Empires In Rivalry:

Opera Concerts and Foreign Territoriality in Shanghai, 1930–1945

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On 9 December 1941 the (British-biased) *Shanghai Times* reported on the Japanese invasion of the International Settlement:

> Rudely awakened long before the break of dawn by the rumbling of naval artillery and the chatter of machine guns as Japanese forces swung into action against the British gunboat Petrel, Shanghailanders [British and other foreign settlers] later in the morning watched silently as units of the Japanese Special Naval Landing Party swiftly and efficiently took control of the International Settlement.

The occupation of the so-called International Settlement—an area associated with British interests in treaty port Shanghai—was of obvious military significance following Imperial Japan's declaration of war on the British Empire and the United States.[1] But such encroachment was played out as much in cultural terms as militarily, and not merely during the Second World War. Indeed, the imperial scrambling for possession of the International Settlement, Shanghai's political and financial hub, reveals a hitherto unexplored relationship between opera and foreign territoriality in the 1930s and 1940s.[2] The present essay aims to analyze this relationship by discussing opera concerts of the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra (上海工部局樂隊) and its successor, the Shanghai Philharmonic (上海愛樂協會愛樂樂團), in the context of British territoriality in the 1930s and Japanese territoriality in the first half of the 1940s.[3] In

examining opera and territoriality across this period, the essay brings to light not only the workings but also the changing conditions of imperial rivalry in Shanghai.

The idea of territoriality assumes particular force given the highly prized and contested nature of the port of Shanghai in the first half of the twentieth century. Territoriality, according to Robert Sack, is "[t]he attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area."[4] Sack's definition highlights not only the cultural instability of a geographic area due to human intervention, but also the act of laying claim to such an area. Similarly, and more recently, Yvonne Whelan has stated: "Unlike the more benign concept that is 'place,' with its connotations of space made meaningful by human habitation, territory and territoriality are suggestive of more malign forces at work."[5] Although it may seem extreme to equate territoriality with malevolence, its expression as the acquisition and/or preservation of (geo)political power entails adopting strategies through which such power is exerted.

Territory and commerce became intertwined issues in Shanghai and other ports in China in the second half of the nineteenth century. Following China's military defeat in the Opium War and the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842—the first of the so-called Unequal Treaties between the Qing Dynasty and such signatories as Britain and France—Shanghai was designated as a port in which foreigners could trade, reside, and lease land at fixed and favorable rates.[6] Settler communities began to take shape in Shanghai and other locations deemed strategic along China's coast, waterways, and railways. In terms of their legalese, the Treaties were exploitative but also labyrinthine agreements ratified with no fewer than a dozen signatories; in the case of Shanghai, they included Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United States in

addition to Britain and France. Treaty ports were thus multi-colonial settings—or colonial formations—and differed from centrally managed colonies due to their various foreign-leased areas, and due to their (initial) focus on commercial exploitation rather than systematic colonization.[7] Of the peculiar and fragmented nature of colonialism in China, Bryna Goodman and David Goodman rightly observe that although Shanghai and Hong Kong were both "locations of British colonial presence," they were "structurally dissimilar and have [therefore] engendered different historical narratives."[8]

To their remarks can be added another important point: because the Treaties brought rival empires into physical proximity in designated ports such as Shanghai, major signatories and their subjects, with their own prerogatives, had competing visions of how leased areas should be planned and administered.[9] The British and Americans, originally with separate Concessions, merged in 1863 and became the so-called "International Settlement." The French, wary of the Anglo-American alliance, established their municipality, the French Concession, in the 1860s, which was presided over by the French Consul-General in Shanghai. The International Settlement became synonymous over time with British (and allied) interests; the Shanghai Municipal Council, the Settlement's de facto governing body, served to safeguard those interests. The International Settlement was effectively Shanghai's political and financial hub, while the French Concession, south of the Settlement and about half its size, developed into an upscale residential district. According to Tess Johnston, "the conventional wisdom of the day was that in the International Settlement the British would teach you how to do business, but in the French Concession the French would teach you how to live."[10] Johnston's dichotomous view of Shanghai's foreign-leased areas was captured in similar fashion in maps

drawn by Chinese cartographers in the 1930s and 1940s, offering distinctive "bird's eye snapshots" of the French Concession and the International Settlement. The Concession was characterized by comfortably-spaced private residences and green plots; the Settlement, by contrast, was densely packed with banks, department stores, and hotels.[11] There was also a third municipality, Greater Shanghai (including the Old City), which was run from the late 1920s by the Chinese Nationalists. Shanghai of the 1930s was thus a "city of cities," composed of foreign-and-local municipalities. This landscape shifted, however, with the Japanese occupation of Greater Shanghai in 1937 and the rest of the city (including the International Settlement) in 1941.[12]

[INSERT Figure 1. Shanghai 1931 map including image of the Bund about here.]

Sack's definition of territoriality—the attempt by an individual or group to delimit and assert control over a geographic area—is especially apposite in view of Shanghai's treaty-port history and various municipal administrations. Foreign territoriality in 1930s and 1940s Shanghai can be defined in terms of British, French, and Japanese forms of imperial expansionism, and attendant displays of political—specifically municipal—power. Multiple uncoordinated administrations led to rivalry, which was manifested, for example, in attempts by the Shanghai Municipal Council and the French Municipal Council to stamp their marks on the International Settlement and the French Concession respectively, and attempts by the Japanese, following occupation, to restructure treaty-port institutions to their own ends. Such institutions included not just those bound up with the practicalities of government and administration, but also those whose province was the expression of culture, notably the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra.

The foreign monopoly of musical institutions was especially symbolic with regard to opera, which was still the jewel in the crown of imperial emblems. As Michael McClellan has shown in his study of opera in colonial Hanoi, the French government of Indochina used the construction of theaters in Hanoi, Haiphong, and Saigon as a means to project their command over Southeast Asia and to showcase their cultural superiority.[13] Opera thus "constitute[d] a basic tool of empire," with the opera houses "contribut[ing] to the reorganization of the colony's physical space," while the operas themselves "reified the lessons of colonial order" by means of dramatic narrative and theatrical spectacle.[14] In late nineteenth-century Shanghai—not a colony as such—operatic performance did not reinforce a particular colonial order in the same manner; nonetheless it enabled British settlers' notions of (European) high culture to hold sway.[15] Opera stagings at the Lyceum, a British-constructed venue, rendered evident settlers' influence over the emergent, colonial "theatrical environment" and the engagement of performers, be they touring companies or the Shanghai Public Band.[16] While staged opera in the 1930s saw ambitious productions by émigré-run groups such as the elusive, Russian-oriented Shanghai Opera,[17] opera's associations with empire not only intensified, but also became more complex. This could best be observed in another type of event—opera concerts—presented in the 1930s by the British-run Shanghai Municipal Orchestra (formerly the Shanghai Public Band), and in the 1940s by the Japanese-affiliated Shanghai Philharmonic Society. Such concerts were potent symbols of foreign territoriality and imperial expansionism. Just as opera in Hanoi can be analyzed in terms of the colonists' (attempted) glorification of Third Republic France, opera concerts in 1930s and 1940s Shanghai can be examined as manifestations of British and Japanese territoriality, and, at a deeper level, as (shifting)

discourses of municipal power. Indeed, evidence relating to such concerts, which favors settlers' and occupiers' perspectives, points to attempts by the British and the Japanese to steer matters civic and cultural.[18] Given the multitude of foreign powers in Shanghai, and the strategically important International Settlement, opera can be seen not only as an imperial emblem, but also as a form of imperial rivalry writ large.

British territoriality in Shanghai: Opera concerts in the 1930s

The Shanghai Municipal Orchestra (SMO) in the 1930s—an institution with imperialist undertones, based in the International Settlement—provides fascinating insight into the nature of British territoriality.[19] Despite the name accorded the area, which was leased to a host of foreign powers under the Unequal Treaties, affairs of the Settlement, according to Robert Bickers, "served the interests until the late 1930s of British settlers."[20] Key posts in the Shanghai Municipal Council (SMC) were occupied by British or British-affiliated administrators. The image of the Settlement as a British-run municipality also derived from the SMC's control, along the river Huangpu (黃浦江), of the upper stretch of the Bund—a (British-constructed) waterfront symbolizing Shanghai's global financial status, with the headquarters of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, Jardine Matheson and Company, and other major British (as well as non-British) enterprises. By contrast, the lower stretch of the Bund, which belonged to the French Concession, consisted mainly of wharves. Although different foreign subjects resided and conducted business in the Settlement, the British presence that had developed over nearly a hundred years (since the establishment of the first treaty ports) was doubtless pervasive.

Founded by the settlers as the Shanghai Public Band in the late 1870s, the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra was initially organized along the lines of a military band, for performances of bandstand music in Europeanized civic spaces such as the Public Garden. Spanish musician Melchior Vela was originally tasked with the recruitment and training of musicians, many of them Filipino (a regular source as the Philippines was an established colony), though always with European stiffening. Following the introduction of "art music" into the repertoire and the Band's gradual development under successive conductors into a fuller orchestra, Italian Mario Paci was appointed Music Director in 1919, and the ensemble was reorganized and renamed the Municipal Orchestra and Band in 1922. Its funding came from the Settlement's ratepayers. The Orchestra, with its growing bulwark of European players, aspired to be Shanghai's most high-profile western music ensemble, operating within and beyond the International Settlement—for example, also giving concerts in Shanghai's French Concession, such as on Bastille Day.[21] Orchestra members doubled as Brass Band members in the summer, giving performances in Shanghai's public parks.[22] Yet, despite its activities in the French municipality, and inclusion of Chinese, Filipinos, Italians, Japanese, and Russians among the audience members and players, the Orchestra was essentially a British-controlled institution.

During the winter, the Orchestra gave concerts at the Grand Theater in the International Settlement, and from 1934, at the Lyceum Theater in the French Concession. Such concerts designedly revolved around nineteenth-century European "art" repertoire (a priority since the days of Rudolf Buck, Paci's German predecessor), for example "a special program of the most popular works by Franz Liszt in memoriam of the fiftieth anniversary of the Master's death."[23] The Lyceum also hosted performances by other groups, notably touring companies and the

English-speaking Amateur Dramatic Club (ADC), and showed the latest motion pictures including Hollywood releases (of course requiring accompaniment). Home to the ADC, the Lyceum (named after the theater in London) was lauded in 1867 by the (British-biased) *North-China Daily News* as "one of the best-planned and most commodious houses in the East."[24] When the Lyceum was rebuilt in 1874 after a fire, it was "constructed in the western manner, with external brick walls, and roof covered with tiles."[25] Its design included a 30-foot roadway allocation which created "convenient harbourage" for chairs and vehicles, attesting to the theater's role as a (foreigners') social hub.[26] The ADC acquired new premises in the French Concession in the late 1920s and rebuilt the theater again. Yet, despite that location, the Lyceum as a performance venue had by then become synonymous with British-affiliated groups such as the ADC and the SMO.

The Orchestra's programs in the 1930s highlight the prominence at the Lyceum of opera concerts presented by the Shanghai Municipal Council, which centered around selections rather than staged and complete works. This approach, which might seem wanting by modern standards, was deemed to hold utilitarian virtue, according to the column "From the S.M.C. Orchestra" in the English-language *China Press*. For example, on Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*:

> A most attractive method of presenting [his] music has been devised for presentation at the second symphony concert of the season at the Lyceum Theater tomorrow. Those musical amateurs and others to whom Wagner is either anathema or unintelligible cannot but delight in the short musical biography of Siegfried [a series of orchestra interludes] which has been selected from the *Nibelung* tetralogy.[27]

The SMO's opera concerts certainly made an impact: they were monthly events during the winter season, publicized in the press (including Chinese newspapers), and attended by foreign and Chinese patrons alike. The international "mix" of the audience was evidently important to the SMC, as officials kept records of attendance by nationality.[28] Just as internationally "diverse" were guest singers brought from opera houses in Europe (La Scala and Théâtre de la Monnaie, for example) to Shanghai and other cities in China by such agents as the Latvian-born Avray Strok, who was originally responsible for recruiting Mario Paci (as a touring pianist) in 1918, and described by Floria Paci Zaharoff, Paci's daughter, as "the Far Eastern impresario."[29] Other singers performing in the SMO's opera concerts included émigré Russian musicians, who fled after the Russian Revolution and established themselves initially in such places as Harbin and Tianjin, but moved further south during the 1920s, partly due to increasing Japanese military presence in northeastern China.[30] Vladimir Shushlin, a bass active in 1930s and 1940s Shanghai, was one such; he relocated from Harbin to Shanghai in 1929, and became a professor at the National Conservatory of Music.[31] The "stateless" status of Russian émigrés (following the cessation of diplomatic relations between the Republic of China and the Soviet Union in the 1920s) afforded some measure of neutrality, and with it, job opportunities regardless of imperial rivalry and its attendant politics; as such, these émigrés could provide continuity between different regimes.

Programs from the 1930s bring to light a rich and wide-ranging repertoire, as the following samples from 1934–5 show. The SMO's opera concert in February 1934 was a three-part extravaganza with German, Russian, and Italian operatic excerpts. Part One comprised excerpts from Wagner's *Parsifal*, *Tannhäuser* and *Die Walküre*. Part Two comprised excerpts

from Russian operas: Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*, Rimsky-Korsakoff's *The Tsar's Bride* and *The Snow Maiden*, and Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar*. Part Three comprised excerpts from Ponchielli's *La Gioconda*. The concert in March 1934 featured a "Grand Italian Operatic Program" and soprano Elisabetta Silinskaia "from the opera houses of Milan and Turin." Silinskaia performed popular arias such as "Signore ascolta" from Puccini's *Turandot* and "Si mi chiamano" from *La bohème*. Interspersed among the arias were the Intermezzo Sinfonico from Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* and the Intermezzo from Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz*. The opera concert in May 1935 featured arias from Tchaikovsky's *The Enchantress* and Puccini's *Tosca*, which were supplemented by the Sinfonia from Mascagni's *Le maschere*.

Judging from these and other surviving programs, the SMO's opera concerts demonstrate a broad repertoire extending from Gluck and Rossini to Saint-Saëns, Puccini, Tchaikovsky, and Wagner. Such variety can probably partly be attributed to Mario Paci, who remained Music Director until May 1942, when the Japanese transferred the Orchestra to private auspices.[32] Paci seems to have traded on his European credentials, emphasizing his Milanese training and support from legendary operatic figures in the program notes for the Orchestra's farewell concert (as a municipal unit) on 31 May 1942. Of one encounter at a soirée hosted by a La Scala patron in 1896, he wrote: "Luck assisted me. . . . I played [Beethoven's] 'Appassionata,' and who should come and compliment me? Puccini!"[33] According to Paci, that encounter proved fruitful: "During my four years at the Conservatory, thanks to Maestro Puccini's [help] again, my apprenticeship as a conductor was under great conductors such as Ferrari, Mugnone, Mascheroni, and the [greatest] of all: Toscanini."[34] If Paci's apparent exposure to such figures as Puccini and Toscanini in 1890s Milan helped to create a vibrant

municipal opera scene in 1930s Shanghai, his (purportedly extensive) connection with Milan must also have added a sense of authenticity to the presentation of the Orchestra's opera concerts—always a concern for the municipality.[35]

Yet, the social function and success of such concerts depended on more than artistic qualities alone, for they were also contingent on the approval of the Shanghai Municipal Council and the local British community, and as such were plagued by civic and financial politics around their expense and choice of programs.[36] For example, the Council's Orchestra and Band Committee issued the directive that "the Conductor [Paci] should submit [proposed programs] to the Committee weekly for information prior to publication."[37] At a deeper level, the SMO's opera concerts—though brought to audiences by Paci and soloists of diverse nationalities—were inextricably linked to the display of British municipal power, and to settlers' cultural values and sense of superiority. A local British report in the 1930s boldly touted Shanghai's International Settlement as "an unprecedented chapter in the history of the world's municipalities."[38] Clearly, British administrators sought not only to celebrate what they deemed a unique political achievement, but also to distinguish themselves from Shanghai's French and Chinese administrations. And since signatories of the Unequal Treaties and their subjects had, from the outset, different vested interests, over time, the British settlers' exercise of municipal power in Shanghai's International Settlement became a matter of both hegemony and self-distinction.

Seen in this light, the SMO's activities were a specific manifestation of British territoriality. Its opera concerts served to steer and define a civic culture as the settlers saw it, and more broadly, reflected the SMC's pride (and control) as Shanghai's "British" municipal

administration. With regard to a proposed bandstand in Jessfield Park, for example, the Council emphasized that "a cheap type of construction is unsuitable and incompatible with [its] dignity."[39] The imperative of maintaining the Orchestra as a "British" institution also pervaded print media such as the (British-biased) *North-China Daily News*; in a letter to the editor, a reader opined: "When the Municipal Council accepted a small donation from the Italian Government it surely was not the intention that in return the Municipal Orchestra should give us an absolute surfeit of Italian music at the weekly concerts, and advertise Italian composers on every possible occasion."[40] So, while Italian repertoire was in many ways the mainstay of the SMO's opera concerts, it was also subject to appraisal by the local British community. The "international" feature of the Settlement—and political muscle-flexing there, such as the Italian Government's attempt to influence matters of programming through sponsorship—were materially conditioned by British territoriality in Shanghai. Even then, not all had the same aspirations to uphold the SMO's function as the bastion of (British-defined) high culture; it is salutary to note that in 1934, the Shanghai Municipal Council found itself obliged to promise "more good music of a lighter kind" in order to ensure continued ratepayer support.[41]

Japanese territoriality in Shanghai: Opera concerts in the 1940s

Following Imperial Japan's declaration of war on the British Empire and the United States in December 1941, and the subsequent occupation of the International Settlement, the SMO gave its final concert as a municipal ensemble on 31 May 1942—with the program for which Paci's autobiographical reminiscences were penned. The Orchestra was then transferred to the auspices of the newly established and privately funded Shanghai Philharmonic Society (or the Society), overseen by Japanese Secretary-Generals. Reporting on the transfer, the *Shanghai*

Times quoted the Japanese Embassy spokesman as saying: "Technically all the members of former Shanghai Municipal Orchestra will remain [if] the members apply for inclusion in the new band [of] the Shanghai Philharmonic Society."[42] Paci did not apply, possibly because he was not in favor of the arrangement and did not see eye to eye with the Japanese authorities. Other regulars were employed instead: Takashi Asahina (朝比奈隆), a Japanese conductor; Arrigo Foa, an Italian Jew and previously Concertmaster and Deputy Conductor of the Orchestra; and Alexander Sloutsky, a Russian émigré and previously Assistant Conductor of the Orchestra. Foa's and Sloutsky's increased role could be attributed to the fact that changing regimes affected Shanghai's musical life in unexpected ways, including through the expanded presence of Russian and European Jewish performers. There were (apparently) two contributing factors: the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact in April 1941, which had the effect of separating Russian subjects from British, American, and other Allied subjects; and the Japanese internment of perceived enemy nationals (including members of the Shanghai Municipal Council), which provided new sources of employment for "stateless" musicians such as Russians and European Jews, longstanding proponents of opera and operetta in Shanghai.[43]

At first glance, the Philharmonic's opera concerts, which were presented by the Society, did not differ greatly from those of the Municipal Orchestra. The Philharmonic continued to perform a rich and wide-ranging repertoire. Paci guest-conducted the "Grand Italian Operatic Concert" at Koukaza Park in August 1942, which featured excerpts from Rossini's *La scala di seta*, Ponchielli's *La Gioconda*, Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*, and Verdi's *Aida*. In the same park in July 1943, "An Evening of Opera Music" was conducted by Foa, and featured selections of French and Italian operas, including Gounod's *Faust*, Bizet's *Carmen*, Donizetti's *Don*

Pasquale, and Catalini's *La Wally*. There followed "An Evening of Russian Opera" in the next month, which was conducted by Sloutsky. Sloutsky also conducted a complete performance of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* at the Koukaza Park in September 1944, billed as a "Special Opera Performance Under the Stars." Like Sloutsky, the soloists and chorus members were all Russian émigrés.

Yet, operatic programming was also different: staged and complete performances became a prominent feature of the Philharmonic's opera concerts in the 1940s, according to copies of programs donated in 1989 to the Shanghai Symphony Archive by Yoshito Kusakari (草刈義人), who had been Secretary-General of the Shanghai Philharmonic Society during the occupation. They indicate that a succession of full-scale concerts took place in the months prior to Japan's surrender in August 1945. In March 1945 there was a "Grand Opera Performance" at the Lyceum of *Cavalleria rusticana*, which was conducted by Sloutsky and produced by Kusakari. May saw a production at the same premises of Lehár's *Count of Luxembourg*, whose personnel included Japanese choreographer Masahide Komaki (小牧正英), who was also a principal dancer at the Shanghai Ballet Russes. Performed in the same month and again in June was Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann*: produced again by Kusakari, it featured Chinese soprano Gao Lanzhi (高蘭芝), who had studied with Russian bass Vladimir Shushlin. June saw Kusakari's production of *La Traviata* at the Lyceum, with Sloutsky on the podium, Gao as Violetta, and émigré Russian tenor Peter Markov as Germont.

The programming of the concerts might suggest that Shanghai's opera scene was largely undisturbed by bloodshed and hostilities, and that it became all the more vibrant due to staged and complete performances with a readily-assembled, "all-star" cast.[44] Yet, these concerts cannot merely be viewed as social events; they were part of Japan's assertion of its credentials as an empire. Its declaration of war points to changing conditions of imperial rivalry, specifically a propagandized East-West competition distinct from that among predominantly western powers in the International Settlement in the 1930s. Below is an excerpted version of the declaration of war:

> More than four years have passed since China, failing to comprehend the true intentions of Our Empire, and recklessly courting trouble, disturbed peace in East Asia and compelled our Empire to take up arms. Eager for realization of their inordinate ambition to dominate the Orient, both America and Great Britain, giving support to the Chungking [Chinese Nationalist] regime, have aggravated disturbances in East Asia. We only desire to do away with the tyranny of America and Britain and to restore East Asia to its proper and undefiled state of existence. The rise and fall of our Empire and progress or decline of East Asia depend upon the present war.[45]

In juxtaposing the "tyranny" of the West with "progress" in the East, Imperial Japan sought to project itself as a liberator: the alleged oppression of the United States and the British Empire (particularly in the treaty ports) served to justify Japan's military presence in China and promulgation of a "Greater East Asia." As John Stephan notes, "[during the war] 'Greater East Asia' reverberated through radio broadcasts, newspapers, magazines, academic monographs, Diet [Japanese parliament] speeches, classrooms, and barracks."[46] Its "them versus us" strategy

was designed to encourage unity amongst East Asians and support for Japanese endeavors, papering over Japanese atrocities in China and elsewhere. But, as Barak Kushner observes, the message was nonetheless "that Japan was the most modern country and race in Asia and that it alone could lead Asians through the twentieth century."[47]

Imperial Japan's posturing—notably its antagonism towards the British Empire—gives context to the occupation of the British-run International Settlement and the restructuring of the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra. Indeed, the founding of the Shanghai Philharmonic Society produced a different state of imperial rivalry: Japanese municipal power, a symbol of expansionism in the name of a "Greater East Asia," effectively displaced British municipal power, a symbol of expansionism in the name of increased trade. That the Society was privately funded did not mean that it was not politically controlled, for ultimately it was loyal to the Japanese military cause, presenting nationalistic concerts such as the "Grand Symphony Concert in commemoration of the Third Anniversary of the Greater East Asia War."[48] Restructuring the Orchestra was said to "greatly improve the musical activities of the group," but such policy—civic culture on Japanese terms—served to extol Japanese virtues and diminish the British influence.[49] At the same time, the attempt to transform a "British" orchestra into a "Japanese" orchestra was, according to Tang Yating, an inherent contradiction, because the orchestra itself (as a concept and in its repertoire) was a western import.[50]

Nonetheless, the inauguration of the Society a mere six months after military occupation illustrates how the occupiers staked territory both politically and culturally in the International Settlement. Opera concerts presented by the Society were a specific manifestation of Japanese territoriality, reflecting the occupiers' ambition to outdo a western

enemy power, and to stamp their mark through "new," regular offerings, notably staged productions of complete operas. Territoriality *in* the Settlement was particularly significant: Japanese occupation of the French Concession did not matter to the same degree, as the Concession was (nominally) under the purview of Vichy France (a regime collaborating with Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan's ally). Thus, the Society's opera concerts were characterized not only by a continually varied repertoire, staged performances, an abundant supply of "stateless" musicians, but also—and above all—by the occupiers' attempt to assert political control over the International Settlement. This control was rendered especially apparent in the Japanese Proclamation in Shanghai of December 1941, which attempted to cast occupation in a positive light—as aspiring to "the peace and order and preservation of the prosperity of the Settlement," with a readiness "to respect the life and property of the general public"—but which also warned of affiliations with the "enemy."[51] So, just as the Orchestra in the 1930s was for the Shanghai Municipal Council a matter of articulating and maintaining British influence, the Philharmonic in the 1940s was inextricably linked to the occupiers' reputation and justification of their invasion of Shanghai.

Operatic geography in and of Shanghai

This emergent geography points inevitably to the influence of empire(s), but at a deeper level, it also complicates opera as a *distinct* imperial emblem. Michael McClellan's study is worth revisiting here. Highlighting the flaws of "French imperial performance" in colonial Hanoi, he notes that "[t]he theater was a byproduct of [the colonial] community's attempt to overcome its separation from and nostalgia for what it had left behind, but opera, which was expected to mediate between the metropole and the colony and draw them closer, ultimately reinforced

Hanoi's peripheral status."[52] He explains: "The size, location, function, and opulence of the building heralded the power of empire, but its irregular use and mediocre performances in combination with a lack of Vietnamese interest discredited it as an emblem of authority."[53] In other words, rehearsing a French imperial ideology had the opposite effect, tempering that ideology. "Opera," supposedly a symbol of the metropole in the colony, was instead locally and spatially negotiated, and hence became a compromised discourse. If the politics of empire in Hanoi were fraught with contradiction, the situation in 1930s and 1940s Shanghai was doubly ambiguous. In a setting that was not anyone's colony, but was contested by various foreign powers, one is compelled to ask: whose imperial ideologies and values mattered, and ultimately, were they able to take root? If the efforts of both British and Japanese administrators rendered opera concerts exemplars of a "model" civic culture, multiple forms of expansionism also meant that, unlike the (attempted) glorification in Hanoi of Third Republic France, "empire" was neither clearly defined nor universally understood. There was no single colonial presence, and further, no single metropole to which Shanghai's foreign administrators professed loyalty.

Seen in this light, operatic geography in and of Shanghai is shaped not only by imperialisms in the plural, but also by different manifestations of foreign territoriality. Such particularities also prompt some other historical reflections, specifically regarding the ingrained epistemological distinction between imperialism and colonialism. In *Postcolonialism*, for example, Robert Young offers the view that imperialism is "typically driven by ideology from the metropolitan center and concerned with the assertion and expansion of state power."[54] Colonialism, by contrast, is principally "economically driven by migrant settler communities,

speculators or trading companies and [is] concerned with more ad hoc, localized matters of territorial and economic administration."[55] In *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, Ania Loomba initially appears to theorize imperialism and colonialism in terms of cause and effect; she is quick to point out, however, that the distinction between them is "defined differently depending on their historical mutations."[56] Opera concerts in 1930s and 1940s Shanghai certainly provide one such example of mutation, highlighting (geopolitically) the entwining of imperialism and colonialism. Imperialism and colonialism both operate as forms of intrusion, leveraging resources on forcibly-claimed territory; as such, they are equally contingent upon the degree to which power is maintained on the ground. Indeed, treaty port and wartime Shanghais cannot simply be characterized as extensions of metropoles or colonial formations; rather, they constitute political arenas in which existing and emergent empires attempt to safeguard their interests, and are thus marked by power relations produced and negotiated within those arenas. Opera concerts in the context of multiple Shanghais—albeit an intriguing story of "western" music-making in the East—bring to the fore these local spatialities of power, presenting a complex tale of encroachment and occupation.

The author's thanks and acknowledgements go to Suzanne Aspden, Daniel Grimley, Takako Maeda, Hu Yianqiong of the Shanghai Symphony Archive, Xu Jinhua and Wang Feng of the Xujiahui Library (藏書樓) in Shanghai, and the Royal Musical Association for the Thurston Dart Research Grant.

[1] Japan declared war following its attack on 7 December 1941 on Pearl Harbor.

[2] Opera in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Shanghai has received some critical

attention, particularly with regard to touring companies and émigré musicians. See, for example, Huang Chun-zen, "Traveling Opera Troupes in Shanghai, 1842–1949," (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1997); and Wang Zhicheng, *Eqiao yinyuejia zai Shanghai* [Russian Musicians in Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shanghai Conservatory Press, 2007).

[3] The orchestra was renamed the Shanghai Municipal Symphony Orchestra (上海市政府交響樂團) after the Second World War, and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra (上海交響樂團) in 1956. The Shanghai Philharmonic during the Japanese occupation is not to be confused with the present-day Shanghai Philharmonic (上海愛樂樂團), whose predecessor was the Shanghai Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra (上海廣播交響樂團).

[4] Robert David Sack, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 19.

[5] Yvonne Whelan, "Territory and Place," in *Key Concepts in Historical Geography*, ed. John Morrissey et al. (London: Sage, 2014), 53.

[6] Fuzhou, Ningbo, Shamian Island, and Xiamen were the other ports forced to open for foreign trade under the Treaty of Nanjing.

[7] The term "colonial formations" helps to convey the peculiarities of colonialism in China. Bryna Goodman and David S. G. Goodman, eds., *Twentieth-Century Colonialism and China: Localities, the Everyday, and the World* (Oxford: Routledge, 2012), 3.

[8] Ibid., 1.

[9] Robert Bickers and Isabella Jackson, eds., *Treaty Ports in Modern China: Law, Land, and Power* (London: Routledge, 2016).

[10] Tess Johnston and Deke Erh, *Frenchtown Shanghai: Western Architecture in Shanghai's Old French Concession* (Hong Kong: Old China Hand Press, 2000), 12.

[11] The maps can be found in *Lao Shanghai baiye zhinan* [Directory of Businesses in Old Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2008), a reprint of *Shanghai shi hanghao tulu* [A Pictorial Directory of Businesses in Shanghai], 2 volumes (1937, 1947).

[12] In February 1943, the British-Chinese Treaty and the U.S.-China Treaty for Relinquishment of Extraterritorial Rights in China were signed between the Nationalist Government under Jiang Jieshi, Britain, and the United States. Although the treaties were not enforceable in Japanese-occupied Shanghai, in July of the same year, the Japanese retroceded the British-affiliated Shanghai Municipal Council to the Shanghai Special Municipality (which reported to Wang Jingwei's collaborationist government). In the same month, the Nazi-affiliated government of Vichy France handed the French Concession over to Wang Jingwei's government. The International Settlement and French Concession officially came to an end with the surrender of Japan, the conclusion of the Second World War, and the Nationalists' resumption of sovereignty.

[13] Michael McClellan, "Performing Empire: Opera in Colonial Hanoi," *Journal of Musicological Research* 22 (2003), 135–166 (135–36).

[14] Ibid., 135–136.

[15] Evidence of French settlers' involvement in opera was not found at the time of research.

[16] Laura Victoir and Victor Zatsepine, eds., *Harbin to Hanoi: The Colonial Built Environment in Asia, 1840–1940* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013). Examples of touring companies performing in treaty port Shanghai include the Italian Grand Opera Company, Stanley Opera Company, and the Russian Grand Opera Company; Huang, "Traveling Opera Troupes."

[17] Three undated Shanghai Opera advertisements for productions of *Aida* (1937), *La Juive*, and *The Tales of Hoffmann* are held with the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra's (SMO) programs at the Shanghai Symphony Archive. The Opera's business manager, I. I. Kounin, was also author of two books on Shanghai; one of its conductors, Alexander Sloutsky, conducted both the SMO and the Shanghai Philharmonic.

[18] On the archiving in Shanghai of British- and Japanese-era materials, and its implications for music research and scholarship, see Yvonne Liao, "Western Music and Municipality in 1930s and 1940s Shanghai" (PhD diss., King's College London, 2016).

[19] Robert Bickers, "'The Greatest Cultural Asset East of Suez': The History and Politics of the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra and Public Band, 1881–1946," in *China and the World in the Twentieth Century: Selected Essays (Vol. II)*, ed. Chang Chi-hsiung (Nankang, Taiwan: Academia Sinica, 2001), 835–875; Tang Yating, *Diguo feisan bianzouqu*: *Shanghai gongbuju yuedui shi* [Variations of Imperial Diasporas: A History of The Shanghai Municipal Orchestra] (Shanghai: Shanghai Conservatory Press, 2014); Wang Yanli, *Shanghai gongbuju yuedui yanjiu* [Research on The Shanghai Municipal Orchestra] (Shanghai: Shanghai Conservatory Press, 2015); and Irene Pang, "Reflecting Musically: The Shanghai Municipal Orchestra as a Semi-Colonial Construct" (PhD diss., University of Hong Kong, 2015).

[20] Bickers, "Greatest Cultural Asset," 836.

[21] The Shanghai Municipal Archives (hereafter SMA) holds a dossier devoted to the Orchestra's services on Bastille Day. See SMA U1-1-896.

[22] On the Shanghai Municipal Brass Band's sonic and aural politics, see Liao, "Western Music and Municipality."

[23] Lyceum, 15 March 1936; featuring Liszt's symphonic poems *Les préludes* and *Tasso, Lamento e trionfo*, Piano Concerto No. 1, Mephisto Waltz, and Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1. See SMA U1-4-928.

[24] *North-China Daily News*, 2 March 1867.

[25] Huang, "Traveling Opera Troupes," 12–13, from the *North-China Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette* on 29 January 1874.

[26] Ibid.

[27] *China Press*, 19 October 1940.

[28] For SMO attendance figures, see, for example, SMA U1-4-893.

[29] Floria Paci Zaharoff, *The Daughter of the Maestro: Life in Surabaya, Shanghai, and Florence* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2005), 105. Strok's reputation in Asia can also be observed in his obituary on 3 July 1956 in *The New York Times*, whose headline reads "Avray Strok Dead; Impresario In East." Born in 1877 in Riga, Latvia, Strok later became an American citizen.

[30] Wang Zhicheng, *Jindai Shanghai eguo qiaomin shenghuo* [The Lives of Russian Settlers in Modern Shanghai] (Shanghai: Cishu Press, 2008); and Hon-Lun Yang, Simo Mikkonen, and John Winzenburg, *Networking the Russian Diaspora: Russian Musicians and Musical Activities in Interwar Shanghai* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, forthcoming). This community

included “White” Russians who fled the Bolsheviks, Ashkenazi Jews, and Soviet Jews, who arrived in northeastern China in the early twentieth century to help construct railways.

[31] Shushlin remained at the Conservatory after the Communist takeover, and left China for the Soviet Union in 1956 (the Conservatory was renamed the Shanghai Conservatory in the same year).

[32] Paci stayed in Shanghai, earned a living by giving private lessons, and died in August 1946.

[33] Paci was approached by Ernest F. Harris (a longstanding member and Chairman of the Orchestra and Band Committee in the Shanghai Municipal Council) to provide an “autobiographical sketch” for the farewell program. Harris was Manager of Sun Life Assurance in Shanghai and President of the Shanghai Rotary Club.

[34] This anecdote appeared in the same “sketch.”

[35] Bickers, “Greatest Cultural Asset.”

[36] Between 1927 and 1935 there were numerous attempts at the Annual Ratepayers’ Meeting to scrap the ensemble.

[37] SMA, U1-4-916-2047 to U1-4-916-2052.

[38] *The Land Regulations and Bye-Laws for the Foreign Settlement in Shanghai, 1845–1930*, 1. The report is held now at the Xujiahui Library.

[39] SMA, U1-4-916-1978.

[40] SMA, U1-4-929-1366.

[41] The long-running debate around the expense of running the SMO was particularly heated in 1934 and widely reported in the English-speaking press, though less extensively in Chinese-

language newspapers. See SMA, U1-4-939-0256. And on the earlier history, see Bickers, "Greatest Cultural Asset."

[42] *Shanghai Times*, 9 December 1941, accessible now at the Xujiahui Library.

[43] Tang, *Diguo feisan bianzouqu* [Variations of Imperial Diasporas], 197. On European Jewish musicians in Japanese-occupied Shanghai, see Yvonne Liao, "'Die gute Unterhaltungsmusik': Landscape, Refugee Cafés, and Sounds of 'Little Vienna' in Wartime Shanghai," *The Musical Quarterly* 98 (2016): 350–394. Though confined from 1943 in the Restricted Sector for Stateless Refugees, these musicians put on operetta productions such as Eysler's *Hanni geht tanzen!*, Kalman's *Die Bajadere*, Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe*, and Oscar Straus' *Ein Walzertraum*, all advertised in the *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle*, a German-language daily, copies of which can be accessed at the Xujiahui Library.

[44] Advertisement for Gounod's *Faust* at the Lyceum, January 1944.

[45] *Shanghai Times*, 9 December 1941.

[46] John J. Stephan, *Hawai'i under the Rising Sun: Japan's Plans for Conquest after Pearl Harbor* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1984), 135.

[47] Barak Kushner, *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda*, (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 20.

[48] Held on 10 December 1944; featuring the Japanese National Hymn, Yamada's Sinfonia *Inno Meiji*, Beethoven *Romance in G*, and Watanabe's Symphonic Poem *Fighting Soul*.

[49] *Shanghai Times*, 9 December 1941.

[50] Tang, *Diguo feisan bianzouqu* [Variations of Imperial Diasporas], 238.

[51] *Shanghai Times*, 9 December 1941.

[52] McClellan, “Performing Empire,” 166.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

[55] Ibid., 16–17.

[56] Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (Oxford: Routledge, 2015), 25.