

The background of the slide is decorated with stylized musical notation. At the top, a series of black musical notes and stems are arranged in a wavy line, set against a light red, textured brushstroke background. At the bottom, another series of black musical notes and stems is arranged in a wavy line, set against a light yellow, textured brushstroke background. The central text is positioned between these two musical elements.

A Perfect Imperfect Performance: Remodeling the Model Minority

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Research Question:

How is classical music training, as well as the deviation from classical music training, involved in Asian American identity construction?



Follow Up Questions:

Why do Asian Americans engage in classical music? In jazz music?

How are these types of music representative of the struggles with class status, economic stability, and individual power?

Issue:

- Cultural exclusion
 - Model minority stereotype – describes Asian Americans as hardworking, docile individuals who are socioeconomically successful and are well-assimilated into mainstream American culture
 - Symbolic violence – unconsciously agreed upon by both parties, is the imposition and perpetuation of power and subordination by the dominating group (Lee, 2016)
- Triangulation of Asian Americans
 - Racial gap between the Asian community and the Black community

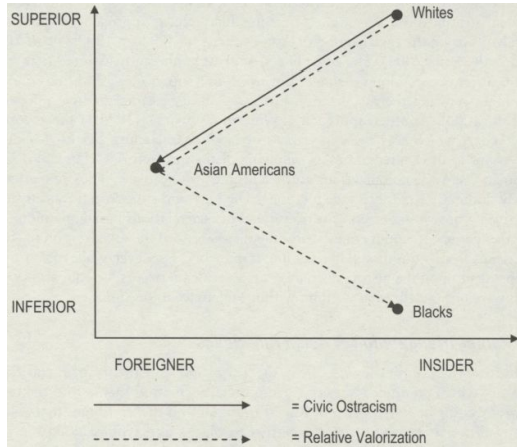
Significance

- Racialization of Asian Americans
 - Has been largely invisible
- Rising number of hate crimes against the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community
 - 3,800 anti-Asian hate incidents in the past year (Yam, 2021)



Theories

- Triangulation Theory (Claire Jean Kim)
 - Valorization
 - Civic Ostracism



- Critical Race Theory (David Eng and Shinhee Han)
 - Racial inequality emerges from the social, economic, and legal differences that white people create between “races” to maintain elite white dominance in labour markets and politics

Cases

- Sarah Chang
 - Korean American classical violinist
 - Child prodigy
- Helen Sung
 - Chinese American jazz pianist
 - Initially classically trained
- Lang Lang
 - Chinese classical pianist





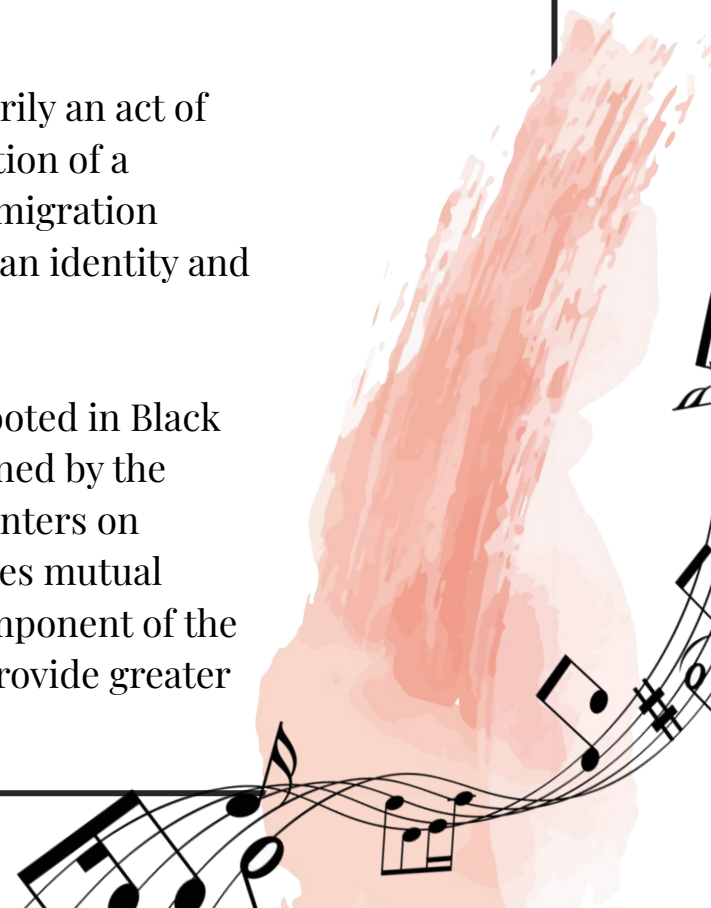


** Traditional-Style Chinese Music (for reference)*

Thesis:

Asian American engagement in classical music is not necessarily an act of acculturation nor a loss of tradition, but allows for the formation of a powerful, new Asian American identity that embraces the immigration experience and is separate from both the dominating American identity and the traditional Asian identity.

Asian American engagement in jazz music, which is deeply rooted in Black culture, begins to close the racial minority gap that was widened by the establishment of the model minority stereotype because it centers on collaboration between the two minority groups and establishes mutual respect. Furthermore, jazz music, which was an essential component of the Black Power Movement that advocated for racial pride, can provide greater insight into how Asian Americans can combat racialization.



Claims



1

The model minority is a façade, as it conceals the different socioeconomic hardships that various Asian ethnic groups have faced in the past and continue to face today.



2

Symbolizing exceptionalism and success, the model minority stereotype pressures Asian Americans into conforming to the stereotype and continues to dictate Asian American identity construction, as it distorts how Asian Americans are perceived, especially in classical music.



3

The unfavorable depiction of Asian American classical musicians diminishes the accomplishments that Asian Americans have achieved in music and devalues traditional Asian beliefs.

Claims

4

Through engagement with classical music, it is possible for Asian Americans to gain authority that can ultimately lead to the securing of a social position comparable to that of Whites.

5

Participation in jazz music can aid in the formation of a powerful Asian American identity in that Asian Americans are connecting with and forming genuine experiences from a culture derived from another minority group.

6

Asian American participation in jazz music, although rather rare, demonstrates that rejecting the model minority stereotype allows Asian Americans to hold agency over their sense of individuality and to truly exercise the freedoms of self-expression.

Research Problems

- Finding a variety of scholarly sources that discussed Asian American involvement in classical and jazz music
- Finding theoretical sources that placed a focus on Asian Americans
- Intertwining classical music and the AAPI movement in a seamless way



Conclusion

- For Asian Americans, both classical music and jazz music offer ways of escaping marginalization and combating cultural shunning.
- Asian American participation in both classical music and jazz music can help to construct a new Asian American identity that may become dominant in its own right, even if it does not align with the American mainstream.



Works Cited

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A large, horizontal, textured red brushstroke serves as a background for the text. It has a watercolor-like appearance with varying shades of red and some white highlights, giving it a hand-painted feel.

Thank you!