

# The “Pop Pacific”

Japanese-American Sojourners and the Development of Japanese Popular Music

By Jayson Makoto Chun

The year 2013 proved a record-setting year in Japanese popular music. The male idol group Arashi occupied the spot for the top-selling album for the fourth year in a row, matching the record set by female singer Utada Hikaru. Arashi, managed by Johnny & Associates, a talent management agency specializing in male idol groups, also occupied the top spot for artist total sales while seven of the top twenty-five singles (and twenty of the top fifty) that year also came from Johnny & Associates groups (Oricon 2013b).<sup>1</sup> With Japan as the world’s second largest music market at US\$3.01 billion in sales in 2013, trailing only the United States (RIAJ 2014), this talent management agency has been one of the most profitable in the world. Across several decades, Johnny Hiromu Kitagawa (born 1931), the brains behind this agency, produced more than 232 chart-topping singles from forty acts and 8,419 concerts (between 2010 and 2012), the most by any individual in history, according to Guinness World Records, which presented two awards to Kitagawa in 2010 (Schwartz 2013), and a third award for the most number-one acts (thirty-five) produced by an individual (Guinness World Record News 2012). Beginning with the debut album of his first group, Johnnys in 1964, Kitagawa has presided over a hit-making factory.

One should also look at R&B (Rhythm and Blues) singer Utada Hikaru (born 1983), whose record of four number one albums of the year Arashi matched. Starting from her debut in 1999 until her hiatus in 2011, she was, as Phil Brasor (2009) of the *Japan Times* proclaimed, the most influential Japanese artist of the 2000s. Her album *First Love* (1999) was the best-selling album in Japanese music history, with over 9.5 million units in sales (Farley and Sekiguchi 2001). Utada also sold more than 52 million records worldwide (Liu 2010).

But the successes of Kitagawa and Utada conceal a key aspect of Japanese popular music. Guinness World Records, in its announcement of Kitagawa’s world records, referred to him as a Los Angeles native (Guinness World Record News 2012). And Utada was also a Japanese-American, having been born and raised in New York City. Fluent in English and Japanese, she released albums in both languages. Thus some of the most influential musicians in Japanese music history were Americans who

sojourned across the Pacific, seeking fame in Japan. What does this tell us about the Japanese music scene when two of its most influential players are Americans?

In a manner similar to how Paul Gilroy (1993) looked at the "Black Atlantic," where Africans and Americans interacted to create a hybrid culture we often identify as "African-American" culture, so has emerged what I dub "Pop Pacific" as a space of transnational cultural construction of "Japanese popular music." This involved a process of exchange across the Pacific mediated through the physical presence of Japantowns in the United States, American military bases in Japan, television, and the Internet. These are what Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1995) has called "hybrid sites," where hybrid formations like Japanese popular music are created and manifested. This hybridized popular music culture largely took root from the mid-1920s with Japanese-American jazz musicians performing in Japan; in the postwar period, the presence of music on American military bases in Japan and the growing interplay between television and Japanese music corporations accelerated and mediated this transnational flow. By the turn of the new millennium, the Internet allowed for near instantaneous access to information and provided easier means for fan interactions, helping to expand the global market.

A study of the "Pop Pacific" reveals the hidden transnational and hybrid aspects of Japanese popular music, or J-pop, as recent Japanese music since the 1990s is known today.

Given the primacy of the United States as the key source of postwar Japanese popular music, I focus on the transnational links between Japan and the United States. A study of the U.S.-Japan music connection discloses that, because much Japanese popular music was part of a larger global web of world music, labels of national origin like "Japanese" or "American" hide the true transnational nature of popular music.

### **Postwar Japan, the Pop Pacific, and Military Bases**

In 1952, Kitagawa arrived in Japan during the Korean War (1950-1953) as an interpreter for the U.S. Embassy, the beginning of his sojourns across the Pacific. Born and raised in Los Angeles as the son of a Buddhist priest from Japan, he was sent to Japan at the outbreak of the war as part of a group of Japanese in exchange for U.S. officials. After the war, he returned to Los Angeles where he finished high school and entered the U.S. military during the Korean War, before becoming part of the administrative staff at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo (Fukue 2009; Otani 2012: 218-219).

American influences have flowed into Japan since Commodore Perry's official opening of Japan in 1853, but this process accelerated during the 1920s and 1930s. Jazz, which was popularized by Filipino musicians working on cruise ships, took hold in port cities (Yoshida 1997: 42-116). Listeners associated jazz with the United States and with middle-class urban lifestyles. The most famous jazz vocalists of the 1930s were Nisei (second generation) Japanese-Americans singers, such as Fumiko Kawahata, Rickey Miyagawa, and Betty Inada, who were frustrated by racial barriers in the American entertainment industry. In Japan, their American nationality bestowed an aura of authenticity that contributed to their popularity, while their Japanese faces made audiences feel more familiar or comfortable with these entertainers (Atkins 2001: 81-82). These singers benefited from what Iwabuchi Koichi (2002) has called "cultural odor"—the amount of cultural features of its country of origin (or the imagined way of life there) that a commodity carries. According to Iwabuchi, cultural odor is closely associated with racial and bodily images. In this case, these Japanese-American jazz singers erased the racial and ethnic characteristics of American jazz singers.

Much U.S. cultural influence came via Japantowns, and, in Kitagawa's case, Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, where he learned stage management techniques while working as an assistant at a local theater (Kosuga 2007: 14-15). In 1950, he served as an interpreter for Misora Hibari when she performed on a stage at his father's temple during her California tour. These experiences provided him with valuable contacts in Japan (Furmanovsky 2012; Otani 2012: 8-9; Schwartz 2013).

Kitagawa's sojourn to Japan as a U.S. official shows the role of the American military in postwar Japanese popular music. During the Allied Occupation, American bases opened up new avenues for cultural flows, as jazz from the U.S. military radio network became for many Japanese people the soundtrack of the Allied Occupation (Bourdagh 2012: 29-35; Mitsui 1997: 166). As encounters with American military personnel ceased to be a part of people's everyday lives starting from the late 1950s, the United States was generally seen as less of an occupier and more of a model of consumer lifestyles (Yoshimi 2003: 443-444).

Kitagawa's first music act, Johnnys (1962-1967), was a revolutionary development in Japanese music: good-looking male singers who could dance, sing, and act. This group also exemplified the "Pop Pacific" intersection of U.S. bases, U.S. popular culture, and U.S. television. Kitagawa came into contact with the future members of his band

when he lived at an apartment in Washington Heights, a U.S. Armed Forces housing complex in Tokyo. Kitagawa coached a local youth baseball team which he named “Johnnys” after himself (Otani 2012: 16—18, 219). Therefore, the site of interaction occurred at a U.S. government installation, with a game that originated in the United States.

The deluge of American cultural influences was mediated through movies. Kitagawa came up with the idea for the band after taking four members of the baseball team to see *West Side Story*. In an interview with *Newsweek*, Kitagawa noted, “I had started in an era when boys, male stars, did not sing and dance in Japan. That was a challenge, and it became a unique spot in the entertainment world, something unprecedented” (Poole 2012: 51). The idea for a singing and dancing boy group also had transnational roots with Kitagawa’s teenage years in Los Angeles, during his involvement in theater and with Hibari’s tours. Thus American-style musicals and Kitagawa’s groups were linked from the beginning. Johnnys performed on stage as back dancers and later performed in musicals, like Ishihara Shintaro’s *Curb of Flame* (*Honno no kabu*), and Kitagawa’s *Whenever and Until Somewhere* (*Itsuka doko made*), which was inspired by *West Side Story* (Otani 2012: 224-225). Kitagawa wanted to be acknowledged while remaining in the shadows.

But Kitagawa needed to repackage his American concept as a Japanese concept—in other words, localize it for Japanese audiences, as this was also a time of growing domestic self-confidence. For example, by 1966, sales of domestic Japanese records exceeded those of non-Japanese imports (de Launey 1995: 206; Kawabata 1991: 336), and although Western pop music had an 80 percent share of the Japanese market immediately after World War II, when the influence of the Allied Occupation was keenly felt, the younger generation, which grew up in this affluent Japan, did not idolize the United States in the same way as their elders (de Launey 1995: 204—207). While the Johnnys manifested the American practice of dancing while singing, their song lyrics were in Japanese. The sound of their debut single “Young tears” (*Wakai namida*, 1964), miles removed from the pop sound of Johnny’s groups today, was likened by a critic in 2012 to Mitch Miller style young men’s chorus with childlike voices, helping to project the potential of youth of the time (Otani 2012: 17). Mitch Miller’s television program *Sing Along with Mitch* (NBC, 1961-1962) aired on Japanese television in the early 1960s (Otani 2012: 17).

Thus Johnnys would become a uniquely “Made in Japan” group, aimed at young teenage Japanese girls. Prominent 1950s author about rebellious youth and later Governor of Tokyo Ishihara Shintaro, watching them perform in his play *Curve of Flame* (*Honoo no kabu*), noticed this potential: “They exactly fit the image of the ‘noisy biker gang’ [*kaminari-zoku*, or “Thunder Tribe”] that I had written about. What was unexpected was how the mood of the Nissay Theater, which until now was stuffy, was transformed by Johnnys and their fans into something completely different” (quoted in *Yomiuri Shinbun* 1965: 6).

Kitagawa turned to television to spread news of his idols nationwide. Introduced to Japan in 1953, television had become a universal household appliance by the mid-1960s. Popular music programs helped promote Japanized pop and forge a national popular media culture (Chun 2007). Kitagawa, grasping the power of this medium, had Johnnys appear on television shows targeting young teenage girls. It did not matter that their broadcast debut as back singers in NHK’s program *Let’s Meet in Our Dreams* (*Yume de aimasho*, 1962) was widely panned, for his formula involved good-looking boys who could sing, dance, and act, so exceptional singing talent was not particularly important. To appeal to families gathered around the television set, networks needed non-threatening entertainment stripped of political protest or ideology. One talent agency executive noted, “The era of vocal groups who can only sing has passed. From now, singing, dancing, and acting—like a concert of three instruments—it’s no good if they don’t become good at all of them” (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 1965: 6).

But training and promoting this new type of celebrity would take time and money; the stream of idols from Johnny & Associates (formed by Kitagawa in 1962) showed the power of the “*jimusho*” (talent agency). A development of the 1960s, the *jimusho* reflected the corporatization of Japanese daily life with the top *jimusho* heading loose hierarchical organizations of smaller affiliated *jimusho* (Marx 2012: 39-42). Johnny & Associates thus represented a hybridized system of the American-inspired dance unit married to the hierarchical Japanese corporation. Kitagawa built his “Johnny’s Jr.” system, which probably represented every evil that young Japanese radicals in the late 1960s perceived about corporate Japan. Johnny & Associates was organized around seniority and hierarchy, just like Japanese corporations were. Young boys, like young “salarymen” (Japanese businessmen), were recruited and housed in a dormitory and trained over a period of years. Just like in Japanese companies, the young trainees

have to obey their older “*senpai*” (senior colleagues) who had joined earlier. Trainees had to practice their singing, dancing, and acting before debuting as backup dancers for older established stars. Kitagawa also made good use of his ties with television networks. He placed popular members of his groups into television dramas and comedies, and any network that dared feature rival boy groups faced a boycott by Johnny & Associates stars (Furmanovsky 2012).

Kitagawa made a breakthrough with his boy band the Four Leaves (1967-1978, reunited 2002—2009), which also targeted the teenage female demographic. He presented them as five *shonen* (adolescents), who would still retain their boyish appeal even as they became adults. Although beyond the scope of this article, the homoerotic styling of this and subsequent groups allowed female fans to interpret the male closeness as male friendship or sexual attraction. This also prevented heterosexual scandals (like sexual misconduct) from sullyng the idols theoretical romantic availability (Darling-Wolf 2004; Nagaike 2012; Glasspool 2014: 120-123).

By the early 1990s, Kitagawa’s model of promotion through television began to rule Japan. Kitagawa cultivated his band members as television personalities who could host programs and serve as celebrity spokespersons for advertisers, generating income from non-music sources (Brasor 2014). The rise of SMAP (Sports Media Assemble People, 1988-2016, a five-man group (six members until Mori Katsuyuki left in 1996), signaled the domination of Japanese popular music by Kitagawa’s talent agency. SMAP, along with other Johnny’s idols, became a ubiquitous part of Japanese mass media through appearances on television dramas, commercials, and variety, and talk shows (Stevens 2009: 54). Given the intertextuality of Japanese media, with television programs making references to radio, and audiences knowing the band members’ roles in other dramas, “idols” (*aidoru*, celebrities the perform multiple functions) like SMAP became more than just musicians but rather hyper-familiar television personalities (Galbraith and Karlin 2012b: 10-12) (see Chapter 15). The *jimusho* strictly controlled idols’ images and sounds.

Above all, the *jimusho* practiced information control through media. The *jimusho* provided artists; media provided favorable coverage. This bears some coincidence to the information control practiced by the Allied Occupation government, for which Kitagawa worked, which censored news critical of the Occupation. By pulling his stars from any television program that used talent from a rival *jimusho*, Kitagawa caused networks to cater to his agency’s demands, for example by booking other Johnny’s

musical acts on their music programs or by blacklisting other boy bands (Marx 2014: 49). And the press made sure to minimize unfavorable news coverage of any Johnny & Associates groups. Calvin Sims of the *New York Times* noted in 2000 that the Japanese media made only scant coverage of accusations of Kitagawa’s improper sexual relationships with his young singers, lest they lose access to his entertainers (Sims 2000). Even today, it is rare to see rival pretty boy idol bands on television, and videos of Johnny & Associates groups are strictly regulated for the public.

### **Utada Hikaru: New York City Cool in a Japanese Package**

Utada Hikaru represents another case of the “Pop Pacific” at work, hybridizing and domesticating American influences, and shows how popular music reflects general changes in Japan’s worldviews. Her success, like that of Kitagawa, also shows the process of hybridization and cultural concealment. By 1991, Japan’s system of high-speed growth went into stagnation, unable to generate sufficient growth for a post-industrial age. After the bursting of the Japanese stock market and real estate bubble, the nation entered into what has been called the “Lost Decade” (*ushinawaretajunen*, or “Lost Decades” because of its continuance past ten years), characterized by a deflationary spiral and the seeming inability of the government to enact effective measures to reform the economy. A degree from a good university was no longer a guarantee of economic security. This also meant that many Japanese youths started to aspire for jobs outside large corporations. This openness to outside influences in ways perhaps more directly than earlier generations was reflected in the music industry. One of the most successful singers was Utada Hikaru, a Japanese- American from New York City who sparked the Japanese R&B boom of the early 2000s. Part of her appeal was her New York City upbringing, which gave her an air of authenticity. Her new sound counterbalanced that of Kitagawa’s American-influenced but Japanese-localized idols, who continued to dominate the charts.

Utada’s parents did not move to America out of economic necessity. Her father was a music producer while her mother, Fuji Keiko, was a famous *enka* (Japanese folk song) singer. Utada was born in New York City, a melting pot of different cultures and the home to thousands of Japanese nationals. Like Japanese-American jazz singers over half a century earlier, Utada debuted in the United States with limited success. She first appeared as the artist Cubic U, releasing *Precious* (1998) in both the United States and Japan an album of R&B songs sung in English. Either because American audiences were not ready for an Asian-American R&B singer or because it was a bad

album, sales in the United States were poor. Utada's American nationality and fluent English imparted authenticity to Japanese audiences, and she sang in an R&B style sound characteristic of the late 1990s. And when first introduced to Japanese press as Cubic U on NHK's *New Midnight Kingdom* (*Shin manaka no oukoku*, 1998) television program, a tanned Utada demonstrated her English abilities and stressed the African-American influences in her music. But perhaps she came across as too American, and the album failed to chart when first released in Japan.

Like Kitagawa, Utada in her next album downplayed her Americanness while playing up her ethnic similarity to Japanese audiences. She re-debuted using her given name and a lighter R&B sound perhaps less jarring to Japanese audiences, with Japanese lyrics and English-style phrasing and American words. Brasor writes about Utada's use of her American musical training:

[S]he sang what she heard, from the diaphragm and with her own take on the kind of melisma that became de rigueur in American pop after the ascendance of Mariah Carey. Previous Japanese pop artists, who were bred not born—and certainly not self-invented—couldn't handle this style for the simple reason that they weren't trained for it. Boy bands like the ubiquitous SMAP couldn't even sing harmony.

(Brasor 2009)

Interestingly, *Precious*, her Cubic U album was reissued in Japan after the success of *First Love* and made the top ten in the Oricon ranking charts, selling 702,060 copies and becoming the thirty-fifth bestselling album of the year (*Cubic U*; Kazuhaya and Hosokawa 2004).

What made Utada popular was her hybridity that combined aspects of Japan and New York City. According to popular discourse, she was influenced by the urban sounds she heard while growing up in New York City, but Takemura Mitsuhige (1999: 206), in a book-length analysis of Utada Hikaru, disagreed, noting that "implying that one developed a black sense of rhythm [by living in New York] was like saying that being born and raised in Japan means that one could do karate and judo." Takemura wrote, "No matter how much I listen to her, she doesn't sound like a black woman singing," and that her songs were "more like a good song with the feel of an R&B essence, and the melody itself is nothing more than Japanese pops" (Takemura 1999: 8). Utada's New York City background made it seem "natural" for her to sing this way, with an R&B flavor but not trying to be black. Takemura felt that other Japanese R&B artists such as UA (debut in 1995) and Misia (debut in 1998), from their black-inspired



singing, hairstyles, and tanned skin, made it clear that they wanted to be black. He believed that since Utada had white skin and straight black hair like other Japanese singers and only differed in her sense of rhythm (Takemura 1999: 9) and one could argue that Utada reflected a multicultural and internationalized ideal: a Japanese person comfortable with multicultural New York City who could sing on equal footing alongside African-American singers with no sense of inferiority about speaking English (Takemura 1999: 11-13, 209). These comments may be more reflective of Takemura's views on race than Utada's listeners, but he does bring up an interesting take on stereotyped racial views of hybridity. Utada alluded to her hybridity when asked whether she was Japanese or American. In an interview with *Time* magazine, she remarked, "When people ask me exactly how much time I spend in each country, I always tell them [have no idea.... [This is] because my parents have taken me back and forth ever since I was a baby" (quoted in Farley 2001). Arguably, Utada's success paved the way for mixed race Japanese artists such as Crystal Kay (debuted in 1999) or AI (debuted in 2000) or for Japanese artists who sang in an R&B style, like Kuraki Mai (Brasor 2009).

Media changes were also responsible for these singers' popularity, just as the growth of television had enabled Kitagawa. These singers' debuts coincided with the rise of satellite television and the Internet, among other technological developments that affected the globalization of popular culture and mediated the "Pop Pacific" for non-Japanese audiences. The ban on Japanese music in South Korea was lifted in 1998, and Japanese performers were popular in places like Taiwan and Singapore, despite the older generation's memories of Japanese wartime atrocities. *First Love* sold one million copies in Asia (despite rampant piracy), demonstrating Utada's role as part of a larger wave of Japanese artists breaking into the Asian market thanks in part to the popularity of Japanese television dramas in Asia during the 1990s (Chung and McClure 2000: 53). Yet Utada's overseas appeal faced limits. Her English language album, *Exodus*, experienced lackluster sales in the United States, with only 55,000 copies sold, reaching only 169th place on the U.S. Billboard chart (Benson 2013: 26; Harrison 2014). Perhaps the United States was not ready for an Asian American pop star, or perhaps it was poor marketing, or just a bad album. We cannot know, but it is notable that the flow of the "Pop Pacific" was mainly one way, from America to Japan. On the other hand, *Exodus* sold well in Japan, as it broke the record for largest one-day shipment of an English language album by doubling Mariah Carey's previous record of 500,000 (Harrison 2014).

By the late 1990s, a transnational Asian popular culture spread over the Internet, which allowed fans to easily access overseas music (if the record company did not remove these illegal copies) and to with other fans. Utada had fans from all walks of life, but special mention must be made of her Asian American subculture fan base. If the U.S. mainstream media marginalized Asian American youth (by the lack of Asian American characters on television or movies, or lack of Asian American singers who made it on the mainstream charts), then these youths turned to their own online-based popular culture. Although Utada's English language albums disappointed in overall sales, she was a star to Asian American youth. For example *Exodus* hit number one on the album sales charts in October 2004 in Hawai'i with its large Asian American population (*Honolulu Star Advertiser* 2004). A 2009 study by Philip Benson (2013: 29) of her English language song "Easy Breezy" showed it was the third most viewed Utada Hikaru video, with 1,320,402 views, mostly from Japan and Thailand, followed by the United States. Judging from fan comments on the YouTube clips, Benson noted that some fans liked it better when she sang in both Japanese and English, showing that many English-speaking fans saw Utada primarily as an Asian or Japanese performer, not an American performer (Benson 2013: 23-33). It is interesting to note that Utada's popularity outside of Japan coincided with the changing international consumption of Japanese popular culture; by the early 2000s Japanese videogames, anime, and manga were popular overseas, signaling the rise of Japan as a global cultural exporter. Utada's hybridity meant that she was able to traverse the "Pop Pacific" via the Internet to fans interested in Japanese culture. However, overseas viewers had trouble accepting her English language songs and American identity. Thus Benson argued, her Japanese identity was problematized when she chose to sing in full English.

### **Conclusion: "Pop Pacific" in the 2010s**

Utada went on hiatus in 2011 (according to her blog on August 9, 2010, she wanted to take a break from "flashy artist activities" and focus on "human activities" [Utada 2010]), and with no superstar to replace her, changing tastes worldwide, and the Japanese music industry secluding into formula music aimed at the domestic market, the R&B boom in Japan seemed to end by the first decade of the 2000s. And surprisingly, the overseas appeal of Japanese artists like Utada was replaced by those from South Korea, where in contrast to the Japanese government and industries, the South Korean government and music industries made use of digital media to promote

their own brand of K-pop (Korean pop) (Russell 2012) (See Chapter 17). At the turn of the millennium, Japanese singers like Utada or Hamasaki Ayumi (debuted 1998) had earned substantial Asian followings; it was predicted that J-pop would have a 10 percent market share in South Korea (McClure 2000a: 49). Yet the predicted dominance of Japanese popular music in Asia never materialized.

One of the reasons was the Japanese music industry withdrawal into a digital seclusion from the “Pop Pacific” by the 2010s. With the economic “Lost Decade” stretching past two decades, the industry focused on easier profits from the domestic market through price fixing and marketing strategies aimed at encouraging fans to buy multiple commemorative CDs (see Chapter 15). Also, strict Japanese laws on copyrights and illegal downloading maximized profits at home but made it increasingly more difficult for overseas fans to obtain Japanese music. Thus Japanese music’s overseas presence declined as companies deprioritized overseas marketing and focused on their large domestic market, and Korean companies, dependent on exports due to their smaller music market, filled in the vacuum by marketing acts created for global consumption.

While Utada may have represented a multicultural Japan appealing to international audiences, the dominance of Johnny & Associates and idol groups like AKB48 represented “Galapagos Japan”: an insular nation cut off from world currents. The term “Galapagos Syndrome” (*garapagosu-ka*) was first used to describe Japanese cellphones so advanced they had little in common with devices in the rest of the world, similar to Darwin’s animals on the Galapagos Islands that had evolved separately in isolation (Stewart 2010; Wakabayashi 2012) (see Chapter 29). Because of the large size of the domestic market, companies considered foreign fans an afterthought and lacked urgency to reach overseas consumers. In the case of Arashi, who debuted in 1999, although they dominated Japanese record sales, it was expensive to watch authorized copies of their music videos overseas, and except for fan groups, they were largely unknown overseas. In fact, local media coverage of Arashi’s first American tour in Hawai’i focused mainly on the economic impact of the concert (Blangiardi 2014).

Yet the “Pop Pacific” lives on. The Internet has helped to strengthen the global flows of music by making it difficult for *jimusho* to control information. While Johnny & Associates may have cowed Japanese media into favorable coverage, an online search will reveal pages devoted to allegations against Kitagawa, and rumors of cover-ups

about the activities of his idols members, such as underage drinking and sexual misconduct. Although it is hard to determine the accuracy of these rumors, it is important to note that this information can be accessed outside of the control of mainstream Japanese news sources. Also, the Internet has allowed for instantaneous sharing of music and information, helping to break the monopoly of the talent management agencies. While online videos and songs of Johnny & Associates groups are quickly removed, there are numerous back alley avenues for illegal downloads of the songs, music videos, and concerts on pirate sharing sites. As quick as these pages are shut down, others will take their place. One cannot predict the future of Japanese music overseas, as the music market is too precarious. In 2000, no one could have predicted the rise of K-pop and the decline of J-pop's appeal overseas. And no one will be able to predict what will happen ten years from the publication of this chapter. For all we know, Taiwanese or Vietnamese pop could become popular. The Internet, along with devoted fan communities, and an increasingly globalized and multicultural world has ensured that the "Pop Pacific," forged out of the aftermath of war, will live on for decades to come.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the Oricon charts only measure physical releases, not downloads, but their sales numbers are used in magazines and news reports (Nak 2012).