

## SHANGHAI JAZZ MUSIC FROM 1930 TO 1949

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Jazz music emerged in Shanghai, China between the late 1920s and early 1930s. This paper documented and analysed Shanghai jazz music that was recorded from 1930 to 1949. Shanghai jazz music recorded and performed within this period was selected through stratified random sampling technique. All samples were analysed in terms of melody, harmony, rhythm and form. The results showed that Western diatonic scale was apparent in the melodies, instead of the usual Chinese pentatonic scale; primary chords were prevalent with minimal use of secondary chords in the harmony; the “oom-pah” rhythm in duple meter was most widely utilized; and the musical form has evolved from the earlier through-composed song form to the later “AABA” form. In conclusion, this research characterised Shanghai jazz music that were recorded between 1930 to 1949. It served to elevate the identity of this music and to prompt further research into Shanghai jazz music spanning from 1950s until present time.

**Keywords:** Shanghai; jazz music; music analysis; music identity

## 1. INTRODUCTION

“In its transformation from fishing village to bustling trading port and now business centre, Shanghai has survived wars, foreign takeovers, communism and the Cultural Revolution to emerge as China’s leading city” (Dorai, 2008).

Shanghai is a city located in the east coast of China, and its as a trading port can be traced back to around the 10th to 13th century during the Song dynasty. By the early 20th century, Shanghai was already leading China in wealth, business, industry, finance, arts as well as culture. Famously known as the ‘Paradise for Adventurers’ and ‘Paris of the East’, Shanghai is christened as the world’s fifth largest city in terms of population since the 1930s. In fact, according to the Demographia World Urban Areas, 10th Annual Edition revised at May 2014, Shanghai’s population is estimated to be 22,650,000, and is the 6th largest urban Areas in the World (Koh and Jaques, 2006).

It has been noted that Shanghai’s foray as an international metropolis began with the arrival of the British consul in November 1843. Although Britain took the first step in controlling Shanghai politically and commercially, it was not the only foreign power vesting interests in Shanghai; in 1849, the French acquired similar concessions from the Chinese government, while the American claimed a settlement of their own in Shanghai in 1854 (Wei, 1993).

From 1930 to 1949, there are many people of different nationalities residing in Shanghai, besides the Chinese. Thus, a diverse type of music can be found in Shanghai (Cheung, 2012; Christian, 2004; Edmunds and Yang, 2012; Ho, 2012; Riggs, 1991; Tang, 2004; Atkins, 1999). However, the music can be further divided into two categories: Chinese music originating in China, and Western music originates from foreign countries. Cheung mentioned that both Chinese and Western music developed separately, but were connected with each other in Shanghai. In addition, Chinese music in Shanghai can be further distinguished into smaller but specific categories: instrumental, vocal, and opera.

The term Shanghai jazz music is used in this paper, as the term was used during the first discussion related to Chinese jazz music (Hip Deep: Andrew Jones on the Story of Shanghai Jazz n.d.). Shanghai jazz music is also known through different resources as Chinese popular music, *liú xíng yīn yuè* (流行音樂) or *liú xíng gē qǔ* (流行歌曲) (Lau 2008); modern Chinese pop music (Field 2010); modern songs or *shí dài qǔ* (時代曲); Chinese popular music; yellow music, *huáng sè yīn yuè* (黃色音樂); popular Chinese songs (Hip Deep: Andrew Jones on the Story of Shanghai Jazz, n.d.); and jazz piece in China (Marlow, 2011).