

Genre Topics as Narrative in Yoasobi's "Idol" (2023)*

Noriko Manabe

NOTE: The examples for the (text-only) PDF version of this item are available online at:

<https://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.26.32.3/mto.26.32.3.manabe.php>

KEYWORDS: topics, genre, anime, J-pop, hip hop, singer-songwriter, Eurobeat

ABSTRACT: This article illustrates the use of topics as narrative devices in popular music through a case study of Yoasobi's "Idol" (2023), Japan's most globally successful song in sixty years. As the opening theme for the anime *Oshi no ko*, it tells the tragic story of Ai, a pop idol who is murdered by a stalking fan. Taking Mirka's definition of topics as styles taken out of their context to use in another, I demonstrate how "Idol" evokes the topics of rap, trap, dark chorus, idol pop, singer-songwriter, and Eurobeat—each with its own social associations and well-known songs—within the host genre of J-pop to produce a multifaceted narrative. I begin with a close analysis of texture (Moore 2012, Lavengood 2020), melody, and harmony to identify the topics. The conventions of trap—orchestral hits, TR-808 bass, triplets, shifting rhyme placement, and intonational patterns—signal internal darkness, though a cute delivery subverts that darkness. Plaintive, leaping melodies with chromatic harmonies on piano recall female singer-songwriters like Yūming and Aiko and their nods to emotional truth. Common idol-pop elements—the half-time pre-chorus with cheering *otaku*, the unprepared upward modulations—evoke fan culture, while the Eurobeat chorus recalls the bright timbres, hedonism, and social unease of the late 1990s to early 2000s, when Ai's life is set. This strategic topic-mixing and its evocation of social memory tell a story of the imagery and toxicity inherent in the entertainment industry. This case study illustrates the potential for topics in studies of narrative and cultural critique in popular music.

DOI: 10.30535/mto.32.3.4

Received January 2026

Volume 32, Number 3, September 2026
Copyright © 2026 Society for Music Theory

1. Introduction

[1.1] Yoasobi, composed of singer Ikura and producer Ayase, are among Japan's most recognizable breakout artists of the 2020s, having clocked a string of hits since "Yoru ni kakeru" (Racing into the Night, 2019) became a viral hit in the early weeks of the Covid lockdown. "Idol," their biggest hit, was not only the no. 1 song of 2023 on Billboard Japan Hot 100,⁽¹⁾ but also the first Japanese-language song to hit no. 1 on Billboard's Global Excl. US chart (on June 10, 2023). As the opening theme song to the first season of the anime *Oshi no ko* (My Favorite Idol's Children, 2023–), "Idol" acts as an operatic overture: it must set the stage for the anime,⁽²⁾ introduce its characters, and raise the audience's interest in its story.⁽³⁾ Watched repeatedly with each episode, the theme song must captivate the listener each time. "Idol" narrates this story

through the evocation of multiple genres, each of which has associations to specific times and people in Japanese and global cultural history, social circumstances, and affects. They are topics that narrate the story of Ai through the juxtaposition of multiple genres and their ties to culture.

[1.2] Leonard Ratner (1980) first used the word “topics” to describe recurring musical patterns in eighteenth-century music, or “subjects for musical discourse.” He referred to two categories of topics: types, or “fully worked-out” genres like minuets and other dances; and styles, or “figures and progressions within a piece,” such as military and hunt music, singing style, and learned style (9). These latter styles are identified by melodic or textural features, which may recall standalone genres (e.g., church music for the learned style, 23). He also saw social context embedded into topics, noting their origins from worship, dance, life of the lower classes, and other circumstances (9). Wye Allanbrook expands on this idea of topics as social indicators, showing how Mozart’s operas bring musical narratives to life by conjuring the associations connected with certain types and styles. For example, the interplay of the aristocratic minuet, rough peasant allemande, and bourgeois contredanse in the Finale of Act I in *Don Giovanni* embodied the social hierarchies in play in the opera and in society in Mozart’s time, when the emerging middle class was threatening the established order (Allanbrook 1983, 286).⁽⁴⁾ Outlining the centrality of topics in eighteenth-century writing on music, Kofi Agawu ([1991] 2014) shows that in classical instrumental works, different topics appear simultaneously and in succession, which may suggest a narrative; he notes that “a topical discourse conveys part of the drama” of these passages (48). Robert Hatten (1994a, 2014, 2025) expands on the semantic impact of combining different topics in “troping,” a dynamic process by which either 1) the importation of a topic into a different context or 2) the juxtaposition of two or more topics results in “generat[ing] fresh meanings from such interactions” (2014, 515). He identifies different categories of topical troping, based on degrees of compatibility among topics, dominance of one topic over another, creativity (or novelty), and productive engagement with the motivic or thematic discourse of the movement.

[1.3] While topic theory has traditionally been associated with its original eighteenth-century contexts, recent works have shown that topic theory can be applied to music of the past one hundred years. Johanna Frymoyer (2017) and James Donaldson (2024) have considered topics in the music of the twentieth century and beyond, examining how degrees of topical realization vary and how topics emerge or dissolve across multiple appearances. Frymoyer (2025) has argued for an embodied approach to the formation of topics: “Topical categories are formed when a particular constellation of features in the musical environment of a work imitate movement types that are collectively identifiable, useful, and meaningful within a usage community” (110). Expanding on Danuta Mirka’s assertion that styles and genres are indexically associated with affects and social contexts (Mirka 2014, 28),⁽⁵⁾ Frymoyer argues that topics inhabit “social memories” that are embedded to individuals’ “movement habits” that help “shape a sense of social identity in the present. . . yet grounded in a historical past” (Frymoyer 2025, 115).

[1.4] Topic theory has also been applied to popular music. William Echard (2017) examines topic theory in psychedelic rock, examining meaning-making through base styles (like folk) inflected with donor styles (like Indian classical music). Several works address topics in video games: Atkinson (2019) describes the soaring topic as “a trope [in Hatten’s sense] combining elements of the martial, transcendence, machines, and the supernatural” [9]; Thomas Yee (2020) notes the combining of sacred-music elements with battle themes set in the rock topic to form the god-slaying trope; Megan Lavengood and Evan Williams (2023) identify topical clusters in videogame music through co-occurring musical characteristics, such as the “winter topic.” Several other works in popular music concern genre or stylistic references in ways that resonate with topic theory. Drawing from Hatten (1985)’s theory of intertextuality, Mark Spicer (2009) analyzes strategic intertextuality (referencing specific works) in Beatles songs like “All You Need Is Love,” versus stylistic intertextuality (adopting style features without specific references) in the Police, which used reggae and punk as home styles while also conjuring jazz, prog, synth pop, baroque lament, and music hall. He defines style as “a musical world that is defined by a family of specific musical devices”—i.e., “a collection of topics”—while a topic is an individual device that could evoke the essence of a style (Spicer 2010, 126–27). Taylor Myers (2017) describes genre modulations within a song, marked by musical parameters including instrumentation, timbre, vocal effects, and meter; she draws from Philip Tagg’s idea of the genre synecdoche, which imports other styles into a home style (Tagg 2012, 522–24). These approaches demonstrate that topic theory and its adjacent methodologies have the relevance and flexibility to address contemporary popular musics, many of which operate in multimodal media contexts.

[1.5] Since Ratner's original essay, the idea of the "topic" has been expanded to encompass melodic figures (e.g., sigh motive), affects (*amoroso*; Agawu [1991] 2014, 30), accompaniment patterns (Alberti bass; Agawu [2009] 2014, 60–62), harmonic schemata (cadences), and meters ($\frac{4}{4}$; Allanbrook 2014, Chapter 3, quoted in Mirka 2014, 2). In her introduction to the *Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, Mirka refocuses the concept of topics to "musical styles and genres taken out of their proper context and used in another one" (Mirka 2014, 2). Her selective consideration of topics would be useful to the analysis of popular music in intermedial contexts and of Japanese popular music in particular. Since Japan's opening to the West in the nineteenth century and especially in the postwar era, Japan has been musically omnivorous, importing genres quickly as they emerge overseas. After taking on rumba and tango early in the twentieth century, a succession of foreign genres—salsa, jazz, rock, hip hop, reggae, EDM, Afrobeat, to name a few—have all attracted Japanese players and audiences, creating an abundance of local scenes and connoisseurs' circles. The existence of diverse genres in Japan has made Japanese popular music open to incorporating them. Indeed, eclecticism is part of the Japanese musical brand, as explained by the head of DMC Japan when DJ Kentarō won the 2002 DMC World Championship; his winning performance had blended house, reggae, hip-hop, drum 'n' bass, and rock, ending with the punchline, "no wall between the music" (Manabe 2013a). Many listeners are avid learners about various genres, as illustrated by the vast catalogues of detailed books called "disc guides" from Shinko Music and other publishers, the coverage of which range from the expected (e.g., classic rock, K-pop) to the niche (e.g., melodic punk, dancehall reggae). The environment is thus receptive to genre-mixing, and while not every Japanese listener is well-versed in all genres, the audiophiles (and the Japanese music critics they follow) tend to be aware of the musical and sociohistorical origins of various genres and associate socially inflected meanings to them. Hence, a focus on genre-based topics in Japanese popular music, their social meanings, and their contributions to narrative—similar to analyses conducted on eighteenth-century topics—would be productive.

[1.6] Anime music is a quintessential example of a multimedia cultural form. Japanese corporations collaborate to construct anime in a so-called "media mix" of intersecting media franchises distributed into Japanese and international contexts.⁽⁶⁾ Given its narrative nature, anime music also presents a compelling test case for how popular music plays on widely recognized conventions, such as the cultural associations of genres, to aid in its storytelling. Indeed, the incorporation of eclectic genres is a feature of some anime like *Cowboy Bebop*, which, as Rose Bridges (2017) has noted, incorporates jazz, singer-songwriter, and a cappella, among many others. In "Idol" (Aidoru, 2023), the J-pop duo Yoasobi incorporates multiple genre-topics in a single track, often interacting with each other to tell the story of the anime.

[1.7] This article illustrates the use of topics as narrative devices in Yoasobi's "Idol" as a case study in topics in popular music. Taking Mirka's consideration of topics as musical genres placed into contexts different from their original ones, I demonstrate how the evocation of rap, trap, dark chorus, idol pop, singer-songwriter, and Eurobeat—each with its own conventions, associations, and well-known songs—produces a multifaceted narrative. For the purposes of this article, I will follow Ratner (1980) in considering genres to be "fully worked-out" types, while styles include compositional elements that evoke them, with "the distinction between types [i.e., genres] and styles [being] flexible" (9).⁽⁷⁾ Genres are characterized by their social context—for example, Fabian Holt defines them as "set[s] of symbolic codes that are organized and constituted ['codified'] in a social network at particular moments in history" (2003, 92–93), reflecting "certain cultural values, rituals, practices, territories, traditions, and groups of people" (2007, 19); the strong social associations of genres make them ideal vehicles for narrative. I consider the host genre for these topics to be J-pop—a commercial Japanese pop genre characterized by catchy melodies and eclectic influences; as examples in this article will show, J-pop often incorporates other genres in ways that speak to their meanings in Japanese culture. I base this analysis on the ways that genres are read by Japanese audiences who are knowledgeable about Japanese and global musics. Many Western fans, especially those familiar with J-pop and anime, are also likely to recognize many of these topics; however, as explained later, in the case of some Western-originated genres like hip hop and Eurobeat, meanings in Japan have shifted in the process of localizing these genres. In "Idol," these musical topics combine with the intermedial referencing between the *Oshi no ko* franchise of the short story "45501," manga,⁽⁸⁾ and anime with the song's lyrics and musical setting. After outlining the story of the manga and explaining how it reflects the place of idols in Japanese entertainment, I show how genre-topics—identified by texture, rhythm, harmony, and melodic contour—combine with the cultural meanings associated with them to construct the narrative for the song and the anime by extension. As a work, *Oshi no ko* offers a critique of the idol industry; in parodying idol music in a musically inventive manner, "Idol" offers its own metacommentary on idol music.

2. *Yoasobi and the Oshi no ko story*

[2.1] Yoasobi was formed in 2019 when vocaloid⁽⁹⁾ producer Ayase (b. 1994) was approached by Monogatary.com, an online writer's platform owned by Sony Music Entertainment Japan, to create music inspired by short stories on the site. Ayase discovered Ikura (Lilas Ikuta), a singer-songwriter of the Plusonica collective, on Instagram and invited her to form the duo. To turn literature into music, as the group's concept is identified, Ayase first reads the story and expresses its imagery and atmosphere in music; he constructs the lyrics out of parts of the story and the emotions of its characters.

[2.2] Ayase wrote the first drafts of "Idol" a year and a half before the anime premiered and well before he was commissioned to write it. He had discovered the manga series *Oshi no ko* on his own; inspired, he wrote a vocaloid song about it, where the protagonist was a fighter, like Chun Li in the videogame *Street Fighter*: "[The protagonist is] a battle girl who is the strongest and most invincible in fights, but she also has some kind of darkness inside her" (Ueda 2023).

[2.3] Indeed, *Oshi no ko* has a dark side. This fictional story is about the children of Ai, a legendary idol in an all-girl group. In Japan, idols are pop stars, typically in their teens or twenties, that thrive on the intense devotion of fans cultivated through meet-and-greets, fan clubs, constant shows, and media exposure. They project an image of cute innocence, making them objects of male fantasy (Aoyagi 2005; Galbraith and Karlin 2019). They hence avoid being seen on dates. When AKB48⁽¹⁰⁾ member Minegishi Minami⁽¹¹⁾ was caught sleeping with a man in 2013, she shaved her head in contrition and was demoted.

[2.4] The first book of the *Oshi no ko* manga series (and the first episode in the anime series) tells the story of Ai. She is a teenager running away from an orphanage when the president of a small artists' agency scouts her to be an idol. As the daughter of a single mother who abandoned her, Ai—whose name (アイ) is a homonym for "love" (愛)—has never known love. The agent convinces her that it is fine to lie in the entertainment industry, where idols routinely proclaim "love" to their fans, and that if she keeps singing "I love you," the lie might turn into a truth. Wishing to experience love, Ai pursues a career as an idol, trying to love her fans and hoping that one day she would find love. Her star power immediately surfaces, and she becomes the center (lead singer) in the girl idol group B-Komachi.

[2.5] At the opening of the manga, the obstetrician Gorō discovers Ai through his terminally ill patient Sarina and becomes a devoted fan himself. Suddenly, Ai appears at his hospital in a remote village, pregnant with twins and seeking to avoid being discovered. (In real life, a Japanese idol giving birth out of wedlock at age sixteen would be a major scandal that would not only end her career but also destroy her artists' agency.) Gorō and Ai develop rapport as he looks after her health. He is killed by a fan stalking Ai. Her twins, Aqua and Ruby, are born respectively as reincarnations of Gorō and Sarina, who retain memories of their past lives. The children's existence and their father are kept secret while Ai achieves increasing success. The day of her triumphant concert in Tokyo Dome, she is stabbed to death in front of her children. Aqua realizes that Ai's murderer is the same stalker that killed Gorō, and that only an accomplice close to Ai could have leaked her tightly guarded whereabouts. He surmises that his father must be the accomplice and that he is a figure in the entertainment industry; Aqua thus cultivates a career in entertainment in order to identify him and seek revenge. The series thereafter focuses on Ai's children, specifically Aqua's quest for revenge and Ruby's quest to be an idol like her mother. But the main characters—Aqua, Ruby, Kamiki Hikaru (their father), and Nino (a B-Komachi member and accomplice)—continue to be obsessed with Ai throughout the series. No longer living, she remains an object of mystery and obsession—a receptacle into which people project their desires and fears. The persistence of her aura is a metacommentary on the idol industry.

[2.6] Indeed, the manga is notable for its depiction of the entertainment industry—how young idols are recruited, paid little, and sexually harassed; how jealousy and toxicity fester in the work environment; how fans worship their idols in ways that project fantasy and deny the idols' humanity; and how cultivating this fandom goes hand-in-hand with the potential for stalking and violence. Ikura was surprised at how realistically it depicted the two sides of the entertainment industry—one in the limelight, the other in the shadows (Billboard Japan 2023; St. Michel 2023). Ayase added, "I wanted to express the light and darkness that swirls around the people in the Japanese entertainment industry. . . and their relationships with the people around them in a song. . . I think it's the first time I've ever written a song that's inspired by the dark parts and the pop parts," with the former being strong and the latter being sparkly (Ueda 2023).

[2.7] Given that Ai forms the emotional core for the series about whom the characters obsess, Ayase made the theme song about her, even though the series centers on Aqua (Akasaka and Yokoyari 2024, 152). He said:

I went to meet with Akasaka, and I made a request to change the point of view of the story. I really wanted Ai to be the protagonist. However, talking with Akasaka, I came to understand that what makes Ai the ultimate idol is that nobody can know her true essence. The common ground we reached was the short story that's been released, which is based on Ai and the events surrounding her as she's seen by a fellow member of B-Komachi. . . If the opening theme song was always one about what Ai was thinking when she was alive, what happened to her, and her love for Aqua and Ruby, [then] people would never forget about Ai, and she would become a legend (Billboard Japan 2023).

[2.8] Akasaka's short story "45510" opens with a former B-Komachi member (presumably Nino) discovering a video recording of a livestream by Ai, a legendary idol who had died sixteen years previously (Akasaka 2023).⁽¹²⁾ The video reawakens her mixed feelings for Ai; Nino was deeply jealous of Ai's beauty, talent, and the attention she received from fans and management, which had relegated the other members of B-Komachi to back-dancer status. The video shows Ai answering questions that fans have typed into the comments, and she characteristically answers them vaguely; pressed to say something about her love life, she says that she doesn't understand why people would want to get married and be with someone for the rest of their lives, although she understands having such feelings for a child. Ai hints at a vulnerable side, saying that she wants someone to know and accept her good and bad points. When the video cuts out, Nino searches for the rest of it and stumbles upon B-Komachi's old blog, formed when the group was new and the members were junior high-school students. She finds an unpublished blog post by Ai after she had reached stardom, in which she wishes the group could go back to getting along again as they did in the early days, when the others treated her as an equal rather than with deference. Nino stops reading her post; it paints Ai as vulnerable, and Nino needs Ai to be invincible, so that Nino would not have let herself be upstaged by an inferior being. She deletes the entire blog, so that no one would discover Ai's vulnerability. She claims she worships Ai more than anyone else. "Idol" expresses this mixed picture of Ai—a bright outward-facing image and a vulnerable interior—through musical topics.

3. *A topical analysis of "Idol"*

[3.1] Deriving its storyline from "45510," the first book of the manga, and the first episode of the anime series, "Idol" is structured as three verse-chorus cycles representing Ai from different points of view (outlined in Example 1): first, the fans' view of her; second, Nino's view; and third, Ai's own view. Each cycle has multiple sections that are delineated through different genre-topics, evoked by texture, vocal style, timbre, tempo, and groove. The genres' associations with a particular mood, social class, or histories add affective resonance to Ai's story. The rapped verses tell each narrator's true feelings, especially their dark sides. The sung pre-chorus, in singer-songwriter style, presents Ai in emotional confession. The chorus, in maximalist Eurobeat, represents the idol in performative excess and the superficial brightness of her image. These genre-topics act not merely as stylistic references, but as narrative devices that recall cultural associations of that genre and its famous performers and songs.

[3.2] **Example 1** shows each cycle and section (as delineated by lyric, harmony, and texture) and the topic it invokes. The textural analysis uses Allan Moore's taxonomy of four layers in popular music (the explicit beat layer, typically drums; the functional bass layer; the melodic layer, which includes primary and secondary melodic lines; and the harmonic filler layer). In addition, it considers the novelty layer, which Megan Lavengood describes as sounds that resist blending with the ensemble and instead stand out, often due to their timbre (Moore 2012, Chapter 2; Lavengood 2020). I have included in the novelty layer those standout timbres (in *italics*) that also fulfill other functions. Evoking these genre-topics, with their differing cultural implications, add affective resonance to Ai's story.

First cycle

First rap verse

[3.3] The rap which opens the first cycle addresses Ai's essence; paralleling "45510," it comments on how she enraptures the media with her smile and how her evasion of any revelatory questions adds to her

mysteriousness, making her fans ever more curious about her. It culminates in declaring Ai a “genius idol.”

[3.4] Rap has a dual image in Japan. On the one hand, it is seen as a cool, stylish, and fun genre of popular music; it has been adopted by entertainers like Itō Seiko in the 1980s,⁽¹³⁾ made the centerpiece of anime like *Samurai Champloo* (2004),⁽¹⁴⁾ and appropriated by poppy groups like Creepy Nuts (e.g., “Bling-Bang-Bang-Born,” 2024)⁽¹⁵⁾ and idols like AKB48 (e.g., “[Green Flash](#),” 2015) and Morning Musume (e.g., “Jealousy Jealousy,” 2017).⁽¹⁶⁾ In fact, one of Japanese rap’s first hits was “[Da.yo.ne](#)” (1994) by East End x Yuri, which featured the idol singer Ichii Yuri as one of the rappers. On the other hand, the Japanese hip-hop community values artists who remain true to their authentic selves. Over the past two decades, hip hop has become identified as a truth-telling genre for the hard-luck underclass, exemplified by Shingo Nishinari, Anarchy, and Chiba Yūki (Kohh), and the voice of marginalized regions (e.g., Awich of Okinawa, Dengaryū of Yamanashi prefecture).⁽¹⁷⁾ Japanese rap aficionados have great respect for socio-politically engaged rappers like Public Enemy and Kendrick Lamar, as shown by the many comments and homages by Japanese rappers and music writers. Yoasobi’s “Idol” frames the introductory rap as a stylish adaptation, but the subsequent rapped verses are in truth-telling mode.

[3.5] The texture connects this opening rap (0:00–0:14, heard in Example 6 below) to the history of rap. The sparse instrumentation and the dry, eighth-note chick-chick sound of hi-hats generated by a TR-808 drum machine signal trap as an inspiration (**Example 2**). Compare, for instance, the opening percussive texture with Ghostemane’s “Mercury Retrograde” (2017) (**Example 3**).⁽¹⁸⁾ The harmonic fill in “Idol” is provided by the orchestral hit—a sound built into the Fairlight CMI synthesizer in 1980 and originally sampled from the initial chord of “Infernal Dance of King Kashchei” from Stravinsky’s *Firebird Suite* (1919); it is featured in hip-hop classics like Afrika Bambaataa and the Soulsonic Force’s seminal hit “Planet Rock” (1982, **Audio Example 1**). The notes of the orchestral hit in “Idol,” G♯–A–F♯–G♯, are a fifth-down transposition of the low synthesizer in Skrillex’s remix of Kendrick Lamar’s “Humble,” D♯–E–C♯–D♯ (**Audio Example 2**).⁽¹⁹⁾ The sonic base of trap instrumentals, coupled with sounds recalling the span of hip-hop history, firmly place the opening in the hip-hop genre.

[3.6] Ayase, who is a trap fan, said that “For the rap part, I’d originally thought of it as being really hardcore, but Ikura’s not a rapper, so we tried a few different approaches and realized that the best approach wouldn’t be to try to imitate real hip-hop, but instead to make the cutest rap ever” ([Billboard Japan 2023](#); [Nagahata 2024](#)). Ikura raps in this *burikko* (exaggeratedly cute) way in the opening, which is apt for reflecting the fans’ imagining of Ai in the first verse. True to trap style, she raps in the alternating high-pitch/low-pitch pattern that Ghostemane does in “Mercury Retrograde” (**Example 4**) and Kendrick Lamar in “Humble” (2017; **Example 5**).⁽²⁰⁾ However, their raps differ from Ikura’s in an important way. Both Americans exaggerate the stress-accent pattern inherent in the English language (in these cases, STRONG–weak patterns in the trochaic foot) by placing the stressed syllables (in CAPITAL letters in the figure) on a higher pitch; additionally, they place the most emphasized word in the entire line (in **BOLD** in the figure) on an even higher pitch. The American rappers’ higher pitches help the intelligibility of the words, given that they are giving all syllables the same duration until the end of the line. On the other hand, Japanese has no stress accents based on loudness and duration, as in English. However, it has pitch accents, consisting of high and low pitch; words could be mistaken for other words if the wrong morae (short syllables) are given higher pitch.⁽²¹⁾

[3.7] **Example 6** shows the first rap verse, with the transliterated Japanese lyrics and the official English lyrics; the higher-pitched morae in Japanese are in CAPS, while the emphasized word in the line is in **BOLD**. Unlike the English examples, where strong and weak syllables alternate to match changing pitches, the accents of the Japanese words in “Idol” don’t have a consistent pattern. Nonetheless, Ikura raps in the up-down pitch pattern of trap artists as shown above, so that her pitch patterns sometimes deviate from the accents of the words. Ikura exaggerates this deviation between pitch and accent patterns at the end of the measure, when she throws the last mora (which is unaccented) into a high whistle range. These deviations from correct Japanese can be seen as cute in idol culture, where such gestures and imperfections entice fans to support the idol so that she could improve and grow. The effect is illustrative of genre importations in J-pop, where the musical parameters signal a particular genre—here, “rap”—but with Japanese and J-pop elements inserted to hybridize the imported genre and shift its associations.

[3.8] This verse has the characteristics of rhyme and assonance common to Japanese rap. The first three lines end with the matching vowels e-i-a: “me-di-a,” “mi-su-te-ri-as’,”⁽²²⁾ and “e-ri-a.” The first, fourth, and

fifth lines begin with another rhyme of e-ki: “mu-te-ki,” “ka-n-pe-ki,” and “ten.sai.te-ki” (where hyphens separate morae and periods separate syllables). Note also the juxtaposition of “hi-**mi-tsu**” (secret) and “**mi-su-te-ri-as**” (mysterious); the repeating morae alleviates the awkwardness of the counterintuitive pitches for “mi-SU-TE-RI-as,” where lexical pitch accents would normally place the three middle morae on a higher pitch than the final mora. Hence, the percussive texture and rapped pitch patterns signal trap, which is associated with truth-telling, but the cute delivery characteristic of idol pop undermines it, putting it in the trope of an idol’s adaptation of rap—a stylish entertainment, albeit with the dark undertones implied by the trap-inspired hi-hat pattern and Phrygian mode. It is an appropriate setting for the fan’s fantasy of Ai.

Choral interlude

[3.9] The rap verse is followed by two measures of a large chorus singing “You’re my savior, you’re my saving grace” (0:14–0:17, **Audio Example 3**), which bookends the song. This foreboding, full-choral texture in minor key and quasi-religious tone, which is reminiscent of “O Fortuna” in Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, constitutes what I will call the “dark chorus” topic. This topic occurs in many anime, such as “Attack on Titan” on the original soundtrack album (**Audio Example 4**) or the opening theme to the second season of the television anime (**Audio Example 5**).⁽²³⁾ As discussed by Reddit fans,⁽²⁴⁾ this topic frequently occurs in depictions of evil characters, such as in the **theme for Ryuk**, the shinigami (death god) in *Death Note*, and **Pain’s theme** in *Naruto Shippuden*. In “Idol,” the dark-chorus topic is set in Phrygian mode against a busy syncopated bass, and the lyrics picture the idol as an object of quasi-religious worship. The connection between “idol” as pop star and “idol” as religious icon—both objects of intense devotion and adulation—is made explicit through this grandiose texture.⁽²⁵⁾ The associative link of the dark chorus to evil makes the listener wonder what the source of evil and its link to adoration are—could it be fans, the music industry, or Ai’s murderer? Combined, the rap opening and the choral interlude fulfill what Tan Nazaré (2023, 2025) has identified as the “call” section of an opening theme, which calls the viewers’ attention through timbrally bright sounds (e.g., the orchestral hits) and thick, busy textures (e.g., the choral interlude).

First sung verse

[3.10] This brief choral flourish is followed by a four-phrase sung verse (0:17–0:39) that only occurs in this first cycle. This section fits with Nazaré’s conception of the typical verse of an opening theme, with sparser texture allowing for lyrics that introduce the main characters (Nazaré Rodríguez 2023, 2025). In “Idol,” the lyrics of this verse are practically direct quotes from “45510,” with the first two phrases describing how Ai keeps dodging simple questions about what she eats or reads, and where she goes to have fun. Set as musical sentences, the melody of these phrases is in the minyō pentatonic scale (G♯, B, C♯, D♯, F♯, G♯), which is used not only in folk songs but also in young children’s songs (*shōka*, *dōyō*).⁽²⁶⁾ This association lends the melody an air of childish innocence.

[3.11] In “45510,” Nino surmises that Ai’s evasiveness surrounds her with an aura of mystery, which only draws the fans in closer as they try to find out more about her. The second part of the sung verse (0:29–0:38) paraphrases this idea, saying that fans are attracted to secrets that look like they might be revealed but are not, in the same way that bees are attracted to honey. The last phrase of the sung verse returns to the fans’ Q&A, asking what type of guy she likes, another quote from “45510.” These last two phrases, set as two musical sentences in a parallel period, are underlined by a chromatic descent in the bass that conjures the lament topic, amplified by the dark chorus. They contrast with the home genre of J-pop, with its high-energy vocals and synthesizer fills, to lend an underlying sense of foreboding against the flashy, upbeat surface. The consequent ends in a perfect authentic cadence as the fans demand a firm answer from Ai.

Pre-chorus

[3.12] Ai responds, “I don’t know what it means to love someone,” in another quote from “45510” (0:39–47, **Example 7**). This line is highlighted by a significantly reduced texture, foregrounding Ikura’s voice as she purposefully sings like a cute idol to piano accompaniment (Billboard Japan 2024). Her voice leaps plaintively to B4 on the words “suki” (love) and “wakaran[ai]” (don’t understand), hinting at an underlying pathos, while the chords E^{maj7} and the progression F♯^{m7}–B suggest an attempted but not obtained modulation to E major from the G♯-minor tonic. This pre-chorus thus represents the singer-songwriter topic, characterized by deeply felt lyrics set to a vocal melody with upward leaps (in brackets, Examples 7–9) and acoustic piano or

guitar accompaniment with chromatic chords (asterisked, Examples 7–9). The topic recalls a vast repertoire of heartfelt songs by female singer-songwriters, for which the Japanese popular-music tradition reaches back to Arai Yumi (Yūming) and Takeuchi Mariya in the 1970s to Aiko, Fujihara Sakura, and others in the 2020s. For example, the chorus of Arai’s “Hikōkigumo” (Vapor Trail, 1973, **Example 8**), which reflects on a classmate’s death, sets the word “kaketeyuku” (run) with a B $\flat$ ^{m7} chord (rather than an expected B $\flat$ ⁷ in the E $\flat$ -major context), implying an (incomplete) ii⁷-V tonicization of A $\flat$ (IV); on this word, her voice leaps a perfect fourth to C5 and to an E $\flat$ 5 in the final iteration of the chorus. The chorus of Aiko’s “Sōshisō ai” (Mutual Love, 2024, **Example 9**) features leaps of a perfect fifth and major sixth on C $\sharp$ ⁷, the applied dominant to vi. In the context of a patriarchal music industry in Japan, the singer-songwriter genre can be seen as a site of female agency, where women reveal their true feelings.⁽²⁷⁾ The confessional associations of the singer-songwriter topic are often employed in anime music; in Episode 15 of *Cowboy Bebop* (1998), the soaring melody and piano accompaniment of “Flying Teapot” play during a flashback revealing Faye Valentine’s past moment of vulnerability (Bridges 2017, 89–91). The reference to the singer-songwriter genre gives Ai’s line a ring of truth, and an audience familiar with the manga and anime would know that she is making a confession because of this textual and stylistic shift. A chromatically descending bass returns and undermines her cadence, questioning her truthfulness.

[3.13] Ai’s revelations are fleeting as she is drowned out by the idol-pop topic,⁽²⁸⁾ representing a specific branch of J-pop dominated by all-boy and all-girl groups that intensely cultivate fan devotion. The pre-chorus in “Idol” transitions from the fast $\frac{4}{4}$ meter of the sung verse to a half-time feel, as the four-on-the-floor kick drum and snare drum on beats 2 and 4 of the sung verse give way to the dotted kick drum with a single snare hit on beat 4 in the pre-chorus (0:40). This reduced percussive density allows for a rebuilding of energy toward the chorus. The half-time pre-chorus is a common characteristic of idol pop, heard in songs like Matsuda Seiko’s “Aoi Sangosho” (1980) and AKB48’s “Heavy Rotation” (2011).⁽²⁹⁾

[3.14] Another aspect of the idol-pop topic is fans’ coordinated chants. Since the 1970s, *otagei*, or coordinated chanting and dancing by fans to encourage idols, has been common during an idol’s performance.⁽³⁰⁾ One common type of *otagei* performance is “PPPH,” in which *otaku* (obsessive fans) clap on P and shout on H (**Example 10**). In “Idol,” the Real Akiba Boyz, an Akihabara-based b-boy dance unit, enact the PPPH pattern, shouting “hey” on beat 4. These shouts mimic fan behavior at J-pop concerts especially in Akihabara, the center of *otaku* culture.

[3.15] Musically, Ai’s response sounds headed for a cadence on the tonic (G $\sharp$ m), but the arrival is immediately undermined by the chromatic descent in the bass, as if to shed doubt on her truthfulness or commitment to her words. The ambiguity is picked up by the fans, who answer back with Ai’s melody, declaring that Ai’s truth is unknowable but that someone will still fall for her. These words are accompanied by a reinvigorated four-on-the-floor drum, intensified cheers (now on beats 2 and 4), and a busy bass, culminating in the half cadence that leads to the chorus. The fans’ shouts and thickening texture of the idol-pop topic literally drown out Ai’s confession and obscure its singer-songwriter topic; the interaction of these topics musically illustrates the dominance of image over identity in the life of Ai (and of female idols more generally).

Chorus

[3.16] The chorus (0:54–1:17) represents Ai in performance. Sung from the fan’s perspective, the lyrics exult Ai as the perfect idol, who steals everyone’s heart and the likes of whom will never appear again. This idealization of Ai as an unsurpassable idol is a notion that the villains in the manga try to uphold by killing, or attempting to kill, anyone who threatens to surpass her. The last line—“those eyes and those words, even if lies, are the perfect *ai*”—makes a pun out of the homonyms “eye,” Ai (the character), ai (love), and the first two morae of a-i-do-ru (idol). A perfect authentic cadence—further highlighted by the Picardy third ending on A major—gives firm grounding to this encapsulation of the fans’ view of Ai.

[3.17] The music incorporates some musical hallmarks that have characterized idol-pop choruses since the 1990s. Stirring up excitement, it begins with a direct half-step upward modulation (to A minor), a common feature of popular music (e.g., Beyoncé, “Love on Top,” 2011). Such a modulation from pre-chorus to chorus is also a common characteristic of idol pop; in AKB48’s “Shonichi” (2010), for instance, the key abruptly moves from G-flat to G at this same point in the form (1:06).⁽³¹⁾

[3.18] But perhaps Eurobeat is the best description for this chorus. Eurobeat was first coined in 1985 in the British magazine *Record Mirror* to refer to Hi-NRG-type, fast-paced music, such as that produced by Mike Stock, Matt Aitken, and Pete Waterman (known as Stock Aitken Waterman, SAW, or the Hit Factory) and featuring artists like Dead or Alive, among others.⁽³²⁾ Simon Frith dubbed it pejoratively as “the dance music churned out by mass producers in Germany and Italy to meet the ever-avaricious middle-class disco demand” (Frith 1989, 168). Meanwhile, Japan was experiencing a second disco boom (and the beginnings of the asset bubble) in the mid-1980s, and the Japanese record company Alfa began releasing compilations of Italo disco and other electronic dance music in the series *That’s Eurobeat* (1986–1994) (Wajima 2022, 84). Japanese covers of songs that appeared on this or other compilations attracted attention: Bananarama’s SAW-produced cover (1986) of Shocking Blue’s 1969 hit “Venus” inspired a similarly-styled [Japanese-language cover](#) by then-idol Nagayama Yōko (1986), which reached no. 10 on the Oricon singles chart; BaBe’s 1987 cover of Michael Fortunati’s “Give Me Up” (1987) reached no. 8.⁽³³⁾ In the late 1980s, the Japanese record company Avex began contracting Italo disco producers to make CDs that were marketed to the Japanese market, which formed the compilation series *Super Eurobeat* (1990–); as of 2025, it is still releasing CDs. Avex also enlisted producer Komuro Tetsuya to record Japanese songs in Eurobeat style with its idol stars Amuro Namie and Hamasaki Ayumi, further cementing the genre (Wajima 2022, 82–84). Closer to the cultural context of Ai’s character is idol-pop group Morning Musume’s “[Love Machine](#)” (1999), produced by Terada Mitsuo (Tsunku) in a somewhat slower-tempo version of Eurobeat; in a nod to its Eurobeat ties, the song begins with the same guitar riff and resolution as “Venus,” going from a V^{7sus4} chord to a $i-IV$ progression.⁽³⁴⁾ Released during uncertain times following the bursting of the bubble economy,⁽³⁵⁾ and with lyrics that encouraged listeners while acknowledging these difficulties, “Love Machine” remains Morning Musume’s most beloved hit. Eurobeat maintained its popularity in the 2000s through its integration into anime and games (like the street-racing-themed *Initial D*) and the para para dance⁽³⁶⁾ with which it is associated. In 2018, boy band Da Pump had a hit with “USA,” a cover of a 1992 Eurobeat song. Given this long history, the Eurobeat genre has several social memories (to use Frymoyer’s parlance) associated with it: the decadence of bubble-era discos, the dance-to-forget melancholy of the post-bubble 1990s, the unabashed commercialism of idols performing Eurobeat, and the hedonism of racing, gaming, and group dance in the 2000s. It is therefore an apt topic for Ai’s on-stage imagery, particularly since its height dates from the 1990s and 2000s—the glory days of women J-pop stars like Hamasaki and Amuro, and when Ai’s life is set.

[3.19] The typical musical characteristics of Eurobeat can be illustrated through Amuro Namie’s breakout hit, “Try Me—Watashi o shinjite” (1995), a cover of Lolita’s “Try Me,” both produced by Italian producer Dave Rodgers (b. Giancarlo Pasquini; **Example 11**).⁽³⁷⁾ This song (as well as most Eurobeat) is marked by fast tempo (typically 140–160 beats per minute [bpm]), four-on-the-floor drums, bass in alternating octaves, and multiple busy synthesizer lines, with one synthesizer providing a melodic fill of shiny timbre and another playing chord stabs. Like “Try Me,” Eurobeat is typically in a minor key, with choruses often sporting the Aeolian progression (VI–VII–i, or a variation of it) and in the form of parallel periods with four-measure antecedents and consequents.

[3.20] The chorus of “Idol” (0:55–1:01, **Example 12**) contains many of these characteristics that mark the Eurobeat topic: fast tempo at 168 bpm, four-on-the-floor bass drums with a snare on backbeats and a busy hi-hat, a bass in alternating octaves, a fast melodic synthesizer line in bright timbre, and chords on another synthesizer, filling out the electronic, maximalist texture. The form is also similar, with two 2-measure phrases forming a four-measure antecedent, followed by a consequent. While not the full Aeolian progression, the chords outline its beginning and end points, with the first bass note on $\hat{6}$ (on an F^{maj7} chord) moving to $\hat{1}$ in the next measure. It creditably evokes the Eurobeat topic, taking on its mood of shiny performative decadence—the bright light of the entertainment industry that Ayase was seeking to depict. A perfect authentic cadence, on a Picardy third, grounds the end of the chorus and the fans’ view of Ai.

Second cycle

Second rap verse

[3.21] The second cycle is in the voice of a B-Komachi member, presumably Nino, who is deeply jealous of Ai. In “45510,” she says that she hated Ai because she was always at the center, while other members were relegated to being backup dancers; she admits that without Ai, B-Komachi would never have been so popular, but it was impossible not to hate Ai when she enjoyed such favoritism. The opening rap verse begins as Nino

seems to be responding sarcastically to management: “Yes, yes, she is special. . . We are the supporting cast for the esteemed star.” Her rap mimics the same up-down pitch pattern and instrumentation as the first rapped verse, but its sarcastic tone is signaled through a lower tessitura and a machine-like vocal timbre that is doubled and produced to a robotic sound. The resulting affect is resentful and unsettling—not cute as in the first rap.

[3.22] As she declares, “[Our success] is not entirely because of her,” the rapped vocal goes into relentless triplets, backed by a booming TR-808 bass. This texture puts Nino’s verse squarely in the trap subtopic. Trap, which takes its name from sites of drug dealing, emerged in the South in the 1990s with lyrics about crime in poor neighborhoods (Drake 2025). While trap rose to widespread popularity with Migos and others by the early 2010s and has since been adopted by Beyoncé, Bad Bunny, and other mainstream artists, it retains an edgy image in Japan—the province of hardcore working-class rap groups like Bad Hop, which hails from an industrial neighborhood in Kawasaki.⁽³⁸⁾ Corey Miles (2023) notes that the sound complements the mentality and emotions of an underground trap community, saying that the “dark vibe” of the 808 bass makes the listener “literally feel trapped within the sonic contours of the music” (20). Such a characteristic makes trap an apt topic for Nino, who is psychologically trapped by her raging jealousy toward Ai. At the same time, Nino is suffering from cognitive dissonance: she needs Ai to stay perfect and strong in order to rationalize Ai’s overshadowing her; if Ai were anything less than perfect, then Nino wouldn’t be able to forgive herself for letting Ai overtake her.

[3.23] As shown in **Example 13**, Nino’s triplet flow is built around repetition of the word “nai” (no) and its rhymes; however, these rhymes are placed irregularly, on beats 1, 2, 4, 1, 2.5, 4, 1.5, 3, 4.5, 3, and 4. These varying placements create a dizzying whirlwind as “nai” and its rhymes, which are verbally stressed, land on different beats—a common technique in Japanese trap. The sense of confusion and tension is compounded by the doubling of the vocals in major thirds, the thickening texture from a simple low bass to electronic swoosh effects, and the rising pitch of the vocalist, which illustrates Nino whipping herself into a frenzy. The wordplay also adds to the intensity: two words for jealousy, *netami* and *shitto*, are used to underline this concept (and *shitto* sounds like the English curse word), while *netami* and *neta* (evidence) repeat initial morae. The combination of wordplay and the trap topic paint a powerful picture of a conflicted personality spiraling into madness.

Second chorus

[3.24] “45510” reveals Nino’s worship of Ai as an “idol” (偶像, in the religious sense) that existed within the fans’ hearts, including Nino herself, as she declares, “[Ai was] someone who doesn’t rely on anyone, is uninhibited, solitary, strong, and has never regretted anything, invincible, the strongest, and one of a kind” (Akasaka 2023). The second chorus (1:41–2:04), again in the Eurobeat topic, makes Nino’s idolizing of Ai explicit; she declares Ai to be “an idol that everyone worships, the strongest and most invincible idol.” This chorus has a second part (1:53) in which Nino implores Ai to hide her weaknesses and remain unique, which, to her, must be the real Ai (again playing with the double meaning of the word with “love”). The idol-pop topic reenters in the form of the fans’ shouts, punctuating the offbeats and reinforcing Nino’s imagined version of Ai in performance.

Third cycle

[3.25] The third cycle opens with Ai’s own rap (2:05–2:31), in which she confesses that her career is built on the lie that she loves her fans, and that she has been hiding Aqua and Ruby’s existence. She is hanging on to her desire for happiness as both an idol and a mother, which the idol industry regards as impossible. In contrast with the sparse trap texture of Nino’s verse, Ai’s texture is dramatically orchestral. Relentless triplets on the snare, reminiscent of Ravel’s “Bolero” (**Example 14**) as well as Nino’s rap, evoke an oppressive march, leading toward her inevitable tragedy. The tempo is slowed down from a half-note value of 84 bpm to 76 bpm, allowing one to hear her words more clearly. Like Nino’s rap verse, Ai’s voice spirals upward in pitch, giving a sense of increasing desperation and madness. There is wordplay in her use of the word *mabuta* (eyelid): it evokes the expression *mabuta no haha*, which refers to a mother who has died or gone away and only remains in the child’s memory, foreshadowing what Ai becomes for her children. She also likens herself to the Virgin Mary, conjuring Ai’s position as an object of worship as well as an endurer of personal sacrifice; the religious reference is corroborated by the re-entry of the dark chorus topic. As Ai repeatedly says in the manga, lies are

a form of love to her; she finishes the rap by declaring lies to be the ultimate expression of ai (this time meaning love, as indicated by the kanji 愛 on the lyric sheet). Her line is followed by a tag line on synthesizer (2:30), reminiscent of a game motif signaling the death of a character, in another foreshadowing.

[3.26] The singer-songwriter pre-chorus is then reprised, with Ai returning to her comment from the first pre-chorus that she's never loved anyone or been loved by anyone. Accompanied without percussion by a solo piano playing chromatic chords and sung with a natural, less-processed voice, it reproduces the singer-songwriter topic and its ring of sincerity, this time uninterrupted by the *otaku* cheers. Unusually, the music modulates a half-step down (perhaps embodying Ai's slippery nature) as Ai declares that one day, her lies will become truth. These lyrics quote the aforementioned point in the manga, in which the president of Ichigo Productions recruits Ai by saying that being an idol might enable her to find love, an outcome she desperately desires. This time, the pre-chorus ends on a perfect authentic cadence, on a Picardy third, harmonically grounding the words that follow—"shinjiteru" (I believe it, 2:43), produced to a distant, otherworldly vocal timbre.

[3.27] For the last iteration of the chorus (2:44–3:14), the excitement (and Eurobeat topic) is reignited in stages. First, the music modulates up a whole step to B-flat minor, the tempo returns to the original speed, and the four-on-the-floor drums come back, as Ai declares her true hope that one day, she'll have it all. In the next phrase when she says she wants to love everyone, the full Eurobeat texture returns as Ai is depicted in performance—and in the music video, performing as herself for the first time rather than as her bunny avatar. The texture intensifies further in the next phrase as the Real Akiba Boyz's *otaku* cheers re-enter. In the post-chorus (3:08), whose lyrics quote the scene of Ai's death, she sings the same Eurobeat melody accompanied by the solo piano texture of the singer-songwriter topic; this blend between the performer's melody and the confessional topic blurs the boundary between Ai's stage persona and her authentic self. When she tells her children that she loves them, the instruments drop out so that a single piano chord adorns "aishiteru" (I love you), highlighting these words as truth. An outro (3:15) in the Eurobeat topic follows, with a return of the dark chorus topic (3:26) singing, "You're my savior" capping off the song.

4. Conclusion

[4.1] "Idol" demonstrates how genre-topics can create layered narratives in popular music. Each topical shift changes perspective, emotional register, and perceptions of truth. While the starting point is stereotypical genre associations drawing from Japan's pop-culture history, the genre-topics combine with vocal style, melody, harmony, and timbre to complicate them. The three rapped verses promise realness (via the rap topic), but the vocal delivery—colored by cute gestures, electronically distorted timbres, or instrumentation—conjures other topics that change the meanings of those verses. Indeed, topics interact: the sincerity of the singer-songwriter topic is drowned out by the idol-pop topic of cheering *otaku* fans. Topics evoke past artists and times: the Eurobeat choruses recall the 1990s, the socioeconomic unease that then prevailed, and the psychological escape that idols, dance music, and clubs provided; it also recalls Morning Musume's "Love Machine," an idol version of Eurobeat that became popular during that time, when Ai's life is set. Indeed, to listen to "Idol" is to engage in a tour of popular music from the 1980s to the present and reflect on the social memories of these musics and artists. This storytelling through topics thus allows for multilayered commentary on idols and idol music, expressing in sound the bright, dark, and heartfelt aspects of the entertainment industry. It may also explain the song's global success, as even listeners who don't understand Japanese can follow aspects of the narrative through these genre shifts. While non-Japanese listeners may be unfamiliar with specific Japanese cultural contexts, genres such as rap, singer-songwriter, and EDM are sufficiently globalized to have conventional associations—many of which are also replicated in the music of popular anime. Meanwhile, listeners familiar with Japanese cultural contexts are treated to an even more abundant set of sociohistorical associations.

[4.2] This analysis points to the potential for applying topics to studies of meaning-making in popular music. Future work might explore how other contemporary artists use genre-mixing for narrative purposes, or how musical metacommentary functions in other cultural contexts. Anime music would be a prime candidate, given its genre-omnivorous nature. Genre references are also common in rock and hip hop. Additionally, the unprecedented global popularity of "Idol" illustrates how streaming and global accessibility are broadening the audience for Japanese popular music, engaging international audiences despite (or because of) the music's Japanese cultural elements. Further study along these lines could shed light on the degree of common

understanding of genre-topics among artists and among audiences, and their portability across cultures and times.

Noriko Manabe
Indiana University Bloomington
Jacobs School of Music
200 S Eagleson Ave.
Bloomington IN 47405-7002
nmanabe@iu.edu

Works Cited

- Agawu, V. Kofi. [1991] 2014. *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music*. Princeton University Press. Originally published in 1991 by Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400861835>.
- . [2009] 2014. *Music As Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music*. Oxford University Press. Originally published in 2009 by Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195370249.001.0001>.
- Akasaka Aka. 2023. “赤坂アカ書き下ろし小説『4 5 5 1 0』.” *週刊ヤングジャンプ公式サイト*. Accessed January 12, 2025. https://youngjump.jp/oshinoko/novel_45510/novel_01.html.
- Akasaka Aka and Yokoyari Mengo. 2024. 『【推しの子】』TVアニメ第1期公式ガイドブック *First Report*. Shūei-sha.
- Allanbrook, Wye Jamison. 1983. *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: Le Nozze di Figaro and Don Giovanni*. University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226437712.001.0001>.
- Allanbrook, Wye Jamison. 2014. *The Secular Commedia: Comic Mimesis in Late Eighteenth-Century Music*, ed. Mary Ann Smart and Richard Taruskin. University of California Press.
- Aoyagi, Hiroshi. 2005. *Islands of Eight Million Smiles: Idol Performance and Symbolic Production in Contemporary Japan*. Harvard University Asia Center. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9781684174188>.
- Aoyagi, Hiroshi, Patrick W. Galbraith, and Mateja Kovacic. 2021. *Idology in Transcultural Perspective: Anthropological Investigations of Popular Idolatry*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-82677-2>.
- Armstrong, Andrew Barton. 2019. *24 Bars to Kill: Hip Hop, Aspiration, and Japan's Social Margins*. Berghahn. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv287sg0x>.
- Atkinson, Sean E. 2019. “Soaring Through the Sky: Topics and Tropes in Video Game Music.” *Music Theory Online* 25 (2). <https://doi.org/10.30535/mto.25.2.1>.
- Billboard Japan. 2023. “YOASOBI Discusses the Creation of Chart-Topping Hit ‘Idol’ & Performing Live: Interview.” *Billboard* (blog), July 5. <https://www.billboard.com/music/music-news/yoasobi-interview-idol-tour-1235367129/>.
- Billboard Japan. 2024. “5 Years of YOASOBI: A Look Back at the Duo’s Unprecedented Rise to J-Pop Superstardom.” *Billboard* (blog), October 25. <https://www.billboard.com/music/music-news/yoasobi-five-year-anniversary-1235811590/>.
- Bridges, Rose. 2017. *Yoko Kanno’s Cowboy Bebop Soundtrack*. Bloomsbury. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501325885>.
- Bridges, Rose, and Brooke McCorkle Okazaki. Forthcoming. “Anime Title Songs: A History.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Music in Television*, ed. Ronald Rodman, James Deaville, Jessica Getman, and Brooke McCorkle Okazaki.

- Cumming, Naomi. 1999. "Musical Signs and Subjectivity: Peircean Reflections." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 35 (3): 437–74.
- Donaldson, James. 2024. "Kaleidoscopic Topics in the Music of György Ligeti and Thomas Adès." *Music Theory Online* 30 (2). <https://doi.org/10.30535/mt0.30.2.2>.
- Drake, David. 2025. "Real Trap Sh*t? The Commodification of Southern Rap's Drug-Fueled Subgenre." *Complex* (website), September 8. <https://www.complex.com/music/a/david-drake/real-trap-sh-t-the-commodification-of-southern-raps-drug-fueled-subgenre>.
- Echard, William. 2017. *Psychedelic Popular Music: A History Through Musical Topic Theory*. Musical Meaning and Interpretation. Indiana University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1zxzgx>.
- Ezaki Ayatake. 2023. "《第3夜》YOASOBI「アイドル」をDig!" 江崎文武のBorderless Music Dig! NHK. August 10. <https://www.nhk.jp/p/rs/R7V6MMNYMK/blog/bl/pRz6kploQR/bp/paVAzyBww8/>. Accessed December 21, 2024.
- Frith, Simon. 1989. "Euro Pop." *Cultural Studies* 3 (2): 166–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502388900490111>.
- Frymoyer, Johanna. 2017. "The Musical Topic in the Twentieth Century: A Case Study of Schoenberg's Ironic Waltzes." *Music Theory Spectrum* 39 (1): 83–108. <https://doi.org/10.1093/mts/mtx004>.
- . 2025. *Modernist Movements: Listening for Topics in Schoenberg and Stravinsky*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/9780197641378.001.0001>.
- Galbraith, Patrick W., and Jason G. Karlin. 2019. *AKB48*. Bloomsbury Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501341144>.
- Hatten, Robert S. 1985. "The Place of Intertextuality in Music Studies." *The American Journal of Semiotics* 3 (4): 69–82. <https://doi.org/10.5840/ajs1985345>.
- . 1994a. *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation*. Indiana University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2979/3489.0>.
- . 1994b. "A Peircean Perspective on the Growth of Markedness and Musical Meaning." In *Peirce and Value Theory on Peircean Ethics and Aesthetics*, ed. Herman Parret, 347–58. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- . 2014. "The Troping of Topics in Mozart's Instrumental Works." In *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka, 514–36. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199841578.013.0020>.
- . 2025. "On Musical Topics and Tropes: Definitions, History, Theoretical Amplifications, Pedagogical Applications, and Extensions." *Res Facta Nova. Teksty o Muzyce Współczesnej*, January 29, 9–22. <https://doi.org/10.14746/rfn.2023.24.1>.
- Hentschel, Frank, and Gunter Kreutz. 2021. "The Perception of Musical Expression in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the *Glorifying Hymnic*." *Music & Science* 4. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20592043211012396>.
- Holt, Fabian. 2003. "Genre Formation in Popular Music." *Musik & Forskning* 28: 77–96.
- Holt, Fabian. 2007. *Genre in Popular Music*. The University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226350400.001.0001>.
- Johnson, Thomas. 2018. "Analyzing Genre in Post-Millennial Popular Music." PhD diss., CUNY Graduate Center.
- Kitaba Hideyuki, and Anita Drexler. 2024. "Tool Kits / 3: A Short Outlook of Anison from 1963 to the 21st Century." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Music and Sound in Japanese Animation*, ed. Marco Pellitteri, 45–66. Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-0429-3_3.

- Laing, Dave. 2001. "Stock, Aitken and Waterman." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford University Press. Accessed November 25, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.47729>.
- Lavengood, Megan L. 2020. "The Cultural Significance of Timbre Analysis: A Case Study in 1980s Pop Music, Texture, and Narrative." *Music Theory Online* 26 (3). <https://doi.org/10.30535/mt.26.3.3>.
- Lavengood, Megan, and Evan Williams. 2023. "The Common Cold: Using Computational Musicology to Define the Winter Topic in Video Game Music." *Music Theory Online* 29 (1). <https://doi.org/10.30535/mt.29.1.2>.
- Lehtonen, Lasse. 2022. *Yuming's The 14th Moon*. 33-1/3 Japan series. Edited by Noriko Manabe. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Manabe, Noriko. 2009. "Western Music in Japan: The Evolution of Styles in Children's Songs, Hip-Hop, and Other Genres." PhD diss., CUNY Graduate Center.
- . 2013a. "Straight Outta Ichimiya: The Appeal of a Rural Japanese Rapper." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 11 (5/1). <https://apjpf.org/2013/11/5/noriko-manabe/3889/article>.
- . 2013b. "Representing Japan: 'National' Style among Japanese Hip-Hop DJs." *Popular Music* 32 (Special Issue 01): 35–50. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261143012000530>.
- . 2024. "Japanese Rap: A History of Style." In *Handbook of Japanese Music in the Modern Era*, ed. Henry Johnson, 423–38. *Handbook of Oriental Studies*, V: Japan, No. 18. Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004687172_027.
- . 2025. "Awich: A New Era for Japanese Women Rappers." *American Music Review* 53: 47–55.
- Miles, Corey J. 2023. *Vibe: The Sound and Feeling of Black Life in the American South*. University Press of Mississippi. <https://doi.org/10.14325/mississippi/9781496847287.001.0001>.
- Mirka, Danuta. 2014. "Introduction." In *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka, 1–57. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199841578.013.002>.
- Moore, Allan F. 2001. "Categorical Conventions in Music Discourse: Style and Genre." *Music and Letters* 82 (3): 432–42. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/82.3.432>.
- . 2012. *Song Means: Analyzing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song*. Ashgate.
- Myers, Taylor. 2017. "Genre Modulation as Sectional Divider." In *Popular Music Studies Today: Proceedings of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music 2017*, ed. Julia Merrill, 235–41. Springer VS. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-17740-9_24.
- Nagahata Hiroaki. 2024. "Jポップを世界へ、'いま'と向き合うYOASOBIが語った「アイドル」に込めた想い." *Pen*, January.
- Nazaré Rodríguez, Tania F. 2023. "The Anime Sound: An Analytical and Semiotic Study of Contemporary Anime Music." MA thesis, McGill University.
- Nazaré, Tan. 2025. "The Anime OP(ening): A Corpus Study of Anison." Paper presented at Society for Music Theory Annual Conference, Minneapolis, November 8.
- Pascall, Robert. 2001. "Style." In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.27041>.
- Peirce, Charles S. 1955. *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*. Edited by Justus Buchler. Dover Publications.
- Ratner, Leonard G. 1980. *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style*. Schirmer Books.
- Samson, Jim. 2001. "Genre." In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40599>.

- St. Michel, Patrick. 2023. "With 'Idol,' Yoasobi Pens a New Chapter in J-Pop's Story." *Japan Times*, June 30.
- Spicer, Mark. 2009. "Strategic Intertextuality in Three of John Lennon's Late Beatles Songs." *Gamut: Online Journal of the Music Theory Society of the Mid-Atlantic* 2 (1): 347–76. <https://doi.org/10.7290/gamutg2jt>.
- . 2010. "Reggatta de Blanc': Analyzing Style in the Music of the Police." In *Sounding out Pop: Analytical Essays in Popular Music*, ed. Mark Spicer and John Rudolph Covach, 124–53. University of Michigan Press.
- Steinberg, Marc. 2012. *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Tagg, Philip. 2012. *Music's Meanings: A Modern Musicology for Non-Musos*. Mass Media Music Scholars' Press.
- Turino, Thomas. 1999. "Signs of Imagination, Identity, and Experience: A Peircian Semiotic Theory for Music." *Ethnomusicology* 43 (2): 221–55. <https://doi.org/10.2307/852734>.
- Turino, Thomas. 2014. "Peircean Thought As Core Theory For A Phenomenological Ethnomusicology." *Ethnomusicology* 58 (2): 185–221. <https://doi.org/10.5406/ethnomusicology.58.2.0185>.
- Ueda Takuto. 2023. "<インタビュー>YOASOBIが語る「アイドル」誕生秘話、完璧で究極な‘アイ’への想い." *Billboard Japan*. <https://www.billboard-japan.com/special/detail/3968>.
- Wajima, Yūsuke. 2022. "Japanese Disco as Pseudo-International Music." In *Global Dance Cultures in the 1970s and 1980s: Disco Heterotopias*, ed. Flora Pitrolo and Marko Zubak, 73–87. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91995-5_5.
- Yamada, Keisuke. 2017. *Supercell's Supercell Featuring Hatsune Miku*. Bloomsbury. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501325953>.
- Yee, Thomas B. 2020. "Battle Hymn of the God-Slayers: Troping Rock and Sacred Music Topics in Xenoblade Chronicles." *Journal of Sound and Music in Games* 1 (1): 2–19.

Footnotes

* This material was originally presented at the Timbre and Orchestration in Popular Song Conference at McGill University in June 2025, the Music Theory Colloquium at Indiana University, and the annual conference of the Society for Music Theory in Minneapolis in November 2025. My colleague, James Donaldson, kindly read the manuscript and assigned it for discussion in his graduate seminar. John Peterson and Kimberly Loeffert reviewed a short version of the essay for an undergraduate audience. I am very grateful to the organizers and participants in these events, Prof. Donaldson, the students in his seminar, Profs. Peterson and Loeffert, and the peer reviewers for their helpful and insightful commentary.

[Return to text](#)

1. Yoasobi, "Aidoru," 2023, <https://open.spotify.com/track/7ovUcF5uHTBRzUpB6ZOmvt?si=0465761f32ff43b1>. A version in English, "Idol," can be found here: <https://open.spotify.com/track/1zVsw1SqQKgtzE4aqmE8nE?si=d1d4448c6f1b41f2>. The official video is at https://youtu.be/ZRtdQ81jPUQ?si=_0h-mB8OzMveB1pJ.

[Return to text](#)

2. *Anime* is a style of animation originating from Japan in the early twentieth century. It first achieved global success through director Tezuka Osamu's *Astro Boy* (1963–66) and became increasingly appreciated for its artistry through anime films like *Akira* (Ōtomo Katsuhiro, 1988), *Cowboy Bebop* (Watanabe Shin'ichirō, 1998), and *Spirited Away* (Miyazaki Hayao, 2001).

[Return to text](#)

3. See Kitaba and Drexler 2024, Bridges and McCorkle Okazaki forthcoming, and Nazaré Rodríguez 2023.

[Return to text](#)

4. Ratner (1980, 9) characterizes contredanse as a dance in low style, in contrast with minuet in high style and gigue in middle style. Despite this difference, both he and Allanbrook show dances as indications of the social order.

[Return to text](#)

5. “Index” refers to Charles Peirce’s second trichotomy of how a sign relates to an object, which can be as an icon (similarity), index (coincidence, as in smoke and fire), and symbol (conventionalized rule). See [Pierce 1955](#). For musical applications of Peirce, see [Hatten 1994b](#), [Cumming 1999](#), and [Turino 1999](#) and [2014](#), among others.

[Return to text](#)

6. See [Steinberg 2012](#) for an analysis of the anime media mix.

[Return to text](#)

7. Mirka (2014, 1) also interprets Ratner’s type as equivalent to genres. Writers contrasting genre against style have described the former as defined by social context and the latter as a product of the composer. This distinction can be seen by comparing the *Grove Music* articles on “genre” ([Samson 2001](#)) and “style” ([Pascall 2001](#)). In reviewing scholars’ uses of these terms, Allan Moore (2001) defines style as “manner of articulation of musical gestures,” while genre “refers to the identity and context of those gestures”; genre is “socially constrained,” while style involves “technical features and appropriability” (441). As Thomas Johnson (2018, 26–29) points out, however, keeping these terms truly separate proves murky even for Moore himself.

[Return to text](#)

8. *Manga* are a form of Japanese comics dating back to premodern eras. In contemporary times, franchises like *Oshi no ko* are first serialized in weekly manga magazines like *Weekly Young Jump*, then resold as a series of individual comic books (*tankōbon*) of about 200 pages each. They often form the basis for anime, as is the case with *Oshi no ko*.

[Return to text](#)

9. Vocaloids are voice-synthesizer software. In Japan, they are often marketed as avatars like Hatsune Miku, who presents as a girl with a high-pitched voice and long green hair. Hatsune Miku has attracted a culture of vocaloid producers and has been featured in live concerts as a hologram. See Yamada (2017) for background on vocaloid culture.

[Return to text](#)

10. AKB48 is Japan’s most successful idol-pop group, consisting of as many as 100 women, having sold over 70 million records and had over 54 number-one hits on the Oricon weekly singles charts. Their CDs are sold with premiums, such as tickets to meet-and-greets and ballots for “elections” for the favorite AKB48 idol, causing devoted fans to buy multiple copies of the same CD. [Galbraith and Karlin 2019](#) details this “economy of affect.”

[Return to text](#)

11. Japanese names are given family-name first, per Japanese practice.

[Return to text](#)

12. The title comes from the shared password for the blog, formed from the flip-phone codes for the first hiragana-letter in the names of each B-Komachi member.

[Return to text](#)

13. Itō Seikō & TINNIE PUNX, “Tokyo Bronx” (1986), posted Apr 27, 2008 by KOENJIROCKLIFE, YouTube, 1:53, <https://youtu.be/bLf1kxTTiY4>. For background, see [Manabe 2024](#).

[Return to text](#)

14. Nujabes ft. Shing02, “Samurai Champloo Opening: Battlecry,” posted Jan 12, 2016 by Crunchyroll, YouTube, 1:29, https://youtu.be/Eq6EYcpWB_c

[Return to text](#)

15. “Creepy Nuts [Bling-Bang-Bang-Born] ×TV Anime 「マッシュル-MASHLE-」 Collaboration Music Video,” posted March 3, 2024 by Creepy Nuts, YouTube, 2:52, <https://youtu.be/mLW35YMzELE>.

[Return to text](#)

16. Morning Musume, “Jealousy Jealousy,” performance from Hina Fest at Makuhari Messe, Tokyo, March 25–26, 2017, posted July 28, 2017, by Pokupoku, YouTube, 4:36, <https://youtu.be/LGyWm9Xhqpw>. The rap occurs in the bridge, 1:31–1:58.

[Return to text](#)

17. For example, see Shingo Nishinari, “Ill Nishinari-Geek Remix” (2007); Anarchy, “Growth” (2006; see [Armstrong 2019](#) for context); Kohh, “Dirt Boys ft. Dutch Montana, Loota” (2015; see [Manabe 2024](#)); Awich, “Queendom (Prod. Chaki Zulu)” (2022; see [Manabe 2025](#)); Dengaryū ft. Stillichimiya, “Yabē ikioi de sugē moriagaru” (2012; see [Manabe 2013b](#)).

[Return to text](#)

18. Ghostemane, “Mercury Retrograde,” 2017, <https://open.spotify.com/track/0UKzG4fj1LXf6DInew5vcV>. The similarity with this track is pointed out in [Ezaki 2023](#).

[Return to text](#)

19. Kendrick Lamar and Skrillex, “Humble—Skrillex Remix,” 2017, <https://open.spotify.com/track/65ES1qwOB577ZnTkizMXJJ>

[Return to text](#)

20. Kendrick Lamar, “Humble,” 2017, <https://open.spotify.com/track/7KXjTSCq5nL1LoYtL7XAwS>
In this article, I have transcribed rapped parts in 5-stave notation with the aim of showing pitch contour and approximate central pitches. The pitch transcription was determined by my ear and pitch data from the linguistic software program Praat. Given that frequencies slide in most syllables and often sit between the pitches of conventional tempered tunings, the transcriptions are meant to be descriptive approximations rather than exact pitches.

[Return to text](#)

21. A mora in Japanese is the shortest prosodic unit, corresponding to a vowel (e.g., a), a consonant and a vowel (ka), the nasal N, or a double consonant (which creates a space, as in it’s hot today). Morae are all pronounced with the same duration. Long vowels (ō or oo) or double vowels (ai) are pronounced as two morae. For example, Tōkyō is pronounced as four morae: “To-o-kyo-o.”

[Return to text](#)

22. The comma after “misuterias” is in place of the final -u, which has been truncated. The romanized spelling would normally be “misuteriasu.”

[Return to text](#)

23. This dark-chorus topic is different from the glorifying hymnic identified by Hentschel and Kreutz ([2021](#)). The glorifying hymnic is in a major key; the dark chorus is in minor mode.

[Return to text](#)

24. For example, [サウンドトラック] 悪役のテーマでよく聞く、ダークな合唱音楽を探してる、 posted May 1, 2018, https://www.reddit.com/r/anime/comments/8g4o4x/soundtrack_looking_for_dark_choir_music_like_you/.

[Return to text](#)

25. For a study on the religious overtones of pop idols, see the first two chapters of [Aoyagi et al. 2021](#).

[Return to text](#)

26. For an explanation of Japanese children’s songs in Western style, see [Manabe 2009](#), Chapters 2 and 3.

[Return to text](#)

27. For a description of this genre as seen in the social context of second-wave feminism in Japan in the 1970s, see [Lehtonen \(2022\)](#).

[Return to text](#)

28. While the home genre of this song is idol pop, I believe it is useful to refer to its more explicitly idol-pop parts as being in the idol-pop topic, as the song cycles through so many genre-topics.

[Return to text](#)

29. FSee Matsuda Seiko's 1983 performance of "Aoi Sangoshō" (1:14), from Seikoland Budokan Live '83, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgwDwech6YM>) and AKB48's performance of "Heavy Rotation" (1:14), 【MV Full】ヘビーローテーション / AKB48 [公式], 2023,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unau6nthttg>.)

[Return to text](#)

30. In addition to "Aoi Sangoshō" and "Heavy Rotation" above, see fans cheering Matsuda Seiko in 1983. 松田聖子 天国のキッス (SEC親衛隊 + 字幕付き) *Seiko Matsuda*, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uu2x1Z0XY6U>.

[Return to text](#)

31. AKB48, "初日," Spotify, 2010, <https://open.spotify.com/track/3VLkCzrhfhldcgZS2dHlT>

[Return to text](#)

32. Hi-NRG is an uptempo electronic dance music genre of the 1970s and 80s that features octave-alternating bass lines. It is seen as a precursor to Eurobeat, and its famous songs include Dead or Alive's "You Spin Me 'Round (Like a Record)" (1984). SAW are also known for their mass-audience hits by Rick Astley ("Never Gonna Give You Up," 1987) and Kylie Minogue ("I Should Be So Lucky," 1988). See [Laing 2001](#).

[Return to text](#)

33. 長山洋子, 「ヴィーナス」, 1986, uploaded by Nagakawa Yōko on June 18, 2024, YouTube, 03:38. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmcALrI7i8k>. BaBe, "Give Me Up," 1987, uploaded by BaBeFun on January 29, 2010, YouTube, 4:09, <https://youtu.be/0A2Ffi7O0FU> Ranking information on Oricon, <https://www.oricon.co.jp/prof/237041/rank/single/> and <https://www.oricon.co.jp/prof/3247/rank/single/>.

[Return to text](#)

34. Morning Musume, "Love Machine," 1999, posted by Morning Musume on October 15, 2010, YouTube, 5:26, <https://youtu.be/6A7j6eryPV4>.

[Return to text](#)

35. The bubble economy was a period of high asset-price inflation in Japan from about 1985–1991. It resulted from the Plaza Accord of 1985, in which Japan, France, West Germany, and the United Kingdom agreed to let the US dollar depreciate against their currencies. By 1988, the yen had nearly doubled against the dollar, hurting Japan's export industries. The Bank of Japan (BoJ, equivalent of the US Federal Reserve) reacted by dramatically lowering interest rates, triggering extreme inflation in real estate and stock prices. By 1989, the value of the land around the Imperial Palace in Tokyo was worth more than the entire state of California. The bubble burst when the BoJ began raising interest rates in December 1989, eventually leading to the collapse of several banks and brokerage firms. Japan entered a thirty-year period of low growth and deflation, from which it only emerged in the 2020s. The Nikkei stock index did not return to its 1989 levels until 2024.

[Return to text](#)

36. Para para dance is a dance that originated from Tokyo discos in the late 1980s and became associated with Eurobeat in the 1990s. It features choreographed upper-body movements. It inspired Konami's dance game, Para Para Paradise.

[Return to text](#)

37. Amuro Namie with Supermonkeys, "Try Me - Watashi o shinjite," originally released on Original Tracks vol. 1, Eastworld, 1996, <https://youtu.be/J8GDzEgGphU>.

[Return to text](#)

38. For a representative video, see Bad Hop, "Kawasaki Drift," posted by Bad Hop on April 5, 2018, YouTube, 4:39, <https://youtu.be/I4t8Fuk-SCQ>

[Return to text](#)

[1] Copyrights for individual items published in *Music Theory Online* (*MTO*) are held by their authors. Items appearing in *MTO* may be saved and stored in electronic or paper form, and may be shared among individuals for purposes of scholarly research or discussion, but may *not* be republished in any form, electronic or print, without prior, written permission from the author(s), and advance notification of the editors of *MTO*.

[2] Any redistributed form of items published in *MTO* must include the following information in a form appropriate to the medium in which the items are to appear:

This item appeared in *Music Theory Online* in Volume 32, Issue 3 in September 2026. It was authored by Noriko Manabe (nmanabe@iu.edu), with whose written permission it is reprinted here.

[3] Libraries may archive issues of *MTO* in electronic or paper form for public access so long as each issue is stored in its entirety, and no access fee is charged. Exceptions to these requirements must be approved in writing by the editors of *MTO*, who will act in accordance with the decisions of the Society for Music Theory.

This document and all portions thereof are protected by U.S. and international copyright laws. Material contained herein may be copied and/or distributed for research purposes only.

Prepared by Andrew Blake, Managing Editor

