



# **Sayonara Amerika, Sayonara Nippon: A Geopolitical Prehistory of J-Pop (Asia Perspectives: History, Society, and Culture)**

*Michael Bourdaghs*

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From the beginning of the American occupation in 1945 to the post-bubble period of the early 1990s, popular music provided Japanese listeners with a much-needed release, channeling their desires, fears, and frustrations over an ever-shifting geopolitical reality into a pleasurable and fluid art. Pop music allowed Japanese artists and audiences to assume various identities, reflecting the country's uncomfortable position under American hegemony. Michael Bourdaghs composes the first English-language study of this phenomenon, considering genres as diverse as boogie-woogie, rockabilly, enka, 1960s rock and roll, 1970s New Music, folk, and technopop. Reading these forms and their cultural import through music, literary, and cultural theory, he introduces a range of readers to the sensual moods and meanings of modern Japan.

As he unpacks the complexities of Japanese pop production and consumption, Bourdaghs interprets a country as it worked through (or tried to forget) its imperial past. These efforts grew even murkier as Japanese pop migrated to the nation's former colonies. In postwar Japan, pop music both accelerated and protested the commodification of everyday life, challenged and reproduced gender hierarchies, and insisted on the uniqueness of a national culture, even as it participated in an increasingly integrated global marketplace. Each chapter examines a single genre through a particular theoretical lens: the relation of music to liberation; the influence of cultural mapping on musical appreciation; the role of translation in transmitting musical genres across the globe; the place of noise in music and its relation to historical change; the tenuous connection between ideologies of authenticity and imitation; the link between commercial success and artistic integrity; and the function of melodrama. Bourdaghs concludes with a look at recent Japanese pop music culture.

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