

Sounds of Asian American Trauma and Cultural Trauma: Jazz Reflections on the Japanese Internment

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Abstract: This article examines post-1980 musical responses to the Japanese Internment in the United States during WW II. It argues that these works differ because they were created at different points in the history of the Asian American movement. While the early works by Jon Jang and Glenn Horiuchi – written around the time of the 1988 Civil Liberties Act – focused on political action, later works by Anthony Brown and Soji Kashiwagi were more concerned with education and the personal traumas of former interns.

Résumé : Cet article examine les réponses musicales apportées après 1980 à l'internement des Japonais aux États-Unis durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Il soutient que ces travaux diffèrent parce qu'ils ont été créés en différents points de l'histoire du mouvement américano-asiatique. Tandis que les premières œuvres, celles de Jon Jang et Glenn Horiuchi – composées à l'époque de la Loi sur les libertés civiles (Civil Liberties Act) de 1988 – se concentraient sur l'action politique, des œuvres plus récentes d'Anthony Brown et de Soji Kashiwagi se préoccupent davantage d'enseignement, ainsi que des traumatismes personnels des anciens internés.

Trauma emerges in the aftermath of an experience so shocking that it overwhelms a person's capacity for comprehension. It disrupts one's sense of self and sabotages one's efforts to narrativize and make sense of the experience. It moreover produces haunting memories that freeze and silence the victim-survivor. What makes the effects of this disorder so difficult to treat and endure is the fact that the effects of trauma are produced not by the original experience, but by involuntary remembrances that often emerge years or even decades after the incidents that precipitated the trauma. As Cathy Caruth writes, "To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an

image or event” (Caruth 1995:4-5). Furthermore, one does not need to have directly experienced a catastrophic event or seen a tragedy live to be so possessed. Descendants of and clinicians who serve the traumatized often develop symptoms of this disorder (Kaslow 1999; Voss Horrell et al. 2011).

One way to alleviate the effects of trauma is to converse with sufferers and to create a safe space where they can gradually put their experiences together into narratives. The desired outcome of this process is not an “objective history”; as traumatic memories are often inconsistent and incomplete, this is well-nigh impossible. Instead, these narrations are linguistic performances that allow victims to create some understanding of what happened.¹ As clinical psychologist Judith Herman writes,

Traumatic memory ... is wordless and static. The survivor’s initial account of the event may be repetitious, stereotyped, and emotionless.... Another therapist described traumatic memory as a series of still snapshots or a silent movie; the role of therapy is to provide the music and words. (1992:175)

Given this emphasis on language and performance, it is no surprise that, over the past two decades, trauma theory has fruitfully illuminated literary studies, particularly discussions of narrative form, the usefulness and limitations of language in articulating experiences of trauma, and the ethical questions raised by the representation of personal, historical, and collective traumas. Outside the field of music therapy, music scholars have been slower to embrace trauma theory. Nonetheless, there is a growing number of studies on musical responses to personal and historical traumas (Barney and Mackinlay 2010; Pilzer 2006), analyses of musical settings of trauma poetry (Englund 2008), and the ability of music to represent and enact trauma and pain (Cizmic 2012; Rubin 1994; Maus 2010).

Over the past decade, a group of sociologists has developed the concept of “cultural trauma.” This theory, which has to date been underused in (ethno) musicological studies, differs from psychological notions of trauma, which are encapsulated in the description of trauma above, in three key ways.² First, cultural trauma deals with social groups and not individuals. Second, cultural trauma does not involuntarily arise from calamitous events. It comes about only when a collective begins to believe that “they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (Alexander 2004:1). To put it another way, cultural trauma arises only when a social group finds a catastrophic event or

policy in its history to be a useful foundation for a new group identity. This leads to the third difference: once an atrocious event or policy becomes a pertinent part of group identity, social collectives, under most circumstances, try to maintain rather than overcome cultural trauma.

Cultural trauma theorists believe that most “cultural trauma processes” begin decades after the end of the tragic experience, when some combination of survivors, activists, intellectuals, writers, artists, and musicians within a collective start promulgating personal testimonies about and alternate interpretations of a crisis through speeches, fiction, journalistic and scholarly articles, art exhibits, and performances (Alexander 2004:10). These stories allow the group to question stereotypes and dominant interpretations of the tragedy, to forge a new identity, and to fight for justice. The entire process is highly contested, and cultural trauma creation can fail because the group disagrees with the revisionist interpretations offered by the activists or declines to provide the resources necessary to disseminate these new ideas. Success might also be foiled because publicly debating these issues causes too much personal trauma for members of the collective. Even when successful, creating cultural trauma is a time-consuming and potentially divisive process that requires regular reinforcement. Although slavery was officially abolished in 1865, Ron Eyerman argues that it wasn’t until the late 19th century that “the memory of slavery and its representation through speech and art works ... grounded African American identity and permitted its institutionalization” (Eyerman 2004:61). In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the maintenance of this cultural trauma, which has been contested by more recent attempts to construct alternate cultural traumas, requires the constant efforts of numerous educators, public intellectuals, and artists.

All Asian American groups have long experiences of racial violence and exclusion, but it was only in the late 1960s and 1970s that activists managed to form a viable political movement aimed at constructing a new pan-Asian American racial identity, a “culture of resistance” that is closely tied to fighting subordination in American society (Omi and Winant 1986:42). In this process, they foregrounded the incarceration of 120,000 people of Japanese descent in the American West and American South during World War II as the foremost example of racial discrimination against Asian Americans – as the cultural trauma that lay at the heart of the new Asian American identity.³

Over the past four decades, Asian Americans have used different methods to construct and reinforce a racial identity based upon the cultural trauma of the Japanese internment and also to help internment camp survivors overcome their personal trauma. One of these methods is music composition. During the late 1970s and 1980s, many Asian American musicians – particularly

those associated with the early Asian American jazz movement – were fervent activists who participated in the campaign that sought redress and reparation for former internees and the Asian American community at large. These efforts, along with the stories that camp survivors told at the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) hearings held between 1980 and 1983, inspired dozens of overtly political compositions by composers of different genres in the mid-late 1980s. These works were performed at many colleges and Asian American movement events and thus played an important role in the first phase of the cultural trauma process. They promulgated and dramatized the ideas and activities of the Asian American movement in musical form. They moreover promoted both an alternative to Cold War America’s general view of the Japanese internment as a “necessary evil” and an Asian American identity that is based upon cultural trauma.

As the 1990s dawned, however, the legislative success of the redress and reparations movement – culminating in the 1988 Civil Liberties Act that granted reparations to surviving internees – and a shifting political environment led to a gradual decline in the quantity of and new approaches to writing internment-related compositions. These works contributed to the second phase of the cultural trauma process – the maintenance of an identity that is based largely on the cultural trauma of the Japanese internment. These pieces tend to be more reflective and often focus on education and on the personal trauma of internment camp survivors.

This article focuses on three internment-inspired compositions written over a 15-year span. While Jon Jang’s *Reparations Now!* (1988; see Jang 1991) belongs to the first phase of the cultural trauma process, Anthony Brown’s *E.O. 9066: Truth Be Told* (1996; see Brown 1997 and Brown, Izu, and Jang 1998) and Soji Kashiwagi’s *The Camp Dance: The Music and the Memories* (composed 2003) are products of the second or “routinization phase” of this process (Alexander 2004:23). Below, I will place these works into the context of Asian American music and demonstrate how each reflects the different stages of and opportunities offered by the cultural trauma process.

The Emergence of Asian American Jazz and Jon Jang’s *Reparations Now!*

The pioneers of the Asian American jazz movement were second- and third-generation Chinese American and Japanese American men. As young adults, this small group, which included Jon Jang (b. 1954), Glenn Horiuchi (1955-2000), Francis Wong (b. 1955), Anthony Brown (b. 1953), Mark Izu (b. 1954), Fred

Ho (b. 1957), and Jason Kao Hwang (b. 1957), was heavily influenced by Black nationalism and became dedicated to cultivating a broad oppositional minority culture. They became a part of the Asian American Consciousness Movement, which refers to efforts beginning in the late 1960s (and particularly with the 1968 San Francisco State University student strike) to expose the adverse effects of racial stereotypes on Asian Americans and thereby change Asian Americans' perceptions of themselves and other Americans' perceptions of them.⁴ To put it another way, these young jazz musicians were part of the Asian American movement that attempted to construct a new collective identity based upon discrimination – the main experience shared by all Americans of Asian descent. Several also adopted far-left politics. To further their solidarity with the proletariat, some turned their backs on white-collar careers or dropped out of graduate school to take blue-collar jobs in construction and utility companies. Jang, Wong, Horiuchi, and Ho even joined the Marxist-Leninist League of Revolutionary Struggle (LRS).

As these Asian American jazz pioneers searched for a musical language that suited their artistic and political needs in the late 1970s and early 1980s, they turned to what is variously called “avant-garde jazz,” “creative music,” or “free jazz,” as exemplified by the compositions of Ornette Coleman, Archie Shepp, Cecil Taylor, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and the late recordings of John Coltrane. They thus followed the lead of Black nationalists and artists who asserted that radical politics required the most cutting-edge art.⁵ These pioneers believed that only new and uncompromising creations could break down old boundaries, beliefs and behaviours. Fred Ho writes,

I identified with its pro-oppressed, anti-oppressor character: with the militancy the musicians displayed, with its social history of rebellion and revolt, and with its musical defiance to not kow-tow to, but challenge and contest, Western European “classical” music and co-opted, diluted, eviscerated commercialized forms that became American pop music. (2009:93)

In short, he and other Asian jazz pioneers discovered in avant-garde jazz a previously unknown and revolutionary cultural space, a place that they would soon adopt to test out new modes of consciousness.

This search for a new and more empowered identity took these musicians in different directions. Violinist Jason Kao Hwang viewed traditional jazz chord progressions as European products; for him, breaking harmonic rules and exploring “the violin in an un-colonized way” became “an issue of cultural integrity and identity” (Kajikawa 2009:38). Others turned to their own and other

Asian heritages. While Mark Izu began studying *gagaku* (Japanese court music) and the *shô* (Japanese mouth organ), Fred Ho learned Chinese traditional music and notation through leading the Boston Asian American Resource Workshop's Chinese folk-singing group. The different ways these musicians incorporated their new knowledge into a jazz framework greatly diversified the movement's music, but aesthetic considerations cannot fully explain these explorations.

The jazz pioneers' forays into Asian traditional musics were also an implicit rejection both of an assimilationist American culture and of the desire of many Asian Americans for what Homi Bhabha calls "mimicry": the flawed attempts of the oppressed (in this case, Asian Americans) to gain equality by copying the language, dress, manners, and attitudes of the oppressors (in this case, mainstream American music). As Ho writes, "It also became evident to me that a huge gulf has existed between this rich traditional heritage of the immigrants and the highly Western-imitative cultural expressions of the American-born" (Ho 2009:49). He goes on to describe the "shallow early Asian American Movement music" – that is, Asian American resistance music before the emergence of Asian American jazz – as "a derivative of both white folk and leftist styles à la Bob Dylan and Pete Seeger or African American gospel, soul, and rhythm and blues idioms" (Ho 2009:50).

Other identity and empowerment issues also permeate the "early" Asian American jazz scene, which included several compositions inspired by the Japanese internment experience. Most of these musicians agreed with the outspoken novelist and playwright Frank Chin, who decried the absence of "masculine" prowess in most American depictions of Asian males.⁶ To combat this absence, the Asian American jazz musicians stayed away from what they viewed to be the feminized worlds of classical and popular music and wrote music that is modern, full of driving rhythms and filled with bold solos.⁷ Moreover, they allied themselves with the plight of African Americans and borrowed the trope of African American masculinity.⁸ This is most obvious in the use of jazz idioms and in the composer's frequent collaborations with male African American musicians, but one finds more subtle affirmations of this bond in specific works.

One of the most well-known of these "early" pieces is Jon Jang's internment-inspired four-movement suite *Reparations Now!* Lasting over half an hour and featuring one or more Asian American bodies aggressively banging large taiko drums, Jang's work exemplifies the identity politics espoused by the Asian American jazz movement during its early phase. Jang was very active in the redress and reparations movement, and was well connected to the Japanese American community.⁹ Yet, in deciding what Japanese musical elements to incorporate into this work, he did not use the popular American idioms that were most familiar to Japanese Americans, nor did he take lessons with *nisei*

(second-generation Japanese immigrant) or *sansei* (third-generation Japanese immigrant) musicians who played Japanese instruments. He was determined to replace the “assimilationist” identity that many Asian Americans of the time adopted with a more empowered identity that exhibited more “Japanese-ness.” In short, Jang was intent on advancing the cultural trauma process by aiming to show how the Japanese internment “left indelible marks on the consciousness of Asian Americans” and changed its identity in “fundamental and irrevocable ways” (Alexander 2004:1). Specifically, the Japanese internment and its aftermath demonstrated that attempts by Asian Americans at assimilation – the performance of swing music at internment camps, the movement of Japanese Americans into traditional Caucasian neighbourhoods after WW II, and the climbing of American corporate ladders – had not lessened their “otherness” in mainstream American society. This reality was brought home not only with the racially motivated murder of Vincent Chin in a Detroit suburb in 1982, but also, even more so, when his murderers managed to avoid any jail time.¹⁰ To improve the treatment of Asian Americans, activists sought a new Asian American identity that balances assimilation and difference – an identity that showed that, despite over a century of intense discrimination, which included the Japanese internment, Asian Americans are strong people with cultural heritages that cannot be destroyed by racist policies and actions.

To Jang and others in the nascent Asian American jazz scene, musically representing this new identity involved combining jazz (an American idiom) and elements that highlighted their “Asian-ness.” In *Reparations Now!*, Jang borrowed some music from *o-bon* festivals, which are popular in both Japan and American Japantowns, 19th-century Japanese-Hawaiian plantation songs called “*hole hole bushi*” and *kumi-daiko*, a new form that was associated with Asian American agency from the time it took root in the United States in the late 1960s. Additionally, he researched Japanese traditional music by reading books. This led him to base the entire suite on the “*kokin-joshi*” scale that he discovered in Yusef Lateef’s *Repository of Scales and Melodic Patterns* (1981; personal communication, 20 April 2011). He also used jazz instruments to imitate the sounds of the *shakuhachi*, which he learned about by studying William Malm’s *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments* (1959). The resulting work thus exhibits an unresolvable tension; *Reparations Now!* is at once a tribute to survivors of the Japanese internment and a rejection of much *nisei-sansei* culture.

In addition to mixing jazz with Japanese musical elements, *Reparations Now!* affirms the Asian American-African American alliance in three ways.¹¹ First, the work’s title pays homage to African American drummer/composer Max Roach’s emphatically named *We Insist! Freedom Now Suite* (1960). Second, the long list of dedications includes former internees/activists, the National

Coalition for Redress and Reparations, as well as the Congressional Black Caucus (which strongly advocated for redress) and the reparation for slavery movement (denoted in the CD booklet as “40 acres and a mule for African Americans”). Furthermore, as Derk Richardson makes known in the CD’s liner notes, the work’s main melody, based on the *kokin-joshi* scale (containing the pitches B-C-E-F#-A), is very similar to the common jazz minor pentatonic scale (containing the pitches B-D-E-F#-A).

The empowered Asian American identity, the partial rejection of existing *nisei-sansei* culture, and the African American alliance are also portrayed in Glenn Horiuchi’s internment-inspired works of the 1980s. After researching Japanese American history and listening to the testimony presented at the CWRIC hearings, he came to believe that the *issei*, the first generation of Japanese immigrants and the group most adversely affected by the internment, possessed a particularly courageous spirit. During the early part of his career, he came to see his music as a sort of initiation ritual for his fellow *sansei*. Specifically, he believed that his music was a liminal space where the *issei*’s radical spirits could be captured, and this music would lead their descendants to follow their lead and take up political activism. In *Issei Spirit* (1988), Horiuchi evokes the early generation by initially playing the *komabue* (Japanese flute) but eventually depicts its power and bravery through the style of Cecil Taylor. As Loren Kajikawa writes,

In the climatic moments of the piece ... Horiuchi pounds away at the keyboard and lets out a series of anguished screams, his piano playing reminiscent of Cecil Taylor’s percussive, rapid-fire clusters. This connection was conscious, as Horiuchi took to performing and being photographed for his album covers wearing a knit wool cap reminiscent of Taylor. Writing the liner notes to Horiuchi’s album *Next Step*, Jon Jang played on this connection, casting Horiuchi’s piano style as “88 tuned taiko drums,” a reference to Valerie Wilmer’s description of Cecil Traylor’s playing as “88 tuned drums.” (Kajikawa 2009:40)

Towards the Second Phase of the Cultural Trauma Process

After 1988, Asian American political activism began to decline. One major reason for this is the very success of the redress movement. For two decades, Asian American activists proposed a new racial identity and a revisionist history of the Japanese internment. When Congress passed the 1988 Civil Liberties Act that granted reparations to surviving internees, the government essentially

endorsed the historical narrative the activists proposed, and the first phase of the cultural trauma process was complete. This success naturally led to a reduction in activism. As Alexander writes, "Once the collective identity has been so reconstructed, there will eventually be a period of 'calming down.' The spiral of signification flattens out, affect and emotion become less inflamed, preoccupation with sacrality and pollution fades" (2004:22).

In the longer term, a more crucial issue for the movement was the changing demographics of Asian America.¹² When the movement emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s, most Asian Americans were second-, third-, and fourth-generation immigrants. The Japanese internment (and, for Chinese Americans, the exclusion acts) was thus central to their family histories, and the movement reflected their interests. However, even as the "consciousness movement" was gaining steam, millions of new Asian immigrants landed in the United States. They knew little about Asian American history and American stereotypes of Asians, and their concerns were often wildly different from those of the activists. For the activists, the large influx of immigrants created the immediate and constant need to reinforce the centrality of resistance in Asian American racial identity and the cultural trauma of the Japanese internment. It also signaled the necessity of expanding the notion of Asian American cultural trauma. This led Asian American activists to apply the lessons of the Japanese internment to other Asian and non-Asian American groups, thereby universalizing the notion of Asian American cultural trauma.

For the early Asian American jazz musicians, the confluence of changes in the Asian American movement and three other issues forced them to reconsider their art, their politics, and their relationship to mainstream arts organizations. First, its popularity with Asian American college students and activists notwithstanding, it became clear by the late 1980s that the music of the jazz pioneers was not speaking to the Asian American community at large.¹³ This is not surprising, as Asian American jazz involved the partial rejection of *nisei-sansei* culture. The strange fusion of traditional Asian and jazz elements allowed Jang, Horiuchi, and their colleagues to express their politics, but their rejection of the "assimilationist" paradigm that so many Asian Americans of the time subscribed to inevitably limited their music's appeal to this audience. As Horiuchi admitted to his long-time student Kajikawa, "Okay, I'm trying to do this Japanese American thing and Japanese Americans don't like it" (Kajikawa 2009:52).

Second, 1989 was a difficult time for the most radical members of the movement. The Tiananmen Massacre, the fall of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union's disavowal of socialism severely affected the LRS. After an internal scandal, the organization itself repudiated

Marxist-Leninism and disbanded in September 1990, leaving its members to search for alternative beliefs.¹⁴ Third, the members of the jazz movement had to deal with the institutionalization of multiculturalism at mainstream arts organizations. In the early 1990s, large institutions frequently incorporated elements of multiculturalism in their mission statements and grant applications to gain funding. This effectively lessened the amount of money available to many grassroots organizations. Moreover, many minority artists discovered that many mainstream organizations were ultimately unwilling to support the multicultural activities outlined in their project narratives.¹⁵ Calling these the “multicultural arts wars,” Jang states,

There was the Berkeley Repertory Theater which received \$1.5 million [from the] Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund to expand Asian audiences while the Asian American Theater company did not get funded.... In the funding game multiculturalism was used in the narrative as a litmus test. If you could describe in your narrative how multicultural you were you would get more funding. Different white arts mainstream organizations would try to doctor up their grants, or use artists of color or arts institutions of color and discuss issues of multiculturalism without them being at the table. (Paget-Clarke 1998)

The composers of the Asian American jazz movement resolved these issues in different ways. As a group, they gradually diversified the movement; women, most notably Miya Masaoka, and South and Southeast Asian musicians began collaborating with the pioneers in the 1990s.¹⁶ As individuals, Glenn Horiuchi turned away from writing explicitly political music and, along with Francis Wong, explored free improvisation intensively in his later albums (1989, 1995, 1991).¹⁷ Horiuchi also studied Zen, eventually becoming a Dharma teacher. Fred Ho remained a committed Marxist, and began writing his *Monkey Trilogy* (Ho 1996, 1997). Based loosely on the Chinese novel *Journey to the West*, Ho’s martial-arts-infused musical theater work depicts the Monkey’s efforts to fight colonialism. Meanwhile, Jon Jang delved into Chinese music and wrote several major works that place Chinese folk songs in the context of contemporary jazz and classical music.

If there is any theme that united the Asian American jazz pioneers in the 1990s, it is transnationalism. As the millennium drew to a close, these composers increasingly looked for inspiration and made connections outside the United States, most frequently in Asia but sometimes in other places. As Francis Wong states,

There was a re-definition of Asian American identity in the sense that up through the '80s the Asian American movement was primarily Chinese American, Japanese American, and generally American born. From the latter half of the '80s through the '90s there's been an infusion into our communities by immigrants from Southeast Asia and from Korea. With both the political global events and the changes our communities were going through there was a need for more of an international perspective on what defines us as Asian Americans. That's when a lot of folks in the Chinese community began once again talking about this idea of the diaspora. (Paget-Clarke 1998)

Jang elaborates on Wong's statement by pointing out that, in the early decades of the Chinese and Asian exclusion acts, Asian America had regular contacts with Asia and Asian performing arts. Nancy Rao's research further demonstrates that Chinese opera troupes regularly toured American Chinatowns in the 1920s and 1930s. These tours not only introduced the latest Chinese stars to American audiences, but also influenced the ways Chinese operas were performed in Asia. Mixed-gender troupes, for example, flourished in America before they became popular in much of China and Hong Kong (Rao 2011:253-54).

As a result of wars and the passing of first-generation immigrants, however, the Asian America in which the jazz pioneers grew up was fairly isolated from Asia. In learning about Japanese traditional music, Jang showed that he often trusted books by European American and African American scholars more than the knowledge of Japanese Americans. All this changed when Asians resumed immigrating to the United States after 1965. Compared to the earlier waves of Asian immigrants, the newcomers had much more diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. Additionally, many of them differed with most early Asian American movement activists by trying to retain their Asian identities or adopting transnational ones. To speak to an Asian America in which recent immigrants increasingly outnumbered the American-born, the jazz pioneers themselves became more transnational by collaborating with Asian-trained musicians and becoming more proficient in Asian traditional musics. Some also developed performance careers in Asia. It was in this outward-looking environment that Anthony Brown wrote *E.O. 9066* in 1996.

Anthony Brown and E.O. 9066

The son of an American Army Sergeant Major of African-Choctaw heritage from South Carolina and a Japanese mother from Tokyo, Anthony Brown has been a world traveller since his youth. A native of San Francisco, Brown grew up in California, Japan, and Germany. This intercontinental upbringing, which sets him apart from the other Asian American jazz pioneers, is reflected in the eclectic nature of his early musical activities. As a teenager, he studied classical music theory and flute, wrote blues, and played drums in jazz and rock bands. He was also exposed to Japanese traditional music during his years in that country. After graduating from high school in Frankfurt, Brown attended the University of Oregon on an ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) scholarship, graduating with a double degree in music and psychology in 1975. He then spent four years as an Army officer stationed in Athens and Heidelberg.

Brown returned to San Francisco in 1980 and joined United Front, a jazz quartet that included Mark Izu. Like many of the other pioneers, he began writing jazz-based works that incorporated elements from his ethnic heritage. An example is the *Incantation Suite* for jazz quartet and string trio (1983), a twenty-minute suite commissioned by the San Francisco Chamber Music Society that contains both Asian and African influences. Unlike Jang, Horiuchi, Wong, and others who adopted and became proud of their "DIY-indie" attitude, however, Brown cultivated ties with establishment institutions even as he continued to play and tour with his Asian American jazz colleagues. He received a Masters in jazz performance from Rutgers University and a PhD in ethnomusicology from the University of California, Berkeley. In 1992, he even began working for the Smithsonian as Curator of American Musical Culture, Director of the Jazz Oral History Program, and member of the Smithsonian Jazz Trio. It was during his tenure with the Smithsonian that he received the commission from the Rockefeller Foundation to write *E.O. 9066: Truth Be Told*. Named after President Franklin D. Roosevelt's executive order that cleared the way for the Japanese internment, this work was premiered at New York City's Asia Society in 1996, a performance that was captured on his 1997 CD *Family*. Unless otherwise noted, my analysis below is based on this recording. In 1997-1998, the Big Bands Behind Barbed Wire project, funded by the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund and dedicated to increasing public awareness about the Japanese internment and its meanings, brought the piece to audiences around the country (Brown, Izu, and Jang 1998). A second recording of four of the five movements of *E.O. 9066* is on the project's companion CD. Brown continues to perform and to rearrange movements from this work; a segment

of the final movement, “Rhymes (for Children),” became the theme music for the public radio show *Pacific Time*. Brown states that, since the United States government continues “indicting and criminalizing people on the basis of race” in the post-9/11 world, he and others need to keep teaching the lessons of the Japanese internment (personal communication, 30 March 2011).

E.O. 9066 is a five-movement suite lasting just under half an hour. The “Prelude” opens with a loud gong crash. As the noise recedes, the drummer (Brown) sneaks in, playing a floating asymmetrical rhythm on the ride cymbal. A bit later, the bassist (Izu) enters with a scurrying line that does not quite sync up with the cymbal while other instrumentalists add sound effects. In the liner notes, Brown states that he wanted to create an “ambience of timelessness.” Given the dissonant sound effects and the increasingly unsettled nature of the bass line, this timeless quality is combined with a certain foreboding and unease. Eventually, an extended melodic fragment (derived from a later movement) is played on the *koto*, giving the piece an aura of “Japanese-ness.” After the piano and Western flute play other melodic fragments, a sudden loud chord interrupts the proceedings and a long shakuhachi solo based on the “General’s Order” melody ensues. Here, the beginning of the melody, with its dramatic pauses and wide vibratos, evokes a nostalgic feel. It announces that the work is about something that happened long ago, but the melody’s overall effect here is quite different from all of its later appearances. The drums and scurrying bass gradually get louder, reminding the shakuhachi that the melody is not a source of happiness, but rather the basis of outrage and injustice. Eventually, the shakuhachi gets the point and becomes more rhythmic and more timbrally varied; there is increasingly liberal use of overblowing, a technique that produces screechy and breathy high pitches. After what seems an eternity, a taiko drum enters, waking the entire ensemble from the shakuhachi haze, and brings the “Prelude” to a loud and turbulent conclusion. This ending leaves little doubt about the seriousness of the subject of the work and its tragic nature.

According to Brown, former internees often discussed the uncertainty they felt when they were removed from their houses and put on trains. They did not know where they were heading or what life would be like wherever the train stopped. For many contemporary readers, these descriptions inevitably brought to mind similar testimonies from Holocaust survivors.¹⁸ The second movement of Brown’s work, “Loco-Motif/Taiko Trane,” portrays this harrowing ride, and represents the first of Brown’s attempts to universalize the Japanese internment experience and Asian American cultural trauma in this composition. It opens with the sounds of a train whistle. The drummer then mimics the slow acceleration of the train. When it reaches a fairly fast

speed, the taiko ensemble enters and eventually takes over completely. Here, the relentless *kane* (the small gong that plays the fast long-short-long-short rhythm) and the steady thumping of the large low drum instill a sense of dread. Near the end of the movement, a loud cymbal crash stops the train's momentum, and the tempo slows to a halt. The mouth organ, perhaps initially representing the noise of train brakes, prepares us for the contrasting sounds of the third movement.

In performance, "Loco-Motif/Taiko Trane" did not quite turn out the way Brown had expected. Watching the video of the premiere, he discovered that the taiko ensemble, far from portraying fear on their faces and bodies, was actually smiling; they treated this movement as a celebratory piece. In a way, this is not shocking. Historically, taiko was used in a wide variety of contexts, and a few, such as intimidating the enemy, fit Brown's original aims well. In those situations, the drums are supposed to scare you. That said, taiko – both in Japan and in the United States – is often festival music. Moreover, most modern taiko ensembles practice *kumi-daiko*, a form that in the United States is associated with Asian American empowerment. Even more pertinent for the performers at the premiere was the fact that the taiko segment in Brown's work is derived from a joyous piece. Although unintended, this movement brings up what Brown calls "double-ness": the idea that several movements of this work can be interpreted in contrasting ways. Here, the differing interpretations resulted not from intention, but from the lack of clear communication of the wishes of the composer. Looking back, Brown states that the contrasting readings of this movement might actually reflect divergent experiences of the train ride to the internment camps: "The kids would have looked at this as an adventure; for adults, it was a very foreboding period."

Dedicated to the *issei*, the middle movement, *Ichikotsu-cho*, is an arrangement of an 11th-century *gagaku* composition.¹⁹ It captures the stately and static quality of Japanese court music, and follows the general form of the genre by introducing each instrument individually, starting with the mouth organ. Brown first heard this music as a young boy, and he still has vivid memories of *gagaku* being played at New Year celebrations near his mother's family home in Tokyo. For this reason, he had long associated this genre with Japaneseness, and his friendship with *gagaku* enthusiast Mark Izu could only have strengthened this association. Although this is not music that the *issei* would have heard on a regular basis, this movement portrays these immigrants' strong desires to keep traditional Japanese culture alive in their new home. At the end of the movement, a drum roll enters and quickly overwhelms both the *issei* and the possibility of Japaneseness in America. The abruptness of this transition reflects, to my ears, the speed with which people of Japanese

descent were removed from their homes and put into assembly centres, trains, and, eventually, camps.

What we hear next is an arrangement of a famous Chinese tune called “The General’s Order.” Brown first learned this tune in 1990, when the *suona* (Chinese reed trumpet) player on this recording, Liu Qi Chao, and his late wife, the *guzheng* virtuoso Zhang Yan, asked him to collaborate on a series of concerts. Brown chose this tune because it offered the opportunity for “double-ness.” On the one hand, the melody’s title is a reference to General John L. Dewitt, who recommended the forced removal of people of Japanese descent along the West Coast of the continental United States to President Roosevelt. On the other hand, this melody reminds audiences that the Japanese internment was not World War II’s only atrocity. According to Brown, the Chineseness of this melody is a reminder that the Rape of Nanjing was an even greater atrocity committed as a result of a general’s order. This movement, then, is perhaps a reminder that terrible things might occur if people do not think before they follow commands. Previewed by the shakuhachi in the “Prelude,” the theme is first played in this movement in the high register of the piercing *suona*. Accompanied by very assertive percussion throughout the entire movement, the whole ensemble eventually picks up “The General’s Order.” Brown’s score suggests that the whole nation (or the whole army) has, sadly, succumbed to the criminal demands of the barking generals.

The final movement, “Rhymes (for Children),” was inspired by two contrasting sets of documents: for Brown, another example of “double-ness.” One was photographs of innocent children who were caught up in the internment process, and the other was papers that demonstrated the American government’s efforts to get Central and South American governments to send Japanese Latin Americans to US-based camps for prisoner exchange purposes.²⁰ The tragic nature of these inspirations notwithstanding, this concluding movement is a rumba that, according to Brown’s liner notes, “celebrates hope for a future that will not see the imprisonment of children.” The composer’s description is a little simplistic; at least at the premiere, the heartbreaking images and the deplorable American foreign policy seem to lurk just beneath the surface. The extreme repetitiveness of this movement, which contrasts greatly with the first four, evokes a sense of restlessness. Coupled with Francis Wong’s very serious tenor sax solo, the ensemble’s fairly straight (i.e., non-swung) rhythms and the booming sound of the large taiko drum, this first performance of “Rhymes (for Children)” emanates a sense of “forced fun” not unlike the feeling some employees get when they are compelled to participate in company bonding activities. Later performances are certainly more playful than the premiere, but the dark undercurrents beneath the joy remain.

As a drummer, Brown played many of the first phase internment-related works by the jazz pioneers, and *E.O. 9066* reflects this experience. Like Jang's *Reparations Now!* and Horiuchi's *Poston Sonata*, Brown's suite ends with a celebration. Also, the train acceleration at the beginning of "Loco-Motif/Taiko Trane" is very similar to a passage at the end of the third movement of Jang's suite. Brown additionally follows Horiuchi's *Issei Spirit* and other works by paying tribute to the first generation of Japanese immigrants. Finally, *E.O. 9066* is similar to other internment pieces in that it is full of direct borrowings of Asian traditional music.

At the same time, however, Brown's composition departs from the "first phase" pieces in important ways, and signifies a different way of responding to the cultural trauma of the Japanese internment. The first phase internment-related works, which were written shortly before or immediately after President Reagan signed the 1988 Civil Liberties Act, were calls to political action. As mentioned earlier, Horiuchi's ultimate aim – however unsuccessful it turned out to be – was to get sansei to be more politically active. Meanwhile, Jang's major internment work is called *Reparations Now!* This aggressive title is reinforced by the title of the first movement, "Redress," and the third movement, which is once again "Reparations Now!" As befits good calls to action, these first phase works stick to a simple message: the Japanese internment was an atrocity, and we need to do something about it. The works exemplify the new Asian American racial identity, which involves a balance between assimilation (jazz) and difference (borrowings of Japanese music). They also present the Japanese internment as a singular atrocity that deserves renewed attention and reinterpretation.

Written eight years after the 1988 Civil Liberties Act was signed, *E.O. 9066* is not a call for immediate political action. It is instead a work in what Alexander calls the routinization phase of the cultural trauma process. During this period, "the 'lessons' of the trauma become objectified in monuments, museums, and collections of historical artifacts" and "the trauma process, once so vivid, can become subject to the technical, sometimes desiccating attention of specialists who detach affect from meaning" (Alexander 2004:22-23). *E.O. 9066* fits both parts of this description to a tee. First, the work was commissioned by a major philanthropic organization and toured the country with a grant from the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund, which was a governmental organization dedicated to educating the public about the Japanese internment. Second, although Brown's work is aesthetically very successful, there is sometimes an odd disjunction between affect and meaning. The fifth movement, for example, is based on two sets of depressing documents: photographs of interned children and the U.S. government's

attempt to use Japanese Latin Americans for prisoner exchange purposes. Yet, the music sounds quite happy. Third, perhaps because there was already so much readily accessible information about the internment camps and their famous survivors during the late 1990s, Brown's work is inspired more by what might be considered footnotes in the history of the Japanese internment than by the main issues. There are no musical depictions of camp life or musical portraits of famous internees. Instead, the work contains depictions of trains that transported internees and a musical reminder that the internment was the brainchild of a general. In short, Brown's *E.O. 9066* was a product of the second phase of the cultural trauma process – a time when straightforward retellings of the internment story became so routinized that artists felt the need to search for new angles and new comparisons.

In the final two decades of the 20th century, the Asian American jazz movement released dozens of excellent recordings, but it remained on the margins of Asian America. In particular, relative newcomers from Asia, who now greatly outnumber second-, third-, and fourth-generation immigrants, have shown little interest in this music. In the 21st century, the jazz pioneers have remained extremely active composers and performers, but the Japanese internment no longer provides much inspiration for their new works. The depiction of relatively obscure topics in Brown's *E.O. 9066* is perhaps a signal that the Asian American jazz musicians have done all they could with the Japanese internment. The movement's next and last major internment-related composition is *Last Dance* (Izu and Yoshida 1998). Commissioned by the Big Bands Behind Barbed Wire project, it is a moving multimedia work that combines Mark Izu's haunting score, arrangements of big band numbers that nisei and sansei performed and danced to inside the camps, and stories chosen by musician and former internee George Yoshida. The inclusion of big band numbers represents a remarkable departure for members of the Asian American jazz movement, which for so many years rejected music that represented an assimilationist Asian American identity.

Recycling the "Original" Asian American Jazz: Soji Kashiwagi and *Camp Dance*

Outside the Asian American jazz movement, however, there emerged in the mid-1990s a batch of musicals that are explicitly based on jazz heard inside the internment camps. As artworks about the Japanese internment, these pieces reinforce the centrality of cultural trauma in Asian American identity, and many of their creators were activists who participated in the fight for

redress and reparations. Unlike the Asian American jazz musicians, however, these writers and composers did not buy into the notion that political art had to be avant-garde. They were not interested in creating genre-bending experimental compositions that alienated most Asian Americans. Instead, they wrote musicals that use conventional forms, sentimental narratives, and humour to spread their message.

An early example of this new genre is *A Jive Bomber's Christmas* (Joe, Magwili, and Magwili 1999). Developed by Saachiko and Dom Magwili, this show, which tells the simple story of internees putting on a Christmas pageant, was staged annually at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles from 1994 to 2003 and again in 2006. Then, in 2003, Asian American theater veteran Soji Kashiwagi wrote *The Camp Dance: The Music and the Memories*. This show has been staged in numerous Japanese American venues, schools, and sites in or near the old internment camps.

Kashiwagi was born in 1962 in Oakland and grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area. He first learned about the Japanese internment in 1975, when he attended a community event at a Buddhist church with his father, playwright/actor/librarian Hiroshi Kashiwagi. During this gathering, the elder Kashiwagi, who was one of the few Japanese Americans who broke the community's self-imposed silence about this difficult period, went into an impassioned speech about the camps. As his son recalls, "[Hiroshi's] speeches were fiery, his poems angry and his plays about camp revealed the injustice and the dark side of our nation's history, and how this darkness blanketed an entire community" (Kashiwagi 2010).

Armed with this knowledge, Soji went on to attend San Francisco State University, the site of the 1968-1969 student strike that was so instrumental in sparking the Asian American Consciousness Movement, and he graduated with a degree in journalism. He then moved to Los Angeles to study filmmaking and playwriting. After several years on the Asian American theatre scene in L.A., Kashiwagi founded the Grateful Crane Ensemble in 2001. This company is dedicated to presenting educational and theatrical programs about Japanese American history and has performed in a wide variety of venues, from theaters to retirement homes and from schools to historic sites. What makes Grateful Crane unique is that its main target audience is the aging nisei, most of whom were forced to live in internment camps during World War II. Kashiwagi is very concerned about the continued traumatic effects of internment on the nisei and their descendants. He states,

There is so much healing that needs to happen. For a lot of people, this [healing] never happened and they died. There are a lot of

people walking around with unresolved pain that has never been dealt with. They just never talked about it and never dealt with it.

He added that the *nisei*'s trauma was also affecting the *sansei* and *yonsei* (fourth-generation Japanese Americans): "The really sad part . . . is that this pain has transferred to their kids. The kids know it has affected us but a lot of times they don't know exactly why because their parents never talked about it" (personal communication, 18 January 2011).

Camp Dance, for which Kashiwagi received the 2006 Ruby Yoshina Schaar Playwriting Award from the Japanese American Citizens League, is largely a reaction against the many indignant camp plays and angry musical works written during the 1970s and 1980s. During this initial phase of the "cultural trauma process," the display of rage and fury was effective and necessary. Without it, activists could not have gotten the attention they needed and exhibited how destructive and offensive the traditional narrative of the Japanese internment was. With the success of the redress and reparations campaign and concomitant change in the dominant narrative about the Japanese internment, however, Kashiwagi argues that the continued emphasis on anger is ineffective and misplaced. As he states, "After a while, you get tired of getting pounded over the head with anger and injustice. You can only take so much of that." To put it another way, once a social group manages to change the dominant historical narrative about a catastrophic event, it has succeeded in establishing a cultural trauma. At this juncture, the cultural trauma enters the routinization phase, where it can be used to "broaden the realm of social understanding and sympathy" and "provide powerful avenues for new forms of social incorporation" (Alexander 2004:24). The institution of the Japanese internment as a cultural trauma thus provides both Asian Americans and the American public at large new ways to comprehend the pain of the victim-survivors and new opportunities for personal healing.

As a playwright, Kashiwagi wanted to take advantage of the possibilities offered by the routinization phase of the cultural trauma process and decided to write a musical because he believed that music "softens the anger and injustice, just as it did for the people in camp." By focusing on the camp dance – one of the happiest and most "normal" aspects of life in internment camps – and the music performed there, he hopes that watching this musical will help former internees feel safe about discussing their internment experiences and encourage their descendants to ask questions. To put it another way, *Camp Dance* is, like the early internment-related works of Horiuchi, intended to be a ritual and a transformative liminal space. While Horiuchi hoped his music would lead to increased political activism, Kashiwagi believes that his work

can help heal some of the lingering effects of trauma within the Japanese American community.

Camp Dance begins with the entire five-member cast singing Doris Day's 1945 hit "Sentimental Journey." Halfway through the song, an actor steps forward and announces, "we'll be taking you on a sentimental journey back to 1942 through 1945, to a place you all remember: the camp dance."²¹ He and another actor then proceed to enumerate concrete events, such as "the Shamrock Jig from 6 to 10[pm] on March 17, 1944. Amache, Colorado" and to recall the camps' most famous bands, such as "the big band sounds of the Music Makers at Poston, Arizona" (Kashiwagi 2007:1). This opening, with the phrase "you all remember," acknowledges that the show targets former internees. The listing of specific dances and bands helps this audience recall buried memories and identify with the actions on stage. At Klamath Falls, where most of the audience was not former internees, these tidbits add a sense of "authenticity," a feeling that the playwright knows what he is writing about. To transport the audience into the ritual space, Kashiwagi uses a very familiar device in internment-related compositions: the train. At the end of "Sentimental Journey," a third actor calls, "ALLLLLL ABOOOOARD!" and the entire ensemble launches into a rendition of Glenn Miller's 1941 hit "Chattanooga Choo Choo." Unlike the anxious, ambiguous, or even tragic train journeys heard in Jang's, Brown's and Izu's compositions, however, the Kashiwagi musical perhaps ironically provides a safe and enjoyable ride to the internment camps.

Once the audience is transported back in time, ensemble members are transformed into tour guides; they also sing WW II-era American and Japanese songs and participate in mini-skits based on recollections that camp survivors had told Kashiwagi. Our excursion through the reconstructed dance hall begins with both of the guides telling us how these dances were put together while reinforcing the cultural trauma: how poor camp conditions were, and how these entertainments helped internees deal with life behind barbed wires. Interspersed within this narration are songs popularized by Doris Day and Glenn Miller and skits that portray just how "American" these dances were. One showed that, like many high school dances outside barbed wire, the boys and girls at camp dances quickly separated themselves on opposite sides of the dance floor. In the skit, a boy under great peer pressure bravely walks across the floor to ask for a dance, but unceremoniously falls on his face. Meanwhile, two other boys (probably unconsciously) demonstrate their "American-ness" by putting on a Marx Brothers shtick.

As the show proceeds, the identity of Japanese Americans becomes more nuanced and complicated. The tour guides reveal that not all internees

were on board with these American-style dances, with one actor stating, “To some *Issei*, dancing was a ‘Waste Time’ activity” (Kashiwagi 2007:8). Additionally, although the *issei* are portrayed as the group most interested in maintaining Japanese culture in America – at Klamath Falls and other performances, Japanese American actor/performer Merv Maruyama made guest appearances singing the 1930s *enka* (a sentimental genre of Japanese popular music that emerged in the late 19th century) hit “Tsuma Koi Douchuu” as a tribute to that first generation – and most uncomfortable with certain aspects of American culture, *Camp Dance* also shows that later generations did not divorce themselves completely from “Japanese-ness.” Many *nisei* listened to Japanese songs, and one skit showed how young Japanese American teenagers fused Japanese and American elements. Based on a dance at Rohwer, Arkansas, it showed dancers participating in a conga line chanting, “Gobo! Gobo! Daikon! Gobo! Gobo! Daikon!” (Burdock root! Radish!) As the narrator explains, the Japanese phrase “Gobo Ashi” referred to “the skinny, dark-skinned legs of many *Nisei* country boy” and “Daikon Ashi” referred to the “daikon shape of some women’s legs” (Kashiwagi 2007:12). The first act concludes with a dramatic reading of a letter by an idealistic 17-year-old *nisei*, who hopes that the America she knew growing up would soon return.

Camp Dance’s second act heightens the former internees’ identification with the actions on stage in two ways. First, it focuses less on the anonymous stories told in the first act, and more on the stars and heroes of the camps. To put it another way, whereas the opening act reintroduces an environment that the former internees knew and stories that they could imagine happening, the second act is designed to trigger memories of specific people and occurrences. Soon after intermission ends, our tour guides introduce guest performer Mary Kageyama Nomura, who as a teenager wowed fellow internees at Manzanar with her voice. Performing in *Camp Dance* as a septuagenarian and octogenarian, she sings Sammy Fain’s “I’ll Be Seeing You,” which was popularized by Bing Crosby and became a huge hit for British and American servicemen, and Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer’s “Accentuate the Positive,” which represented Nomura’s role in both camp and *Camp Dance*. Later in the act, there is a tribute to another singing sensation, the late Sue Takimoto Okabe. Because of her immense talents, she not only entertained her fellow internees at Minidoka, but was also given permission to leave camp to perform at nearby towns. Towards the end of the war, she was drafted by the USO to entertain American troops stationed in the Rockies.

Second, in the most serious and perhaps climactic scene of the entire production, Kashiwagi incorporates a moment of audience participation. To address the contrasting ways the American government treated different

Japanese Americans, one scene depicts the rivalry between members of the 100th battalion, comprising Japanese Americans from Hawaii, where Executive Order 9066 did not apply, and members of the 442nd battalion, which consisted of mainland Japanese Americans who were internees. Here, the mainlanders invite the Hawaiians to a dance at the internment camp in Jerome, Arkansas. The excursion proves to be an immense shock for the Hawaiians. As the character Jason says after the visit, “We’re from Hawaii ... We didn’t know nothing ’bout discrimination” (Kashiwagi 2007:22). The skit concludes with the tour guides’ asking audience members who served in the 100th or 442nd battalions to stand up and be recognized. As we return to the present near the end of the musical, the actors transform from tour guides to descendants of former internees. They give a moving tribute to their ancestors and perform a “last dance.”

By accentuating the positive moments of camp life, honouring the achievements of talented internees, and allowing some former campers to partake in this celebration, this trip back in time tries to transform the audience by opening up ways of thinking about and discussing the internment that do not begin (or end) with anger and injustice. Kashiwagi reports that he and the cast regularly hear from descendants of internees who discuss how their parents and grandparents talk about the internment for the first time after watching the show. These anecdotes, coupled with the fact that presenters continue to ask for the show, make it clear that *Camp Dance* has at least partially fulfilled Kashiwagi’s therapeutic goals – objectives that are made possible largely because the Japanese internment is now memorialized as a cultural trauma. Unlike the 1950s and 1960s, former internees no longer have to fear that frank talk about the internment will either mark them as “un-American” or lead them and their families to be ostracized by the rest of the Japanese American community.

All this positive feedback notwithstanding, there is one outspoken nisei who is not fond of the show. The creator’s father, Hiroshi, feels that the show did not tell the right story about the internment. As Soji states, “It may be a bit too happy.” The show focused on those internees who believed they “just had to accept this and make the best out of a bad situation. [His dad’s] position was to question and protest” the entire time (Kashiwagi, personal communication, 18 January 2011). Additionally, *Camp Dance* does not tackle the stories of those most hated by both the U.S. government and the vast majority of internees: the group who answered “no” to the two loyalty questions on the questionnaire given to all campers above age seventeen.²² When internees who were seventeen years old or older arrived at a camp, they were given a questionnaire, and the label “no-nos” refers to those who answered “no” to

questions 27 and 28: (27) “Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty wherever ordered?” and (28) “Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any and all attacks by foreign or domestic forces and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese Emperor or any other foreign government, power, or organization?” Ultimately, about 10 per cent of the internees answered “no” to both questions. The motives behind the negative responses vary: some were protesting their incarceration, others were confused by the word “forswear” in question 28, which implies prior loyalty to a foreign country, and still others felt some loyalty to Japan. In response, Hiroshi – himself a “no-no” boy – decided to follow in his son’s footsteps and revised a never-produced play that he hopes will begin healing the rift between the “no-nos” and the rest of the Japanese American community. Called *The Betrayed*, this play was premiered by Soji’s Grateful Crane Ensemble in 2010. Just how controversial the “no-no” issue remains even today is demonstrated by the fact that the premiere sparked a minor protest from Japanese American veterans.²³

Conclusion: The Continuing Struggles of Asian American Identity and Music

Constructing and maintaining cultural trauma is a difficult and painful process that involves research, the arts, political action, education campaigns, and the whole affected community. This article focuses on activists who, through the medium of music, wanted listeners to become more politically active, self-reflect, put historical events into larger contexts, and begin a healing process. Given all this anguish and labour, is it even worthwhile to start the cultural trauma process? Soji Kashiwagi recalls that, when his father started speaking up about the Japanese internment in the 1970s, many Japanese Americans of his generation were not happy. Remembering, commemorating and discussing past tragedies – steps that are crucial to constructing an alternate narrative that forms the basis of cultural trauma – are painful processes; they bring back forgotten wounds and buried miseries. Isn’t it better to just forget? Isn’t it more therapeutic to make the best of a bad situation and go to the camp dance? Although it is sometimes constructive to let things go, the cultural trauma process is necessary if we want to create a different and better world. Without it, there would have been no official apology for the internment, no reparations, and an implicit acknowledgement that treating Asian Americans as second-class citizens is acceptable.

Through their artistic creations, the composers and writers discussed in this article contributed to the cultural trauma process. Their internment-related works differ, however, because they created them at different points in the Asian American movement. In the earlier phase of the cultural trauma process, the victimized group sought to replace a dominant story of a crisis with an alternative. In the case of the Japanese internment, Asian American activists gradually discredited the notion that the camps were an insignificant and necessary evil in American history and asserted that the internment was not only unjust and unwarranted, but was also a significant violation of the U.S. Constitution. Writing their works near the end of this initial phase, Jang and Horiuchi focused on promulgating this new narrative. They adopted jazz and screamed loudly, thereby announcing through their music that Japanese Americans were not weak but potentially subversive foreigners on American soil. Almost a decade after the American government officially declared its acceptance of this alternative narrative by passing the 1988 Civil Liberties Act, Brown, Izu, and Yoshida reinforced it by organizing an educational tour. They also broadened and refined the new narrative by highlighting the Latin America internees, connecting the internment to other wartime human rights abuses, and including new testimony about the internment in their works. Meanwhile, Kashiwagi took advantage of the establishment of the Japanese internment as a cultural trauma and used his musical to discuss the lingering effects of the internment on Japanese American families and communities. 🌻

Notes

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1. For a discussion of the “dangers” of this type of therapy, see Leys 2000:chapter 8.

2. The two major articles that deal with cultural trauma and music are Miller 2005 and Stratton 2005.

3. This article is concerned only with responses to the Japanese internment over the past three decades. For more information about the internment itself, see Robinson 2009, Irons 1993 and Tateishi 1999. For information about the musical activities inside the internment camps, see Yoshida 1997.

4. Outside Asian American jazz and selected far-left circles, the term *Asian*

American Consciousness Movement is rarely used today. Glenn Omatsu argues that the most important aspect of the Asian American movement was its effects on Asian American consciousness. It “redefined racial and ethnic identity, promoted new ways of thinking about communities, and challenged prevailing notions of power and authority” (Omatsu 2000:165). Although “consciousness” issues were widely discussed by Asian American activists in the 1980s, many historians will dispute the jazz pioneers’ contention that the height of the “consciousness movement” coincided with the climax of the redress and reparations movement in the mid- to late-1980s (see Omatsu 2000:176-83; Osajima 2007). As the discussion below shows, however, “consciousness” was central to the early works of the Asian American jazz movement. For more information about these musicians, see Wong 2004, particularly chapters 2, 8, and 12.

5. For an impassioned discussion of the connection between Black nationalism and avant-garde jazz, see Kofsky 1970.

6. See Chin et al. 1974:introduction.

7. See Gardner 1999 for a good discussion of the connection between modernism and masculinity in music.

8. Although conflicts between Asian Americans and African Americans are often better reported in the media, it is important to recognize the long history of Afro-Asian interconnections, interactions, and alliances. Besides Asian American jazz and the redress and reparations movement, some examples are Paul Robeson’s support for Asian American civil rights, African American popular culture’s adoption of Asian/Asian American martial arts, and Asian American hip hop. See Prashad 2001, Raphael-Hernandez and Steen 2006, Ho 2009, and Wong 2004.

9. Jang began studying piano seriously in the early 1970s, when he did not own a piano. In an interview with the author, Jang explained that one attraction of San Francisco’s Japantown in this period was the availability of pianos on which he could practise.

10. The literature on the Vincent Chin case is large. For basic information about the case, watch Choy 1988. This award-winning documentary examines the trials and the galvanizing effect they had on the Asian American movement.

11. For a good discussion of taiko playing as a form of Asian American empowerment from the point of view of a practitioner, see Wong 2004:195-232.

12. See Zhou and Gatewood 2007 for an overview on the topic. See Espiritu 1992 for a discussion on how the new immigrants have affected the meaning of the term *Asian American*.

13. When asked how they knew they were on the right track in the early days of the Asian American jazz movement, Jon Jang and Francis Wong have repeatedly pointed to an incident at Stanford University in March 1984. Jang states, “*Are You Chinese or Charlie Chan?*” was released in March, 1984, on the very day of a large APSU [Asian Pacific Student Union] conference. The ensemble that performed on the recording performed at APSU. We sold about 60 records at the conference. Students were asking me to autograph the record. There was a tremendous

response” (Paget-Clarke 1998).

14. To understand Fred Ho’s break with the LRS, see Ho 2009:46-63.

15. For an analysis of the Asian American jazz movement’s dispute with the San Francisco Jazz Festival, see Wong 2004:306-19.

16. Among the women that the Asian American jazz pioneers have worked with since the 1990s are vocalist Jen Shyu, erhu virtuoso Jiebing Chen, and drummer/composer Ikue Mori. Among the non-Chinese/non-Japanese American musicians they have collaborated with are Indian American pianist Vijay Iyer, Indian American saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa, Iranian American saxophonist Hafez Modirzadeh, and Burmese American drum circle virtuoso Kyaw Kyaw Naing.

17. For a discussion and analysis of one of Glenn Horiuchi and Francis Wong’s free improvisations, see Wong 2004:288-96.

18. To hear a very moving story about the train ride, listen to Izu and Yoshida (1998), track 5: “The Train Ride.”

19. “Ichikotsucho” is a tonality, not the title of a specific piece.

20. For more on the internment of Japanese Latin Americans, see Connell 1995 and Hagihara and Shimizu 2002.

21. There are several versions of *Camp Dance*. In this article, I am analyzing the performance that occurred on October 15, 2007 in Klamath Falls, OR, which is near the Tule Lake Segregation Center.

22. Most internees felt that, by resisting the draft and refusing to swear unqualified allegiance, the so-called “no-no boys” helped to justify the U.S. government’s internment policy. For more about the changing perceptions of “no-no boys,” see Ling 1995.

23. See Nakagawa 2011.

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