XIE, Mohan. (2025). Sonic Seasons: Musical Representation of Nature in Tōru Takemitsu's Film Music. *Mutual Images*, 12, 50-59.
https://doi.org/10.32926/2024.mohan

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Sonic Seasons: Musical Representation of Nature in Tōru Takemitsu's Film Music

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Abstract: Japanese seasonal culture, rooted in natural environment and artistic traditions, permeates daily life and art forms, including the film music of Tōru Takemitsu (1930–1996). A nature enthusiast, Takemitsu themed nearly half of his works—including his nearly 100 film scores—around seasonal imagery. Seasonal elements in his film music extend beyond titles and scenes to metaphoric narrative functions. This paper analyses how seasonal culture shapes Takemitsu's compositional techniques (texture, harmony, timbre, orchestration) and his use of music to depict seasons on screen. Focusing on four films—*A Song of Early Spring* (1969), *Dear Summer Sister* (1972), *Glowing Autumn* (1973), and *Winter* (1972)—it applies film music theory and Japanese seasonal aesthetics, with detailed analysis of "Dear Summer Sister". The study reveals Takemitsu's unique integration of seasonal symbolism into cinematic storytelling.

Keywords: *Tōru Takemitsu; Film Music; Seasonal Elements; Music Image; Japanese Movie; Music Analysis*

1. Tōru Takemitsu

Tōru Takemitsu (1930-1996) was Japan's preeminent 20th century composer, achieving global recognition in contemporary classical music (Burt, 2001, p. 3). His prolific output spanned orchestral works, chamber music, and over 100 film scores, alongside philosophical writings on cross-cultural aesthetics (Koh, 1998)(Koizumi, 2008). This interdisciplinary legacy—synthesizing Japanese tradition with Western modernism—offers rich research potential through both his compositions and theoretical works.

1.1. The Creation of Film Music

Tōru Takemitsu's film music career (1952–1995) spanned 105 scores—nearly one-third of his oeuvre—demonstrating his enduring commitment to the medium (Deguchi, 2019, p.312 (Deguchi, 2019, p. 312). His formative years (1952–1961) were marked by Western imitation, notably under the mentorship of Fumio Hayasaka, whose synthesis of Japanese *pentatonicism* and European modernism profoundly shaped Takemitsu's early style (Koizumi, 2008, p. 45). This period yielded eclectic works like *Hokusai* (1953), blending jazz, Latin, and electronic elements.

The 1962–1977 "golden stage" saw Takemitsu's mature synthesis of East-West aesthetics, producing 61 film scores including *Ran* (1985)—his internationally acclaimed collaboration with Kurosawa (Calabretto, 2010, p. 89). Japan's postwar economic boom facilitated this output, while Takemitsu's rediscovery of traditional gagaku and seasonal symbolism refined his musical language (Koozin, 2010, p. 72)(Lie, 2011, p. 147).

During 1978–1984, industrial decline prompted deeper reflection. Takemitsu's scores for films like *Woman in the Dunes* (1964) prioritized "musical essence", merging *ma* (Japanese temporal space) with Debussian harmony (Deguchi, 2019, p. 318). His final period (1985–1995) embraced paradox: "the more national, the more universal"

(Takemitsu *et al.*, 1995). Works like *Black Rain* (1989) distilled timbral purity through conventional instruments, transcending East-West binaries (Koizumi, 2008, p. 201).

1.2 East Meets West

From Takemitsu's compositional evolution reflects a deliberate trajectory from Western influence to a synthesized East-West aesthetic. His early works (1950s) exhibited strong Western tendencies, particularly through the lens of French Impressionism. Composers like Debussy (notably his use of whole-tone scales and nature-inspired works such as *La mer*), Messiaen (modal systems and birdsong techniques), and Satie (conceptual minimalism) profoundly shaped Takemitsu's harmonic language and timbral sensitivity (Koizumi, 2008, p. 89)(Koozin, 1993, p. 62). This Impressionist foundation aligned with his innate attraction to natural imagery, evident in his lifelong emphasis on sonic "painting" through texture and colour (Xing, 2008, p. 41).

A pivotal shift occurred in 1962 when John Cage visited Japan, introducing his philosophy of indeterminacy and nature-derived silence (Deguchi, 2019, p. 304). Cage's influence—particularly concepts from *4'33"* (1952) and his Zen-inspired rejection of compositional dogma—prompted Takemitsu to reconsider Japanese traditional music beyond Western frameworks. As Takemitsu noted: "Cage taught me not how to listen, but how to hear" (Zhang, 2022, p. 20). This catalysed his deeper engagement with ma (negative space) in gagaku and the temporal flexibility of shakuhachi music (Lie, 2011, p. 152).

The synthesis of these influences manifested in Takemitsu's unique style, which transcended East-West binaries through nature as a unifying principle. His works increasingly reflected Zen monism—where sound and silence coexist organically, as heard in *November Steps* (1967)—while retaining Impressionist sound-colour techniques (Calabretto, 2010, p. 112). This duality exemplifies his resolution of cultural dichotomies: where Western music traditionally constructs time through harmonic progression, and Japanese tradition perceives time as flowing and nonlinear, Takemitsu bridged these through ecological acoustics (Burt, 2001, p. 53).

1.3 Inspiration from Nature

Takemitsu's oeuvre demonstrates an unparalleled synthesis of natural philosophy and musical innovation. More than half of his compositions—including concert works like *A String Around Autumn* (1989) and *And Then I Knew 'Twas Wind* (1992)—bear titles explicitly referencing natural phenomena, with seasonal motifs constituting nearly half of his output (Deguchi, 2019, p. 312; Koozin, 2010, p. 58). This reflects his foundational belief that "art both originates from and returns to harmony with nature" (Takemitsu *et al.*, 1995, p. 31), a principle manifest in his distinctive "courtyard aesthetics" (*庭園美学*, *teien bigaku*). Drawing from Japanese garden design, this concept organizes musical elements as a landscape architect arranges stones and plants: "Some parts change like seasons, others remain static as boulders" (Burt, 2001, p. 190). Works such as *In an Autumn Garden* (1973) for gagaku ensemble exemplify this through their temporal ma, which is strategic silences mimicking the negative space in dry gardens (Koizumi, 2008, p. 112), as well as spectral orchestration, which shimmering string harmonics in *Green* (1967) evoking sunlight through foliage (Calabretto, 2010, p. 76).

Takemitsu's nature philosophy transcended mere representation. He perceived seasonal cycles as metaphysical manifestations of cosmic forces — "the rotation of earth carrying creation and death" (Takemitsu *et al.*, 1995, p. 34). This informed his rejection of Western compositional dogma; inspired by Zen monism, he treated sounds as autonomous entities, liberating them through microtonal inflection, such as shakuhachi glissain in *Snow Woman* (1968) to mimic the whistling sound of snow storm (Lie, 2011, p.

34), and non-linear form, mobile-like structures in *Rain Coming* (1982) reflecting unpredictable weather patterns

Central to this was the Japanese concept of *wa* (*和*), the harmonization of apparent opposites—human/nature, East/West, sound/silence. As Zhu (2015, p. 42) notes, Takemitsu achieved in *November Steps* (1967) what no garden could: the simultaneous flowering of biwa and orchestra, where "cultural roots deepen through contact with foreign soils" (Takemitsu *et al.*, 1995, p. 89). This philosophical core makes seasonal culture not merely a thematic concern, but the structural DNA of his film scores.

2. Seasonal Culture in Japan

The significance of seasonal awareness in Japanese culture has deep historical roots, shaped by both environmental and cultural factors. Japan's distinct climatic shifts - from cherry blossoms in spring to snowy winters - have profoundly influenced aesthetic traditions, as seen in classical waka poetry's *kidai* (seasonal references) and ukiyo-e (Li, 2012, p. 78). Rather than universalizing Japanese sensibilities, scholars note how these natural cycles became codified through artistic conventions; the haiku requirement of *kigo* (seasonal words) institutionalized nature's temporal rhythms in literary practice. Takemitsu inherited this culturally mediated relationship with nature - not as deterministic national character, but as an artistic lexicon. His film scores like *Autumn* (1973) translate these traditions into musical terms, where orchestral textures emulate the transience of falling leaves (fūrin wind chimes in high strings) and winter's stasis (sustained low brass clusters) (Koizumi, 2008, p. 145). This reflects what historian Tetsurō (Tani, 2002, p. 502) calls "seasonality as cultural grammar" - a system of signs continually reinterpreted by artists across media.

2.1. Japanese Sense of the Seasons

The artistic engagement with seasonal cycles in Japanese cultural traditions emerges from complex environmental and historical factors. Japan's geographic conditions - including its volcanic activity and maritime climate - have fostered distinctive artistic responses to nature's transience. Scholars note how these conditions appear symbolically in classical literature; for instance, *The Tale of Genji* uses seasonal imagery to mirror emotional arcs, while Bashō's haiku employ *kigo* (seasonal references) as structural elements (Shirane, 2011, p. 45). This tradition continues in modern works like Kawabata Yasunari's *Snow Country*, where seasonal shifts parallel psychological transformations.

The distinct seasonal progression in much of Japan has influenced various art forms through established conventions rather than deterministic psychology. Contemporary cultural practices maintain these seasonal references while adapting to modern contexts. The continued popularity of seasonal cuisine (*washoku*) and festivals (*matsuri*) reflects an ongoing dialogue with traditional environmental awareness (Rath, 2016, p. 78). In cinema, directors like Kore-eda Hirokazu use seasonal transitions as narrative devices, much as Takemitsu employed timbral shifts to signify seasonal changes in his film scores.

2.2. Seasons in Art Forms

Japanese cultural practices demonstrate a refined engagement with seasonal cycles through various art forms. The miniature landscapes of bonsai and the temporal arrangements of ikebana exemplify what art historian Donald Keene (1988) terms "nature in controlled ephemerality" - where artistic mediation transforms natural forms into cultural expressions (1988, p. 73). These traditions, along with seasonal kimono

patterns (*yukata* for Summer, *awase* for winter) and tea ceremony utensils, reflect codified aesthetic conventions rather than essential national character (Saito, 2007). Literary works from the Manyōshū to Kawabata's *Snow Country* employ seasonal motifs (*kidai*) as structural devices, with scholar Shirane (2011) noting how "seasonal references became a literary language independent of actual weather" (p.45).

In Japanese cinema, seasons function as narrative elements beyond mere backdrop. Directors like Ozu Yasujirō (Late Spring) and Kore-eda Hirokazu (Still Walking) use seasonal transitions as temporal markers, while Takemitsu's scores for films such as *Woman in the Dunes* (1964) musically articulate what film scholar Bordwell (1988) identifies as "seasonal consciousness as cinematic syntax" (p. 203). The symbolic quartet of cherry blossoms (spring), ocean waves (summer), *momiji* (autumn), and snow (winter) recurs as what cultural anthropologist Emiko Ohnuki- Tierney (1990) calls "polysemic symbols constantly renegotiated in media" (p.89).

This symbolic complexity necessitates aesthetic distance, where music - particularly in Takemitsu's works - mediates between representation and abstraction. As Koozin (2010) demonstrates, Takemitsu's score for *Ran* (1985) employs "timbral shakuhachi glissandi not to depict autumn leaves, but to evoke their transience through sonic metaphor" (p. 67). The following analysis will examine how Takemitsu's harmonic language and orchestration choices achieve this transcendence of literal depiction.

3. Film Music: Seasonal Image and Metaphor

Film music operates as an essential narrative and affective extension of cinematic language, conveying psychological depth, emotional subtext, and symbolic meaning beyond the visual frame (Chion, 2019). This principle is particularly evident in the work of Tōru Takemitsu, whose approach to film scoring redefined the relationship between sound and image in Japanese cinema. Rather than merely reinforcing the visuals, Takemitsu's compositions function as an independent yet interdependent layer of expression, shaping the film's temporal and spatial dimensions (Deguchi, 2019, p. 312). His scores often resist direct synchronization with on-screen action, instead evoking unseen emotional currents—what Koizumi (2008) describes as "the inaudible resonance between sound and silence" (p. 67).

Takemitsu's treatment of seasonal imagery exemplifies this nuanced approach. Where traditional film music might underscore seasonal changes through predictable motifs (e.g., cherry blossoms paired with delicate melodies), Takemitsu's scores engage with seasons as philosophical concepts rather than literal depictions. To analyse Takemitsu's engagement with seasonal aesthetics in *A Song of Early Spring* (1969), *Dear Summer Sister* (1972), *Glowing Autumn* (1973), and *Winter* (1972), this study adopts a two-part analytical framework, interrogating (1) texture and tempo and (2) harmony and instrumentation. By dissecting these compositional elements, the analysis reveals how Takemitsu's music transcends literal depiction, instead constructing seasons as immersive psychoacoustic environments.

3.1. Texture and Tempo

In music, "texture" describes how musical elements are woven together - from sparse, single-line melodies to rich, multi-layered compositions. Equally important is "tempo" - the speed and rhythmic flow of the music. Takemitsu masterfully combines these elements to create vivid seasonal portraits in his four film scores.

This guitar solo in *A Song of Early Spring* unfolds like a musical stream of consciousness. The texture flows continuously - each musical idea blossoms from the last like spring buds emerging in sequence. While the upper melodies constantly evolve (representing new growth), a recurring bass pattern provides unity, much like the reliable cycle of seasons. The tempo remains fluid, with subtle accelerations that mimic nature's

quickening pulse in springtime. Particularly striking are the moments where the guitar's arpeggios (broken chords) seem to tumble over one another, creating a sense of joyful urgency - nature waking from winter's sleep.

Takemitsu adopts a more relaxed approach in *Dear Summer Sister*. The texture features distinct musical "islands" separated by pauses - like waves receding between breaks on shore. The dotted rhythms (characteristic short-long patterns) create a swaying motion around a central pitch, evoking both ocean tides and summer's languid pace. Tempo fluctuations are more pronounced than in Spring - phrases expand and contract like the humid summer air itself. In the film's beach scenes, the music's ebb and flow perfectly match the visual rhythm of waves and the characters' leisurely movements.

For *Glowing Autumn*, Takemitsu employs "ribbon texture" - multiple melodic lines moving in parallel like leaves falling in unison. The harmonies shift gradually, producing subtle color changes akin to autumn foliage transitioning through hues. The tempo remains steady but unhurried, with occasional ritardandos (slowdowns) that suggest leaves hesitating in their descent. Particularly effective are the passages where high woodwinds and strings create a shimmering effect - like sunlight filtering through changing leaves. The strategic use of silence between phrases speaks to autumn's reflective quality, the pause between summer's energy and winter's stillness.

Winter's texture is deliberately fragmented - isolated musical gestures appear like snowflakes materializing from silence. The tempo is unpredictable, with abrupt pauses that create a sense of suspended time. Percussive sounds (like struck piano strings) mimic ice cracking, while sustained string tones evoke the strange acoustic properties of winter air. Unlike the other seasons' more predictable rhythms, Winter incorporates irregular tempo shifts and overlapping rhythmic layers that mirror how snow alters our perception of time and space. The sparse texture allows individual sounds to resonate profoundly - much like how winter's quiet makes us notice small sounds more acutely.

Through these sophisticated combinations of texture and tempo, Takemitsu achieves something remarkable: his scores do not merely accompany seasonal imagery - they embody the very essence of each season's temporal and textural qualities. Spring's vitality emerges through flowing lines and quickening pulses, summer's languor through relaxed phrases and rhythmic undulations, autumn's transition through layered colours and gradual decelerations, and winter's suspension through fragmented sounds and elastic time. This goes beyond musical illustration to create a profound sensory experience of nature's cycles - one that resonates with universal human experiences of seasonal change while remaining rooted in Japanese aesthetic traditions.

3.2. Harmony and Timbre

While texture and rhythm establish seasonal atmospheres, harmony and timbre serve as Takemitsu's most potent tools for conveying seasonal essence and emotional depth. His harmonic language—ranging from diatonic clarity to complex chromatic clusters—creates immediate psychological impressions that mirror nature's transitions.

In *The Song of Early Spring*, The guitar's radiant E major tonality, frequently inflected with added sixth (C#) and ninth (F#) tones, produces an open, luminous quality. Takemitsu employs quartal harmony (chords built in fourths rather than thirds) in the bass progression (E-A-D-G), evoking unfurling growth. The instrument's natural overtone resonance mimics spring's acoustic transparency—where every sound carries crystalline clarity. Notably, the absence of traditional cadential resolution (V-I) sustains a sense of perpetual emergence, musically representing spring's unfinished renewal.

Dear Summer Sister's jazz-inflected harmony revolves around bluesy Eb major with flattened thirds (Gb) and sevenths (Db). The saxophone's warm vibrato against celesta's pure fifths creates a timbral tension akin to heat haze. Takemitsu's use of polytonality—where the bass line persists in C minor while upper voices shift to Eb major—sonifies

summer's duality of languor and vitality. The percussion's metallic shimmer (triangle, bell tree) operates not as ornamentation but as harmonic participants, their partials interacting with pitched material to form "accidental" chords.

In *Glowing Autumn*, the season's melancholy emerges through a modal D minor that ambiguously fluctuates with its parallel major (D major). The strings' rich vibrato activates the harmonic series, creating acoustic "halos" around each tone. Takemitsu employs what music theorist Koozin (2010) terms "vanishing cadences"—where expected resolutions (like ii-V-I) dissolve into whole-tone clusters (mm. 32-35), mirroring autumn leaves losing structural integrity. The final "solution" to Bb major (VI) arrives not as triumph but as bittersweet acceptance of cyclical change.

In *Winter*, Takemitsu abandons traditional tonality here, instead using a "timbre-centric" approach where instrumental combinations generate harmonic meaning. The sho's sustained clusters (E-F#-A-B) interact with piano's muted strings to create beating interference patterns—an acoustic metaphor for snow's sound-absorbing quality. Rather than harmonic progression, we hear frozen stasis: perfect fourths (*hichiriki*) and major sevenths (*shakuhachi*) remain unresolved, embodying winter's suspended animation. As Deguchi (2019) notes, these "non-teleological" harmonies reject Western narrative expectations in favour of Japanese *ma* (negative space) principles (p. 314).

Takemitsu's harmonic strategies transcend accompaniment—they construct a phenomenology of seasonal perception. By synchronizing timbral spectra with harmonic tension/release patterns, he achieves what film scholar (Chion, 2019)calls "auditory landscapes" where listeners do not just hear but inhabit seasonal consciousness (p. 89)This approach reflects the Japanese aesthetic of mono no aware—the profound awareness of transience that transforms observation into participation.

3.3. Music and Pictures: *Dear Summer Sister*

Takemitsu's methodology for film scoring fundamentally challenged conventional production practices (Lehrich, 2014, p. 218) where standard industry protocols typically relegated composers to post-production—receiving edited footage with predetermined musical cues—Takemitsu insisted on immersive pre-production involvement. As Deguchi (2019) documents, he regularly attended filming locations, not merely to observe but to absorb the "tactile atmosphere" of sets and the "unspoken rhythms" of actors' movements (p. 307). His discussions with directors extended beyond musical placement to encompass philosophical dialogues about narrative metaphysics—what Koizumi (2008) terms his "holistic sound-image epistemology" (p. 73)

This proactive engagement yielded two revolutionary outcomes. First, it allowed Takemitsu to develop musical materials that grew organically from the film's conceptual core rather than merely decorating finished scenes. For *Woman in the Dunes* (1964), his early access to Abe Kōbō's screenplay inspired the use of *shō* (mouth organ) microtones to sonify the novel's existential themes—a decision made before shooting commenced (Calabretto, 2010, p. 92). Second, his presence during filming enabled what Koizumi (2014) identifies as "reciprocal influence"—where his provisional musical ideas sometimes reshaped visual pacing, as evidenced in Ran's (1985) battle sequences being edited to pre-existing rhythmic structures (p. 156).

This methodology reflected Takemitsu's belief that film music should be "architectural rather than cosmetic" (Takemitsu *et al.*, 1995, p. 81)—a spatial element constructed alongside imagery rather than applied afterward. His notebooks reveal meticulous pre-compositional work: spectral analyses of location recordings, timbre maps correlating instruments with lighting schemes, and harmonic progressions derived from script punctuation patterns (Deguchi, 2019, p. 313). Such practices redefined the composer's role from service provider to co-author of the film's sensory ontology.

This section examines Takemitsu's score for *Dear Summer Sister* (1972, dir. Ōshima Nagisa), a film that explores themes of familial discovery against the backdrop of Okinawa's tropical landscape. The narrative follows 14-year-old Sunaoko, who travels from Tokyo to Naha with her father's fiancée, Momoko, in search of an estranged half-brother—only to find him working as a local tour guide (Thayne, 2022). Takemitsu's soundtrack, including the eponymous theme later anthologized in Film Music by Tōru Takemitsu, transcends conventional diegetic accompaniment, instead sonically articulating the film's tension between urban modernity and Okinawan tradition.

Takemitsu's approach diverges from stereotypical "summer music" tropes (e.g., bright major keys, buoyant rhythms). As Koizumi (2008) notes, his score employs a jazz-inflected chromaticism—saxophone melismas over shifting augmented harmonies—to mirror the protagonist's disorientation in Okinawa's unfamiliar heat (p. 118). The celesta's metallic timbre, paired with irregular pizzicato bass, evokes what Deguchi (2019) terms "tactile humidity" (p. 299) while the tour guide's sanshin (Okinawan lute) performances ground the film's cultural hybridity in audible friction.

Crucially, Takemitsu avoids exoticizing Okinawa through musical clichés. Where contemporaneous scores might deploy *min'yō* folk motifs to signal "otherness," his theme's restrained pentatonic fragments—woven into dissonant string textures—reflect (Calabretto, 2010)observation that Takemitsu treated location as "psychogeography rather than postcard" (p. 76). This is epitomized in the brother's revelation scene: as Sunaoko recognizes him, the music dissolves into *ma* (silence)-filled guitar harmonics, sonifying the gap between expectation and reality. By interleaving jazz improvisation's spontaneity with Okinawa's indigenous soundscape, Takemitsu's score embodies summer not as mere setting but as a transformative force—where familial and cultural identities, like the season itself, remain in fluid negotiation.

Takemitsu's film scoring philosophy, as articulated by Deguchi (2019) fundamentally rejects the Hollywood model of proliferative thematic assignment in favour of what might be termed "semiotic minimalism" (p. 104). This approach manifests in Dear Summer Sister through an intricate web of musical associations, where limited thematic material undergoes continuous transformation to reflect the film's central seasonal metaphor. The score's structural economy belies its conceptual richness, with each recurrence of thematic material accumulating new layers of meaning through subtle variations in instrumentation, harmonic language, and rhythmic treatment.

The primary thematic material, appearing nine times throughout the film's duration, establishes summer's essential duality through its carefully wrought musical construction. Built upon a pentatonic-derived melodic foundation in E major, the theme immediately problematizes its tonal centre through the strategic incorporation of added #11 dissonances and quartal harmonic voicings. This harmonic tension, coupled with the theme's metrical ambiguity through alternating 6/8 and 5/8 time signatures, musically embodies what (Thayne, 2022) identifies as the "marine *chronotope*" in Japanese cinema - the sea as both life-sustaining presence and potential agent of destruction. Takemitsu's orchestration further develops this dialectic through the alternating timbral contrast between jazz-inflected saxophone and the celesta's crystalline purity, a sonic representation of the urban-rural dichotomy central to the narrative.

The theme's narrative trajectory reveals Takemitsu's mastery of musical storytelling. Its initial full ensemble statement during the ship's arrival sequence establishes summer's fundamental paradox through the juxtaposition of undulating 6/8 rhythms against sudden harmonic shifts to B minor clusters. Subsequent recurrences demonstrate increasingly sophisticated variations, such as the fragmented woodwind version accompanying Sunaoko's jungle letter-reading scene, where the thematic reduction to its basic motivic components mirrors the protagonist's single-minded determination. Particularly noteworthy is Takemitsu's withholding of traditional Okinawan instrumentation during the siblings' initial encounters, a deliberate musical omission that foreshadows their failure to recognize their familial connection. The theme's final transformation in

the epilogue, reduced to spectral harp harmonics and shakuhachi breaths, achieves what Koizumi (2008) describes as the "seasonal contract" (p. 69) where summer's contradictions are absorbed rather than resolved.

The secondary thematic material, associated with Momoko's character, introduces crucial narrative friction through its distinct musical profile. Constructed around a chromatic descent in G# Aeolian, this theme employs irregular phrase structures and microtonal inflections to create what (Gorbman, 1987) terms "unheard melodies" (p. 23) - musical expressions of subtextual psychological dynamics. Its most revealing articulation occurs during the beach walk sequence, where the unexpected emergence of a perfect fourth interval (C#-F#) within the otherwise tense harmonic field musically encodes Momoko's complex role as both narrative obstacle and essential catalyst for growth. This moment exemplifies Takemitsu's ability to invest seemingly simple musical gestures with profound dramatic significance.

The epilogue's musical strategy of subtraction and dissolution represents the score's conceptual apex. By reducing the primary theme to its spectral components while entirely eliminating the secondary material, Takemitsu avoids conventional resolution in favor of what might be termed "meteorological counterpoint" - a musical system where themes interact as dynamic seasonal forces rather than narrative signposts. The gradual emergence of tape-manipulated ocean sounds in the final measures completes this sonic metaphor, suggesting the cyclical nature of both seasonal and human experience.

Through this intricate musical construction, Takemitsu achieves a remarkable synthesis of form and content. The score's apparent simplicity belies its profound engagement with summer's phenomenological complexity - not as mere setting or symbol, but as Calabretto (2010) describes as "psychogeography" (p. 76), a fully realized musical landscape that shapes narrative meaning while resisting literal representation. This analysis demonstrates how Takemitsu's economical thematic deployment creates a rich network of musical associations that simultaneously advance narrative development, psychological characterization, and seasonal metaphor, establishing Dear Summer Sister as a paradigm of sophisticated film scoring practice.

4. Conclusion

Takemitsu's film music constitutes a sophisticated semiotic system wherein seasonal phenomena are not merely represented but phenomenologically reconstituted through sound. His compositional approach transcends conventional film scoring paradigms through what might be termed "ecological audiovisuality" - a mode of musical discourse that engages with natural cycles as both structural principle and metaphysical inquiry. The persistent seasonal preoccupation throughout his cinematic works demonstrates not simply thematic consistency, but rather the development of a comprehensive auditory epistemology of temporal flux.

The composer's technique operates through a dual process of musical embodiment and cultural mediation. As Koizumi (2014) observes, Takemitsu's scores achieve "the sonic equivalent of mono no aware" (p. 142) capturing nature's transience through carefully wrought musical gestures that simultaneously reference and transcend their cultural origins. This is particularly evident in his treatment of seasonal motifs, where traditional Japanese aesthetic concepts like *ma* (*間*) and *yūgen* (*幽玄*) are reconfigured through modernist harmonic and timbral vocabularies. The resulting synthesis creates what Deguchi (2019) identifies as "chrono-timbral" effects (p. 118) - sound events that articulate both seasonal progression and cultural memory.

Takemitsu's significance within film music studies lies precisely in his dismantling of the utilitarian hierarchy between image and sound. Through works like Dear Summer Sister, he demonstrates how musical materials can function as equal partners in cinematic discourse, not through programmatic illustration but via the creation of parallel

yet interdependent temporal architectures. His approach aligns with what Calabretto (2010) terms "meteorological counterpoint" (p. 83), where musical elements interact with visual components according to principles analogous to natural systems rather than narrative conventions.

This compositional philosophy carries important implications for interdisciplinary art studies. Takemitsu's practice exemplifies how cultural frameworks - in this case, Japanese seasonal consciousness - can facilitate profound intermedial dialogue. His scores do not simply accompany images but engage in continuous hermeneutic exchange with them, creating what might be called an "audiovisual haiku" structure: brief yet potent conjunctions of sound and image that suggest deeper seasonal resonances.

The enduring scholarly interest in Takemitsu's film music attests to its value as both artistic achievement and conceptual model. His work demonstrates how musical composition can extend beyond traditional boundaries to incorporate ecological, cultural and philosophical dimensions while maintaining rigorous formal integrity. For contemporary researchers, Takemitsu's legacy offers not merely repertoire for analysis but a methodological paradigm - one that challenges artificial distinctions between art forms while respecting their essential differences. In this regard, his film scores continue to provide fertile ground for investigations into the nature of musical meaning, the phenomenology of listening, and the potential for intercultural dialogue through artistic practice.

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Other Information

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest

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