



An Antiquity Of Jazz In China: From Yellow Music To A Jazz Revival In China

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ABSTRACT

Jazz has the potential to bring people of all backgrounds together in China, and the US government is working hard to get the word out about this. A country is about to get funding and instructors to help spread jazz throughout the country. In June 2015, Blue Note Entertainment Group CEO Steven Bensusan announced the launch of a Blue Note jazz club at No. 23 East Qianmen Road in Beijing. Between the years 1900 till the late 1930s, this building served as the seat of the United States Embassy. The United States and China chose jazz as a means of cultural interaction.

For the Chinese, first encountering Western ideas was like being sucked into a whirlwind of novel thoughts. The passion faded as the basic human urge for pleasure, attractiveness, wealth, and comfort reclaimed the spotlight once civilian life resumed its regular rhythm. This economic and cultural revival gave the intellectuals optimism, and many of them set out on new career paths. An old debate about China's modernization, which had previously divided opinions along Western and Oriental lines, was rekindled in the pivotal year of 1978. No satisfactory answer has been discovered to the issue since its origin in the 1860s, when China was only starting its modernization process. In the 1980s, as postmodernism started to acquire influence in China's popular and creative cultural institutions, there was optimism about the country's potential for future modernization.

KEYWORDS: *Economic reforms, Modernization, Arts and culture, Chinese jazz, Yellow music.*

1. Introduction

This research looks at how jazz evolved in China from the perspective of modern Beijing society. Here they discuss individualism, ethics, and postmodernism. From this seemingly contradictory data, they deduce indications about the beginnings and current structure of the jazz rebirth in Beijing in the 1980s. Researchers were giving their undivided attention to these three relationships. All other explanations were based on morality since the old Chinese moral code controlled the roles and forms of music. Because of its function in society, this viewpoint has traditionally regarded music as a tertiary medium. As a result, two main subgenres emerged: moral and immoral music. When individuals listened to immoral music played by others, they often found themselves describing it as beautiful.

The term soon became synonymous with American culture and the music that represented it when it was used as a tribute to jazz during the Cold War (Yang, 2019). In ancient China, the aspirations of the nobility for total domination over the common people had little impact on popular culture. In ancient China, there were two types of traditions: public and private. Some subcultures continued to practise their traditions even after the "service" of dominant ideology failed to meet their needs. As authoritarian rulers in ancient China used music to enforce their moral code on the populace, the pursuit of forbidden beauty emerged as a hidden tradition that characterised the subcultures of musicians. The devaluation of artists by fundamentalist ideologies gave rise to this long-forgotten tradition. The disparity in values between the musical subculture and "society at large" becomes wider over time (Zhihu 2019).

2. Background of the Study

The Chinese media and jazz musicians throughout the globe have noticed the current jazz revival. A trend towards more "jazzy" pop tunes was observed by state-run media channels in China. Thanks to jazz, Chinese performers fared far better "because to the music." A watershed moment in U.S.-China diplomatic ties occurred in 1972, when President Nixon officially visited China. This performance was the catalyst for jazz to become the city of Beijing's preferred musical style. As a consequence of the US government's recent recognition of the US-China alliance, jazz's relevance has grown. An example of how American individuals and government agencies are beginning to see jazz as a diplomatic gesture, a method of cultural communication, and an economic cooperation with China was the Blue Note jazz club in Beijing. Their next point was demonstrating this (Hu, 2019). Despite the importance of improving Sino-American ties, the first objective in China was to bring jazz to Beijing in the 1970s. From 1978 to 1993, which of these organisations was affiliated with Deng Xiaoping, the former leader of China? Up to December 1978, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party convened for a grand total of eleven sessions. Several cases concerning rights breaches during the Cultural Revolution were approved, Deng Xiaoping was elevated to paramount leadership over President Hua Guofeng, and the Party's policies placed a priority on education and economic development. Chairman Mao Zedong had been succeeded by President Hua. After China liberalised its commerce and media, a large number of young people in Beijing and other big cities decided to go to college. Western music, which China had always despised, thereby became an invasive part of the country's cultural landscape (Zhao, 2020).

3. Purpose of the Research

The United States government is increasingly supporting jazz in China as a means of fostering better ties between the two countries. Funds have been set aside and instructors have been sent out to promote jazz's nationwide expansion. In June 2015, Blue Note president Steven Bensusan announced that the jazz clubs were be relocating to East Qianmen Street No. 23, Beijing. This address was once used by the American Embassy from 1900 until the late 1930s. The idea that jazz would bridge the gap between the two nations' cultural idioms was widely agreed upon. The Chinese "people" emerged from their "black and white" period confronted with a deluge of ideas. This fixation began to wane as civilian life returned to its regular pattern, and the innate desires for joy, attractiveness, ease, and prosperity progressively supplanted it. The academic community was filled with ambitious dreamers and adventurers during the cultural and economic boom. In 1978, a long-simmering debate between those who advocated for Westernisation and those who favoured Orientalization over China's modernization finally broke out. The 1860s, when China was undergoing its modernization, was the last time this issue was resolved. That a new period of modernity may have begun in the 1980s with the rise of postmodernism in Chinese art and culture (Cai, 2019).

4. Literature Review

Andrew F. Jones vividly connects the dots between early modernization in China and jazz and popular music in China in his 2001 book *Yellow Music: Media Culture and Colonial Modernity in the Chinese Jazz Age*. During the 1930s and forward, what Jones calls the "Chinese jazz age," new left-wing popular music like yellow music began to emerge. "Obscene music" or "yellow music" were the terms used to describe jazz and jazz-influenced popular music in China prior to the 1980s. Reading about China's modernization in the 1930s is where that idea originated (Beijing News, 2019). Jones plans to lay claim to new authority as part of this modernization by first investigating where contemporary Chinese musical groups came from. Traditional Chinese philosophy and the May 4th Movements, ignited by Western control of China, form the basis of his thesis, which is that "good music" may unite the country. The Ming and early Qing eras brought music from Europe before Western culture took off, and Jones explains why that occurred. As a "refreshing" Western instrument, the harpsichord was supposedly taken up by each successive Chinese emperor as a new royal hobby.

Since imperial severities forced China to Westernise in 1840, this indicates that the country has undergone some Westernisation since then (Kang & Wang, 2019). In the end, it was Jones's study that aided Chinese critics and journalists in understanding the biased coverage of the Chinese jazz period. Jones revealed the historical context of jazz criticism disregarding. The many references to Buck Clayton's work in *Yellow Music* support Jones' claim.

In the renowned ballrooms of Shanghai, where jazz first appeared in the 1920s, it quickly became the dominant musical form. Clayton, from his base in Los Angeles, was in charge of the "Harlem Gentlemen," a group that performed songs typical of the American West. When Clayton first met Teddy Weatherford in Shanghai in 1934, he was a booking agent for the Tong Vong Company. Following Weatherford's fixation on Buck, the band's second preferred venue for a concert was Canidrome, Shanghai. Many American musicians made Shanghai their home in the 1930s, when jazz fans from Japan and Russia came to learn with American ensembles. Shanghai became a truly global city in the 1930s because people from "all corners of the world" resided there (Zhang, 2020).

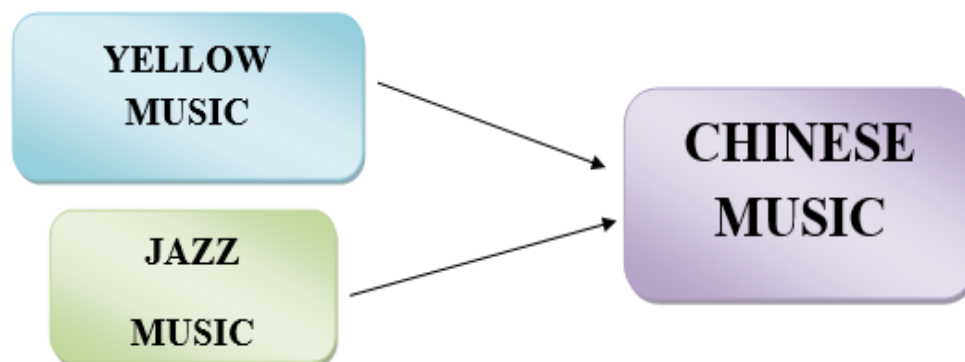
5. Research Questions

- What role do "concrete, complex, and historically placed" ideas play in contemporary musicology?
- Would you mind clarifying how the "multi-disciplinary aspect of the technique incorporates many perspectives from the domains of history, sociology, ethnography, and ethnomusicology"?
- What gives postmodernism its significant weight in a Chinese jazz study?

6. Methodology

The excessive dependence on "facts" in this thesis's methodology is a direct outcome of the required interdisciplinary approach. Is there any way to make sense of the information they have on the evolution of a certain style of live music? How can one make sense of the vast amount of information available while investigating Beijing jazz? The age-old subject of how to incorporate methods from other fields into ethnomusicology study has been addressed by several authors, each with their own unique perspective. Our research provides a fresh perspective on multidisciplinary studies by exploring ethnomusicological paradigms.

6.1 Conceptual Framework



7. Result

7.1 Data Analysis

The reference group hypothesis states that one's emotional state reflects one's social status. To reiterate the first claim, doing contextualised interview research and making use of samples are necessary to accomplish this goal. The theory proposes that a reference group might consist of non-Beijing residents who have a common interest, in this example jazz. Conducting a poll among the groups' members would provide valuable insight into their perspectives on joining or not joining jazz ensembles. Talking to jazz musicians, jazz enthusiasts, and music lovers in general even those who wouldn't call themselves jazz aficionados was the main goal. Jazz was popular among a wide range of individuals, both in and out of the millenium. Pop and classical music were the most popular choices among those who liked other genres.

8. Discussion

The idea of identity has evolved from more primitive discussions of unity across cultures and languages. The concept has been significant since the 1960s, when civil rights movements started to gather momentum in the US and social interpretations started to develop, as shown in Gerald Izenberg's *Identity: The Importance of a Contemporary Concept*. These movements expanded the meaning of the word to include collective consciousness, expanding it beyond the realms of philosophy and psychology, where it had previously been understood and studied only in isolation (Huang, 2023). As the concept of collective identity gained traction, the term became a catchphrase, and discussions on identification particularly regarding who ought to be included and who ought to be excluded persisted. In the Euro-American scholarly community, the concept of identity has taken centre stage due to the ongoing process of redefining ethnic identity. In the US, the long-running racial tension between "whites" and "blacks" intensified as a result of civil rights and fairness movement goals held by African Americans. In the course of this new Black identity construction, a more militant Black identity the African American identity of today was moulded. However, racism and xenophobia began to manifest among white people. Because of this, the long-established view that cultural variables were foundational to previous understandings of ethnicity became problematic (Chapman, 2018).

9. Conclusion

As Max Roach put it, "this tale about jazz's beginnings served as a sobering reminder" of the dark side of American history from which jazz sprang. Jazz greats like Sonny Rollins and Ron Carter have used this kind of storytelling to demonstrate their distaste for the past. An exaggerated belief in one's capacity to disregard one's social status gives rise to this non-threatening demeanour. It is their belief that the criteria by which persons are assessed and evaluated constitute an axis inside the intricate normative framework that is created by the interwoven threads of social power and need. Jazz artists developed their beliefs by experimenting with the boundary between good and bad, much as they did with their musical skills. They were able to communicate via vocalisations and visual "actions" because of their deep familiarity with popular culture (Guo, 2019).

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