

Networked Musical Connections and Development Directions of City Pop between Hong Kong China and Osaka

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Abstract: Osaka and Hong Kong China occupy a significant role in the Asian music environment, exemplifying music's capacity to transcend boundaries and connect cultures. By fostering international cooperation, employing technology, and hosting global music events, Osaka and Hong Kong China can reinforce their status as cultural centers. The revival of City Pop exceeds common nostalgia. Rather, it is a commemoration of music's capacity to unite people, inspire creativity, and capture the spirit of urban life.

1. Introduction

The interaction between globalization and localization is evidently demonstrated in the realm of music, where economic and cultural perspectives provide an essential framework for understanding these relationships. The musical connection between Hong Kong China and Osaka exemplifies the effects of cultural exchange and illustrates the significance of City Pop as a critical nexus, which emerged in Japan in the late 1970s and flourished in response to the economic boom, integrating elements of jazz, funk, and AOR to depict an idealized urban lifestyle. The genre spread over Asia via television programs, anime theme songs, and pop culture, significantly influencing adjacent Hong Kong China.

This essay will examine the history of City Pop in Osaka and Hong Kong China but will focus more on the analysis regarding the potential of Hong Kong China and Osaka to the future evolution of City Pop. The City Pop ecosystems in these two cities serve as nodes in the global music network, offering opportunities for technology innovation, international collaboration, and rising regional markets. Moreover, this article will explore the way for City Pop continues to thrive under cultural globalization and will forecast its trajectory in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

2. Musical cosmopolitanism in Osaka

Osaka, the origin of Japan's City Pop, epitomizes Musical Cosmopolitanism, which emerged during the economic boom of the late 1970s and 1980s, significantly influenced by European and American musical styles. With this economic background, the key feature of City Pop is its idealized representation of a cosmopolitan urban lifestyle. This musical style, which integrates elements of jazz, funk, and adult-oriented rock (AOR), exemplifies Japan's assimilation and transformation of Western music, while representing the combination of global music culture and

contemporary Japanese music. [4]

One example of City Pop in Osaka is Miki Matsubara's "Stay With Me." As a classical song of City Pop, it characterizes lively tempo, soft melody, and intricate composition. The musical elements of the song, including jazz and funk, align with European and American pop music styles. At the same time, these elements incorporate the emotional subtlety and melodic smoothness that are the characteristics of Japanese music, making it both worldly and regionally appealing. This combination exemplifies Osaka's openness and innovation as a cultural hub, while also establishing it as a symbol of the internationalization of Japanese music.

Moreover, with the title of Music City, Osaka has solidified its position as a hub in the global music network by hosting music festivals, promoting local musicians, and exporting internationally competitive works. The popularity of City Pop has not only built an international recognition for Japanese music but has also catalyzed the sustainable evolution of Osaka's local music regarding diversity and globalization. The music internationalism in Osaka serves as a cultural phenomenon that reflects economic prosperity and exemplifies the interaction of musical ecosystems within the framework of globalization. [1]

3. Musical cosmopolitanism in Hong Kong China

The cosmopolitan nature of Hong Kong China's music arises from its position as the economic center of Asia. Economic prosperity has made Hong Kong China a platform for frequent cultural exchanges. Its status as a dual economic and cultural center gives Hong Kong China the ability to integrate various musical genres. As mentioned above, Japanese urban pop music originated in the economic boom and urban culture. It spread to Hong Kong China in the late 1970s and 1980s through television programs, anime theme songs and concerts. Hong Kong China singers often covered and adapted Japanese pop music, incorporating aspects of urban pop music into Cantonese pop music (Canton-pop), thus creating a localized form of expression.

One example of Canton-pop is the music created by Anita Mui. Mui has frequently covered the works of Japanese composer Miyuki Nakajima, including "Walking Alone on My Way". Mui blend Cantonese lyrics and Hong Kong China-style emotional nuances into this song while preserving the melody and sentiment of the original composition. This adaption illustrates Hong Kong China music's capacity to integrate and reinterpret global music culture, defining it as a significant international hub within the Asian music network. [1]

Furthermore, the impact of City Pop in Hong Kong China has been amplified by the extensive importation of Japanese pop culture and performances, such as Japanese music shows broadcast by Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB). This cultural interchange not only promoted the diversity of Cantonese pop music but also offered an opportunity for Hong Kong China to engage with the global music ecosystem.[4] The musical internationalism in Hong Kong China encompasses not only the incorporation of Japanese music but also its adaptation into local musical styles, which are subsequently disseminated, exemplified by the popularity of Cantonese pop music within Chinese communities in Southeast Asia.[5] By absorbing, adapting and disseminating City Pop music, Hong Kong China has embodied the music cosmopolitanism while consolidating its position as a cultural link in the global music network.

4. Trajectories of Musical Internationalism between Osaka and Hong Kong China

Although both Osaka and Hong Kong China have been important cities in the international development of urban pop music, the two places have shown different trajectories in the introduction and dissemination of music and culture. Osaka, as a creative center, has developed urban pop music with distinctive local characteristics by absorbing European and American musical

forms and spreading them to other parts of Asia. In contrast, Hong Kong China emphasized openness and adaptation, developing its distinctive musical identity through cultural exchanges with Japanese music. This bilateral musical internationalism demonstrates the different functions of the two regions in the global music network and their reciprocal impact on each other: Osaka is a center of music creation, and Hong Kong China as a nexus of cultural exchange and dissemination. Together, Osaka and Hong Kong China play a pivotal role in the Asian music industry.

5. Soft Power in Osaka

City Pop is a typical demonstration of Japan's soft power, spreading its cultural influence around the globe through music. In the digital age, especially with the emergence of new social media platforms such as TikTok, there is a revival of this 80s music genre through digital channels of communication.

Osaka and Hong Kong China, as important centers of music culture in Asia, show great potential for the future development of City Pop. Osaka, the birthplace of City Pop, has seen a resurgence of its music through TikTok. The algorithms reintroduce City Pop classics such as Miki Matsubara's 'Stay With Me' and Maria Takeuchi's 'Plastic Love' to global audiences. Moreover, with the form of short-video, TikTok and similar platforms start interactive cyber activities such as "Retro Music Challenges." The strategy effectively engages younger audiences by combining City Pop with visual elements.[4] Local musicians in Osaka can increase their global visibility through TikTok and utilize streaming services such as Spotify and Apple Music to release new music for the international market that blends traditional City Pop with edging technologies of music-production.

In addition, Osaka can utilize its rich musical assets and cultural heritage by hosting international music festivals or virtual live performances featuring City Pop. By curating online events in collaboration with digital platforms and social medias, Osaka can encourage the participation of global creators and stimulate the creation of new City Pop. Its resources can not only consolidate its position as a center for urban pop music, but also enhance the soft power of Japan's musical heritage.

6. Soft Power in Hong Kong China

As a center of cultural interaction in Asia, Hong Kong China has historically demonstrated a remarkable capacity for accepting and localizing cultures. The adaption of City Pop to Canto-Pop is an example demonstrating Hong Kong China's capacity as an international culture center. Nowadays, digital platforms such as TikTok and YouTube have enhanced this capacity. With these innovative tools, Hong Kong China artists can benefit from the resurgence of urban pop music to increase their profile in Asian music networks.[1]

The popularity of TikTok in Hong Kong China has provided great opportunities for local musicians to engage their fans by recomposing or reinterpreting iconic urban pop songs, incorporating Cantonese lyrics and Hong Kong China's distinctive urban characteristics. Similar to Japanese musicians, the younger generation of musicians in Hong Kong China can utilize TikTok's algorithms to promote creative works that combine City Pop with modern music genres such as electronic music and hip-hop, resulting in a trend of "new City Pop" with Hong Kong China characteristics. Moreover, as the special district of China, Hong Kong China has greater access to and popularity in Chinese market. As a strong market power, the Chinese market can foster the promotion and resurgence of City Pop. This cross-cultural fusion will enhance the influence of Hong Kong China music and spread Cantonese pop music to Southeast Asia and the global Chinese diaspora through streaming platforms.[5]

7. Conclusion

The history of City Pop and its cultural exchange between Hong Kong China and Osaka exemplifies the intriguing dynamics of globalization and local adaptation in music. Emerging in Osaka during Japan's economic boom, City Pop mixed Western music influences with Japanese elements, epitomizing music cosmopolitanism. The dissemination of the genre to Hong Kong China via television programs, anime, and concerts highlights the city's function as a center of cultural exchange, where it adopted and adapted the genre, thereby enhancing Cantonese pop music. Osaka and Hong Kong China exemplify two factors of musical internationalism: Osaka as a creative power creating the genre, and Hong Kong China as a cultural center that adapts and disseminates it globally.

In the digital era, platforms such as TikTok, Spotify, and YouTube have revitalized City Pop, presenting it to younger, international audiences. Osaka's extensive musical legacy and pioneering utilization of digital technologies establish it as a vanguard in the genre's future. Hong Kong China's capacity to merge City Pop with contemporary genres such as electronic and hip-hop ensure its sustainable development. Both cities occupy a significant role in the Asian music environment, exemplifying music's capacity to transcend boundaries and connect cultures. By fostering international cooperation, employing technology, and hosting global music events, Osaka and Hong Kong China can reinforce their status as cultural centers. The revival of City Pop exceeds common nostalgia. Rather, it is a commemoration of music's capacity to unite people, inspire creativity, and capture the spirit of urban life.

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