

American Influences on Japanese Bands

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Japanese Bands: World War II through the 1970s

School bands

World War II caused the disruption or disbanding of many Japanese school band programs in 1943 (Obata, 1974). Immediately after the war, a surge of interest in band programs resulted from the presence of several American military bands in Japan due to the post-war occupation. At this time the Japanese government also switched from the 6-year elementary 5-year junior high scholastic plan to a 6-year elementary, 3-year junior high, 3-year high school plan. With this change, all elementary students were required to take music courses as part of their education, which improved general knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of music in the country. Elementary instruction in singing, music theory, music appreciation, as well as learning to play the recorder, accordion (also known as a *melodica*- a small blown plastic instrument with a keyboard for one hand on the side), and piano were included in the curriculum. The European music system was stated in the national curriculum as the required basis for the new music education plan, and left out Japanese music because education officials felt that more than one type of music learning system would hinder students (Abdoo, 1984; Akiyama, 1994; Berger, 1972; Fukui, 1963; Hebert, 2005; Murao & Wilkins, 2001; Obata, 1974; Ogawa, 1994).

Many of the schools with bands tried to re-establish their bands, although it was extremely difficult to find and afford quality instruments and music. One of the big factors in increasing the number of bands was the increased number of schools. With the creation of so many new high schools, many new band programs were created at these schools. In 1958, only 10% of Japanese high schools had band programs. By the early 1970s, only 10% of the high

schools did *not* have bands (Berger, 1972; Obata, 1974).

In the early to mid-1950s, Japan was recovering economically, and citizens were again having their basic needs met. Some wealthier families were able to afford extracurricular activities including sports and bands. School band programs reappeared in metropolitan areas such as Tokyo and Osaka at first and little by little suburban areas and smaller municipalities followed. One of the biggest challenges in resurrecting the band programs after the war was the ability to secure a competent director. If such a teacher was not already on staff at the school, he or she would either have to donate his/her time or charge students for their lessons. Once the program was established, the school's student activity fees and Parent-Teacher Association would

written at the beginner and intermediate levels (Obato, 1974).

The Yamaha Corporation, which had merged with the above-mentioned *Nippon Kangakki* Company, began making wind instruments in 1965 that were of higher quality than what had been available in Japan previously. Much of their improvements in instrument-making came from working with members of the Japan Band Director's Clinic and through visiting Western musicians who came to Japan through invitation by Yamaha (Akiyama, 1994). Since Yamaha's merger, they have become an internationally recognized manufacturer of quality musical instruments.

The university and vocational school system was entirely revised in 1948, setting up a structured 4-year program for undergraduate degrees. In so doing, more universities were offering more degrees, greatly enhancing higher education opportunities in Japan. For music teacher training, there were three schools in Japan prior to the war, and sixty-seven after (Obata, 1974). In 1949, institutions of higher learning also introduced schools of music

strong as in the United States (Neidig, 1978; Wright, 1975).

Marching band literature in Japan was somewhat similar to that in the United States. A Japanese marching band was likely to play traditional Japanese folk songs as well as American folk songs and standards, along with other public domain tunes. Published music for marching band was much like what was used in the United States, as much of what was played in Japan was imported from the United States. There were also Japanese composers who wrote original compositions specifically for marching bands such as Toshio Akiyama, Masaru Kawasaki, and Ichitaro Tsujii (Wright, 1970, 1975).

There is little published research in English on the later developments in Japanese marching bands such as their involvement in Drum Corps International (DCI). Most of the Japanese groups which have participated in DCI events have been quite successful. However, information on these bands is primarily in Japanese and no translation is currently available.

Influential Visiting Western Bands

The first American band to tour Japan after the war was the United States Air Force Band under the direction of Colonel George S. Howard in 1956. This

high, business, and college and other bands. Top-ranking bands at divisional (regional) contests would advance to the national competition. This competition was the impetus to form and improve the quality of many Japanese bands, including amateur groups as well as scholastic groups. Those school bands that ranked highly often received incentives from school officials such as more funds for the band and more rehearsal time. By the 1960s, competition organizers promoted the inclusion of more Japanese-composed music by commissioning a Japanese composer to write a piece for that year's event which would be required repertoire for each band (Akiyama, 1994; Neidig, 1978; Obato, 1974).

Education Practices in Japanese Bands Today


Japanese band directors have learned much from band directors in the United States and have had time to implement Western ideas and techniques, as well as ma

musicianship includes the strong elementary

research articles published in Japanese journals which exhibit critical opinions of the competition level of bands and the culture of bands in general, which are currently unavailable to those who cannot read Japanese. A comparative literature review between American and Japanese perspectives of Japanese band programs would most likely yield worthwhile findings.

Another potentially valuable direction for further research would involve Japanese drum and bugle corps which participate in Drum Corps International (DCI) events. These groups have developed international fame for their success and abilities but little has been published in English about their backgrounds or how they are managed and taught.

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CHINESE ABSTRACT

中文摘要

美國對日本管樂隊的影響

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自19世紀中葉以來，日本的管樂隊受到美國管樂隊極大影響，包括其樂器使用、演奏曲目、排演方法、學校管樂隊的組織（音樂會型式和操演型式）以及樂隊比賽。對相關文獻的回顧集中于日本音樂教育的早期影響（見Whiting Mason 和 Isawa