and K-pop (Korean pop) reaching international audiences suggest cultural factors play a role in its success. However, there has not been a general analysis of how these genres of music, representing different modes of emotional expression, have manifested in the current landscape of Eastern and Western cultures. Our paper posits that Eastern cultures, heavily influenced by collectivist Confucian values, may lead to limited emotional expression and less diversity of musicianship in our current era. Our paper analyzes and compares the most popular musicians and albums of three groups of the past 30 years: Eastern pop, Eastern Jazz, and Western Jazz. Our results show that Eastern Jazz had more emotional complexity and diversity compared to those of Eastern pop. Our results also show that Western Jazz had more variety in the instruments that were used and the age of the musicians. Eastern Jazz did not have many new jazz musicians, signaling the decline of jazz's popularity. By analyzing the social and cultural effects of music composition and range within genres of music, we may get a better understanding of the nuanced differences between cultures and have better insight into what makes music from different countries so unique. Future research should focus on expanding the analysis of Eastern music to include audience perception of music genres.

Introduction

Music and its ability to express and communicate emotion are universal phenomena that have manifested in the form of different genres and diverse music styles across the world. Research analyzing the cross-cultural judgment or perception of emotions of music from Eastern and Western listeners confirm that emotions within music could be accurately judged by listeners of disparate cultures (Balkwill & Thompson, 1999). Nevertheless, there are still fundamental differences between Eastern and Western cultures that affect the music that is being created by the musicians (Balkwill & Thompson, 1999; Murata & Kitayama, 2013).

One clear categorization of emotional expression within music can be seen within the development of music genres in recent history. The spectrum of music genres is broad and encompasses different emotional complexities. Two genres that are particularly opposed to each other are pop and jazz music. Pop music is characterized by simple and repetitive musical themes that have a very wide appeal while jazz is characterized by spontaneous and complex themes. Both of these genres originated in the United States within Western culture and were spread throughout Asia in the 20th century.

In the past 30 years, the Asian music industry experienced a meteoric rise with genres such as J-pop (Japanese pop), C-pop (Cantopop), and K-pop (Korean pop) reaching international audiences. However, discussions of Asian jazz artists today are almost nonexistent. Ultimately, there has not been a general analysis of how these genres of music, representing different modes of emotional expression, have manifested in the current landscape of different

cultures. Our paper will first examine the differences between the emotional expression between Western and Eastern cultures. Then, we will examine the history of two genres with differing emotional complexities of jazz and pop in two representative East Asian countries: China and Japan. Finally, we will examine reviews and analysis of these artists and show that East Asian social and cultural contexts affect the proliferation of certain genres over others.

Emotional Expression in Western vs Eastern cultures

Emotional expression is deeply linked with human biology and is argued to be universal. Indeed, the overall expression of general emotions such as anger, sadness, and happiness are recognized similarly across cultures. However, findings suggest that key differences in cultural values between Eastern and Western cultures related to emotional control and expression may influence how individuals process emotions (Murata & Kitayama, 2013).

One key cultural difference between Eastern and Western cultures is the tendency to display and express emotions to others. Many East Asian cultures' foundations are built upon Confucian ideals that emphasize conformity and setting a strict hierarchy of human relationships. Though Confucianism does not restrict emotions explicitly, the general consensus is that one must put the collective cohesion of relationships of others over individual emotion and expression. Current research shows that Asians are prone to disengage themselves from the current emotional situation to control and downregulate their emotions (Murata & Kitayama, 2013). In sharp contrast, Western culture was largely influenced by the ideals of the Enlightenment since the late 17th century. The central component of the Enlightenment was to highlight the accomplishments of humanity through science, liberalism, and individuality. In a culture that emphasizes the individual, it will be much easier to express one's emotions with less regulation.

In a study examining the differences between Japanese and American research subjects, it was found that individuals from the United States typically pay more attention to the mouth when interpreting the emotions of others, while individuals from Japan tend to focus more on the eyes. The implication was that American subjects were looking for displays of emotion that are visible whereas Japanese subjects look for more subtle cues of emotional display. While the physiological components of emotional responses seem to be comparable across cultures, the associated facial expressions tend to exhibit more cultural specificity (Tsai, 2023).

Further research confirmed that cultural variances exist in "display rules," which are norms dictating which emotions are acceptable to exhibit in a particular context. North American and East Asian contexts exhibit differences in their values and attitudes, including the emphasis on personal versus group needs (individualism versus collectivism, respectively). American participants were more inclined than Japanese participants to use psychological attributes (such as friendly or cheerful) to describe themselves, while Japanese participants were more likely to use references to social roles and responsibilities (Tsai, 2023).

Emotional Expression and Complexity in Jazz vs. Pop

The Western music traditions of jazz and pop based in North America are rooted in the culture of African slaves who were forcibly brought to the US. Blending both African and Western concepts of music, the African American communities birthed jazz in the late 19th century, a groundbreaking genre for breaking most of the conventions associated with music and representing the first genres that delved into the concept of popular music. While beautiful music at that time was usually defined by order, harmony, and perfect technique, jazz was chaotic, discordant, and spontaneous. While certain forms of art are deemed "legitimate" and tend to detach themselves from human emotions and experiences, "jazz and other expressive genres associated with Black culture emphasize and value the very human qualities that make up real-life experiences. Such qualities include rawness, physicality, the expression of pain and anger, sensuality, and joy (Levine, 1989). The cultural roots of jazz, originating from African American communities, also contribute to its emphasis on emotional expression. Historically, jazz has been a powerful form of resistance and a means of asserting identity and reclaiming humanity in the face of oppression. Through music, African American

artists have found a way to give voice to their struggles, celebrate their resilience, and express their collective joy and sorrow (Atkins, 2001)

Furthermore, research suggests that the ability to control and express one's emotions is indeed correlated to how complex or improvised a jazz piece can be performed. Creativity requires a deactivation of the self-censoring mechanisms in the brain, allowing musicians to generate new ideas without limitations (Schwartz, 2014). As musicians engage with their emotions, their brain functionality increases. The rich harmonies, complex chord progressions, and nuanced improvisations found in jazz reflect a deeper exploration of emotions, requiring both the musicians and listeners to navigate through a more diverse and multifaceted emotional landscape (Mcpherson, 2016).

Another significant musical development in America's history was in the 20th century with the creation of "pop" music. This term was first defined in the 19th century to denote a new wave of songs that had "simple and trophic structure, devoid of tempo changes, of dynamic variations based on pentatonic scales" separate from the more structured and lengthy musical compositions of the time (ceciliaheband.org, 2021). Then, with the proliferation of technology and media improving accessibility to music, popular or "pop" music began to proliferate in the US. Unlike other genres, the pop genre can incorporate any number and combination of other genres, creating a familiar but unique sound. Arguably, the first pop star was Elvis Presley in the 1950s with his music blending rock, blues, and country to gain international acclaim. The emotions and musical qualities tend to be simple and repetitive, while the music is meant to be understood by the general public. Currently, pop music is the most common genre of music in the world. Pop music is the ultimate example of a manufactured and curated art that is made to appeal to the masses. With the power of the Western military in world conflicts, pop music from the West quickly became integrated in the East and was increasingly curated by global artists.

In the creation of popular music, there are two opposing forces in the consumption and curation of the material: "the demand for repetition or uniformity and the desire for variety." A research study examining complexity of popular music showed an inverse relationship with popularity (Percino, 2014). This can be interpreted as music becoming increasingly formulaic in terms of instrumentation under increasing sales numbers due to a tendency to popularize music styles with low variety and musicians with similar skills. Pop music, with its repetitive and simplistic beats, tends to appeal to a broader audience. Its straightforward and easily recognizable melodies cater to a more straightforward range of emotions, resulting in a reduced need for emotional complexity. Therefore, it can be concluded that emotional complexity is essential in jazz compared to the relatively simpler emotional expressions found in pop music.

Music and Cultural history in East Asia

Before globalization and world conflicts brought cultures clashing together, East Asian countries (China, Japan, and South Korea) produced music very different from the west. Having different tonal systems and emphasizing distinct features of the music, Eastern and Western music and musicians were largely separate (Malm). Then, as global military conflicts brought more Western influence to countries throughout Asia, music was one of the most popular exports from the West.

China

Before the 19th century, most Chinese music was in the form of royal court music or folk songs. Though missionaries first brought Western music to China centuries ago, significant cultural change came about during the New Cultural Movement in the 1910's and 20's when modernization efforts were underway and Chinese musicians and composers were coming back to China after studying Western genres such as classical music and jazz. The development of Chinese modern music was centered around Shanghai, a port city where international trade flourished and musicians

from all over the world were playing in Shanghai venues and clubs and spreading its influence. Blending jazzy harmonies with pentatonic melodies derived from urban folk traditions, the new genre was called “shidaiqu,” or the songs of the era. This prompted jazz to become widely popular during the 1920’s and 30’s and represented the new generation of musicians who were looking to define a new musical landscape that blended both Eastern and Western elements into the music (Marlow, 2018).

Then, almost all musical and cultural development ceased when the Communist Party took over the Chinese government. At this time influences from Western cultures and forms of emotional and creative expression were restricted and only nationalistic songs were produced. The only emotion that was deemed valuable to express was propaganda emphasizing the glory and accomplishments of the Communist government. Along with the Cultural Revolution from the 1960s to the 80s, where Western and traditional Chinese elements were purged from society. Music development in China all but halted and jazz and other popular genres languished at this time.

In the early 1980s, China introduced open-door policies, which saw the reintroduction of the Western soundscape in present-day China. Chinese pop or C-pop emerged in this era, the general population preferring the simple and emotionally expressive songs within pop (Cheng, 2021). With subgenres such as local-dialect pop and Mandopop, pop music became the most common genre throughout Asia. Although expression was still restricted in China, many Chinese artists were able to thrive in the music industry. Jazz also saw a revival at this time with Beijing emerging alongside Shanghai as the jazz capitals with the Chinese listeners looking back to aging American figures such as Winton Kelly, Chick Corea, and Oscar Peterson (Marlow, 2018).

China’s music development has been hampered by political and cultural values which restricted emotional expression. China’s music industry is still a fraction of its American counterpart. However, the Chinese music market is one of the fastest growing in the world, bringing an uncertain but hopeful outlook (Pashtukhov, 2022). Figure 1 shows the results of a survey of preferred music genres online among a Chinese audience: pop music was considered the top most favored while jazz is the least favored of the genres. This reflects the trend that emotionally and musically simplistic genres would gain the most popularity, while the more emotionally expressive and spontaneous genres of jazz would not be as appealing to the general population.

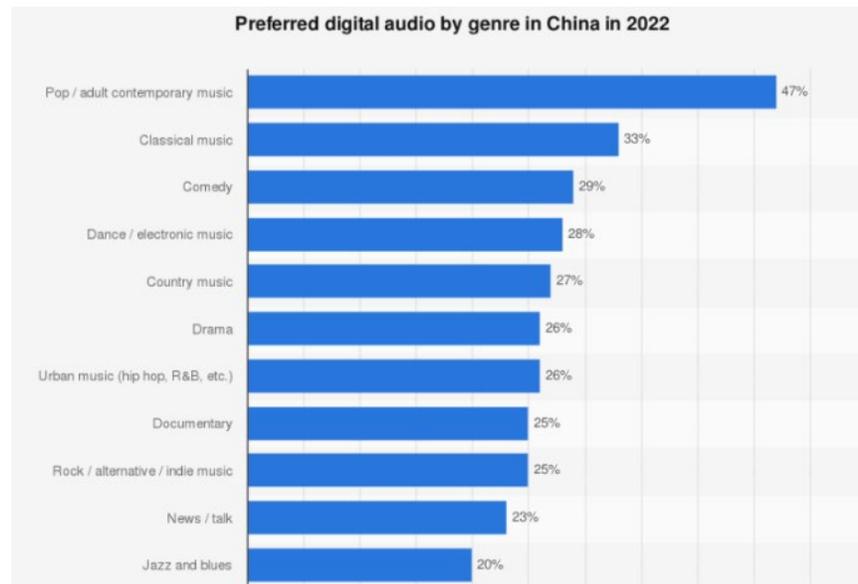


Figure 1. Preferred digital audio by genre in China in 2022. Source: Statista Inc.

Japan

Japan has a unique development compared to other Asian countries as the country was a world power colonizing and expanding westward. Japan has a long history of continual Western influence and artistic development throughout the 20th century. With the start of the Japanese music industry in the 1920's, Japanese musicians were bringing jazz or "ryukoka" into the country. While jazz was part of the culture of the underprivileged and heavily based on improvisation in the US, jazz was most commonly consumed by young, middle class, Western culture enthusiasts. Then, the introduction of American troops after World War II brought musicians together to perform jazz and other American songs and was the start of the proliferation of jazz in Japan (Atkins, 2001).

With economic recovery speeding along through to the 1970's, Japanese jazz experienced a Golden Age of jazz in which musicians were studying abroad and bringing back and making new and exciting music. However, one issue that has been persistent in jazz was the issue of authenticity. Japanese jazz musicians at the time were mostly focused on reproducing jazz sounds as opposed to making their own style. Some notable jazz artists felt unsure about the authenticity of Japanese jazz and developed "strategies of authentication" to validate it. These strategies include reproducing the precise sounds of American jazz and attempting to recreate the social and cultural contexts, such as the "hipster scene," in which jazz is typically performed. They have also explored whether such expression constitutes a unique national style and whether this style can be considered authentic jazz. The focus on authentication seems to take away from the raw, emotional expression that jazz requires. (Atkins, 2001).

With the start of jazz's entry into Japan, pop music also started to make its entrance with the importing of pop music from the US. Just as for jazz, most bands in the 60's and 70's mainly covered or modified Western pop songs for the Japanese audience. The 80's saw the rise of the "idols" in Japan, a unique phenomenon that has been replicated in almost all East Asian countries. Idols are not merely musicians; they are an entertainer who is desired for their image, attractiveness, and personality, rather than their musicianship (Gailbraith, 2012). They were especially popular who desired to engage in a parasocial relationship with the idols. The idol system is clearly an avenue for promoting the entertainers as commodities while the songs are manufactured to be upbeat and trendy. Figure 2 shows that idol music is still consumed by a significant portion of the population. Though there still were Japanese artists who were pushing the envelope and expressing new ideas and emotions through pop music, their popularity would be fragmented and only accomplished by a few groups.

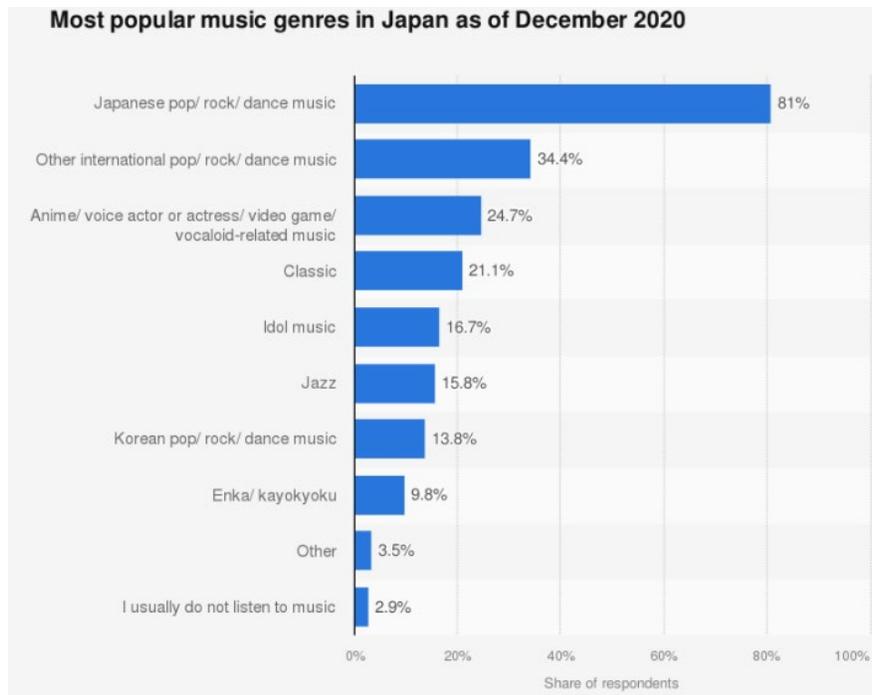


Figure 2. The most popular genres in Japan as of December 2020. Source: RIAJ.

Figure 2 shows the analysis of the most popular music genres in Japan; jazz is among the least popular genres to listen to, with variations of pop music (Japanese pop, international pop) having the most popularity over all other genres. The only other Japanese genre of music that jazz manages to exceed is enka, which is a traditional Japanese music that spans centuries of Japan’s history. This survey also shows the decreasing popularity of traditional music within Japan.

Methods

To gauge the current state of jazz and pop in Asia, our paper will be comparing the ~20 most prolific and popular albums of the last 3 decades starting from 1990. This period is when the improvement of music technology expanded the music industry and consumption of music in the general public. The paper will also compare the level of emotional and technical sophistication of Asian and Western (American) jazz. The analysis will exclude album releases of artists who have already passed or who are not active as well as anthology or compilation albums. Information about Japanese pop artists and American jazz artists were primarily derived from the free online database allmusic.com as it is one of the most prolific sources of music information. Information about Asian jazz artists and Chinese pop artists were obtained from the website rateyourmusic.com as options information for many Asian artists in these categories were unreliable or not available. This website is one of the few sources in which extensive reviews are provided for Asian jazz artists.

Results

Asian Pop

Table 1. Highest rated and most popular artists in China and Japan active during the 1990's to today based on reviews and ratings of albums.

Year	Artist	Album	Genre/Country
1994	Pizzicato Five	Made in USA	Japanese Pop
2004	Ayumi Hamasaki	I Am...	Japanese Pop
2001	Tujiko Noriko	Shojo Toshi	Japanese Pop
1997	Chara	Junior Sweet	Japanese Pop
1998	My Little Lover	Presents	Japanese Pop
1997	globe	Faces Places	Japanese Pop
2002	AKB48	Set List: Greatest Songs 2006–2007	Japanese Pop
2003	T.M. Revolution	Coordinate	Japanese Pop
2000	Namie Amuro	Break the Rules	Japanese Pop
2018	Perfume	Future Pop	Japanese Pop
1999	Puffy	Fever Fever	Japanese Pop
2001	Karen Mok	Golden Flower	Cantopop
1994	Faye Wong	Wu Si Lyun Seong	Cantopop
1989*	Leslie Cheung	Final Encounter	Cantopop
1995	Anthony Wong	愈夜愈美麗 (The More Beautiful the Night)	Cantopop
1991	Sandy Lam	Wildflower	Cantopop

Source: allmusic.com; rateyourmusic.com

*Leslie Cheung's 1989 album was included as he was famous in the 1990's but his most successful albums were released in in the late 1980's

As Asia experienced unparalleled growth in the music industry starting from the 1980's and 90's, the pop mega superstars were produced in this era to an Asian audience who had been used to Western influences of pop music. At this time, Japanese audiences were interested in new sounds and led to the success of pop musicians and bands, such as Pizzicato Five, Ayumi Hayasaki, Tujiko Noriko, who did display their versatility and ability to perform in different genres through their experimentation with pop music. These artists would find success with incorporating diverse genres such as classical music, disco, hip-hop, electronic, and rock (allmusic.com; Walters, 2014). This shows that Asian pop music does have some variety and diversity in its repertoire. However, idol music that was often repetitive and reductive was also very prevalent in the 2000's on. Idol groups such as AKB48 recruit dozens of girls every few years to update their team image, while the quality of songs have largely stayed stagnant. The idol groups Puffy and Perfume have static members, but also produce albums that are similar in terms of musical composition.

In China, idol groups do not have a hold of the public. Yet, many of the superstar musicians that enjoyed massive success in China, were also popular actors at the time. Singers Karen Mok, Faye Wong, and Leslie Cheung not only were among the most successful cantopop singers but also would take their time away from their music career to act in popular movies. Leslie Cheung would eventually stop actively making original music while Faye Wong and Karen Mok released albums sporadically and have met criticism for their increasingly commercialized singing style (McGibbon, 2013; Cheng, 2021).

Asian Jazz

For Asian jazz, we will be examining the most influential Japanese jazz artists because jazz has a longer foothold and has much more established jazz musicians than in China.

Table 2. Popular Japanese jazz artists active during the 1990's to today

Years Active*	Artist	Mode of Music
1978	Yasuko Agawa	Vocals
1992	Kei Akagi	Piano
2008	All That Jazz	Guitar, Saxophone, Keyboards, Drums
1989	Altered States	Saxophone, Trumpet, Percussion
1992	Tatsu Aoki	Bass, Shamisen
1972	Maki Asakawa	Vocals
1999	Chie Ayado	Vocals
1979	Casiopea	Guitar, Keyboards, Drums
1971	Motohiko Hino	Drums
1970	Masahiko Sato	Piano
1995	Satoko Fujii	Piano
2001	Jazztronik	Keyboard, Drum, Bass, guitar
1993	Mondo Grosso	Keyboards, Drums, Bass, guitar, voice
1991	Shoji Hano	Drums

2002	Quasimode	Saxophone, Trumpet, Keyboards, bass, drums
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**The column shows when the musicians or bands started their music career with their debut album. These groups were active in the 90's and the 00's

One common theme among jazz singers who have been active and releasing commercially successful albums during the past 30 years seems to be that they have been long established bands who arose to fame in the Golden Age of Jazz. Yasuko Agawa, Maki Asakawa, Casiopea, Motohiko Hino, Masahiko Sato were all in some way an influential figure in Japanese Jazz. There also has been a lapse of new and successful jazz musicians since the 1980s. This may be indicative of the declining popularity of jazz in Japan. Another pattern shown is the prevalence of female jazz singers (Yasuko Agawa, Maki Asakawa, Chie Ayado) compared to the complete lack of male singers in this list. Perhaps this is because female voices are more palatable or commerciabile than male voices.

One notable aspect is the prevalence of jazz singers who get intensive Western musical training. Examining the backgrounds of Asian jazz players, they were educated and practiced jazz overseas. Musicians such as Kei Akagi, Shoji Hano, Tatsu Aoki, and Chie Ayado all have had interactions outside of their home country that have informed their jazz musicianship. Shoji Hano recalls his frustration with the Japanese Jazz audience as they were not open to Hano's experimental jazz compositions. Only when he moved overseas was he able to be appreciated and also improve his skills to become famous in Japan (shojihano.com). This may add to the sentiment that Japanese musicians want to emulate the West instead of representing Japanese identity within jazz.

Western Jazz

Table 1. Highest rated and most popular American jazz artists active from 1990

Year	Artist	Album	Mode of Music
1998	John Zorn	The Circle Maker	Saxophone, Clarinet, Guitar, Keyboards, Violin, Voice
1992	Joe Henderson	Lush Life: The Music of Billy Strayhorn	Saxophone, Flute, Voice
1999	John Zorn	Godard/Spillane	Banjo, Guitar, Voice
2009	Bela Fleck	Throw Down Your Heart	Piano, Voice
1990	Randy Weston	Uhuru Africa/Highlife	Guitar
1994	John Fahey	Return of the Repressed: The John Fahey Anthology	Guitar, Bass, Drums, Keyboards, Percussion, Voice
1991	Phish	A Picture of Nectar	Piano, Keyboards, Percussion, Voice
1995	Keith Jarrett	Keith Jarrett	Trumpet, Flugelhorn, Keyboards, Guitar, Voice
1998	Mark Isham	A Windham Hill Retrospective	Guitar, Voice
1990	John Scofield	Meant to See	Piano, Keyboards, Voice

1992	Joe Henderson	Lush Life: The Music of Billy Strayhorn	Guitar, Keyboards, Voice
2007	Paul Bley	Solo in Mondsee	Banjo, Bass, Keyboards, Drums, Percussion, Voice
2005	Jeff Parker	The Relatives	Guitar, Voice
1991	Béla Fleck & the Flecktones / Béla Fleck	Flight of the Cosmic Hippo	Bass, Voice
1993	Will Ackerman	A Windham Hill Retrospective	Saxophone, Flute, Clarinet, Voice
1995	David Friesen / Bud Shank / Clark Terry	Three to Get Ready	Trumpet, Flugelhorn, Voice
1996	Bob James/Bob James Trio	Straight Up	Piano, Keyboards, Voice
2005	Kieth Jarrett	Radiance	Piano, Keyboards, Percussion, Voice

Source: allmusic.com

Examining the most popular jazz musicians and bands of the past three decades, there is much more diversity in music composition and instrument type for Western musicians. Furthermore, compared to Japanese jazz artists, there is a good mix of younger and older musicians. The rock band Phish was included in this list because their album was heavily based on jazz foundations. However, there are no prominent and active female jazz musicians who were on our list. Issues of sexism should be considered within jazz.

Discussion and Conclusion

Comparing Japanese pop to Japanese jazz music highlights a stark contrast in between the range of musicianship and emotions between genres. While Japanese Pop did have artists that were creative and incorporated complex genres like jazz within their work, a significant portion of Japanese Pop shows repetitive emotional themes and stagnant music composition. Then, comparing Japanese jazz to Western jazz showed a marked difference in the range and diversity of jazz musicianship. While Japanese jazz bands have constantly delved into the experimental realm, the lack of diversity within Japanese jazz suggests that a Japanese audience is not conducive to such experimental styles. There is less of a range or diversity within music genres in Asia compared with those of the West. The prevalence of female singers in both Japanese Jazz and Pop but not in American Jazz suggests that Japanese audiences prefer vocals over instrumentals. This may be due to the fact that Eastern audiences want predictable and simple emotions that are easy to convey due to the emotional repression experienced in Eastern cultures. By analyzing the social and cultural effects of music composition and range within genres of music, we may get a better understanding of the nuanced differences between cultures and have better insight into what makes music from different countries so unique. Future research should focus on expanding the analysis of Eastern music to include audience perception of music genres.

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