

The *Enka* Popularity's Potential Revival and Youth Culture in Late 20th Century Japanese Society: A Case Study of Hideo MURATA and Michiya MIHASHI

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Traditional Singing in Japan



Yose 寄席 [Concert]
in Edo period

- *Min'yō* 民謡 [folk songs]
- *Rōkyoku* 浪曲 [narrative singing]
- *Jōruri* 浄瑠璃 [narrative singing]
- *Nagauta* 長唄 [long music]
- *Shigin* 詩吟 [reciting a poem]
- *Gagaku* 雅楽 [court music]
- *Kagura* 神楽 [Shinto ritual music]
- *Shōmyō* 声明 [Buddhist chant]

Ryūkōka 流行歌 [Popular Songs] Before WWII



Kirishima Noboru 霧島昇 (1914-1984)

- Influenced by jazz, chanson, tango and blues
 - Japanese history and culture (*samurai* 侍, *geisha* 芸者, *yakuza* やくざ) were sometimes the subject matter
 - European style of singing method
 - Male singers weaned suits or tuxedos, female singers weaned dresses
 - Roots of *enka* 演歌
- ✂ Not same as today's *enka*

Ryūkōka and Military Songs during WWII



- Brave lyrics
- Warlike spirit and unity of citizens
- Inciting nationalism
- Political propaganda
- English-style singer's name changed to Japanese
- Western style in both melody and singing method

The SP record of the military song

Shussei heishi o okuru uta 出征兵士を送る歌 [Song to Send Soldiers Off to War]



Kasuga Hachirō 春日八郎
(1924-1991)



Mihashi Michiya 三橋美智也
(1930-1996)



Murata Hideo 村田英雄
(1929-2002)

General *Enka* Features



Interaction between a young *enka* singer
Asaka Miho 朝花美穂 and her fans

- Yona-nuki scale
- Fusion of traditional Japanese and western music Influence (folk songs and *rōkyoku*)
- Much Japanese history and culture is featured.
- Local community-based
- Singers wear *kimono* 着物 as well as western clothes
- Community-based Feudal apprenticeship system

Micchī Boom ミッチーブーム by Mihashi Michiya



- Regular appearances as a DJ on radio programmes
- Unconventional talk that overturns the conventional image
- Unusually flamboyant costumes for an *enka* singer
- "Micchī in the Rock"
- TV commercials "Gekimen 激めん"

Mihashi Michiya
with "Micchī in the Rock" style

Mucchī Boom ムッチーブーム by Murata Hideo



- When he was asked in a restaurant how well the steak was cooked, he said "beef ribs!"
- He put a lot of sugar and milk in his coffee and said, "Hmm, this black coffee is very good!"
- When he was a guest on a radio programme, he looked at the hit chart and said "This singer called Soundtrack is very amazing, he has 6 songs in the top 10!"
- When he played a slot machine, he said to an orange horizontal line, "I don't need oranges!"

Murata's impersonation by comedian Shimizu Akira 清水アキラ

Future Prospects and Challenges for *Enka*



International cultural exchange event
by amateur *enka* singer Tsuji Hirohito

- Unparalleled singing ability
- Authority and familiarity (ie. *Sabu-chan* サブちゃん of Kitajima Saburō 北島三郎)
- Tackling multiple genres (ie. Yoshi Ikuzō 吉幾三's Ikzō boom, Kobayashi Sachiko 小林幸子's last-boss boom)
- Community-based, local songs
Globalisation
- Potential of amateur singers for
globalisation
- Ageing of support base Popularity of other
genres
- Decline of karaoke culture due to COVID-19

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Thank you for your attention

御清聴有難うございました。