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Nihon Wa New Orleans No Ongaku Ga Daisukidesu (Japan Loves New Orleans's Music): A Look at Japanese Interest in New Orleans Music from the 1940s to 2017

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Nihon Wa New Orleans No Ongaku Ga Daisukidesu (Japan Loves New Orleans's Music):

A Look at Japanese Interest in New Orleans Music from the 1940s to 2017

An Honors Thesis

Presented to

the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies

of the University of New Orleans

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Interdisciplinary Studies,

with University High Honors

and Honors in Interdisciplinary Studies

by

William Archambeault

May 2017

Acknowledgments

This undergraduate Honors thesis is dedicated to Travis “Trumpet Black” Hill, a New Orleans trumpeter who died in Tokyo, Japan, on May 4, 2015, while touring Japan.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	i
Table of Contents.....	ii
List of Illustrations.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Body of Thesis.....	1
2.1. Connecting New Orleans and Japan.....	1
2.2. Japan and Jazz / New Orleans Music.....	2
2.3. George Lewis in Japan.....	6
2.4. Waseda University's New Orleans Jazz Club.....	9
2.5. Foreign Immigrant Musicians in New Orleans.....	15
2.6. Preservation Hall in New Orleans.....	18
2.7. Japanese Musicians on Becoming Familiar with New Orleans Music.....	21
2.8. Japanese Musicians Compare New Orleans and Japan.....	24
2.9. Japanese Musicians as New Orleans Ambassadors.....	28
2.10. Tourism in New Orleans.....	34
3. Conclusion.....	38
Bibliography.....	39

List of Illustrations

Figures

1. Japanese population in Louisiana: 1900-1940	2
2. Japanese population in Louisiana: 1950-1980	2
3. Louis Armstrong Japanese theater sign, 1953	4
4. Louis Armstrong eats ramen in Japan, 1953	4
5. Japanese press for George Lewis's tour of Japan (<i>Shin Ongaku</i>), 1963	6
6. Japanese press for George Lewis's tour of Japan (<i>Tsu Ro Uon</i>), 1963	6
7. George Lewis's band with Yoshio and Keiko Toyama, 1963	8
8. Keiko and Yoshio Toyama, 1971	11
9. The New Orleans Rascals arrive in New Orleans, 1966	13
10. The New Orleans Rascals perform at Moisant International Airport, 1966	13
11. Yoichi Kimura visits Joe Watkins, 1966	15
12. The Toyamas and other musicians in New Orleans, 1970s	17
13. The Toyamas jam at Preservation Hall, 1968	19
14. Wonderful World Jazz Foundation business card, 2001	29
15. New Orleans music section at Tower Records in Osaka, 2016	30
16. Papa Grows Funk in Japanese compilation, 2005	32

Abstract

Since the 1940s, music lovers and musicians in Japan has professed a strong interest in New Orleans music, particularly New Orleans jazz. This paper examines three ways in which this interest manifests itself: Japanese musicians immigrating to New Orleans, Japanese tourists visiting New Orleans, and sales of recorded and live New Orleans music in Japan. This paper primarily revolves around oral history interviews with Japanese musicians who immigrated in New Orleans. Additionally, this paper utilizes a combination of primary source and secondary source material to examine the history of Japanese interest in New Orleans music. By utilizing these sources, this paper chronicles ways that this interest manifests itself.

Keywords: New Orleans, Japan, Music, Jazz, Immigrants

Introduction

Japanese music lovers have shown interest in New Orleans music for over five decades. This paper studies Japanese interest in New Orleans music. An analysis of oral history interviews with Japanese musicians who moved to New Orleans shows that music can be a motivator for immigration. By examining these oral histories, one can see cultural differences of expression in Japan and New Orleans and the ambassador role of Japanese musicians in New Orleans. This paper also examines the increasing number of international tourists visiting New Orleans.¹ In addition, the paper analyzes the sales of both recorded and live New Orleans music in Japan, which has remained strong for over half a century. Examining all three of these subjects chronicles Japanese interest in New Orleans music.

Connecting New Orleans and Japan

During the first half of the twentieth century, only a small number of Japanese resided in Louisiana. In 1900, seventeen Japanese lived in the state.² Census records between 1900 and 1940 show a peak Japanese population in Louisiana of fifty-seven people.³ Despite these small numbers, in 1922, Japan chose New Orleans as its southern United States consulate.⁴ In 1944 and 1945, following the release of Japanese-Americans from internment camps, Louisiana had its first wave of Japanese move to the state: during 1945-1946, approximately 190 *Nisei*, second-

¹ Richard Thompson, "Leading the Pack: New Orleans' International Tourism Up by a Third in 2015; Largest One-Year Spike in U.S.," *The Advocate*, August 3, 2016, accessed March 10, 2017, http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/business/article_c64ce872-59c3-11e6-a3e0-cba6894c592e.html. (Hereafter referred to as "Thompson, 'Leading the Pack'")

² Benjamin Wren, "The Rising Sun on the Mississippi, 1900-1975," *Louisiana Historical Association* 17, no. 3 (Summer 1976): 321. (Hereafter referred to as "Wren")

³ Edward J. Lazzerini et al., "The Asian Peoples of Southern Louisiana: An Ethnohistory," January 1990, 102; the Louisiana Collection, Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans. (Hereafter referred to as "Lazzerini, 'The Asian Peoples'")

⁴ Wren, 322.

generation Japanese-Americans, settled in and around New Orleans.⁵ On May 10, 1945, three ordinances were passed in nearby Plaquemines Parish that prevented anyone of the Japanese race from owning land.⁶ These ordinances were followed the next day by the same laws being passed in St. Bernard Parish.⁷ By 1950, most of the Japanese who had moved to Louisiana following their release from internment had returned to their former home state of California.⁸ In a University of New Orleans ethnohistory, Edward Lazzerini claims that, during the second half of the twentieth century, Louisiana's Japanese-American population had risen due to an increasing number of American men with Japanese brides.⁹

TABLE 22.
JAPANESE POPULATION IN LOUISIANA, 1900-1940¹

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1900	16	1	17
1910	29	2	31
1920	48	9	57
1930	33	19	52
1940	32	14	46

10

TABLE 23.
JAPANESE POPULATION IN LOUISIANA, 1950-1980¹

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1950	63	64	127
1960	156	363	519
1970	392	731	1,123
1980	654	1,017	1,671

11

Figures 1 and 2 show the growth of Louisiana's Japanese population between 1900 and 1980.

Japan and Jazz / New Orleans Music

Japan has a long history of appreciation for both jazz and New Orleans music. In 2008, music historian Michael Furmanovsky wrote that jazz “by the 1920s had already established itself as the most popular western genre in Japan.”¹² He claims that, by 1950, a significant following for jazz existed in every major Japanese city and that jazz was the only American

⁵ Lazzerini, “The Asian Peoples,” 102. Wren, 327.

⁶ Ibid., 326.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Lazzerini, “The Asian Peoples,” 103.

⁹ Ibid., 104.

¹⁰ Ibid., 102.

¹¹ Ibid., 104.

¹² Michael Furmanovsky, “American Country Music in Japan: Lost Piece in the Popular Music History Puzzle,” *Popular Music & Society* 31, no. 3 (July 2008): 359.

genre with a significant international presence.¹³ Furmanovsky also notes that, between 1952 and 1954, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, and Oscar Peterson each visited Tokyo to “a rapturous welcome.”¹⁴

The history of jazz is tied closely to New Orleans. The city is often credited as and marketed as the birthplace of jazz.¹⁵ In particular, the city’s association with Dixieland jazz is so strong that the phrase New Orleans-style jazz is often used interchangeably to reference the subgenre.¹⁶ Many New Orleans musicians played prominent roles in pioneering and advancing jazz as a genre. Trumpeter and singer Louis Armstrong, a New Orleans native, took New Orleans to global attention with songs like “Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans?” and “When the Saints Go Marching In.” Composer and critic Gunther Schuller once wrote that “Through Louis Armstrong and his influence, jazz became a truly twentieth-century language. And it no longer belonged to New Orleans, but to the world.”¹⁷ According to Furmanovsky, huge crowds met Louis Armstrong’s 1954 Japanese tour and Armstrong supposedly left the country with the largest guarantees ever given to any act in Japan at the time.¹⁸

¹³ Ibid., 360.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Mark McKnight, “Researching New Orleans Rhythm and Blues,” *Black Music Research Journal* 8, no. 1 (1988): 113. Matt Sakakeeny, “New Orleans Music as a Circulatory System,” *Black Music Research Journal* 31, no. 2 (2011): 292. J. Mark Souther, “Making the ‘Birthplace of Jazz’: Tourism and Musical Heritage Marketing in New Orleans,” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 44, no. 1 (2003): 43. (Hereafter referred to as “Souther, ‘Making’”)

¹⁶ Ibid., 47.

¹⁷ Terry Teachout, “Jazz,” *The Wilson Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 69.

¹⁸ James Lincoln Collier, *Louis Armstrong: An American Genius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 317.



19



20

Figures 3 and 4. Japanese musician Yoshio Toyama claims these photographs depict Louis Armstrong's first trip to Japan in 1953.^{21,22}

A 1958 issue of *The Second Line* detailed letters received by the publication from a Japanese reader named Ryuji Kohno, who operated four radio programs in Tokyo with a listening audience of an estimated two million people.²³ The publication described the programs as “devoted exclusively to Dixieland Jazz, the school of New Orleans music, the history of jazz, and ‘popular jazz’ (pops).”²⁴ The piece made the assertion that Kohno’s Dixieland hour had been on the radio for ten years.²⁵ *Second Line*’s writer showed excitement over Kohno’s claims that

¹⁹ Yoshio Toyama, “Satchmo & New Orleans Changed the World: My First Experiences with Pops,” *Beyond Katrina*, November 16, 2016, accessed March 11, 2016, http://margaretsaizan.typepad.com/hurricane_katrina/2006/11/my_first_encoun.html. (Hereafter referred to as “Toyama, ‘Satchmo’”)

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² In an email correspondence, Toyama explained that these photos were taken by a dead bass player in December 1953.

²³ “Mailbox,” *The Second Line*, November-December 1958, 34.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

many Japanese bands had recorded interpretations of New Orleans jazz music.²⁶ *The Second Line*'s writings about Kohno may actually have some validity. In the September 25, 1971, issue of *Billboard*, Cosimo Matassa of Jazz City Studios in New Orleans mentioned Ryuji Kohno visiting his studio to record New Orleans traditional jazz groups.²⁷ *Billboard* quoted Matassa detailing that Kohno was the jazz critic for NHK, which he said was a Japanese radio network.²⁸ Taking Matassa's recollections about Kohno into consideration, the claims from *The Second Line*'s correspondence with Kohno gain more weight and show that New Orleans jazz had a following in Japan following World War II.

Yoshio Toyama, a Japanese trumpeter and singer who lived in New Orleans between 1968 and 1973, makes a particularly strong case for Louis Armstrong's influence in Japan.²⁹ Sometimes referred to as the Louis Armstrong of Japan, Toyama travels to New Orleans every year to perform a set of Armstrong's music at Satchmo Summerfest, a festival dedicated to Armstrong.³⁰ Born in 1944, Toyama reflected that, during high school, he bought a used copy of Louis Armstrong's book *Satchmo, My Life in New Orleans*.³¹ In 2006, Toyama wrote "I had a Japanese-English dictionary in one hand and managed to read it all. Thanks to Pop's book, I learned so much English while struggling with that book!"³² In 1964, Toyama saw Armstrong

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Bob Glassenberg, "Studio Talk," *Billboard*, September 25, 1971, 4.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "Yoshio and Keiko Toyama: Japanese Friends of New Orleans and Jazz," *The Second Line* L, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 9. (Hereafter referred to as "'Yoshio and Keiko Toyama'")

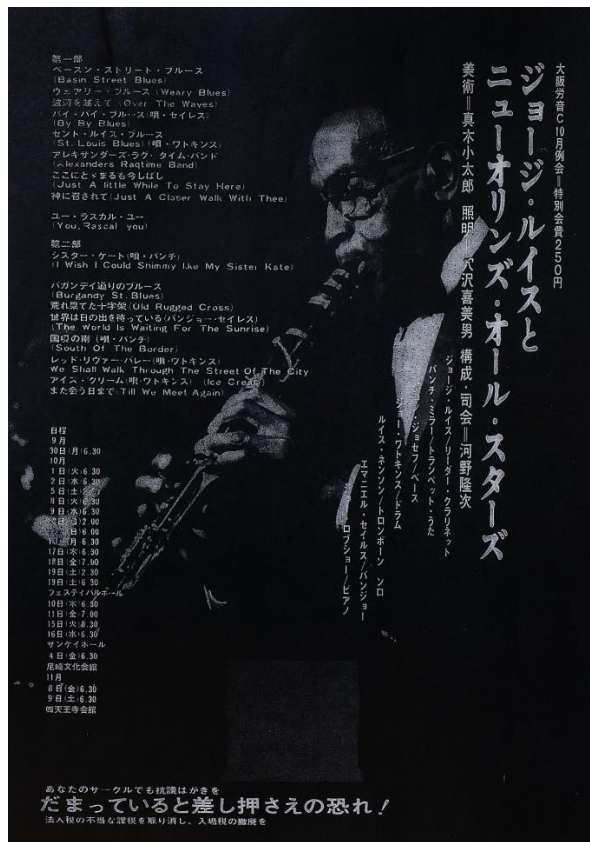
³⁰ Sheila Stroup, "Yoshio Toyama, Wilbert Rawlins Share Love of Music and New Orleans Kids," *The Times-Picayune*, August 10, 2010, accessed September 7, 2016, http://www.nola.com/music/index.ssf/2010/08/yoshio_toyama_and_wilbert_rawl.html.

³¹ Yoshio Toyama, "Satchmo & New Orleans Changed the World (Part 2): Our First Jazz Funeral in New Orleans," *Beyond Katrina*, December 7, 2016, accessed March 11, 2016, http://margaretsaizan.typepad.com/hurricane_katrina/2006/12/when_i_was_in_h.html. (Hereafter referred to as "Toyama, 'Satchmo & New Orleans'")

³² Ibid.

perform in Kyoto, Japan.³³³⁴ He claimed that, at the show, he snuck backstage, meeting Armstrong and playing Armstrong's trumpet.³⁵ In 1963, Toyama and a banjo player named Keiko, his future wife, witnessed George Lewis, another New Orleans musician, perform in Osaka, Japan.³⁶

George Lewis in Japan



Figures 5 and 6. The Japanese press covers New Orleans clarinet player George Lewis's 1963 tour of Japan

New Orleans clarinetist George Lewis toured Japan three times in the 1960s. According to *The Times-Picayune*, his 1963 tour comprised of 90 days of concerts in Japan, including 40

³³ Toyama, "Satchmo."

³⁴ "Yoshio and Keiko Toyama," 8.

³⁵ Toyama, "Satchmo."

³⁶ "Yoshio and Keiko Toyama, 8.

³⁷ "George Lewis To New Orleans All-stars," *Shin Ongaku*, no. 163 (1963): 1.

³⁸ *Tsu Ro Uon*, no. 28 (September 1963).

concerts in Osaka.³⁹ According to Takashi Hiramatsu, the group arrived at Tokyo International Airport on August 18, 1963, to a “battery” of jazz enthusiasts and a brass band playing “Just A Closer Walk With Thee.”⁴⁰ Himatsu explained that Ro-On (The Labors Music Appreciation Society), an organization with over 15 million members, was responsible for Lewis’s 1963 tour.⁴¹ Himatsu wrote Ro-On’s members spent years demanding the organization bring foreign talent into Japan.⁴²

Bob Greene, a pianist who encountered Lewis and his band in Japan, recalled his interactions with them in Tokyo in the summer of 1963: “The first concert was at the great Kosei Nenkin Hall in Tokyo which seemed to be about the size of Radio City Music Hall in New York. Absolutely crowded, plush seats...Every seat taken.”⁴³ Greene also recollected, “The band was just beautifully received everywhere they went.”⁴⁴ A photo dated September 2, 1963 shows George Lewis and members of his band relaxing with a group of Japanese people, including Yoshio and Keiko Toyama, after a jam session in Osaka, Japan.⁴⁵ In the photo, Yoshio is holding a trumpet.⁴⁶ In a December 1963 *The Time-Picayune* article, Old Papa John Joseph, an 89-year-old bassist who toured with Lewis in Japan, said “the Japanese gave us a reception we will never forget – if I were younger I would try to tour in Japan every year.”⁴⁷

³⁹ *Times-Picayune*, August 10, 1963.

⁴⁰ Takeshi Hiramatsu, “George Lewis in Japan,” August 18, 1963, 1; George Lewis persons vertical file, Hogan Jazz Archive, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University. (Hereafter referred to as “Hiramatsu”)

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Tom Bethell, *George Lewis: A Jazzman from New Orleans* (London: University of California Press, 1977), 262.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ “George Lewis Band,” September 2, 1963, Hogan Jazz Archive Photography Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University. (Hereafter referred to as “George Lewis Band”)

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ *The Times-Picayune*, December 25, 1963.



48

Figure 7. September 3, 1963: George Lewis's band sits with a group of Japanese people after a jam session in Osaka, Japan. Yoshio Toyama is holding a trumpet behind the drum kit and Keiko Toyama is third from the right.⁴⁹

In 1964, Lewis returned to Japan for another tour. A *States-Item* article, published on July 7, 1964, during Lewis's trip, proclaimed Lewis's crowds reached up to 6,000 per show.⁵⁰ The article also observed that the group noticed New Orleans records in record shops in several Japanese cities, a sign that the New Orleans musical influence in the country was widespread.⁵¹ Reflecting on his experience abroad in an interview for *Melody Maker*, George Lewis said "They often say that our kind of music is dying, but I just don't believe it, not after what I've seen in Europe and in Japan last year."⁵² In 1965, Lewis toured Japan for the last time. In an October

⁴⁸ "George Lewis Band."

⁴⁹ "George Lewis Band."

⁵⁰ "How Far Out?...", *The States-Item*, July 7, 1964. (Hereafter referred to as "How Far")

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Max Jones, "In New Orleans, You Play the Saints – or You're Not Playing Jazz," *Melody Maker* (February 27, 1965).

1985 *Wavelength* article, drummer Alonzo Stewart claimed that his first Japanese performance with George Lewis in 1965 was in a stadium filled with 25,000 people.⁵³ While Stewart's comments are most likely hyperbole, it is clear that Lewis and his band were quite well received during his three tours of Japan.

Waseda University's New Orleans Jazz Club

A July 7, 1964, *States-Item* article about Lewis's then-current tour of Japan mentioned a "thriving New Orleans Jazz Club of Japan," possibly referring to Waseda University's New Orleans Jazz Club.⁵⁴ For sixty years, Waseda University's New Orleans Jazz Club has helped connect Japan to New Orleans. A December 25, 1963, *The Times-Picayune* article reported that Sadamu Nishie, a Waseda University professor and then-president of the university's New Orleans Jazz Club, visited New Orleans while touring the world.⁵⁵ The article quoted Nishie explaining Waseda University students started the club six years earlier and approached him to become its president.⁵⁶ This statement places the club's founding in 1957. Although Nishie admitted to having never listened to jazz before the club's founding, he agreed to become the New Orleans Jazz Club's president and had come to enjoy listening to jazz.⁵⁷

Mari Watanabe, a Japanese pianist who moved to New Orleans in 1985, attended Waseda University for two years during the early 1980s and was a member of their New Orleans Jazz Club during that time.⁵⁸ She recalled that the club primarily played and studied George Lewis's

⁵³ Almost Slim, "Alonzo Stewart and the Gondoliers," *Wavelength* (October 1985): 25.

⁵⁴ "How Far."

⁵⁵ "Japanese Love."

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Mari Watanabe, interview by author, Mari Watanabe's home, New Orleans, February 8, 2017. (Hereafter referred to as "Watanabe, interview")

music.⁵⁹ She remembered members listening to records and trying to transcribe them so they could perform Lewis's tunes.⁶⁰ Citing a distaste for Lewis's music, Watanabe said she considered quitting the club until a friend introduced her to Young Tuxedo Brass Band's *Jazz Begins*, a recording of a jazz funeral in New Orleans.⁶¹ Her decision to almost leave the club over a dislike of Lewis's music implies that the club had a very heavy focus on his work during the early 1980s. Haruka Kikuchi, a Japanese trombonist who moved to New Orleans in 2014, said she was also active in the club.⁶² She referred to Waseda University's New Orleans Jazz Club as a "record circle," which implies that it served as a listening group for people to gather and hear New Orleans jazz.⁶³ Similar to Watanabe, Kikuchi also made references to George Lewis in her discussion about Waseda University's New Orleans Jazz Club.⁶⁴

Waseda University has played a part in bringing Japanese students to New Orleans. A February 24, 1981, *The Times-Picayune* article mentioned an upcoming free performance by the Second Liners, a group of students from Waseda University, at the Landmark Motor Hotel in Metairie, a suburb near New Orleans.⁶⁵ The article stated the New Orleans Jazz Club sponsored the event.⁶⁶ The March 3, 1981, issue of *The Times-Picayune* also briefly mentioned a group of Waseda University students performing on a street corner as a hearse left for a cemetery with the body of Matthew "Fats" Houston, who is described as the grand marshal for Olympia Brass Band, Eureka Brass Band, and Young Tuxedo Brass Band.⁶⁷ Watanabe recalled a group of the

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Haruka Kikuchi, interview by author, Treme Coffeehouse, New Orleans, December 5, 2016. (Hereafter referred to as "Kikuchi, interview.")

⁶³ Ibid.

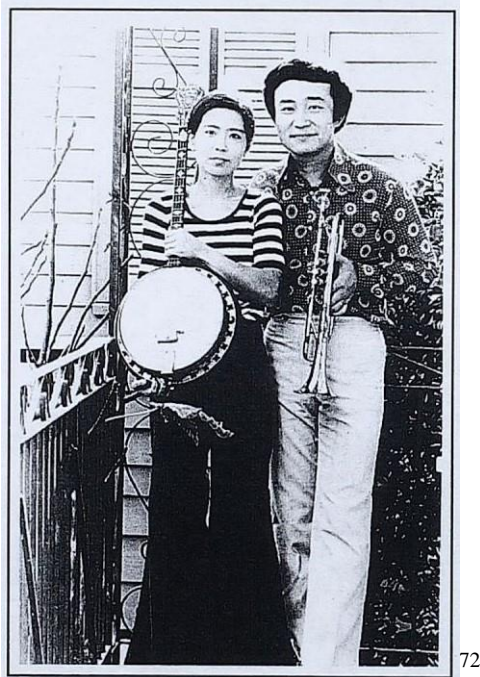
⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ *The Times-Picayune/The States-Item*, February 24, 1981

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ *The Times-Picayune/The States-Item*, March 3, 1981.

New Orleans Jazz Club's singers, ranging somewhere around twenty to thirty members, visited New Orleans twice before she visited the city during Mardi Gras season in 1985.⁶⁸ Watanabe recollected that, during her time in the club, there was an unsuccessful effort to form a tour group to visit New Orleans.⁶⁹ As a result, Watanabe and only a handful of others traveled to New Orleans in 1985.⁷⁰ In passing, Watanabe mentioned that students in Waseda University's New Orleans Jazz Club continue to visit New Orleans each year.⁷¹



72

Figure 8. Keiko and Yoshio Toyama in 1971⁷³

Members of Waseda University's New Orleans Jazz Club have helped foster close ties between Japan and New Orleans. During the 1960s, Yoshio and Keiko Toyama met as members

⁶⁸ Watanabe, interview.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² "Yoshio and Keiko Toyama," 8.

⁷³ Ibid.

of the club.⁷⁴ In an August 8, 2015, *The Times-Picayune* article, Yoshio claimed that, during George Lewis's 1963 Japanese tour, Lewis's manager, Allan Jaffe, recommended that the couple move to New Orleans.⁷⁵ From 1968-1969 and 1971-1973, the couple resided in New Orleans, studying under musicians at Preservation Hall.⁷⁶ In an undated piece by Yoshio, he reflected "I know many New Orleans musician and I meet them every day at Preservation Hall, Dixieland Hall, parade[s], funeral[s] and parties" and "As it is very rare that husband and wife both plays this music, our couple is very popular among musicians."⁷⁷ Idealistically, and perhaps inspired by Preservation Hall's efforts to preserve and revive the careers of elder musicians, Toyama also wrote that he hoped to assist sick or retired musicians make comebacks.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Sheila Stroup, "Yoshio Toyama and Wife Keiko Celebrate Their Long Love Affair with Satchmo, Jazz, and New Orleans," *The Times-Picayune*, August 8, 2015, accessed September 7, 2016, http://www.nola.com/satchmofest/index.ssf/2015/08/yoshio_toyama_and_wife_keiko_c.html. (Hereafter referred to as "Stroup, 'Yoshio Toyama and Wife Keiko'")

⁷⁶ "Yoshio and Keiko Toyama," 9.

⁷⁷ Yoshio Toyama, "Item 13," 1; Yoshio Toyama persons vertical file, Hogan Jazz Archive, Howard-Tilton Memorial Archive, Tulane University.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 5.

Japanese Musicians Welcomed at N.O. Airport



ON ARRIVAL in New Orleans Friday were members of the Original Dixieland Jazz Club of Osaka, Japan, who were received by American friends. From left are Ryoichi Kawai, leader of the band; Mitsuo Suehiro,

Japanese jazz critic; Jun Kobayashi, club president; Naokazu Okuda, Japanese Consul General, and Durel Black, president of the New Orleans Jazz Club.



PLAYING WITH AMERICAN FRIENDS is Japanese trumpeter Keifaro Shiga, who is here for a two-month American musical study tour with members of the Original Dixieland Jazz Club of Osaka, Japan. He plays here at Moisant International Airport Friday with members of the Glynnia Brass Band.

Figures 9 and 10. The Times-Picayune shows Osaka, Japan's New Orleans Rascals arrival in New Orleans in 1966.

During the 1960s, the New Orleans Rascals, a Japanese jazz group, formed while bandmates were attending Waseda University, where members were part of the New Orleans Jazz Club.⁸¹ *The Times-Picayune* reported the New Orleans Rascals traveled to and performed in New Orleans in both 1966 and 1971.⁸² In 1966, the New Orleans Rascals visited New Orleans as representatives of the Original Dixieland Jazz Club of Osaka, Japan.⁸³ In 1966, *The Times-Picayune* detailed that the club's president and a jazz critic joined the band.⁸⁴ According to the 1966 *The Times-Picayune* article, the Osaka Dixieland Jazz Club had been founded five years earlier and its membership had grown to three hundred members by that point.⁸⁵ A parade

⁷⁹ *The Times-Picayune*, July 9, 1966.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ *The Times-Picayune*, August 5, 1971. "Yoshio and Keiko Toyama," 8.

⁸² *The Times-Picayune*, July 9, 1966.

⁸³ *The Times-Picayune*, July 9, 1966.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

featuring Olympia Brass Band and additional musicians greeted the group's arrival at Moisant International Airport.⁸⁶ The occasion featured a rare marching band performance by George Lewis, who *The Times-Picayune* quoted as saying "These are my boys, the finest bunch of young men I ever knew."⁸⁷ *The Times-Picayune* quoted New Orleans Rascals Pianist Satsoshi Adachi saying "We have been dreaming of New Orleans because New Orleans is the home of jazz and jazzmen are all brothers in this home of jazz."⁸⁸ An August 21, 1966, *The Times-Picayune* article depicted Yoichi Kimura, credited as the drummer of the New Orleans Rascals, visiting ailing drummer Joe Watkins.⁸⁹ In 1963, Watkins had played drums for George Lewis's band during their Japanese tour.⁹⁰ *The Times-Picayune* article credited Kimura as having been a fan of Watkins for years.⁹¹ The combination of these two pieces of information makes it appear likely that Kimura had watched George Lewis's band perform in Japan.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Gerald Glaser, "Famed Drummer Suffers Heart Ailment," *The Times-Picayune*, August 21, 1966, accessed March 8, 2017. (Hereafter referred to as "Glaser")

⁹⁰ Hiramatsu, 2.

⁹¹ Glaser.



Figure 11. The Times-Picayune depicts Japanese drummer Yoichi Kimura visiting ailing New Orleans drummer Joe Watkins in 1966⁹³

Foreign immigrant musicians in NOLA

Historian Thomas W. Jacobsen identified Yoshio Toyama, Keiko Toyama, and Yoichi Kimura as part of a larger wave of foreign musicians who visited New Orleans in the 1960s to learn more about the city's music and become active in its music scene.⁹⁴ He also wrote that, in addition to Danny Barker's efforts to keep jazz alive in New Orleans, "there was another, often overlooked moving force that helped keep the music alive – the influx of young foreign musicians who arrived in the city in the '60s."⁹⁵ English trumpeter Clive Wilson, who

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Thomas W. Jacobsen, *Traditional New Orleans Jazz: Conversations with the Men Who Make the Music* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011), 178. (Hereafter referred to as "Jacobsen, *Traditional New Orleans Jazz*")

⁹⁵ Ibid.

immigrated to New Orleans in the 1960s, recalls that the city was “inundated with an ever-increasing tide of Europeans, Australians, Canadians, and Japanese.”⁹⁶

During the 1960s, many foreign musicians flocked to New Orleans. In addition to Wilson, New Orleans received many other English musicians, such as Sandra Cook, Trevor Richards, Dan Pawson, John “Legs” Lancaster, Mike Casimir, John Simmons, Dick Douthwaite, Les Muscutt, and Jim Finch.⁹⁷ Lars Edegran, Orjan “Orange” Kellin, and Sven Stahlberg came to New Orleans from Sweden.⁹⁸ Spud Spedding, Geoff Bull, Dick Edser, and John Edser left Australia to come to New Orleans.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Thomas W. Jacobsen, *The New Orleans Jazz Scene, 1970-2000: A Personal Retrospective* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014), 4.

⁹⁹ Jacobsen, *Traditional New Orleans Jazz*, 178.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.



101

Figure 12. This 1970s photograph shows (from left to right): Keiko Toyama, Tony Fougerat, Yoshio Toyama, Orjan “Orange” Kellin, and Lars Edegran in New Orleans.¹⁰² The Toyamas, Kellin, and Edegran are foreign musicians who came to New Orleans in the 1960s to study music.¹⁰³

New Orleans was a melting pot for musicians from all over the globe. During the 1960s, many of these musicians interacted musically as they learned in New Orleans. In a June 1993 *Mississippi Rag* article, Swedish pianist Lars Edegran reflected that, during the late 1960s, he played three nights a week at Luthjen’s with “an international jazz band.”¹⁰⁴ This group featured Yoshio Toyama, Orjan “Orange” Kellin, and, for a period, a Japanese bass player.¹⁰⁵ Toyama

¹⁰¹ Hans Lychou, “Toyama, Keiko,” 1970s, Hogan Jazz Archive Photography Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Jacobsen, *Traditional New Orleans Jazz*, 178.

¹⁰⁴ Chip Deffaa, “From Stockholm to New Orleans,” *The Mississippi Rag* XX, No. 8 (June 1993): 2.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

recalls that, during the late 1960s, Edegran, Kellin, and he would practice sheet music from the John Robichaux collection at Tulane Jazz Archives.¹⁰⁶

Preservation Hall in New Orleans

Preservation Hall served as a central spot for foreign musicians in the 1960s and has continued to be a central spot for subsequent Japanese musicians who have come to New Orleans. As mentioned, Allan Jaffe, who acted as Preservation Hall's manager and the band manager for Lewis's 1963 tour, was the person who suggested that Yoshio and Keiko Toyama visit New Orleans.¹⁰⁷ Doratha "Dodie" Smith Simmons, who lived above Preservation Hall during the late 1960s, reflected that she was surrounded by musicians from Europe and Japan who came to visit the Hall.¹⁰⁸ Simmons said "I just had no inkling that these [Preservation Hall] musicians had a world-wide appeal. That blew me away. There were musicians from England, Greenland, Australia coming to study the music."¹⁰⁹ Simmons recalled one particular incident in 1966, during Preservation Hall's fifth anniversary celebrations, where she heard clarinet playing downstairs.¹¹⁰ Assuming George Lewis made the sounds, Simmons walked down to offer him coffee, only to discover that it was the Japanese clarinet player from the New Orleans Rascals.¹¹¹ Thinking back, she proclaimed "He sounded just like him."¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ "Yoshio and Keiko Toyama," 9.

¹⁰⁷ Stroup, "Yoshio Toyama and His Wife Keiko."

¹⁰⁸ Rachel Breunlin and Bruce Sunpie Barnes, *Talk That Music Talk, Passing on Brass Band Music in New Orleans: the Traditional Way* (New Orleans: Center for the Book at the University of New Orleans), 82. (Hereafter referred to as "Breunlin, *Talk*")

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.



113

Figure 13. This 1968 photograph shows (from left to right): Joe Watkins, Kid Thomas Valentine, Keiko Toyama, and Yoshio Toyama playing at Preservation Hall¹¹⁴

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Toyamas worked as musicians and studied under musicians at Preservation Hall.¹¹⁵ Yoshio even goes as far as to call Preservation Hall “our school.”¹¹⁶ Simmons recalled organizing a jam session at Preservation Hall to get Joe Watkins playing drums again.¹¹⁷ She recalled picking up foreign musicians like Lars Edegran, John “Kid” Simmons, and the Toyamas to participate in the jam sessions.¹¹⁸

The Toyamas are not the only Japanese musicians to foster a relationship with Preservation Hall. As of 2017, pianist Mari Watanabe performed weekly at Preservation Hall.¹¹⁹ According to Watanabe, her relationship with the venue began around 1994, when she began working as a substitute for the venue’s main band.¹²⁰ Because the venue’s main band toured frequently, Watanabe said she played Preservation Hall about once a week.¹²¹ In 2011, Shannon Brinkman and Eve Abrams included Watanabe in *Preservation Hall*, their collaborative

¹¹³ “Yoshio and Keiko Toyama,” 9.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Stroup, “Yoshio Toyama and Wife Keiko.”

¹¹⁶ Toyama, “Satchmo & New Orleans.”

¹¹⁷ Breunlin, *Talk*, 82.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Watanabe, interview.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

collection of photographs and interviews of Preservation Hall musicians.¹²² In that book, current Preservation Hall manager Ben Jaffe explained that, in addition to Watanabe performing at the Hall, he remembered her stopping there to listen to veteran pianists Sadie Goodson and Jeanette Kimball.¹²³

Mayumi Shara, a Japanese drummer who moved to New Orleans in 1998, cited Watanabe's Preservation Hall gigs as a major part of her adjustment to New Orleans.¹²⁴ Shara explained that she did not speak any English when she moved to New Orleans.¹²⁵ As a result, Shara said her conversations were primarily limited to her landlord until the landlord introduced her to Watanabe.¹²⁶ Watanabe began inviting her to her gigs, where frequently watching Watanabe perform at Preservation Hall and Vaughn's gave Shara the opportunity to meet local musicians.¹²⁷

Haruka Kikuchi furthers the history of Japanese musicians at Preservation Hall.¹²⁸ She detailed occasionally performing at the Hall with drummer Shannon Powell.¹²⁹ Kikuchi called Powell's band "my dream band."¹³⁰ Mari Watanabe, who sometimes performs with Powell, also recalled instances when she has performed with Powell and Kikuchi has sat in.¹³¹ Almost five decades after the Toyamas came to Preservation Hall, Japanese immigrant musicians are still drawn to Preservation Hall, in part because of its long relationship with Japanese musicians.

¹²² Shannon Brinkman and Eve Abrams, *Preservation Hall* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 128.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Mayumi Shara, interview by author, Le Pavillon Hotel, New Orleans, December 7, 2016. (Hereafter referred to as "Shara, interview.")

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Kikuchi, interview.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Watanabe, interview.

Japanese Musicians on Becoming Familiar with New Orleans Music

Japanese musicians who have lived in New Orleans each have their own story about becoming familiar with New Orleans music. Many of these musicians cite New Orleans jazz and brass music as a major source of interest. Haruka Kikuchi, a Japanese trombonist who moved to New Orleans in 2014, said that, while she lived in Tokyo, she listened to New Orleans brass bands like Dirty Dozen Brass Band and Rebirth Brass Band.¹³² Takeshi Shimmura, a Japanese guitarist who moved to New Orleans in 2007, also mentioned that, while living in Japan, he listened to Dirty Dozen Brass Band.¹³³ Shimmura first heard Dirty Dozen Brass Band when he was thirteen years old while listening to Elvis Costello's album *Spike*.¹³⁴ Shimmura even recalled watching Dirty Dozen Brass Band perform twice in Tokyo: once at Blue Note and once at Club Quattro. He described his current job as Dirty Dozen Brass Band's guitarist as a dream come true.¹³⁵

Yoshitaka "Z2" Tsuji, a Japanese pianist who moved to New Orleans in 2010, didn't encounter New Orleans music until approximately a decade into his professional career as a musician in Osaka, Japan.¹³⁶ Tsuji's interest in New Orleans music developed after meeting Mitsuru "Mitch" Yasuda, a Japanese trumpeter and singer who *504 Magazine* credits as having performed with New Orleans groups like Lil' Rascals Brass Band and New Birth Brass Band.¹³⁷ He recalled that Yasuda primarily introduced him to music by Rebirth Brass Band and ex-

¹³² Kikuchi, interview.

¹³³ Takeshi Shimmura, interview by author, The Bean Gallery, New Orleans, February 8, 2017. (Hereafter referred to as "Shimmura, interview")

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Yoshitaka "Z2" Tsuji, interview by author, Treme Coffeehouse, New Orleans, November 29, 2016. (Hereafter referred to as "Tsuji, interview.")

¹³⁷ Ibid. David Williamson, "Mitsuru 'Mitch' Yasuda: NOLA's Coolest Japanese Jazz Trumpet Player," *504 Magazine* 2, no. 7 (July 2013): 30, <http://504mag.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/504mag-Issue-7-Japanese-Edition.pdf>.

Rebirth Brass Band trumpeter and vocalist Kermit Ruffins.¹³⁸ Two weeks after moving to New Orleans in 2010, Tsuji began working as a substitute keyboardist for Kermit Ruffins & the Barbeque Swingers, filling in for the regular keyboardist who was on vacation.¹³⁹ Similar to Shimmura's comments about joining Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Tsuji remarked that "my dream came true [in] just two weeks."¹⁴⁰ As of 2017, Tsuji currently performs as Kermit Ruffins & the Barbeque Swingers' regular keyboardist, a position he claims to have occupied since 2012.¹⁴¹

Japanese interest in New Orleans music goes beyond brass music. In a 2014 interview with *Go NOLA*, June Yamagishi, a Japanese guitarist who moved to New Orleans in 1995, detailed that Mardi Gras Indian music was his first introduction to New Orleans music.¹⁴² More specifically, a 2001 *Offbeat* article by Christian Blagg explained that Yamagishi became fascinated with New Orleans Mardi Gras Indian group the Wild Magnolias after seeing one of their album covers in a record store.¹⁴³ According to Blagg, Yamagishi played his first gig with the Wild Magnolias in 1996.¹⁴⁴ Yamagishi reflects that "I really surprised them, because I already knew all their songs. They were like 'How does this Japanese guy know all our stuff?'"¹⁴⁵

As mentioned before, Mari Watanabe first encountered New Orleans music during the early 1980s as a member of Waseda University's New Orleans Jazz Club.¹⁴⁶ Watanabe's interest

¹³⁸ Tsuji, interview.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² McClain Johnson, "GoNOLA Jazz Fest Interview: June Yamagishi," *GoNOLA*, April 4, 2014, accessed September 7, 2016, <http://gonola.com/2014/04/04/gonola-jazz-fest-interview-june-yamagishi.html>.

¹⁴³ Christopher Blagg, "June Yamagishi," *Offbeat*, October 1, 2001, accessed October 15, 2017, <http://www.offbeat.com/articles/june-yamahishi/>. (Hereafter referred to as "Blagg, 'June'")

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Watanabe, interview.

in jazz funeral music grew after hearing Young Tuxedo Brass Band's album *Jazz Begins*.¹⁴⁷

Watanabe stated that, during her first visit to New Orleans, she witnessed a jazz funeral and the sight became one of her inspirations to move to New Orleans.¹⁴⁸

Jazz, brass bands, and Mardi Gras Indians are not the only types of New Orleans music listened to in Japan. Haruka Kikuchi argued that, in her opinion, New Orleans-style piano music, as performed by Professor Longhair, Allen Toussaint, and Jon Cleary, is actually more popular in Japan than brass music.¹⁴⁹ Tsuji also mentioned an interest in New Orleans-style piano music, specifically mentioning Professor Longhair, James Booker, and Henry Butler.¹⁵⁰

Some of these Japanese musicians knew little about the city or its music developed an interest in New Orleans music after visiting the city. Mayumi Shara, a Japanese drummer who moved to New Orleans in 1998, wasn't very interested in New Orleans music prior to moving to the city.¹⁵¹ She said she thought New Orleans music was "Dixieland music," which she negatively associated with Dixieland groups performing at Pizza Huts in Japan.¹⁵² She did not become interested in Dixieland until an older musician introduced her to non-New Orleanian Sidney Catlett's drumming, which she described favorably as "like Dixieland Elvin Jones."¹⁵³ After becoming interested in Dixieland music, Shara visit New Orleansed, liked the city's "groove" and decided to stay here.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Kikuchi, interview.

¹⁵⁰ Tsuji, interview.

¹⁵¹ Shara, interview.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

Yoshitaka “Z2” Tsuji remembered that before Yasuda introduced him to New Orleans music, he couldn’t even point out New Orleans on a map.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, Takeshi Shimmura reflected that, while in Japan, “sometimes I hear the word ‘New Orleans or something from old song lyrics or song title. But then I was wondering, you know, ‘What is New Orleans? What is New Orleans?’”¹⁵⁶ Reflecting on his decision to visit New Orleans for the first time in 2003, Shimmura said “Local food tastes always better, right? I got to go to the music, go to – uh – I got to listen to music where the music is born.”¹⁵⁷

Japanese Musicians Compare New Orleans and Japan

Many Japanese musicians have remarked that they find their opportunities in New Orleans are different from their opportunities in Japan. Referencing the differences between Osaka and New Orleans, Yoshitaka “Z2” Tsuji noted a high number of music venues in New Orleans compared to a small number of jazz clubs in Osaka.¹⁵⁸ Tsuji believed that an increased number of venues means he has more opportunities to play gigs.¹⁵⁹ Tsuji also found it easier to sit in and jam with other musicians in New Orleans, which can lead to more gigs.¹⁶⁰ Takeshi Shimmura, a native of Hokkaido, Japan, who also spent time in Tokyo, positively commented about the large number of events in New Orleans that feature live music as opposed to pre-recorded music.¹⁶¹ He considered this abundance of live music to be a difference between New Orleans and Japan. He remarked, “In New Orleans, we can have much more opportunity to play

¹⁵⁵ Tsuji, interview.

¹⁵⁶ Shimmura, interview.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Tsuji, interview.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Shimmura, interview.

music here.”¹⁶² Similarly, Haruka Kikuchi voiced surprise that musicians contact her to play trombone in New Orleans, even though she does not consider herself to be a “famous” or “popular” musician in the city.¹⁶³

Kikuchi found the New Orleans attitude about live music to be different from Tokyo’s. She said that, in Tokyo, “Every music is a little expensive for charge, music charge so and people pay the music charge so, different attitude. ‘Hey. What kind of music do you play?...I paid you blah, blah, blah.’ So it’s a little bit attitude from the customer.”¹⁶⁴ In contrast, Kikuchi found audiences in New Orleans to be relaxed and receptive.¹⁶⁵

Similarly, Mayumi Shara reflected that, in Tokyo, “music is, you know, separated from people’s everyday life and musician is like ‘Oh. *I’m a musician.*’ But here? no.” Takeshi Shimmura also found that “music is close to life” in New Orleans, which he found to not be true about Japan. Mari Watanabe remarked that she felt that, in Japan, music is very commercial while, in New Orleans, “music is a part of daily life.”

Haruka Kikuchi reflected that bands in New Orleans tended to rehearse less than bands in Tokyo.¹⁶⁶ As she explained, “Sometimes, I don’t have a rehearsal in New Orleans but I just do a gig.”¹⁶⁷ Haruka Kikuchi observed that she felt young New Orleans musicians were beginning to rehearse more than their older counterparts.¹⁶⁸ Kikuchi felt this corresponds more with Tokyo than older New Orleans musicians’ habits of not practicing.¹⁶⁹ Mayumi Shara, who came from Tokyo, noted that she felt Tokyo, as a big city, was more similar to New York City than New

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Kikuchi, interview.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

Orleans.¹⁷⁰ Haruka Kikuchi also considered the size of New Orleans to be a dramatic difference between it and Tokyo.¹⁷¹ Shara noted, somewhat in jest, that Tokyo is very *sophisticated* in comparison to the relaxed atmosphere of New Orleans.¹⁷²

When asked about similarities between New Orleans and Japan, Mari Watanabe, a native of Tokyo, responded that she could not find any similarities between New Orleans and Japan.¹⁷³ Shara also struggled to find an answer to the questions, ultimately leaving it unanswered.¹⁷⁴ While she was able to point a few similarities, Kikuchi felt it was harder to point out similarities than it was to point out differences between New Orleans and Tokyo.¹⁷⁵

Thinking about similarities between New Orleans and Japan, Takeshi Shimmura remarked that “People love music. People like to drink. [People] like to eat. People are kind.”¹⁷⁶ Yoshitaka Tsuji remarked that both New Orleans and Osaka have regional foods that the cities are known for and southern dialects that set speakers in New Orleans and Osaka apart from the rest of their country.¹⁷⁷ Tsuji also referenced kind people as a similarity between New Orleans and Osaka.¹⁷⁸ Reflecting on his time in New Orleans in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Yoshio Toyama, via email, wrote that “We were young and we did not find it so different... We are all humans, and more or less the same.”¹⁷⁹

Some female Japanese musicians have commented on issues with sexism in both New Orleans and Japan. As a female drummer, Mayumi Shara says she still struggled with issues of

¹⁷⁰ Shara, interview.

¹⁷¹ Kikuchi, interview.

¹⁷² Shara, interview.

¹⁷³ Watanabe, interview.

¹⁷⁴ Shara, interview.

¹⁷⁵ Kikuchi, interview.

¹⁷⁶ Shimmura, interview.

¹⁷⁷ Tsuji, interview.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Yoshio Toyama, e-mail message to author, March 12, 2017. (Hereafter referred to as “Toyama, e-mail”)

sexism because she feels drums are viewed as a “man’s instrument.”¹⁸⁰ Born in the 1960s, Shara had issues convincing Motohiko Hino to train her as a jazz drummer in Japan because he did not feel women could play drums.¹⁸¹ Shara said that, even after she convinced the famous jazz drummer to teach her, he would frequently ask her when she would quit playing drums.¹⁸² Shara said that Hino only began to approve of her work after eight years of studying under him.¹⁸³ When asked about her experiences with sexism in New Orleans, Shara remarked that she felt it was similar all over the globe.¹⁸⁴

As a female trombonist born in 1986, Haruka Kikuchi stated that she found brass band culture to be huge in many schools and, thus, felt it was common for women to play brass instruments in Japan.¹⁸⁵ When asked about sexism in New Orleans, she explained that she felt people sometimes judged women’s ability to play based on their appearances instead of their actual skills.¹⁸⁶ She noted that sometimes people in New Orleans believe she cannot play because she is female and Asian.¹⁸⁷

Mari Watanabe viewed sexism and ageism in Japan’s music industry as a major catalyst for her decision to move to New Orleans.¹⁸⁸ She felt that the Japanese music industry heavily favors young women, remarking that at twenty years old a woman may be too old to have a music career.¹⁸⁹ Watanabe remarked that seeing older musicians perform at a jazz funeral in New

¹⁸⁰ Shara, interview.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Kikuchi, interview.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Watanabe, interview.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Orleans gave her a new sense of hope about the possibility of being a professional musician.¹⁹⁰

As she put it, when she saw that she began wondering "I can maybe just keep playing until I die, so that's why I came here."¹⁹¹

Japanese musicians as New Orleans ambassadors

In many instances, Japanese musicians have acted as ambassadors for New Orleans and its music. Referencing the wave of foreign musicians that visited New Orleans in the 1960s, Thomas W. Jacobsen wrote that many musicians only stayed in New Orleans for a short time before returning home, while others stayed and became major contributors to New Orleans's music scene.¹⁹² This exchange is part of a larger movement among out-of-town musicians and can be applied to musicians from various decades.

Yoshio and Keiko Toyama left New Orleans in 1973 but continue to represent the city through their music and charitable actions. In 1994, the couple began donating instruments to schools and organizations in New Orleans through their Wonderful World Foundation in an effort to deter youths from gun violence.¹⁹³ An August 8, 2013, *The Times-Picayune* quoted Yoshio claiming that the foundation had donated 800 instruments since 1994.¹⁹⁴ In 2008, the Toyamas received a key to the city of New Orleans for their non-profit work.¹⁹⁵ An August 9,

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Jacobsen, *Traditional New Orleans Jazz*, 178.

¹⁹³ Sheila Stroup, "Yoshio and Keiko Toyama Happy to be a Part of 'Heart to Heart Through Jazz,'" *The Times-Picayune*, August 10, 2013, accessed September 7, 2016, http://www.nola.com/music/index.ssf/2013/08/yoshio_and_keiko_toyama_happy.html.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Sheila Stroup, "Time to Help Yoshio Toyama, a Great Friend of New Orleans in Japan," *The Times-Picayune*, April 5, 2011, accessed September 7, 2016, http://www.nola.com/music/index.ssf/2011/04/time_to_help_yoshio_toyama_a_g.html.

2014, *The Times-Picayune* reported that the Toyamas raised \$10,000 in Japan to help create a jazz exhibit at The Old U.S. Mint in New Orleans.¹⁹⁶



197

Figure 14. A business card for the Toyamas' Wonderful World Jazz Foundation, which donates instruments to schools and organizations in New Orleans

On November 19, 2006, Toyama wrote that he and his wife had recently finished a twenty-three years long stint as musicians at Tokyo Disneyland.¹⁹⁸ According to Toyama, they spent the last eight years of that stint as the Dixie Band at the New Orleans Square section of Tokyo Disneyland.¹⁹⁹ Given the diverse traffic of the park, Toyama acted as an ambassador for New Orleans to not only Japan but the entire world. In 2008, the Toyamas published a photo book in Japan documenting their time in New Orleans, entitled *The Holy Land: New Orleans, The Saint: Louis Armstrong*.²⁰⁰ In a 2017 email interview, Yoshio explained that he had also released two other books in Japan and, in the mid-1970s, translated *Music: Black, White, and Blue* by Ortiz Walton.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ Sheila Stroup, "Yoshio Toyama's Jazz Foundation Launches Fundraising Effort for 'Louisiana Music Experience' Exhibit," *The Times-Picayune*, August 9, 2014, accessed April 10, 2017, http://www.nola.com/music/index.ssf/2011/04/time_to_help_yoshio_toyama_a_g.html.

¹⁹⁷ "Wonderful World Jazz Foundation Business Card," 2001; Yoshio Toyama persons vertical file, Hogan Jazz Archive, Howard-Tilton Memorial Archive, Tulane University.

¹⁹⁸ Toyama, "Satchmo."

¹⁹⁹ Toyama, "Satchmo."

²⁰⁰ Dan Shea, "A Fest to Build a Dream On," *The Times-Picayune*, July 31, 2008, accessed March 11, 2017, http://blog.nola.com/sheilastroup/2008/07/a_fest_to_build_a_dream_on.html.

²⁰¹ Toyama, e-mail.

Toyama is not the only former New Orleans Japanese musician to market New Orleans music to Japanese consumers. On January 29, 2017, Japanese record label MFA Records released *NOLA Revisited* in Japan.^{202,203} Nori Naraoka, a Japanese musician who had lived in New Orleans, produced the album.²⁰⁴ The album featured an all-star group of New Orleans musicians including Meters bassist George Porter Jr., Dirty Dozen Brass Band sousaphonist Kirk Joseph, and June Yamagishi, a Japanese guitarist who moved to New Orleans in the 1994.²⁰⁵ By releasing this album in Japan, Naraoka acted as an ambassador for New Orleans music, helping bring it to a Japanese audience. New Orleans music remains a spotlight of many Japanese record stores. In June 2016, the author of this paper witnessed and documented New Orleans music sections in Tower Records locations in Kyoto, Osaka, and Tokyo, in addition to Disc Union in Tokyo.²⁰⁶

²⁰² "MFA Records," MFA Records, accessed March 11, 2017, <http://www.mfa-records.com>.

²⁰³ "NOLA REVISITED," Amazon.co.jp, accessed March 11, 2017, <https://www.amazon.co.jp/NOLA-REVISITED-ORLEANS-FUNK-ALL-STARS/dp/B01N5G2T9L>.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. Blagg, "June."

²⁰⁶ Personal experience.



Figure 15. June 2016: A display above the New Orleans music section at Tower Records in Osaka, Japan.

In addition to his work on the recent *NOLA Revisited*, June Yamagishi used recorded music to bridge the gap between New Orleans and Japan prior to moving to New Orleans. In Japan, Yamagishi released a solo album entitled *Jack of the Blues*, which featured New Orleans musicians Art Neville of the Neville Brothers, pianist and singer Dr. John, and guitarist John Mooney. In 2000, Yamagishi co-founded the New Orleans band Papa Gros Funk, which later changed its name to Papa Grows Funk.²⁰⁸ A January 4, 2002, *The Times-Picayune* article noted that, during a recent tour of Japan with New Orleans guitarist Earl King, Papa Grows Funk leader John Gros discovered that Papa Grows Funk's 2001 debut album *Doin' It* was the number one selling blues CD at the Tower Records in Osaka and number three at the Tokyo Tower.²⁰⁹ The article attributed this feat to Yamagishi's "homeland connections."²¹⁰ An April 8, 2005, *The Times-Picayune* article noted, at that time, Papa Grows Funk had sold 3,000 copies of their two

²⁰⁷ William Archambeault, "New Orleans Music Section at Tower Records in Osaka, Japan," June 19, 2016.

²⁰⁸ *The Times-Picayune*, April 7, 2000.

²⁰⁹ *The Times-Picayune*, January 4, 2002.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

CDs in Japan.²¹¹ A March 23, 2007, *The Times-Picayune* article noted that Buffalo Records, which had issued Papa Grows Funk's previous albums as imports in Japan, would be releasing the group's album *Mr. Patterson's Hat* as a domestic release, complete with Japanese titles and liner notes.²¹² These examples show that June Yamagishi has helped to promote New Orleans in Japan by releasing recorded New Orleans music in Japan.



213

Figure 16. The booklet for *Orange: New Orleans Vibes – American New Roots Vol. 2*, a Japanese compilation of New Orleans music, shows June Yamagishi (second to the left) with his group Papa Grows Funk. Buffalo Records, which put out this compilation, has also released albums by Papa Grows Funk in Japan.²¹⁴

Japanese musicians who have or who continue to live in New Orleans directly promote New Orleans is through performances of New Orleans music in Japan. Mayumi Shara reflected that when she visits Japan, it is usually to perform music.²¹⁵ Mari Watanabe recalled that,

²¹¹ *The Times-Picayune*, April 8, 2005.

²¹² *The Times-Picayune*, March 23, 2007.

²¹³ Liner notes to *Orange: New Orleans Vibes – American New Roots Vol. 2*, Various Artists, Buffalo Records, LBCY-302, CD, 2005.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Shara, interview.

between 2005 and 2007, she toured Japan once a year.²¹⁶ She further detailed that her 2005 performances were charity events related to Hurricane Katrina and that her 2006 tour was with New Orleans trumpeter Gregg Stafford.²¹⁷ Takeshi Shimmura remembered enthusiastically touring Japan in 2015 with Dirty Dozen Brass Band, playing two nights in Tokyo and one night in Osaka.²¹⁸ Haruka Kikuchi also visited Tokyo in May 2016 to perform music.²¹⁹ Yoshitaka “Z2” Tsuji said he played fifteen gigs in Japan during August and September of 2016.²²⁰ By touring in Japan, these musicians helped bring attention to New Orleans and increase its profile.

Haruka Kikuchi reflected that she has visited New Orleans’s Japanese sister city Matsue twice to perform in the city’s annual New Orleans festival, which she describes as including a Mardi Gras parade with a brass band.²²¹ Looking back on her experiences in Matsue, Kikuchi said “I am so happy and so surprised because many people love, love the parade or festival.”²²² She also explained that she hopes to bring this “good atmosphere into Japan” and that she hopes “Japanese people enjoy the parade and public performance.”²²³

June Yamagishi, a Japanese guitarist who moved to New Orleans in 1995, has toured Japan many times since moving to the city.²²⁴ A December 21, 2001, *The Times-Picayune* article mentioned that that week Yamagishi would be touring Japan with New Orleans guitarist Earl King and a group of other Crescent City musicians.²²⁵ According to an April 8, 2005, *The Times-Picayune* piece about the fifth anniversary of Yamagishi’s band Papa Grows Funk, several

²¹⁶ Watanabe, interview.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Shimmura, interview.

²¹⁹ Kikuchi, interview.

²²⁰ Tsuji, interview.

²²¹ Kikuchi, interview.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Blagg, “June.”

²²⁵ “Funk.”

hundred people attended the group's 2004 set at Club Quattro in Tokyo, Japan.²²⁶ A September 9, 2005, article in *The Bulletin* detailed that Papa Grows Funk spent a month during the summer of 2005 touring Japan.²²⁷ Additionally, Papa Grows Funk performed four shows in Japan during July 2009, which a 2009 *The Times-Picayune* article credits as the band's fourth visit to Japan.²²⁸

However, musicians do not need to travel all the way to Japan to act as ambassadors of New Orleans to the country. Mari Watanabe reflected that she has interacted with Waseda University's New Orleans Jazz Club during the club's trips to New Orleans.²²⁹ She mentions that she has instructed club members to bring her Japanese language books during their past trips to New Orleans.²³⁰ Watanabe reflects that she knew Haruka Kikuchi from Kikuchi's involvement in Waseda University's New Orleans Jazz Club prior to playing together at Preservation Hall.²³¹ These instances show a longstanding relationship between her and the club.

Tourism in New Orleans

Tourism has and continues to be a major part of the New Orleans economy. Since at least the 1960s, New Orleans has turned to tourism for vital revenue. Historian Richard Campanella wrote that, in the mid-1960s, New Orleans authorities turned to tourism to compensate for thousands of disappearing port jobs.²³² In the 1980s, New Orleans's tourism industry began overtaking the port as New Orleans's major employer.²³³ During the 1980s, the worldwide oil bust destroyed many white-collar oil jobs in New Orleans's but gave Americans more money to

²²⁶ *The Times-Picayune*, April 8, 2005.

²²⁷ *The Bulletin* (Bend, OR), September 9, 2005.

²²⁸ *The Times-Picayune*, November 20, 2009.

²²⁹ Watanabe, interview.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Richard Campanella, *Bourbon Street: A History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014), 201. (Hereafter referred to as "Campanella, *Bourbon Street*")

²³³ Richard Campanella, *Geographies of New Orleans: Urban Fabrics Before the Storm* (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies at University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2006), 294.

spend on leisure travel and vacations, positively impacting tourism in New Orleans.²³⁴ As of 2017, tourism continues to play a major part in the New Orleans economy with international tourism becoming increasingly prominent.

International tourism in the United States and New Orleans is one the rise. A record 77.5 million foreign travelers visited the United States in 2015, up 3 percent from 2014.²³⁵ Estimates by the National Travel & Tourism Office show that New Orleans's international travel grew thirty-seven percent in 2015, the biggest one-year increase by any American city that year.²³⁶ The same estimates show Louisiana's international travel grew thirty-seven percent in 2014, tying for the second biggest one-year increase by a state year.²³⁷ Kyle Edmiston, Assistant Secretary of Louisiana Office of Tourism, called this the third consecutive year of double digit growth for Louisiana's inbound international visitations.²³⁸ A *New Orleans Advocate* article about New Orleans's increase in international tourism noted that the city's tourism industry officials were targeting that market segment for growth.²³⁹ The article also made the claims that international travelers tended to stay in New Orleans longer and spend more money during their visits to New Orleans than American tourists.²⁴⁰

Part of New Orleans's tourism campaign over recent decades has been based around promoting its music and culture. Historian J. Mark Souther has written,

²³⁴ Campanella, *Bourbon Street*, 227.

²³⁵ Thompson, "Leading the Pack."

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ "Lt. Governor Announces Increase in International Travel to Louisiana," *KNOE*, August 3, 2016, accessed March 11, 2017, <http://www.knoe.com/content/news/Lt-Governor-announces-increase-in-International-travel-to-Louisiana-389091752.html>.

²³⁹ Thompson, "Leading the Pack."

²⁴⁰ Thompson, "Leading the Pack."

The establishment of traditional jazz as a major tourist attraction in the French Quarter has often been attributed to the founding of Preservation Hall, a jazz venue that opened in 1961 to reintroduce a number of old, long-forgotten jazzmen”²⁴¹

Souther further explained that, in addition to utilizing media coverage, Preservation Hall used national and global tours as a way to draw attention to the venue.²⁴² Souther particularly mentioned George Lewis’s 1963 Japan tour, which he explains included ninety-two concerts for a quarter million people, as a strong example of this style of promotion.²⁴³ In 1967 and 1968, the Louisiana Tourist Development Commission sponsored European tours by Olympia Brass Band.²⁴⁴ A 1983 *Wavelength* article quoted Helen Perry, a long-time volunteer at the New Orleans Jazz Club’s museum,²⁴⁵ claiming that tourists generated much of their traffic, specially noting that “lots” of Germans and Japanese tourists visit the museum.²⁴⁶ During the mid-1980s, when the city’s oil industry was declining, New Orleans’s municipal government worked in a close public-private partnership with tourism interests to increasingly use jazz in marketing efforts.²⁴⁷ These examples show that New Orleans and places like Preservation Hall have a history of utilizing the city’s musical resources to promote New Orleans in tourism.

In a 2013 article, Ann Marshall Thomas, Marketing Coordinator at the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, recalled visiting Matsue, one of New Orleans’s sister cities, in

²⁴¹ Souther, “Making,” 48.

²⁴² Ibid., 53.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 56.

²⁴⁵ This should not be confused with Waseda University’s New Orleans Jazz Club.

²⁴⁶ Virginia Levie, “Mint Condition Jazz,” *Wavelength* (December 1983): 15.

²⁴⁷ Richard H. King and Helen Taylor, eds., *Dixie Debates: Perspectives on Southern Cultures* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 154.

October 2013 with a delegation of New Orleans leaders.²⁴⁸ Thomas described attending an event dedicated to the twentieth anniversary of the cities' sister city relationship.²⁴⁹ She also wrote about the opening of an exhibit entitled "New Orleans and Lafcadio Hearn" at the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum in Matsue.²⁵⁰ Both the exhibit and the museum's names reference Lafcadio Hearn, a writer who worked New Orleans between 1877-1888 before moving to Japan and achieving wider fame.²⁵¹ A November 12, 2015 *The Times-Picayune* article quotes Donna Fraiche, honorary consul general of Japan, explaining that New Orleans and Matsue's relationships with Hearn were pivotal in the development of their sister city relationship.²⁵² Thomas recalled a positive response to the city's "Little Mardi Gras" celebration, which culminated in a collaborative performance between New Orleans group the Sasha Masakowski Quartet and the Japanese brass band Khachaturian.²⁵³ Haruka Kikuchi said she has visited Matsue twice to perform at this festival.²⁵⁴ She recalled an extremely enthusiastic response to the festival.²⁵⁵

New Orleans's relationship with Matsue indicates that there is potential for New Orleans to outreach to Japan. As the number of international tourists visiting New Orleans continues to rise, the city's government and private businesses should give serious contemplation about trying to appeal to potential Japanese tourists. For over sixty years, Japanese music lovers have visited

²⁴⁸ Ann Marshall Thomas, "Sister Cities: A Local Girl Shares Her Trip to Matsue, Japan, New Orleans' Sister City," *myNewOrleans.com*, November 2013, accessed March 15, 2017, <http://www.myneworleans.com/My-New-Orleans/November-2013/Sister-Cities-My-Journey-to-Matsue-Japan/>. (Hereafter referred to as "Thomas, 'Sister Cities'")

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Lafcadio Hearn, *Inventing New Orleans*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), xiii-xv.

²⁵² Tina Soong, "New Orleans Delegations Visits Japanese Sister City," *The Times-Picayune*, November 12, 2015, accessed March 11, 2017. http://blog.nola.com/new_orleans/2015/11/new_orleans_delegation_visits.html.

²⁵³ Thomas, "Sister Cities."

²⁵⁴ Kikuchi, interview.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

New Orleans and this connection could be further exploited to increase Japanese tourism to New Orleans. One suggestion is that New Orleans and Louisiana could sponsor Japanese tours by New Orleans musicians, similar to what happened in 1967 and 1968 when the Louisiana Tourist Development Commission sponsored European tours by Olympia Brass Band.²⁵⁶

Conclusion

This paper chronicles the long history of Japanese interest in New Orleans music. While its primary focus was on Japanese immigrant musicians in New Orleans, this paper shows a larger Japanese interest in New Orleans music that dates back to at least the 1940s. A look at New Orleans music recordings and performances in Japan shows a continuing curiosity in New Orleans music spanning over half a century. Japanese tourists have been driven to visit the city marketed as the birthplace of jazz. While recent increases in international tourism to New Orleans will likely result in new attention to New Orleans's foreign visitors, this study of Japanese appreciation for New Orleans music shows that Japanese visitors are nothing new for New Orleans. As Yoshio Toyama wrote in a 2017 email interview, after leaving New Orleans in 1973, "We decided to spread [the] music of Louis and New Orleans, and also wanted to show our thanks to New Orleans, Satchmo, and USA, for giving the world such a wonderful present called jazz."²⁵⁷

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²⁵⁷ Toyama, e-mail.

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