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Panel 4.1: Music Bridging Cultures? Towards an Acoustic Geography of Contemporary Asia

The “Asian Sound Bridge”: Breaking Boundaries in American Pop Music

In today’s social environment, it is almost impossible to ask what music someone likes without finding some type of connection to popular music and video styles from Asia. The music comes from performers in a traditional format, but music is also heard and learned online and from video games and other entertainment formats that cater to young listeners. The “Asian Sound Bridge” is my way of acknowledging the Japanese, Korean and Chinese influences—among others—that have become interwoven into the personal music choices that Western listeners are making. A once fixed acoustic geography has been liberated—its “place” now flexible and portable, the unique creation of each listener, and is a response to the multiple influences in contemporary society. This paper examines how Asian pop music is an essential part of this new trend and how boundaries are broken as listeners cross over the “Asian Sound Bridge.”