

China Connections

Foreigners in Treaty Port China

"I found the Chinese in Shanghai to be a very jolly people, much like colored folks at home. To tell the truth, I was more afraid of going into the world famous Cathay Hotel than I was of going into any public place in the Chinese quarters. Colored people are not welcomed at the Cathay. But beyond the gates of the International Settlement, color was no barrier. I could go anywhere", Langston Hughes (1902-1967) writes in his autobiography about his visit to Shanghai in 1934.¹ During its Treaty Port era (1843-1943), Shanghai transformed from a trading town of 270,000 residents to a world-renowned metropolis of over 5 million people, attracting fortune-hunters like businessmen, writers, musicians, architects, and refugees from all over the world.

Lena Scheen

THE ARTICLES IN THIS SECTION introduce us to some of these foreigners, such as the African-American Jazz pianist Teddy Weatherford (1903-1945), who Langston Hughes met during his visit: "a big, genial, dark man, something of a clown, Teddy could walk into almost any public place in the Orient and folks would break into applause". In his article, Andrew Field shows how Jazz musicians like Weatherford would have an everlasting impact on the formation of new music genres in the Asia-Pacific region. Likewise, Robert Bickers describes, in his article on the amateur photographer Jack Ephgrave (1914-1979), how the work of the Artists' Department at Capital Lithographers of the British American Tobacco in Shanghai, which Ephgrave headed, deeply influenced China's modern visual culture. Moreover, the articles focus on the importance of the study of material culture to a better understanding of the roles these foreigners played in their new homeland. For this reason, this section highlights the important work of various archival projects, such as the University of Bristol's 'Historical Photographs of China' and the Upton Sino-Foreign Archive (USFA) whose unique collection not only includes written materials, but also art works, trophies, medals, and photographs. It is the objects, songs, diaries, and pictures these foreigners left behind that provide us with a glimpse of the city through the eyes of its outsiders.

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Reference

- Hughes, L. 1993 (first published in 1964) *I Wonder as I Wander*, The Collected Works of Langston Hughes Series #14. New York: Hill & Wang.



Postcard from the Cathay Hotel and advertisement for the Canidrome Ballroom; both from Lethbridge, H.J. 1934. *All About Shanghai: A Standard Guidebook*.



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Center for Global Asia at NYU Shanghai

The Center for Global Asia at NYU Shanghai serves as the hub within the NYU Global Network University system to promote the study of Asian interactions and comparisons, both historical and contemporary. The overall objective of the Center is to provide global societies with information on the contexts for the reemerging connections between the various parts of Asia through research and teaching. Collaborating with institutions across the world, the Center seeks to play a bridging role between existing Asian studies knowledge silos. It will take the lead in drawing connections and comparisons between the existing fields of Asian studies, and stimulating new ways of understanding Asia in a globalized world.

Asia Research Center at Fudan University

Founded in March 2002, the Asia Research Center at Fudan University (ARC-FDU) is one of the achievements of the cooperation of Fudan and the Korean Foundation for Advanced Studies (KFAS). Through the years, the center is making all the efforts to promote Asian Studies, including hosting conferences and supporting research projects. ARC-FDU keeps close connections with the ARCs in mainland China and many institutes abroad.

Asian jazz diasporas: performing jazz in Pacific port cities, 1920-1945

Andrew Field

WHAT CAN THE SPREAD in Asia of the American popular music known as jazz, during its early period of the 1920s-40s, tell us about the dynamics of western colonialism and imperialism in this world region? How does the historian reconstruct and analyze the flow of jazz music as it spread into this part of the world? Who were the musicians who played key roles in spreading jazz in Asia and what were their trajectories? In what sorts of venues was jazz performed and who constituted the audiences for live jazz performances during this era? Finally, what was the overall impact of the jazz diaspora into Asia during this period, and is it really true that these jazz musicians laid the groundwork for the nativization of American popular music and the formation of modern pop music cultures in Asian countries?

While this paper cannot answer all of these questions in exhaustive detail, it constitutes a first attempt by the author to tackle a few and offer some initial answers. Many scholars and popular writers, including this author, have produced comprehensive book-length studies of the initial rise and spread of jazz in specific cities and countries, including Bombay, Shanghai, the Philippines, and Japan. Others have written articles about jazz and

popular music in South and Southeast Asian countries and cities, particularly India, yet until now the vectors and networks by which jazz spread around Asia as a whole have remained somewhat mysterious.

One key observation is that the spread of jazz throughout Asia was carried out mainly through the vehicle of passenger liners that cruised along networks of port cities. The passenger liner was the ideal vehicle for jazz, since it brought the musicians themselves to far flung ports throughout the Asia Pacific. These musicians were sometimes given jobs on the liners entertaining passengers, and they could disembark at any port and explore and sometimes even settle in port cities where they might also find an audience for their music. In this sense, the spread of jazz in this world region is best understood through the oceanic networks of trade, commerce and culture that emerged through the forces of western colonialism and imperialism, but which were far more deeply embedded in the history of oceanic trading networks in Asia. Similarly, jazz was a modern western invention, and yet as it spread across the globe, it took on the trappings of local musical cultures, which often played a mediating role in bringing jazz to 'native' peoples in these countries and cities.



'The Plantation Quartet of Crickett Smith' - Teddy Weatherford, Rudy Jackson, and Roy Butler. © Naresh Fernandes, *Taj Mahal Foxtrot: The Story of Bombay's Jazz Age*, Roli Books, 2012.

Throughout this period, certain cities served as fundamental nodes in the distribution of jazz throughout Asia. Among those cities were Shanghai, Tokyo, Manila, and Bombay. These cities boasted the largest concentration of spaces that regularly hosted jazz performances, keeping in mind that most if not all performances during that period were accompanied by partnered dancing. Playing key roles among these spaces were international hotels, which invariably featured ballrooms, as well as dedicated jazz cabarets and nightclubs for dancing. Shanghai