Introduction

This chapter offers insight into the construction of community through music and the music industry in response to Japan's 3/11 (11 March 2011) triple disasters: earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident (see Kingston 2012). While located to the northeast of Japan's largest island, Honshū, the enormity of the disasters had a massive effect on the entire nation in terms of not only the loss of lives and destruction of infrastructure in and around the immediately affected areas, but also in terms of how the nation responded, both from the top down (e.g. government and regional government), and from the bottom up (e.g. individuals, organizations and communities).

Disasters have the power to capture the emotions of people in far-reaching ways. Such events as acts of war, terrorism, earthquakes, tsunamis or major accidents will unfailingly conjure up images of tragedy and devastation, and will have a lasting impact on those directly and indirectly affected by the event. One area of culture that is frequently used in diverse ways as a result of disaster is music. Does music help in the healing process? Can music bring people together? Does music have the ability to evoke transcultural solicitude? Take for instance the 9/11 terrorist acts in America in 2001 that changed international relations and national security at the start of the twenty-first century (see Fisher and Flota 2011; Ritter and Daughtry 2007); Hurricane Katrina, which reminded the world in 2005 of the power of the elements (e.g. McLeese 2008); the food disasters in Africa in the 1980s, which aroused the emotions of musicians from different continents to produce Band Aid in 1984 and then Live Aid in 1985; the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, which saw Grammy-winning rap singer Wyclef Jean so involved with and inspired by the events that he wanted to run for President; or the 3/11 earthquake and tsunami disasters of Japan, which devastated many villages and towns, brought the nation to the brink of nuclear catastrophe, and caused trauma for thousands. With such disasters and many others, musicians and the musical public are increasingly proactive and
publicly visible in wanting to help: they may write songs or hold fund-raising events soon after the disaster, or they may create new music in commemoration (e.g. Robin Gibb’s *The Titanic Requiem* of 2012 commemorating 100 years since the vessel sank; cf. Cooper 2008; King et al. 2009).

Musical responses to the 3/11 disasters were diverse, both within and outside Japan. In this political setting, it is important to consider the social and cultural place of music more broadly. That is, ‘musical sounds are a powerful human resource, often at the heart of our most profound social occasions and experiences’ (Turino 2008: 1). Music is a type of creativity through which people are able to express themselves, both through sound and through words, and one creative response to disaster is to channel feelings through an artistic work, for performers and listeners alike. In terms of music, fundraising and relief concerts for 3/11 have featured numerous performances all over Japan (and internationally), from professional musicians to amateur performers; proceeds from album sales, downloads and gigs have been contributed to the relief effort; and new music has been produced as a way of remembering the event. Building on recent research in the field of music and conflict (e.g. Dunn 2008; O’Connell and Castelo-Branco 2010; Robertson 2010), this chapter provides three contrasting case studies that explore the use of music in the music industry in the aftermath of 3/11 (both inside and outside Japan), and the chapter divides into three main parts accordingly. Following this brief introduction, the first of these parts focuses on the earthquake/tsunami response in terms of how one celebrated Japanese music agency and its artists responded by focusing on fund-raising for the relief effort by holding large-scale and high-profile concerts. The emphasis on this part of the discussion is how this influential company used its music industry networks to project itself in a benevolent way within the highly commercial world of Japanese popular music. The second part of the chapter looks at the Japanese response to the nuclear disaster in connection with how the anti-nuclear movement reacted through the intervention of established and influential musicians, as well as rising stars. The last main part of the chapter explores an international response through the music industry and collaboration between several major record labels. While musical responses to 3/11 have been diverse and far-reaching in their social and cultural reach, each of the three case studies in this chapter is discussed from the perspective of the music industry: a leading Japanese music agency, a famous musician and activist, and international record labels.

As a way of showing such responses, the discussion places emphasis on how community has been constructed as a result of 3/11. I use the term community to express the diverse ways that people from inside and outside Japan have responded to 3/11, but have acted together in one way or another. The very fact