

# Composer Kajiura Yuki and neo-medieval anime soundtracks

Stacey JOCOY | Texas Tech University, USA

Heike HOFFER | The Ohio State University, USA

[HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.32926/2023.11.2](https://doi.org/10.32926/2023.11.2)

## ABSTRACT

*This study semiotically interrogates the historical imaginary evinced in the neo-medievalist musical topoi found in Kajiura Yuki's distinctive music for anime, which is easily recognised by its eclectic mix of sounds and styles gathered from across the globe. Her early scores employed a compositional method practised in Japanese popular music since the 1990s, which treated the creative act as a process of musical curation. This technique is evident in Kajiura's handling of medieval Gregorian chant, which - as she has explained in interviews - she did not learn from studies in music history but rather from the German band Enigma and their hit album MCMXC a.D. from 1990, where samples of chant were mixed with Euro dance pop and French rap. The anime Noir from 2001 contains an excellent example of her approach, combining chant-based vocal tracks with energetic dance rhythms. Enigma used chant to call on modern neo-medieval tropes that highlight the pleasures of mysticism, religious devotion, and sexuality freed from morality, and Kajiura has replicated this imagery in Noir, making chant the symbol of an ancient criminal order that both worships and overtly sexualises femininity as embodied by the main female characters. Kajiura's later style expands the technique of the Gregorian chant-influenced sound she developed in her earlier works: shifting away from Latin lyrics to her invented nonsense language of "Kajiurago" (literally "the language of Kajiura" in Japanese), with her ethereal chant delivered primarily by female voices. This shift is partially due to her collaboration with FictionJunction and Kalafina and is also a reflection of the strong female anime protagonists. Her signature sound enlivens the soundscapes of both Fate/Zero (2011) and the blockbuster anime, Demon Slayer (2019). The track "Brace up and run!" opens each episode of the latter, highlighting female voices chanting Kajiurago as a musically haunting reminder of the otherness of the past.*

## KEYWORDS

Kajiura Yuki; Neo-medievalism; Anime; Music; Japan.

*Date of submission: 25 May 2023*

*Date of acceptance: 07 November 2023*

*Date of publication: 20 December 2023*

## 1. Introduction

Born in 1965 in Tokyo, Japan, Kajiura Yuki is a celebrated performer, composer, and record producer who has established herself as one of the most sought-after musicians in modern anime soundtracks. She has composed both background music (BGM) and theme songs for a wide variety of works including some of the best-known titles in anime since the early 2000s such as *.hack//Sign* (2002), *My-HiME* (2004-2005), *Puella Magi Madoka Magica* (2011), *Fate/Zero* (2011-2012), *Sword Art Online* (2012), and

*Tsubasa: Reservoir Chronicle* (2005-2006), to name only a few. She recently made headlines for her collaboration with another respected anime composer, Masaru Shiina (professionally known as Go Shiina, born in 1974 in Yokohama, Japan), on the soundtrack for the first and second seasons of the world-famous *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba* anime (2019/2021-2022) and the spin-off film *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba – The Movie: Mugen Train* (2020).

Kajiura's music is identified by a famously eclectic sound that is unique among anime scores, making use of specific musical features that have become the hallmarks of her musical style. These include the prominent use of modal scales, high female voices heard in pairs, high instrumental timbres, folk-song-like elements, and propulsive background percussion, all of which render her works instantly recognisable to even the most casual listener. The remarkable consistency of her music has resulted in some critical comments on fan blogs and social media platforms that she is writing the same pieces over and over in slightly different guises without creating anything new, but these detractors overlook some of the most interesting aspects of Kajiura's professional strategy. The continued success that she has enjoyed for over two decades is greatly due to her keen ability to pick projects that allow her to position her music strategically in anime with very specific contexts, encompassing narratives based on certain themes and particular types of characters rather than selecting based on the anime's popularity or fame. In this way, Kajiura opts to score anime with modes of visual presentation and narrative content that serve as the best complement to her idiosyncratic music, making for a memorable blend of music and image. Anime with strong female characters and stories about time distortion are among her favourite topics, resulting in her music being strongly associated with the *isekai* (parallel world or fantasy world) genre, which often have a distinctly European neo-medieval flair featuring knights, dragons, and magic. These *isekai* productions allow Kajiura to employ musical traits that will lend a sense of exoticism to the anime, such as her attraction to, and particularly unique usage of, medieval Gregorian chant. This paper traces how Kajiura's distinctive musical style developed and how it connects to the soundscape of European neo-medievalism in modern Japan. The first section looks at Kajiura's early years when she was building her career as a composer and trying to formalise the musical techniques that would become her signature sound, including aspects derived from Gregorian chant. The second section covers Kajiura's

later years to the present day, where she is able to be more selective about her projects and has demonstrated a clear preference for specific themes in anime that complement her neo-medieval musical traits.

## **2. Kajiura's early years as a professional musician, discovering Gregorian chant, and *Noir***

Kajiura formally launched her professional career as a musician in 1992 at the age of twenty-seven when she left her job as systems engineer for the Japanese giant Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Telecommunications Company (NTT) and debuted as a singer in the pop duo See-Saw. Much of her motivation to succeed in the music industry came from the memory of her late father who had passed away when she was a teenager, an avid music lover whose diverse musical tastes had a profound impact on Kajiura's musical style (Eplus "Spice" Entertainment Media, 2016). Up until 1992, the extent of Kajiura's professional experience amounted to a few live concerts that a talent agency arranged for her each year, so by the time of her debut she was already old compared to the teenage idols that remain the norm in Japanese popular music, adding extra uncertainty to what was already a risky profession (Mainichi Broadcasting System TV, 2003). In addition, Kajiura's timing for a career shift could not have been worse, coinciding with the aftermath of the late 1980s "bubble economy" collapse that plunged Japan into a long period of economic stagnation. Luckily, she was able to live in her family home with her mother—another music lover who had met Kajiura's father in their university choir club—making it possible for her to devote her full attention to musical pursuits (Nikkei xwoman online, 2020).

Upon leaving NTT, Kajiura threw herself into the musical world of Tokyo, where she was exposed to ways of thinking that had a major impact on the development of her mature compositional style. Like many musicians of the time, she was influenced by musical ideas originating both inside and outside of Japan, an exchange supported by greatly improved forms of audio storage and sharing technologies such as compact discs and sampling (Oricon News, 2018). Joining Tokyo's music scene in the 1990s meant that Kajiura found herself in the middle of a musical movement known as *Shibuya-kei*, a niche yet highly influential form of Japanese popular music that originated in the youth-oriented area of Shibuya in Tokyo and held close ties to the fashion industry. Shibuya-kei music was based on a highly personalised pastiche of sound materials drawn from sources worldwide, which music scholar Mori Yoshitaka described as:

...eclectically fashionable hybrid music influenced by different musical resources from around the world...Shibuya-kei musicians gathered together all kinds of music, and thanks to the prosperity of the late 1980s “bubble economy” that helped make Shibuya area CD/record shops some of the most eclectic in the world in musical genre, they were able to listen to, quote, sample, mix, and dub this music, and eventually create a new hybrid music. (Yoshitaka, 2009: 225)

Shibuya-kei members were not interested in creating faithful or accurate representations of the various musical genres from which they borrowed, nor did they seek to be recognised as possessing any sort of distinctive artistic originality, and instead were only concerned with how their curated music collections could function as tools for personal expression and embody their individual musical tastes. Shibuya-kei musicians made no effort to hide the fictitiousness of their musical world, meaning that, even if the reference point of a certain piece of music seemed obvious to the listener, its usage and context might be entirely different from its original purpose. Pieces that shared no musical, cultural, or historical relationship could be combined in a single-track, a process that allowed each Shibuya-kei member to reveal their own “personal imaginary musical geography” (Seibt, 2018: 166). Though not a Shibuya-kei member herself, Kajiura frequently interacted with musicians who were, leading her to adopt some Shibuya-kei traits, most importantly the process of making music from a curated collection of eclectic sources without concern for context, a way of thinking she would apply to Gregorian chant.

Just as Shibuya-kei members were seeking new sounds and modes of self-expression, musicians globally were experiencing similar changes in their artistic worldviews with the influx of “world music”—music from sources outside the European Western musical tradition—that burst onto the popular music scene of the late 1980s and early 1990s in albums such as Paul Simon’s *Graceland* from 1986, to give one example. The production of so-called worldbeat recordings was soon at an all-time high, making it possible to engage with music from any culture or country and leading musicians to seek out new and intriguing sounds wherever they could. It was not uncommon for a worldbeat lover to spend hours in record stores combing through the wealth of existing titles or mining field recordings and other academic research artefacts for unique sounds to use as samples (a practice that would result in a few major copyright lawsuits later on; see Tan, 2008: 222).

At the same time, musicians were also looking within their own musical traditions for new insights. Folk and traditional music enjoyed a substantial revival and, even more surprising, Europe and America saw a growing popular interest in music from the Medieval and Renaissance periods of Western music history, which had previously been unknown outside a handful of specialised academic ensembles. These dedicated groups strove for a return to musical practices that reflected the artistic attitudes and behaviours of musicians from long-ago eras and, to paraphrase Upton, sought to make an objective discovery of the musical past authenticated by musicological research (Upton, 2012). As a result, early music sounded quite different from what most listeners thought of as conventional classical music. The sound of early music was so unexpected that it was easy for listeners to treat it as a kind of exotic world music rather than part of the timeline of classical music, fuelling a boom in neo-medieval recordings that appealed to an entirely new market of consumers (ibid.).

One of the run-away neo-medieval hits of the 1990s was the CD *Chant* from 1994, which featured the Benedictine monks of Santo Domingo de Silos monastery singing thousand-year-old Gregorian chants (EMI Angel, 1994). Performed in the traditional manner by an unaccompanied male chorus singing with no vibrato, the chants sounded ethereal, pure, and uplifting, leading the CD to be marketed as a stress reliever or meditation aid, not as an academic exploration of a supposedly authentic medieval musical practice. This marketing strategy paid off and the album went double platinum in the United States, hitting #3 on the *Billboard* magazine popularity charts and earning it global recognition, making it likely that Kajiura was aware of this recording given the eclectic proclivities of both herself and her Shibuya-kei colleagues.

Another access point for medieval music in the 1990s was through sampling, most famously heard in the album *MCMXC a.D.* produced by the German group Enigma in 1990 (Virgin, 1990). This genre-changing CD skyrocketed into the top-ten record charts of ten different countries and peaked at #6 in the United States, ultimately occupying a position on the American *Billboard 200* chart for an impressive 282 weeks as well as going quadruple platinum. *MCMXC a.D.* comprised a diverse mix of influences that combined the sacred sounds of Gregorian chant with secular examples drawn from Euro dance pop, French rap, synthesised Native American flute, spoken text, and many other styles and genres. Sexually suggestive materials, such as erotically charged heavy breathing, were also a prominent part of the aural mix. Enigma described the album as

part of their musical search for mysticism and exoticism, using chant to invoke exotic images of secretive monks and their mysterious monastic life in a way that acknowledged the original context of the music while simultaneously recontextualising it as an object of worldbeat styling. As Yri explained in her doctoral dissertation on medieval music in the late twentieth century:

[Enigma constructs] their medievalism so that medieval themes inserted into the music function first and foremost as a direct conduit to the spiritual and mysterious. Interestingly enough, in most cases, this vision of the Middle Ages creates an aura of spirituality for renditions of sacred and secular works effectively combining the sacred and secular repertoires into one aesthetic category. This construction of the Middle Ages – the use of medieval music to convey a non-denominational and in some cases, non-Christian spirituality – could only occur after medieval music was removed from its academic, and to a certain degree, Catholic, context... (Yri, 2004: 106)

By drawing on medieval music in this way, Enigma created “one monolithic, essentialist presentation” of medieval tradition, to borrow Yri’s term (Yri, 2008: 67). The combination of sacred chant with sensual and erotic elements was controversial in Christian countries familiar with the religious purpose of Gregorian chant and its strong connection to the Catholic Church, but its provocative nature also drove the album’s success worldwide and eventually brought it to Kajiura’s attention in Japan, where the historical images of monks and esoteric Christian rituals that Enigma called upon, as well as the musical codes associated with those images, were unfamiliar and allowed for chant to be repurposed in entirely new ways.

Kajiura appears to have learned a great deal from Enigma, particularly in the group’s eclectic use of sound sources that appear somewhat similar, at least on the surface, to the curatorial methods of the Shibuya-kei. The major difference was primarily intent. The European members of Enigma did not ignore the context of Gregorian chant so much as make it a historical and cultural signifier of a long-past time and place meant to draw on their audience’s existing knowledge of the medieval era. Having established a musical context, Enigma promptly violated it by adding sounds from unrelated cultures or sexually charged lyrics that conflicted with the historical purpose of the Gregorian chants and complicated their meaning, making their disregard for chant’s context provocative by design. In contrast, for Shibuya-kei artists, context was irrelevant in the first place, especially when it came to music that had no origin in the

Japanese experience, so Gregorian chant became another way to create a general sense of exoticism that was not connected to any particular historical context.

The composer herself has not spoken formally about her interest in Gregorian chant or Enigma but did address the idea briefly at the 6<sup>th</sup> FictionJunction Fan Club event held Nissho Hall in Tokyo on 13 October 2013, during which she and members of her performing group FictionJunction answered questions from the audience covering both personal and professional topics. A member of the club calling herself “Tou” made an audio recording of the event and transcribed it, putting the transcription on her personal blog. As with many of Tou’s blog entries concerning Kajiura, Tou has shown particular dedication to sharing the contents of the fan event as quickly as possible, posting her blog entry only one day after the session with a comment that she “didn’t finish typing this until one in the morning” (Tou, 2013). Tou’s transcription included this query to Kajiura from an unidentified audience member:

*Fan question:* “Miss Kajiura, since you’ve lived in Germany for elementary and junior high school, are you influenced by Gregorian chant stuff like Enigma?”

*Kajiura’s response:* “In those days, there was a boom in innovative loops using Gregorian chant...they’re trippy. Hypnotic effect. Enigma was kind of the spark that ignited it, and I was influenced by it. So I made a lot of loops.” (Tou, 2013. Transl. by Nakayama Reona)

The questioner refers to the years Kajiura spent living in West Germany after her father was transferred there when she was in elementary school, making the assumption that this early childhood experience living abroad correlated to Kajiura’s later interest in Enigma and Gregorian chant due to their European origins. Kajiura’s response glosses over the topic of her childhood, focusing instead on the Japanese musical culture of the 1990s and her reactions to hearing Enigma. She describes how she was influenced by Enigma’s technique of looping (repeating short sections) of musical tracks to create a “trippy” and “hypnotic” effect, especially the process of making loops from Gregorian chant. In other words, Kajiura followed Enigma in treating Gregorian chant as a kind of building block for constructing music, not as an example of Christian religious music. Since Kajiura never studied music formally at a university or conservatory, she derived chant’s basic tropes from Enigma, working from this musical model as a starting point rather than from a position of historical authenticity.

The idea of historical authenticity and its relationship to the Japanese understanding of the medieval is eloquently described by Jennifer deWinter in her work on neo-Bushido tropes in anime. As she explains, medieval media genres try to sort out ideas about an authentic reality, while neo-medieval genres have no reference to the historical past and “only re-present or re-signify the medieval as understood through other texts about the medieval...one method in which the neomedieval in anime is produced is through referencing previous forms of new media—anime, comics, manga, novels, film, television, and so on—thereby becoming further removed from the referent because of media genre practices.” (deWinter, 2021: 73,75) For Europeans and Americans, ideas of the medieval are exotic but also have cultural and historical meaning, which is what Enigma relies on to give context to the use of Gregorian chant in their music. In contrast, the Japanese see the European medieval as a location of exoticism without any immediate cultural or historical reference point. Since the European medieval never existed in Japan and has been derived from other forms of media, it offers numerous tropes that can easily be manipulated to fit the needs of the anime narrative. deWinter continues, “As such, the medieval as representation and commodity was always open to the play of neomedievalism. If the real never existed, then anime never needed to stay as true as possible to the real.” (ibid, 77) When dealing with neo-medieval ideas that never had an authentic point of reference, the point of reference often becomes whatever representation of the medieval introduced these tropes to the creator in the first place. In this case, Kajiura learned about the medieval from Enigma’s example of Gregorian chant representing secret societies of medieval monks, mysticism, and religious devotion. She has imitated Enigma’s example while also adopting aspects of Gregorian chant as a foundation of her overall musical style, evolving far beyond Enigma’s sampled loops and affecting her thinking in the realms of timbre, phrase, melody, line, and atmosphere. Since the neo-medieval is a mediated version of an inauthentic reality, Kajiura could impose a wide variety of new meanings on chant as she sought out musical styles that evoked a sense of age or the passage of time but could also be manipulated to fit her modern musical vision evoking past and present at the same time.

Kajiura is known for picking and choosing her anime projects carefully, favouring series that will be a good match to her particular musical style, but she did not have that privilege in her early career and initially produced some unremarkable scores for



anime, stage musicals, and video games. This work in video games garnered her enough attention to be asked to compose the BGM for the TV anime series *Noir*, which aired between April and September of 2001 on TV Tokyo. *Noir* would be a landmark in Kajiura's musical development as the first score in which she displays the musical traits that now characterise her mature style including propulsive background percussion, high instrumental and vocal timbres, and folk-song like elements, with aspects associated with Gregorian chant such as Latin or Latin-esque lyrics, modal scales, and voices heard moving in pairs at close intervals (technically a trait of medieval organum, a later development of chant with an added accompaniment voice).

Given Kajiura's preference for anime with strong female characters and stories that feature time distortion, it is no surprise that she agreed to provide the music for *Noir*. The basic plot concerns two women, the French-Corsican Mireille Bouquet and Japanese Yūmura Kirika, who agree to work together as killers-for-hire while they seek answers about complex mysteries in their past. During the course of the series, Mireille and Kirika encounter a secret organisation, named Les Soldats, which is looking for girls destined to become the legendary "Noir," a pair of divine maidens that serve the whims of the organisation as expert assassins. The senior members of Les Soldats have identified Mireille, Kirika, and a third girl named Chloe as candidates to become part of the Noir duo, resulting in the characters being forced into various deadly tests of skill by Les Soldats.

Kajiura fashioned two types of chant-inspired music for *Noir*. First, a more conventional example can be found in a short introductory scene that appears in every episode after the opening credits, in which a cryptic poem describing the Noir duo is read by a narrator. An image of two stone statues appears on the screen depicting young women holding large European-style swords and dressed in flowing robes that leave little to the imagination. Behind them is a swirling array of brightly coloured line drawings showing human figures that appear to be dressed in medieval garb, somewhat resembling the stained-glass window of a church being twisted in a kaleidoscope. These images are accompanied by the short track "Les Soldats," which is meant to be ominous and brooding with slow-moving notes sung in the low range of a mixed chorus using the Latin text "Alleluia." It is a clear imitation of Gregorian chant meant to invoke the images of secretive monks and esoteric rituals that Kajiura learned

from Enigma, increasing the feelings of exoticism surrounding the mysterious Noir duo, their origins, and their purpose.

The composer takes a different approach for the insert songs “Canta per me” and “Salva nos,” which appear throughout the series at moments that highlight Mireille’s and Kirika’s relationship and interconnected history, such as during their first meeting and subsequent gun fight with henchmen of Les Soldats in the first episode of the series. These songs go beyond Enigma’s model to embed chant in Kajiura’s own musical style as the basis of one of her most recognisable musical hallmarks, a pair of female singers performing a slow-moving, chant-like melody in tightly interconnected harmonies over a propulsive electronic accompaniment. Parts of this sound are reminiscent of Enigma, such as the fast-paced percussive background and preference for high timbres in the voice parts and accompanying instruments, but from chant, Kajiura has borrowed modal scales, extended phrases delivered through longer note durations, tight vocal intervals, and stepwise melodic motion. One theory for why medieval Christians performed chants were to make their prayers more pleasant to God’s ears while rendering listeners more responsive to the spiritual messages, and Kajiura maintains the beauty of chant in her female voice parts, drawing in listeners with the sweetness of her atmospheric, floating melodies.

Kajiura’s use of language reflects chant influence as well, setting “Canta per me” in Italian and “Salva nos” in traditional church Latin. The composer gravitated to these languages as another type of musical building block, selecting them because she thought they sounded good when sung, not because of their specific linguistic content. Kajiura was familiar with the musical function of Romance languages due to participating in what she termed “annoying karaoke” with her younger sister and father as a child, during which they would sing along with recordings of operas by mimicking the libretto using improvised, nonsensical Italian-sounding text. Kajiura would later claim this practice as the origin point of her made-up singing language “Kajiurago” (literally “the language of Kajiura” in Japanese), a set of meaningless vocal syllables based on the sounds of Romance languages heard in many of her later anime scores (Kajiura, 2017).

While working on *Noir*, Kajiura had something of a revelation about her music with her discovery of styles and sounds that were most effective for her compositionally. In

her short essay “More Melody!” found in the liner notes of the first original soundtrack for *Noir*, she describes her experiences writing the score:

About NOIR. When I got the script for the first few episodes, the story was so fascinating (I wanted more!!!) that I almost forgot to think about the creation of the music.

The first song I wrote was called "Canta per me," which is also the theme of Kirika, and I wanted to make this sound image the center point of the whole score. This theme music was personally very important to me, so I was surprised and delighted when the director approved this song instantly, allowing me to create the score smoothly from that point forward.

Composing this music was fun because, although I had been asked to write BGM, I was allowed to create pieces that included singing. Even in certain kinds of scenes where melodic musical settings were not appreciated, the director urged me strongly to include “more melody!” (Hooray!)

I created the music so that it would tune-in to the internal image that I had for the score, rather than write straightforward BGM. I do not remember that I struggled with the creation of the music of NOIR. It was more like I simply focused on the image that came to mind, represented it with a melody, and handed it off, saying, "Here you go." It was a very enjoyable and efficient process. Also, the instructions that I received from the director about his concept of the score matched my own intuition so perfectly that I could easily expand the musical world of NOIR just by working from the musical descriptions and piece titles that the director had in his own mind. So, I was very excited from the beginning stages of the project, even during the initial meetings. There are many attractive characters in NOIR but, at the moment, I'm in the Chloe camp. Even I don't know where the story is going yet, but Chloe, don't die... Please hear my request, Director Mashimo and Script-Writer Tsukimura! (Kajiura, 2001. Transl. by Nakayama Reona.)

By this account, Kajiura found “Canta per me” surprisingly easy to write and used the piece as her model for the entire score because it felt exceptionally personal, having been created organically based on her own musical preferences rather than constructed as intentionally unobtrusive BGM. When she played the piece for *Noir*'s director Mashimo Kōichi, she expected him to reject the music due to it containing voice parts and for its overtly melodic character, traits that Kajiura believed were inappropriate for certain types of anime scenes. Instead, Mashimo accepted the piece right away and insisted that Kajiura emphasise the melodic writing even more, making it easy for her to complete the score without extra effort since the director's vision for the anime so closely matched her own.

The ease with which Kajiura composed the score for *Noir* solidified a kind of musical thinking that has stayed with her until the present day. Her description of the

compositional process as comfortable, natural, and highly personal indicates that she had stumbled upon a combination of musical techniques that were perfectly suited to her artistic thinking. Both “Canta per me” and its musically similar counterpart “Salva nos” contain all of Kajiura’s hallmark traits including modal scales, high female voices heard in pairs, high instrumental timbres, folk-song like elements, and propulsive background percussion. Gregorian chant influences the first two of these traits, with both songs containing examples of modality as well as long, soaring melodic lines in the high female voices. These holdovers from the medieval were completely repurposed within Kajiura’s own compositional style as part of a lively and upbeat pop soundtrack rather than a meditative prayer, helping Kajiura highlight the exoticism of the story by bringing the past into the present aurally to match a narrative where both long-ago events and those from the recent past are a key part of unravelling the mystery of Mireille’s and Kirika’s relationship. *Noir* opened the door for Kajiura to write many more anime soundtracks, each of which increased her devotion to and expertise using the particular musical tools she developed and essentially perfected in “Canta per me” and “Salva nos.” Her scores for the 2004 anime *Le Portrait de Petite Cossette* and *My-HiME* combined her made-up language of Kajiurago with the high timbres, long-lined female voice pairs, modal scales, and folk-like elements she preferred, continually evolving her chant-invoking sound into something increasingly flexible for her musical needs.

### **3. Kajiura’s mature work, her evolution of Gregorian chant, *Fate/Zero*, and *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba***

Kajiura continued a steady stream of projects from 2004 to 2009, embracing and expanding these compositional traits and her passion for melody. These include anime series soundtracks such as *My-Otome Zwei* (2006) and *El Cazador de la Bruja* (2007), work on the *Tsubasa* franchise (2005-2006, 2007-2008, 2009), movie soundtracks including the *Kara no Kyoukai* series (2007-2009, 2013), *Achilles and the Tortoise* (2008), and video game soundtracks like the *Xenosaga*, episodes II (2004) and III (2006). At the same time, she maintained a steady output of albums with her groups FictionJunction and Kalafina: *Destination* (2004), *Circus* (2007), *Re/oblivious* (2008), and *Everlasting Songs* (2009). 2009, however, appears to have been a watershed moment for Kajiura as Kalafina seems to have eclipsed FictionJunction and her projects

moving forward became increasingly popular, up to her most recent work on the internationally acclaimed series *Demon Slayer* (2019-21) and *Fena: Pirate Princess* (2021), part of the ongoing world of *One Piece*. 2009 also coincides with her evolving work on the *Kara no Kyoukai* (known as “The Garden of Sinners”, but literally translated as “Boundary/-ies of Emptiness”) movie series; a set of soundtracks that a number of her fans consider to be a defining moment in her stylistic development. At this same time, in the soundtrack to *Pandora Hearts* (2009) it is possible to hear the same musical elements from *Noir* and *My HiME*, developed in her earlier career in a confident and polished combination in the piece “Preparation.” Layered musical effects introduce and recur throughout the piece while gong-like bells function as percussion for female voices in tight harmony. In “Salva nos,” Kajiura continued to use Latin as a nod to her inspiration, despite the limitations of its potential recognisability. By 2009 she had developed and switched to the use of her own fictitious language, “Kajiura-go,” which, when paired with chant-like musical elements such as closely-paired voices and conjunct melodic lines with longer-held note values, creates a medieval-sounding effect (Yri, 2004: 116). Add the melodic and ornamented use of the violin between vocal verses and almost all of Kajiura’s elements are present. Her creativity as a composer arguably lies in the many ways that she combines and recombines these elements with different percussions and sound effects to reflect the soundscapes of various anime narratives.

This highlights two important points about both Kajiura’s compositional style and about the anime productions that she scores. While fans and critics comment on her ethereal sound, much of which can be linked to the aforementioned layered musical medievalisms, Kajiura considers her style to be adaptable but primarily rhythmic in nature (*Tokyo Otaku Mode*, 2016). With audience focus often centred on melody and timbre, her skill with percussion, especially with choosing appropriate percussive sounds as well as beats and patterns, tends to be overshadowed. Given the global and technological palette of sounds available to modern composers, choosing the driving or wandering quality of a piece calls for its own artistry. Kajiura is sensitive to this and uses her percussion on many levels to represent the sound qualities of the narrative: driving rock percussion with heavy synth for *Sword Art Online* counters the medieval qualities of the melody to underscore the *isekai*, video-game based storyline, and hand drums punctuate Fena’s dance to create an exotic sound that embodies a Caribbean

acoustic quality often associated with the so-called golden age of piracy (c. 1650s-1750s). This attention to narrative and careful sonic choices that both relate to and help to build the soundscapes of anime is an aspect of her success with soundtrack composition.

The question of the anime Kajiura chooses to compose soundtracks for is another important point in the discussion of both her style and her larger career. Though Kajiura fiercely maintains that she has no conscious style, she does acknowledge a desire to make the music fit as appropriately to the story as possible. As with any artist, her earlier projects were formative but relatively scattered across narrative genres. This demanded stylistic breadth and flexibility to create soundscapes for jazz clubs in space, dystopian death games, *Dungeon and Dragons*-style *isekai*—historical fiction from medieval times to space and beyond. With success came more opportunity to consider the idea of her narrative preferences in relation to her style. Reviewing the titles and franchises, a preference for *isekai*, fantasy, and adventure comes to the fore. Starting even as early as *Noir*, her anime projects often feature female characters as important action figures. The fact that her projects have leaned in this direction may have implications for her sound, which for many anime audiences has become synonymous with fantasy, or fantasy-adventure narratives. Many of these fantasies, whether they are set in alternate dimensions, inside video games, or even in contemporary landscapes with time-travelling figures from the past, all feature a strong sense of the medieval—an imagined, largely European past.

Medievalism, as a theme this collection seeks to unravel, is always a negotiation between popular conceptions of the past and how we *feel* about the past at any given moment. Was it peaceful or barbaric? Was it spiritual or sinister? Karen Cook notes that “such oscillations are ubiquitous in medievalism” (Cook, 2019: 484) and Claudia Gorbman comments that, “medievalist musical tropes have taken on a sort of bifurcated polyvalence, such that the same sound can act as a “connotative cue” (Gorbman, 1987: 5). Musically, however, one often hears a discursive confusion with the sounds of the medieval that may implicate folk songs, or folk songs patterns, and often sound markedly Celtic or Irish in nature. This last point relates back to the international success of fantasy franchises set in versions of Britain, such as the ecranisations of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* or J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series that combine lyric folk song (Nugent, 2018: 107). A significant number of twenty-first

century anime have used many of the same aural strategies, mixing medieval chant with folk-like melodies. This is referenced and can be heard throughout the futurist-medieval franchise *Fate/Stay Night* (2006) and its sequel *Fate/Zero* (2011).

This portion of the larger *Fate* series, which began with *Fate/Stay Night* (2006), was initially a Japanese adult visual novel developed by Type-Moon. Modern characters participate in a fight-to-the-death tournament called the Fifth Holy Grail War, where combatants employ magic and heroes drawn from throughout history for a chance to have their wishes granted by the eponymous Holy Grail. One of the main figures that is brought forward from the past is the medieval British figure, King Arthur. Rather than the burly, bearded man the summoner expected, Arthur is Artoria, a woman who actually *was* King Arthur, leader of her people. This sets up a gender-bent story line that features a medieval king, one of the most famous warriors in European history (one of the Nine Worthies), as a female, complicating notions of history, strength, martial skill, aggressiveness, and related stereotypes. Connect this to themes of time-travel and British or Celtic medieval adventure, like the quest for the Holy Grail, and Kajiura is in her prime imaginative space.

Several of the pieces in this soundtrack use chant, or chantlike sounds, using her Kajiura-go, with high voices and synth orchestra, including “Fate/Zero,” “The Battle goes to the Strong,” and, “The Sword of Promised Victory.” This last piece is featured in a climactic battle that allows Artoria to prove that she is a true monarch, an undefeated champion, despite the active derision of her male competitors. It comprises two musical themes: theme one uses aggressive, staccato flute accompaniment of the high female chorus with orchestral background, while theme two might be described as more romantic, with solo violin meditatively outlining a modal, melancholic tune. The first theme is clearly aggressive, but also aggressively female in its choice of instruments that produce high timbres and high female voices. Kajiura emphasises the medieval qualities further here in her use of musical intervals, such as the fourth, which along with the fifth, was preferred prior to 1400, due to the perception of their mathematical beauty. Theme two contrasts this with its slower, lyrical melody, evocative of European folk tunes. Although female voices are not heard in this theme, the violin maintains a higher pitch profile. This broadens to include a full orchestral accompaniment with brass, bells, and percussion as Artoria raises Excalibur to strike the final blow.

The music of this scene and all of Artoria's decisive battles evokes the yin-yang or contrasting effect. This musicality echoes the tension felt throughout the narrative as the author of the original visual novel, Kinoko Nasu, likely intended from the moment he switched Arthur from the male prototype to her final female form. Identity negotiation, especially the identities of the historic heroes, is a critical issue throughout this franchise in which music participates. As Helen Dell notes, "music plays a significant role in the establishment and maintenance, sometimes the evolution, of an identity. The quest for identity can also be seen as a factor in determining which particular associations remain dominant in medievalist music" (Dell, 2019: 415). Certain timbres are associated with the Western or Christian church, such as the pipe organ or a Capella male voices and thus evoke male-dominated associations (Whittaker, 2018: 220). Voices often have a certain artificial sound that denotes their religious quality. In this scene, the high female voices take on the historically male role of the fierce aggressor, while the violin, historically associated with masculine energies (due to the mathematics involved in the tuning of the strings), adopts the slower, quiet female role. Both themes embrace these opposing energies and develop them as the second theme acts as a musical analogue to the narrative visuality of the scene. As the narrator informs the audience, Artoria summons the supporting energies of warriors past—those associated with King Arthur and beyond—to empower her legendary sword. Male and female join visually, narratively, and musically as the orchestra swells to support the solo violin for the decisive attack. Kajiura's additions to this soundtrack meld medievalist tropes with historically gendered musical signifiers to complement and musically support this narrative.

The medieval is primarily discussed as a European construct of castles, knights, and sword fights. Arthur/Artoria represents this. Assuming, however, that medieval is somehow only Western is problematic and may, as Cook explains, "create harmful, insidious versions, ones that reinforce ideas of the medieval as all-Christian, all-white, all-male, all-powerful, all-universal, which have led some attempts to remake the present in the past's twisted image" (Cook, 2019: 493). As Pugh and Weisl aptly observe, medieval Japan also contains the medieval, with castles, knights, and sword fights (Pugh & Weisl, 2013). The Edo period maintained sociopolitical isolation (*sakoku*) that kept these power structures in place until the later nineteenth century. By the Taisho period (1912-1926), pre-Meiji concepts of *yōkai* and swordsmen were



old-fashioned, almost medieval in comparison to electricity, telegraphs, and other markers of modernisation. *Demon Slayer* (2019-2021) recreates a sense of medieval Japan in the midst of the modern. The soundtrack combines the efforts of Kajiura with composer Masaru Shiina, better known as Go Shiina. If the medieval often sounds like chant, Kajiura responds with an Asian medieval soundscape in the form of female-voiced, strident chant that intentionally imitates south-east Asian religious chanting. Though it is not derived from any one tradition, it sonically indexes a pan-Asian auralty, weighted with a sense to age, solemnity, and power.

*Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba* is one of the largest and most popular anime properties of the last three years. It began as a manga series written and illustrated by Gotouge Koyoharu. The main character, Tanjiro, trains to become a demon slayer after his family is slaughtered by a demon, leaving only his now-demon sister, Nezuko, alive. Unlike many monster slayers before him though, Tanjiro's quest is not primarily to slay, but to find a cure for his sister. That this series has become so popular during the Covid-19 pandemic has been understood by scholars as a reflection of contemporary anxieties and even the race for a vaccine (Hartzheim and Yoshimoto, 2021). The soundtrack references this epic quality, playing an important part in both the merchandising and the narrative.

Music for the anime series and the movie ranges from pop songs to lush orchestral works filled with choirs and layered effects. The extradiegetic music for both the opening "Gurenge" and closing credits "From the Edge" of the anime feature vocalist LiSA with the group FictionJunction on the latter piece. The main theme of *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba the Movie: Mugen Train*, "Homura", performed by LiSA, won the grand prize at the Japan Record Awards in 2020, continuing the successes of the series themes. While there are some forty-two tracks on the soundtrack, *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba Tanjiro Kamado, Unwavering Resolve Arc Original Soundtrack* (released May 2021) with themes for all the main characters, several tracks stand out. Kajiura delivers aspects of her signature sound in the track "Brace up and run!" which opens each episode. This small section, highlighting female voices chanting Kajiura-go is a musically haunting reminder of the otherness of the past related to concepts of medievalism and the world of monsters and slayers. Its chant defines the piece and arguably the whole franchise, as it is the one aural element heard in every show, movie, and game. Its exotic sound evokes unfamiliar ritual practices locating tradition,

mysticism, and the unknown within mundane modernity—an aural analogue to the main narrative theme of the series. Another piece, “Survive and get the blade, boy,” is a rock-influenced, orchestral work featuring shakuhachi solo. Again, referencing an Asian, specifically Japanese, instrumentation, Kajiura reaches for a higher timbre and settles on the shakuhachi flute. While the instrument is capable of higher ranges, the shakuhachi, both visually and aurally, has strong historical-cultural connection to samurai swordsmen. Kajiura has continued to expand her musical and orchestrating palette throughout her career through collaborations with many movie composers as well as through her affiliations with talented performers in both pop and classical circles.

For *Mugen Train*, Kajiura composed “Mugen Train Avant-Grade M01” (“Mugen Resshahen”), a theme for the movie that evokes this powerful arc while still connecting to the first season. Beginning with high shimmering bells that recur at various points throughout, the piece creates the majesty and the size of the train with the swelling low brass. This is immediately contrasted with a mechanistic percussion, again to depict the train musically along with the sonic qualities of the engine. Though the percussive quality remains part of the piece, a melodic theme in the high strings enters and connects to several of the familiar melodies from the first season, including Kajiura’s main theme of “Kimetsu no yaiba” and “Tanjiro no uta” by Go Shiina. This functions as an overture, using segments of earlier themes to connect the listener’s ear subtly to the earlier season. The shimmering bells and lower gongs allow the melodies to dissipate, and the train reemerges as the star of the piece with full orchestra, percussion, shimmering synth, and a final gong left resonating as both a signifier of danger and as a metallic object that again recalls the physicality of the train itself. Gongs and bells, also medieval musical sounds, are both Western and Eastern, evoking, on the one hand, the clang of the iron horse (an archaic term for the steam locomotive), and on the other, the sounds of gongs in various eastern religious practices. That all these sounds are layered within a piece barely longer than three minutes is clearly deft and sensitive composition that semiotically connects sounds associated with both mystic antiquity and modern technology—a theme that runs throughout the series.

While the focus of this study has primarily discussed and analysed Kajiura’s non-diegetic or underscore music, her theme songs deserve some attention. Along with Shiina, she has composed several of *Demon Slayer*’s theme songs including “Akeboshi”

and “Shirogane” for *Mugen Train* and “Asa ga Kuru” for *Demon Slayer*, Season 2: Entertainment arc. The singer Aimer wrote that she, “swam ecstatically through Kajiura-san’s music,” and that she “always shudders” when she hears music Kajiura has composed for her to sing (Komatsu, 2022). It is easy to get swept up in the sound of Aimer’s voice, however, accompanying it one hears many of the same elements that are featured in Kajiura’s other works. Shimmering bells in the percussion open the piece followed by driving drum-set percussion, accented with tambourine-like bells. Violin is featured, standing out from the rest of the string texture by outlining a counterpoint to the voice. Though the piece is strophic, its repetition is broken by the lyric bridge and Aimer’s smooth vocal techniques. Kajiura’s harmonies are dramatic, almost brooding in places, befitting the lyrics about a “world full of cuts and bruises” (JKPop Lyrics, 2022) as the violin leads out to the shimmer of bells and cymbals. The largely orchestral nature of the soundtrack creates an overarching epic tone that suits the dark, historicised fantasy of this story.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Medievalism, identity, and conceptualisations of authenticity are all interconnected through complex webs of cultural history. Helen Dell considers that identity is fugal, pieced together from different strands and patterns (Dell, 2019). Popular culture constantly negotiates and renegotiates these elements, especially as cultural influences grow ever more transnational. Karen Cook, considering medieval musical sounds through the lens of ludomusicology, recalls Gorbman’s discussion of polyvalence to recognise that the medieval is not only complicated by layers of historical meaning and popular culture associations, but potentially injurious. That is to say that the medieval has been perceived as a “blank slate” upon which people inscribe their own meaning, supposedly imbuing it with the weight of cultural history (Cook, 2019). Approaching this same question from an Asian popular-culture perspective, John Griffith notes that the medieval West is “a foreign space in which to question identity indirectly, safely as if were, without having to directly address the cultural setting of one’s own day” (Griffith, 2009: 115). The medieval then, its visuality, but more important to this study, its aurality is a marker of potentiality.

The aurality of medievalism often involves the sounds of bells and gongs, organ, and most notably, chant. Although Kajiura’s initial use of chant was a response to the

borrowed layering of sounds popularised by Enigma and other groups during the worldbeat movement of the 1990s, her usage has changed substantially over time to become what fans have called the “Kajiura Sound” (Tokyo Otaku Mode, 2016). She has regularly woven together chanted song, usually with high, lyrical or strident female voices, rhythmic punctuation evocative of various styles, shimmering synthesised backdrops, rich chromatic, orchestral music, even including leitmotifs, but juxtaposes moments of repose with driving rhythms. Many of her longer works fall into an organic development model, allowing for the return of themes and other recognisable motivic materials. This rewards the listener with both a sense of recognition and familiarity.

Additionally, the manipulation of the idea of chant, which in the West is almost exclusively a male-voiced music, is definitive for Kajiura. The use of female voices, often in imitation of chant that vacillates between the timbres of Gregorian chant, Bulgarian women’s choirs, and traditional Filipino chant, is an element that Kajiura favours. Her orchestral sound shifts to suit each anime, emphasising the use of higher-timbre instruments such as the flute or violin, which effectively float the melody above the orchestra. Cook considers that the “wordless voice” with a chant quality has been used throughout neo-medieval video games as a dual signifier of both safety and danger, although in both cases it is often tied to magic and a sense to the unknown (Cook, 2019: 492). Kajiura’s Kajiura-go is not wordless, but its inherent lack of meaning creates a more textured version of the “wordless voice.” This element combined with bells and gongs, intimates medievalism, sometimes as danger, but more consistently as an aural signifier of magic, the unfamiliar, and the unknown.

Kajiura’s style has been criticised by some as “consistent” (i.e. predictable) and defended by others as “recognizable,” her musical strength lies in her melodicality that can evoke a singable style that strikes a chord with listeners. Concerning themes and her compositional choices, it should be noted that many of the later anime she has set since 2009 fall into fantasy or *isekai*-related genres (Anime Instrumentality Staff, 2011). These interrelated genres in anime consistently involve the use of magic or futuristic technology in or from alternate dimensions that have been dressed as fantasy, simultaneously recalling the unknowable past and a magically-potent future. Kajiura has arguably created a genre-defining sound that blends orchestra with high or even strident chorus, often incorporating indigenous Japanese instruments that strike a note

of mystery or exoticism—neither past nor future, but capable of simultaneously conveying both the fantastical and the folkloric.

## REFERENCES

---

- ANIME INSTRUMENTALITY STAFF (2011), Composer of the Month—Yuki Kajiura. Available from <https://blog.animeinstrumentality.net/composer-profiles/composer-of-the-month-yuki-kajiura/> (accessed 20 October 2021).
- BOLTON, CHRISTOPHER (2018), *Interpreting Anime*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- COOK, KAREN (2018), Beyond (the) Halo: Chant in Video Games. In: Fugelso, Karl (ed.), *Studies in Medievalism XXVII: Authenticity, Medievalism, Music*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, pp. 183-200.
- (2019), Medievalism and Emotions in Video Game Music. *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies*, 10, pp. 482–497.
- DEWINTER, JENNIFER (2012), Neo-Bushido: Neomedieval Anime and Japanese Essence. In: Clements, Pamela and Carol L. Robinson (eds.), *Neomedievalism in the Media: Essays on Film, Television, and Electronic Games*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, pp. 83-102.
- DELL, HELEN (2019), Music and the Emotions of Medievalism: The Quest for Identity. *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies*, 10, pp. 411-422.
- EPLUS “SPICE” ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA (2016), 梶浦由記 曲作りのルーツ、ライブに対する考え方を語る (Yuki Kajiura: Talks about the roots of songwriting and her approach to live performances). Available from: <https://spice.eplus.jp/articles/38328> (accessed 12 November, 2022).
- FITZPATRICK, KELLYANN (2019), *Neomedievalism, Popular Culture, and the Academy: From Tolkien to Game of Thrones*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer.
- GORBMAN, CLAUDIA (1987), *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- GRIFFITH, JOHN LANCE (2009), Integration and Inversion: Western Medieval Knights in Japanese Manga and Anime. *중세 르네상스 문학 (Medieval Renaissance Literature)*, 17, pp. 89-119.
- HARTZHEIM, BRYAN — YOSHIMOTO, MITSUHIRO (2021), Suspensions of Concentration: *Kimetsu no Yaiba* and Blockbuster in the Year of the Global Pandemic. Available from [https://waseda.repo.nii.ac.jp/index.php?action=pages\\_view\\_main&active\\_action=repository\\_view\\_main\\_item\\_snippet&index\\_id=4200&pn=1&count=20&order=7&lang=english&page\\_id=15&block\\_id=22](https://waseda.repo.nii.ac.jp/index.php?action=pages_view_main&active_action=repository_view_main_item_snippet&index_id=4200&pn=1&count=20&order=7&lang=english&page_id=15&block_id=22) (accessed 15 March 2021).
- JKPOP LYRICS (2022), Aimer 朝が来る (asa ga kuru) Lyrics Romaji Romanized And English Translation. Available from <https://jkpoplyrics.com/aimer-%E6%9C%9D%E3%81%8C%E6%9D%A5%E3%82%8B-asa-ga-kuru-lyrics-romaji-romanized-and-english-translation> (accessed 12 February 2022).
- KAJIURA, YUKI (2011), *Liner Notes for Noir (ノワール) Noir Original Soundtrack I*. Victor Entertainment VICL-60737, compact disc.

- (2017), 今日はオルセー見てお散歩などして夜はリゴレット。(Today we saw the Orsay, went for a Walk, and then went to *Rigoletto* in the evening). Available from [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1493831454012952&id=100001583365922](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1493831454012952&id=100001583365922) (accessed 25 January 2022).
- KOMATSU, MIKIKAZU (2022), Aimer Posts Yuki Kajiura-produced Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba Entertainment District Arc ED Theme MV. Available from <https://www.crunchyroll.com/anime-news/2022/01/09/aimer-posts-yuki-kajiura-produced-demon-slayer-kimetsu-no-yaiba-entertainment-district-arc-ed-theme-mv> (accessed 20 January 2022).
- MAINICHI BROADCASTING SYSTEM TV (2003) *Interview with Yuki Kajiura*. 2003. Available from: [youtube.com/watch?v=KBv8XKFHiLU&ab\\_channel=dandanie](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBv8XKFHiLU&ab_channel=dandanie)  
[youtube.com/watch?v=2BCmXTSNhjE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BCmXTSNhjE)  
[youtube.com/watch?v=Vh8C8cU6NL0&ab\\_channel=dandanie](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vh8C8cU6NL0&ab_channel=dandanie) (accessed 15 January 2022).
- MARX, W. DAVID (2004), Néojaponisme: The Legacy of Shibuya-Kei Part One. Available from <http://neojaponisme.com/2004/11/15/the-legacy-of-shibuya-kei-part-one/> (accessed 15 January 2022).
- (2004), Néojaponisme: The Legacy of Shibuya-Kei Part Two." Available from <http://neojaponisme.com/2004/11/16/the-legacy-of-shibuya-kei-part-two/> (accessed 15 January 2022).
- MCCORKLE OKAZAKI, BROOKE (2020), Reviving the Swordplay Action Film: Nature, Technology, and the Soundtrack for Seven Samurai. In: Buhler, James — Mark Durrand (eds.) *Music in Action Film: Sounds Like Action!*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 59-77.
- NIKKEI XWOMAN ONLINE (2020), OL からバンドデビュー 無名の作曲家が築いたキャリア (From Office Lady to Band Debut: How an Unknown Composer Built a Career). Available from <https://aria.nikkei.com/atcl/column/19/012200049/033100008/> (accessed 12 November, 2022).
- ORICON NEWS (2018), 梶浦由記氏、未来を開いたサントラとの出会い大切なのは「良い曲を書くことではない」 (Kajiura Yuki Talks About Encountering a Soundtrack that Opened Up the Future: "Writing Good Songs is Not The Important Thing"). Available from <https://www.oricon.co.jp/news/2114552/full/> (accessed 11 November, 2022)
- REYNOLDS, SIMON (2011), *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past*. New York: Faber and Faber, Inc.
- SEIBT, OLIVER (2018), The (Musical) Imaginarium of Konishi Yasuharu, or How to Make Western Music Japanese. In: Strohm, Richard (ed.), *Studies on a Global History of Music: A Balzan Musicology Project*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 157-176.
- TAN, SHZR EE (2008), Returning to and from "Innocence": Taiwan Aboriginal Recordings. *Journal of American Folklore*, 121, 480 (Spring), pp. 222-235.
- TOKYO OTAKU MODE NEWS (2016) *Special Interview with Yuki Kajiura*. Available from <https://otakumode.com/news/580dd20b183d4cef4aadf557/Special-Interview-with-Yuki-Kajiura~Featuring-Sword-Art-Online~> (accessed 20 November 2021).
- PUGH, TISON — ANGELA JANE WEISL (2013), *Medievalisms: Making the Past the Present*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Tou (2013), FJC ファンクラブイベント第6弾トーク&トーク Part.2 (FJC Fan Club Event #6 Talk & Talk Part 2). Available from <http://toublog.blog26.fc2.com/blog-entry-1623.html> (accessed 15 October 2021).
- UPTON, ELIZABETH (2012), Concepts of Authenticity in Early Music and Popular Music Communities. *Ethnomusicology Review*, 17. Available from <https://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu> (accessed 14 November 2022).
- YOSHITAKA, MORI (2009), Reconsidering Cultural Hybridities. In: Berry, Chris — Nicola Liscutin — Jonathan D. Mackintosh (eds.), *Cultural Studies and Cultural Industries in Northeast Asia: What a Difference a Region Makes*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp. 213-230.
- YRI, KIRSTEN (2004), Medieval Uncloistered: Uses of Medieval Music in Late Twentieth-Century Culture, PH.D. diss, State University of New York at Stony Brook.
- (2008), Medievalism and Exoticism in the Music of Dead Can Dance. *Current Musicology*, 85 (Spring), pp. 53-72.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

---

**Stacey JOCOY** is an associate professor of music history at Texas Tech University. She holds a Ph.D. in musicology from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She has presented on music in anime at the American Popular Culture Association, the Animation and Public Engagement Symposium, Mechademia conferences, and Anime Expo Academic Conferences. She is a guest editor for Mechademia 13.2 “Soundscapes” and has articles appearing in the upcoming *Anime and Music Handbook* (Palgrave) and *Animation and Public Engagement at the Time of Covid-19* (Vernon Press). Her research explores the intersections of music, politics, and constructions of gender, focusing on the functions of musical narratives in context.

**Heike Hoffer** completed her Ph.D. musicology at The Ohio State University in 2022. Her doctoral thesis examined the relationship between Western classical music and anime in terms of the cultural landscape of modern Japan, specifically the function of Beethoven’s music in anime underscores. Today, Heike lives in Tokyo, where she conducts research and plays the oboe in various local ensembles.