

Beatles, popular music and society - a thousand voices

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Outsiding the Beatles: Assessing the Influence and Legacy of the Ventures on Japanese Musicians and Popular Music in the 1960s (Michael Farnsworth)

Abstract

The Beatles have a unique status in Japanese popular culture and their music and image can be found in almost every area of commercial life and entertainment. Perhaps for this reason, popular music came to influence and be influenced by the Beatlemania that swept Japan in the early 1960s. The popular music culture of Japan in the mid and late 1960s. A superficial look at the so-called "Group Sounds" bands of the era seems to confirm this description. However, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the Ventures, an electric guitar based instrumental American group who still tour Japan, were in fact more influential than the Beatles in shaping the direction of Japanese pop and rock music. This article, the first in English to allow a full range of Japanese sources, looks at the impact of the Ventures. It argues that by ignoring the electric guitar bands of 1960, in an attempt to glorify the Beatles, the music press and music scholars have distorted the history of the 1960s, the group deserve a place alongside the Beatles in Japanese popular music history and were in fact the underlying musical influence on which Group Sounds was built.

Many journalists and commentators have written about the special place reserved for the Beatles in Japanese popular culture. It is not uncommon for Beatles songs to be played regularly in shopping centres or in a variety of TV show settings, while the range of Beatles CDs and accounts available online or in music-related retail outlets is as wide and diverse as that in any country. Even high school English textbooks often feature Beatles songs that are used for listening and pronunciation practice and information about the Beatles, especially John Lennon's artistic activities can be found in JHS and HES Social Studies textbooks.¹ On a more tangible level, both the Kaito and Karaoke areas have several highly publicised and more subtle pop regarding to cafes and live houses. Some of these are modelled on the Beatles' Cavern Club in Liverpool and as many commentators have noted, the cover bands go to great lengths not only to look like the four members of the band, but to make use of exactly the same instruments and equipment that the Beatles used when they performed in the mid 1960s.² The quantity and longevity of the Beatles in Japan has of course benefited from the Japanese nationality of Yoko Ono, the wife of John Lennon's wife, and is in line with the group's iconic status throughout the developed world. Yet despite their unparalleled popularity in Japan, the Beatles, an American instrumental group with a far less Beatlesque reputation in popular music history.³ Taken alone, the Beatles do not necessarily equate with long-term influence. Nevertheless, the role and contribution of the Ventures in the shaping of Japanese popular culture, especially through their popularisation of the electric guitar, as an instrument that can be seen during the decades of many pop, Japanese bands on only given their role in Japan seems worthy of closer examination, especially in light of the fact that the Ventures were high and credible to have in the mid to early 1960s, Japanese. As will also be suggested below, the instrumental sound of the Ventures would provide the template for what would evolve into the so-called "Group Sounds" of the late 1960s, a musical movement that is generally thought to be a Japanese response to, or version of, the Beatles-led

Description: -

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Computer simulation -- Bibliography.

Numerical analysis -- Bibliography.

Music -- Social aspects.

Rock music -- 1961-1970 -- Analysis, appreciation.

Rock musicians -- England -- Biography.

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The Beatles

In other words, it was totally opposed to the boring adult world of work, money and responsibility. Cloonan Tell Me What You See: the Influence and Impact of the Beatles' Movies; B. McCartney parodied the hoax with the title and cover art of his 1993 live album,

The Beatles, Popular Music and Society : a Thousand Voices (eBook, 2000) [mikhmon.us.to]

It is essential reading for those wishing to understand not only the phenomenon of the Beatles but also the cultural environment within which popular music continues to be practised and studied. Edited by Anthony DeCurtis and James Henke, 209—222.

Paul is dead

Of course, the fact that many similarities between these two groups can be established does not necessarily mean that the one influenced the other. The fact that not that much has changed and we are still not even close to the society the Beat writers dreamt of is also illustrated by censorship regulations of today: readings of Howl are still banned on American radio before midnight Russell 10.

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