VOLUME !

Volume !

La revue des musiques populaires

13 : 1 | 2016

La scène punk en France

Tōru MITSUI (ed.), *Made in Japan: Studies in Popular Music*

Gerry McGoldrick

Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/volume/5114>

DOI: 10.4000/volume.5114

ISSN: 1950-568X

Publisher

Association Mélanie Seteun

Printed version

Date of publication: 25 November 2016

Number of pages: 190-191

ISBN: 978-2-913169-41-8

ISSN: 1634-5495

Electronic reference

Gerry McGoldrick, "Tōru MITSUI (ed.), *Made in Japan: Studies in Popular Music*", *Volume !* [Online], 13 : 1 | 2016, Online since 25 November 2016, connection on 13 November 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/volume/5114> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/volume.5114>

L'auteur & les Éd. Mélanie Seteun

Tōru Mitsui, *Made in Japan : Studies in Popular Music*, New York & Londres, Routledge, 2014.

The literature in English on Japanese popular music is steadily growing, with monographs on a variety of genres appearing since the late 1990s. Almost all of these describe the music through one theoretical lens or another, advancing the literature on popular music and, for example, gender, identity, globalization, or authenticity at the expense of providing a clear depiction of the subject itself. As a result, there is very little writing in English that describes Japanese popular music as the average Japanese person knows it. The fourteen essays in this book, all but one written by Japanese scholars, go a long way to addressing this. Chapter 4, "The Birth of Enka," praises Christine Yano's 2002 analysis of the musical genre "as a coherent cultural form that articulates nostalgia, emotion, and the nation," but notes that it lacks an exploration of the historical processes by which that genre

was formed (71). Its explicit goal, to provide this historical context, informs every chapter of this highly readable collection.

The introduction by editor Tōru Mitsui serves as a concise history of popular music in modern Japan, and includes a section on Japanese and English works on the subject as well. The rest of the book, consisting of twelve essays and an interview, is divided into three parts: part 1 deals with topics that fall outside of the mainstream of popular music, part 2 looks at various aspects of Japanese rock, and part 3 covers popular music in film. There is a "coda" on the global reception of Japanese pop music, an interview with industry insider Tatsuro Yamashita by way of an afterword, and a useful bibliography of works in the field, organized by topic and including genres not covered in the book itself.

Part 1 covers a wide range of topics in its five chapters, all of which to varying degrees fall outside of the mainstream of popular music as it is experienced today. Naomi Miyamoto presents a fascinating exploration of the overwhelmingly female and surprisingly regimented fans of the Takarazuka all-woman musical theatre. Shelly Brunt looks at the history and significance of the *Kōhaku* song contest, a postwar, nation-affirming institution broadcast annually on New Year's Eve. Mamoru Tōya delivers a detailed description of the live music scene in the "off-limit" military clubs of Yokohama during Japan's occupation, and the Japanese people that worked on both sides of the spotlight. Yōsuke Wajima gives an account of the

development of the faux-traditional genre of *enka* derived from slightly earlier modern styles and conceived as an alternative to westernized pop music. Tōru Mitsui looks in to the perhaps uniquely Japanese tendency to sing triple time songs in duple time, excavating recordings from the 1920s and 1930s that demonstrate an early proclivity for this.

Part 2 presents a brief history of live and recorded rock in Japan from the late 1950s to the present. Terumasa Shimizu outlines the progression from early postwar covers to the beginning of an original Japanese rock in the 1960s. Katsuya Minamida applies a Bourdieuan analysis to 1970s rock, forwarding a model of mainstream cooptation of rock counterculture as an engine for musical change up to the present. Jun'ichi Nagai traces the history of live rock in Japan, from the coffeehouses of the 1950s to the multi-day outdoor festivals of today.

Part 3 deals with music in film and animation. Kyōko Koizumi analyses one of the film scores of renowned composer Tōru Takemitsu, arguing that international audiences, in ignoring his more conventional works, may be guilty of a

sort of orientalism. Hideko Haguchi uncovers the world music pioneer responsible for the soundtrack for the dystopian, cyberpunk animated movie *Akira*. Aki Yamasaki investigates how *anime* voice actors singing in character have gained ground in the pop charts of the struggling local music industry.

Yoshitaka Mōri's chapter on J-Pop looks at how this music, until recently almost entirely unknown outside of Japan, is being received abroad due to new modes of consumption. Finally, the short interview with Tatsurō Yamashita, an insider who has lived the history of postwar popular music, provides an intimate perspective on the topic to close out the volume.

Though there are occasional, minor translation issues, this book provides a straight-forward but scholarly overview of selected topics in Japanese popular music. While not encyclopedic, it is thorough on the topics that it does cover, providing some much needed context to the existing writing in English on Japanese popular music.

Gerry McGOLDRICK

Amber Clifford-Napoleone, *Queerness in Heavy Metal Music : Metal Bent*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2015.

Metal Bent is an important book that sheds new light on the topic of gender and sexuality in metal music. Its aims are to queer metal and reconfigure discussion of the genre around gender and sexuality, and to move on from thinking about metal as just for "the straight boys" (3). These aims are achieved through a

discussion of the style and media coverage of various musicians, and the results of a survey and interviews with queer metal fans. Central are the assertions that metal is queer and that the genre provides a safe space for queer identified people—a queerscape. Identifying this is essential to understanding the genre,