Fan-created Online Resources on Music in Japanese Visual Media

Christopher Zysik and Magnus Pfeffer

Gefördert durch
DFG Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

Overview

- Building data infrastructure for research
- Select enthusiast-curated web resources on Anime music
- Example research use cases
- Ethical considerations

HOCHSCHULE
DER MEDIEN

Building data infrastructure for research

Building data infrastructure for research

HOCHSCHULE DER MEDIEN

- Infrastructure project “Japanese visual media graph” (JVMG)
  - Original grant proposed by Prof. Dr. Martin Roth and me with the Leipzig University Library
  - Funded by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)
  - Started in 2019, funding ends 12/2026

- Idea: Make the data on Japanese visual media that is curated by online enthusiast communities available to researchers

- Tenets
  - *Collaboration* instead of download: Engage with the communities and respect their wishes
  - *Research* as the core use case: All data and design decisions are made with this in mind
  - *Open* development: All code and data is available under open licences

Learnings from the JVMG project: Communities

HOCHSCHULE DER MEDIEN

- Enthusiast communities are very diverse
- Differentiation
  - By interest: from broad interest in all things Japanese to highly specific niche interests
  - By origin: communities rooted in a language/region to truly international communities
  - By organisation: from loosely organised groups with shared leadership to individual founders that are in control

→ Depth and breadth of information can be very heterogeneous

- While many communities were open to share information, some had bad experiences in the past and do not even allow contacting them

Learnings from the JVMG project: Content

HOCHSCHULE DER MEDIEN

- High data quality
  - Study using a random sample from Anime title information
  - Factual errors were almost non-existent
  - Most discrepancies were caused by encoding issues (e.g. ♥ vs. ♡)
  - Some sources extended titles with disambiguation elements (e.g. “OVA”)

- Legal aspects
  - Most communities did not have a licence for their databases, and some communities used ill-suited licences
  - All were open to discussing individual licence terms
  - CC-BY-SA-NC is both sufficient for all research use cases and close to the ideals of the communities. It also is written in a way that works across different international legal systems

Learnings from the JVMG project: Tech

HOCHSCHULE DER MEDIEN

- Data integration into a knowledge graph using RDF and linked open data
  - Transformation from tabular data is lossless
  - Original data organisation and terms can be preserved
  - Ontologies can describe the entities and their properties in multiple languages
  - Allows integration of conflicting information from different sources
  - Allows browsing of entities and their relations on the web

- Access to large quantities of data
  - Researchers need to understand the scope and structure of the available data
  - Search functions need to take the distinct qualities of the data into account
  - Needs user-friendly tools for creating complex queries and downloading data for analysis

Methodology: TUC

- Drawing on experience from prior digital humanities projects
- “Tiny use case” (TUC)
  - Self-contained small research questions
  - Deliberately limited complexity and scope
  - Usually with focus on a single aspect of the information
  - Can be communicated in a team with members of diverse backgrounds
  - Works as a goal for an agile-sprint-like development loop

- Result: Better understanding of the original data and its limitations and quirks as well as its suitability for research

Methodology: Engaging external researchers

HOCHSCHULE DER MEDIEN

- Continued joint research as part of the implementation work
  - Larger use cases
  - Long-term commitment
- Inviting PhD students as “interns” to collaborate with our lab
  - New TUC which helps us understand diverse data needs
  - Intensive collaboration over a short time frame (2-4 weeks)
- Hackathon-like events with graduate students and early career researchers
  - Individual research questions
  - Data is prepared by the project team
  - Helps more researchers learn about the project and data driven research

JVMG: Status

HOCHSCHULE DER MEDIEN

- Aggregated information from five sources
- Core entities: Works, Products, Artists, Companies, Characters
- Web-based faceted search engine
- Query builder for complex queries

- Currently, there is very limited information on music in our knowledge graph
- But many communities exist

HOCHSCHULE DER MEDIEN

Enthusiast-curated web resources on Anime music

VGMdb.net

- Established 2007
- Original core interest was video game music
  - Now also covers Anime music
- Entities
  - Albums (includes cover image and tracklist)
  - Artists
  - Labels
  - Products (Games, Franchises, Animation)
  - Events
- Distinction: Large dataset, freedb protocol access

anison.info (Anison Generation)

- Established 1998
- As the name suggests, individual songs are the original focus
- Entities
  - Work (Anime, Tokusatsu, Game)
  - Individual Song
  - Artist (Singer, lyricist, composer, arranger) - also includes groups
  - Albums
- Distinction: Qualified relation of song to work (OP, ED, …)

animethemes.moe

- Exists at least from 2018 (oldest Wayback machine entry)
- Sole focus on OP and ED for Anime
- Entities
  - Anime
  - Theme (Song)
  - Artist
  - Series
  - Studio
- Distinction: Hosts videos of OPs and EDs

Seiyuu (voice actor) database

- Part of an individual person's website that started in 1994
  - http://www.usagi.org/doi/seiyuu/index.html
- Entities
  - Individuals
  - Seiyuu groups
  - Books and magazines
  - Media (CD, DVD, LD)
  - Broadcast (TV, Radio, Internet)
  - Games
  - Events
- Distinction: information on appearance in all kinds of media/events
- Only Japanese seiyuu

behindthevoiceactors.com

- Established in 2009
- Focus of Seiyuu
- Entities
  - Voice Actors
  - Characters
  - Media (TV Shows, Movies, Video Games, Shorts, Attractions, Commercials)
- Distinction: Also contains international voice actors

anidb.net

- Established in 2002
  - Initial focus on Anime episodes (and the pirate files that exist for them)
  - Added character and artist information
  - Added song and seiyuu information
- Entities
  - Work
  - Episode
  - Creator (Artist, Seiyuu, Singer, Company)
  - Character
  - Album
  - Song
- Large community, incredibly detailed information

Example research use cases

Areas of application

- Why would music researchers use data from fan-curated databases for their research?
- How can researchers use data from fan-curated databases for their research?

Two possibilities:

1. Analyze the data itself in a bottom-up approach to find patterns in the gathered and archived data.
2. Critically examine theories, notions, and concepts against the data in a top-down approach.

Areas include: music history, fan studies, crossmedia studies, production, etc.

Case Study #1: Ghibli’s Sound Contributors

HOCHSCHULE DER MEDIEN

- Question: Who are the main contributors of Studio Ghibli’s musical identity and how has the artistic core shifted over the decades?
- Examine the contribution not only of the composer, but of other roles involved in the creative processes, such as arranger, conductor, soloists, lyricists, singers, creative producer, sound engineers, and many more.

Case Study #1: Ghibli's Sound Contributors

Credits

Music	Joe Hisaishi
Composer	Joe Hisaishi
Arranger	Joe Hisaishi
Lyricist	Hayao Miyazaki
Performer	Tokyo City Philharmonic Orchestra, Joe Hisaishi
Conductor	Hiroshi Kumagai
Vocals	Yoshimi Niikura, Maki Kimura, Satoko Shimonari, Yoshikazu Mera
Quena	Takashi Asahi
Wadaiko	Ikuo Kakehashi
Ryuteki	Makoto Takei
Hichiriki	Yuji Nishihara
Producer	Joe Hisaishi
Music Production	Studio Ghibli
Production Producer	Toshio Suzuki (STUDIO GHIBLI)
Recording Engineer	Masayoshi Okawa, Makoto Morimoto, Suminobu Hamada (Wonder Station)
Assistant Engineer	Hiroya Ishihara (Wonder Station), Kenji Furukawa (AVACO CREATIVE STUDIOS)
Mastering Engineer	Masaaki Kato (SUNRISE Music)
Recording Studio	Wonder Station, AVACO CREATIVE STUDIOS
Management	Yukio Yamashita (Wonder City)
Management Office	Wonder City
Special Thanks	Yamaha Corporation
A & R	Kazumi Inaki, Toshiyuki Kawabata, Takahiro Yonezawa (STUDIO GHIBLI), Tomoko Okada (TOKUMA JAPAN COMMUNICATIONS)
Design	Kaoru Mano (CNT508)
Photographer	落合淳一 (プラス ワン), Toshiro Uratani (TV MAN UNION)

Credits

Music	Katz Hoshi
Compose	Katz Hoshi, Toraji Oonaka, Kuranosuke Hamaguchi, Hirooki Ogawa, Seiichiro Uno, Kunihiko Kase, Hideyuki Fujiwara, Hiroaki Hagiwara, Shosuke Ichikawa, Amanda McBroom
Arranger	Katz Hoshi, Kimio Mizutani, Akihisa Matsuura, Seiichiro Uno, Kenichiro Morioka, Hideyuki Fujiwara, Hiroaki Hagiwara, Hirooki Ogawa, Shosuke Ichikawa, Péter Éri, Márta Sebestyén, G Moina, Zoltan Juhász, Mihály Sipos, Gheorghe Zamfir, Italie Eternelle
Artist	Yoko Maekawa, Arihiro Fujimura*, Kazuo Kumakura, Seiichiro Uno, THE WILD ONES*, Sachiko Nishida, Hajime Hana & The Crazy Cats*, Chieko Baisho, Harumi Miyako, Katz Hoshi, Márta Sebestyén, MUZSIKAS, Gheorghe Zamfir, Italie Eternelle
Lyricist	Hisashi Inoue, Morihisa Yamamoto, Shigeki Torizuka, Kaoru Mizuki, Yukio Aoshima, Hiroshi Yokoi, Choei Shiratori, Amanda McBroom
Japanese Lyrics Translation	Isao Takahata
Acoustic Piano	Haruki Mino
Electric Piano	Haruki Mino
Strings	Aska Kaneko Group
Flute	Takashi Asahi
Oboe	Soichi Wakioka
Clarinet	Tadashi Hoshino
Bass Clarinet	Nobuyuki Kanai
Harp	Keiko Yamakawa
Wood Bass	Keiichi Ishibashi
Timpani	Isao Kanayama
Cymbal	Isao Kanayama
Keyboard	Akihisa Matsuura, Haruki Mino
Trumpet	Masahiro Kobayashi
Vibraphone	Isao Kanayama
Tenor Sax	Hirofumi Kinjo
Flamenco Guitar	Yutaka Takezawa by the Courtesy of Kitty Records, Inc.
Latin Percussion	Makoto Kimura, Pecker
Synthesizer	Haruki Mino, Hiroyuki Namba
Synthesizer Operator	Hiroshi Koizumi
Synthesizer Programming	Akihisa Matsuura
Director	Yoshihiro Oikawa
Recording Engineer	原一翔
Mixing Engineer	原一翔
Production Supervisor	Isao Takahata, Toshio Suzuki
Associate Producer	Michitoshi Ichikawa (KATZ SONGS)
Assistant Director	Kentaro Matsumoto
Mastering Engineer	Yoei Hashimoto (Tokyo CD Center)
Recording Coordinator	Yoshitaka Ono (shin shitu)
Design	Kaoru Mano
Recording at	SOUND INN studio, HITOKUCHI-ZAKA studio, TOKYU FUN studio

HOCHSCHULE DER MEDIEN

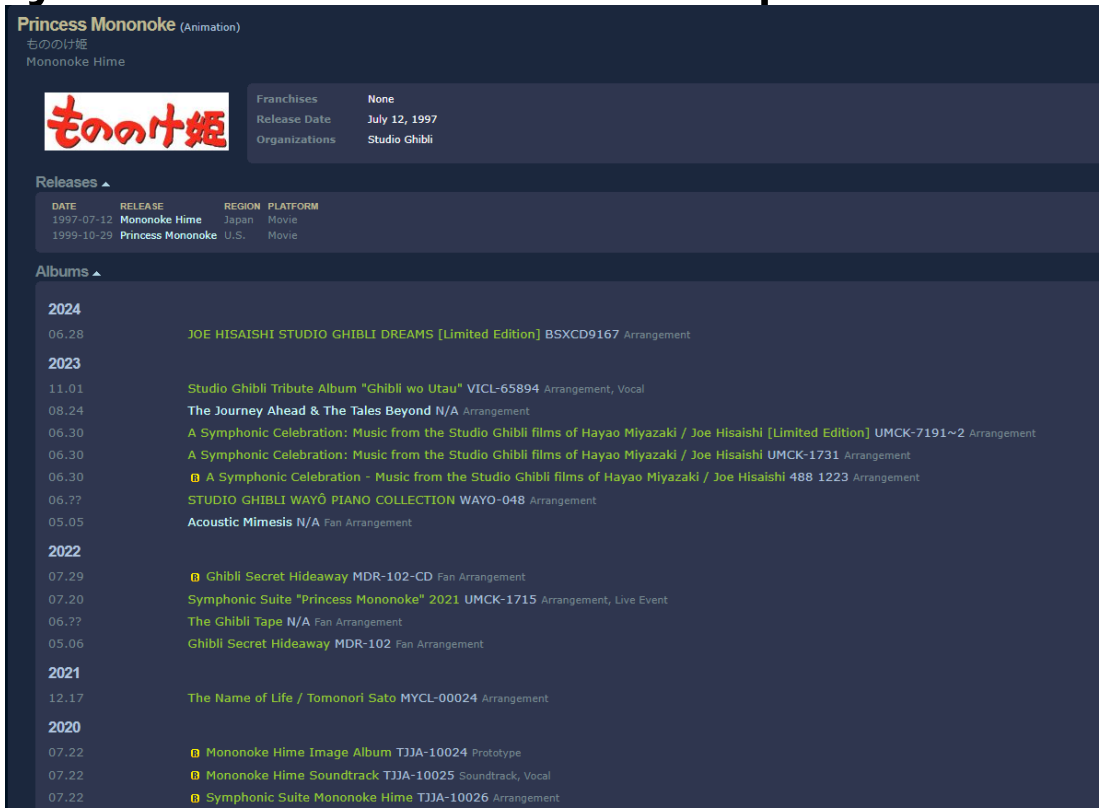
Tropes	Kaiju	Shou	BigD	Myt	Behe	OhC	BigB	Tool	Fore	Stoc	Curb	Hero	Bitte	Dark	Expy	Hens	Light	Gian	Wha	Nice	Chel	Mon	Godz	Assh	Dubl	CallB	Hope	Mea	Non	Cont	Kick	Doe	Artis	Brea	TheC	EyeScrear	
Kaiju	42	19	17	13	15	7	15	7	9	5	12	8	9	6	7	19	6	4	8	6	8	7	7	2	0	5	8	5	7	8	3	6	5	1	7	7	278
ShoutOut	19	37	16	18	13	16	12	13	16	6	10	9	9	10	9	9	10	6	8	11	9	11	9	7	2	7	9	5	8	7	5	5	5	3	5	7	324
BigDamnHeroes	17	16	34	17	12	11	9	9	13	7	12	12	10	10	10	8	8	6	6	7	8	7	8	5	2	8	8	4	4	8	4	4	7	4	5	6	292
MythologyGag	13	18	17	33	10	13	9	9	11	5	8	10	7	11	5	8	6	5	6	13	7	8	7	5	3	5	9	3	5	5	6	4	4	7	8	7	277
BehemothBattle	15	13	12	10	30	8	6	7	12	5	11	6	7	6	8	9	9	4	7	6	7	6	9	6	1	4	8	3	5	7	4	4	5	3	4	6	243
OhCrap	7	16	11	13	8	29	7	13	15	5	6	5	9	8	9	0	7	10	11	13	7	10	9	7	3	6	9	7	10	2	3	10	9	7	6	6	278
BigBad	15	12	9	9	6	7	29	8	10	3	11	4	5	6	4	7	3	4	6	4	8	5	4	5	2	7	8	3	4	7	4	4	5	2	7	4	212
TooDumbToLive	7	13	9	9	7	13	8	27	9	6	8	4	9	8	7	0	10	7	8	10	6	6	6	5	4	5	7	6	8	3	7	8	6	6	4	4	243
Foreshadowing	9	16	13	11	12	15	10	9	26	5	11	6	7	10	7	3	7	4	10	9	10	10	8	7	2	8	7	6	8	6	4	7	10	4	5	7	283
StockFootage	5	6	7	5	5	5	3	6	5	26	3	2	3	6	2	4	4	5	5	5	1	2	3	0	4	3	2	4	2	3	2	1	3	4	2	0	122
CurbStompBattle	12	10	12	8	11	6	11	8	11	3	25	4	7	8	6	5	5	4	5	6	6	6	7	4	3	4	7	2	2	5	3	3	7	2	5	5	213
HeroicSacrifice	8	9	12	10	6	5	4	4	6	2	4	25	8	5	6	4	6	3	2	4	6	4	4	5	4	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	6	159
BittersweetEnding	9	9	10	7	7	9	5	9	7	3	7	8	24	7	7	2	5	5	6	8	6	5	4	2	3	5	6	6	5	3	2	9	5	3	4	4	202
DarkerAndEdgier	6	10	10	11	6	8	6	8	10	6	8	5	7	23	6	3	2	7	5	8	3	7	5	3	4	5	7	4	2	3	6	6	5	8	4	2	206
Expy	7	9	10	5	8	9	4	7	7	2	6	6	7	6	22	3	7	7	3	5	3	6	5	4	1	2	5	5	4	4	4	5	7	5	2	3	183
HenshinHero	19	9	8	8	9	0	7	0	3	4	5	4	2	3	3	21	2	1	1	1	4	1	3	0	0	1	2	3	1	7	1	0	0	0	3	1	116
LighterAndSofter	6	10	8	6	9	7	3	10	7	4	5	6	5	2	7	2	20	6	1	6	6	4	5	4	2	2	2	3	5	2	1	3	5	4	3	2	163
GiantEqualsInvincible	4	6	6	5	4	10	4	7	4	5	4	3	5	7	7	1	6	19	4	4	2	6	5	3	6	2	4	6	4	0	5	4	6	8	2	1	160
WhatHappenedToTheMouse	8	8	6	6	7	11	6	8	10	5	5	2	6	5	3	1	1	4	19	5	3	5	5	5	2	5	7	4	8	1	5	7	6	3	4	4	181
NiceJobBreakingItHero	6	11	7	13	6	13	4	10	9	5	6	4	8	8	5	1	6	4	5	19	7	6	5	3	1	2	5	4	7	3	4	5	5	4	4	4	200
ChekhovsGun	8	9	8	7	7	7	8	6	10	1	6	6	6	3	3	4	6	2	3	7	19	3	5	4	2	4	5	5	5	5	1	4	6	1	3	5	175
MonumentalDamage	7	11	7	8	6	10	5	6	10	2	6	4	5	7	6	1	4	6	5	6	3	17	8	3	1	3	5	4	6	2	4	5	5	4	3	3	181
GodzillaThreshold	7	9	8	7	9	9	4	6	8	3	7	4	4	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	8	16	3	2	4	6	4	4	1	1	5	4	4	4	3	176
AssholeVictim	2	7	5	5	6	7	5	5	7	0	4	5	2	3	4	0	4	3	5	3	4	3	3	16	3	4	2	1	4	3	4	3	4	2	1	3	126
DubNameChange	0	2	2	3	1	3	2	4	2	4	3	4	3	4	1	0	2	6	2	1	2	1	2	3	16	1	0	2	0	2	2	2	1	2	0	1	70
CallBack	5	7	8	5	4	6	7	5	8	3	4	2	5	5	2	1	2	2	5	2	4	3	4	4	1	15	4	4	3	4	1	1	4	1	2	2	130
HopeSpot	8	9	8	9	8	9	8	7	7	2	7	1	6	7	5	2	2	4	7	5	5	5	6	2	0	4	15	2	4	3	3	7	5	3	6	3	179
MeaningfulName	5	5	4	3	3	7	3	6	6	4	2	2	6	4	5	3	3	6	4	4	5	4	4	1	2	4	2	15	4	1	2	5	4	3	1	3	130
NonMaliciousMonster	7	8	4	5	5	10	4	8	8	2	2	2	5	2	4	1	5	4	8	7	5	6	4	4	0	3	4	4	15	2	5	6	5	2	2	3	156
ContinuityNod	8	7	8	5	7	2	7	3	6	3	5	3	3	3	4	7	2	0	1	3	5	2	1	3	2	4	3	1	2	15	2	0	1	0	3	1	117
KickTheDog	3	5	4	6	4	3	4	7	4	2	3	2	2	6	4	1	1	5	5	4	1	4	1	4	2	1	3	2	5	2	14	3	1	2	0	1	107
DoesThisRemindYouOfAnything	6	5	4	4	4	10	4	8	7	1	3	2	9	6	5	0	3	4	7	5	4	5	5	3	2	1	7	5	6	0	3	14	5	4	5	3	155
ArtisticLicensePhysics	5	5	7	4	5	9	5	6	10	3	7	3	5	5	7	0	5	6	6	5	6	5	4	4	1	4	5	4	5	1	1	5	14	4	4	5	166
BreathWeapon	1	3	4	7	3	7	2	6	4	4	2	3	3	8	5	0	4	8	3	4	1	4	4	2	2	1	3	3	2	0	2	4	4	14	3	0	116
TheCameo	7	5	5	8	4	6	7	4	5	2	5	2	4	4	2	3	3	2	4	4	3	3	4	1	0	2	6	1	2	3	0	5	4	3	14	3	126
EyeScream	7	7	6	7	6	6	4	4	7	0	5	6	4	2	3	1	2	1	4	4	5	3	3	3	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	3	5	0	3	14	125
	278	324	292	277	243	278	212	243	283	122	213	159	202	206	183	116	163	160	181	200	175	181	176	126	70	130	179	130	156	117	107	155	166	116	126	125	

HOCHSCHULE DER MEDIEN

Case Study #2: Historical development of releases

- Question: As music of a particular Ghibli work has been released in various iterations, how has it developed over time (Prototype, Soundtrack, Arrangement, Live-Event)?

Case Study #2: Historical development of releases



Princess Mononoke (Animation)
もののけ姫
Mononoke Hime

もののけ姫

Franchises	None
Release Date	July 12, 1997
Organizations	Studio Ghibli

Releases

DATE	RELEASE	REGION	PLATFORM
1997-07-12	Mononoke Hime	Japan	Movie
1999-10-29	Princess Mononoke	U.S.	Movie

Albums

2024

06.28 JOE HISAISHI STUDIO GHIBLI DREAMS [Limited Edition] BSXCD9167 Arrangement

2023

11.01 Studio Ghibli Tribute Album "Ghibli wo Utau" VICL-65894 Arrangement, Vocal
08.24 The Journey Ahead & The Tales Beyond N/A Arrangement
06.30 A Symphonic Celebration: Music from the Studio Ghibli films of Hayao Miyazaki / Joe Hisaishi [Limited Edition] UMCK-7191~2 Arrangement
06.30 A Symphonic Celebration: Music from the Studio Ghibli films of Hayao Miyazaki / Joe Hisaishi UMCK-1731 Arrangement
06.30 A Symphonic Celebration - Music from the Studio Ghibli films of Hayao Miyazaki / Joe Hisaishi 488 1223 Arrangement
06.?? STUDIO GHIBLI WAYÔ PIANO COLLECTION WAYO-048 Arrangement
05.05 Acoustic Mimesis N/A Fan Arrangement

2022

07.29 Ghibli Secret Hideaway MDR-102-CD Fan Arrangement
07.20 Symphonic Suite "Princess Mononoke" 2021 UMCK-1715 Arrangement, Live Event
06.?? The Ghibli Tape N/A Fan Arrangement
05.06 Ghibli Secret Hideaway MDR-102 Fan Arrangement

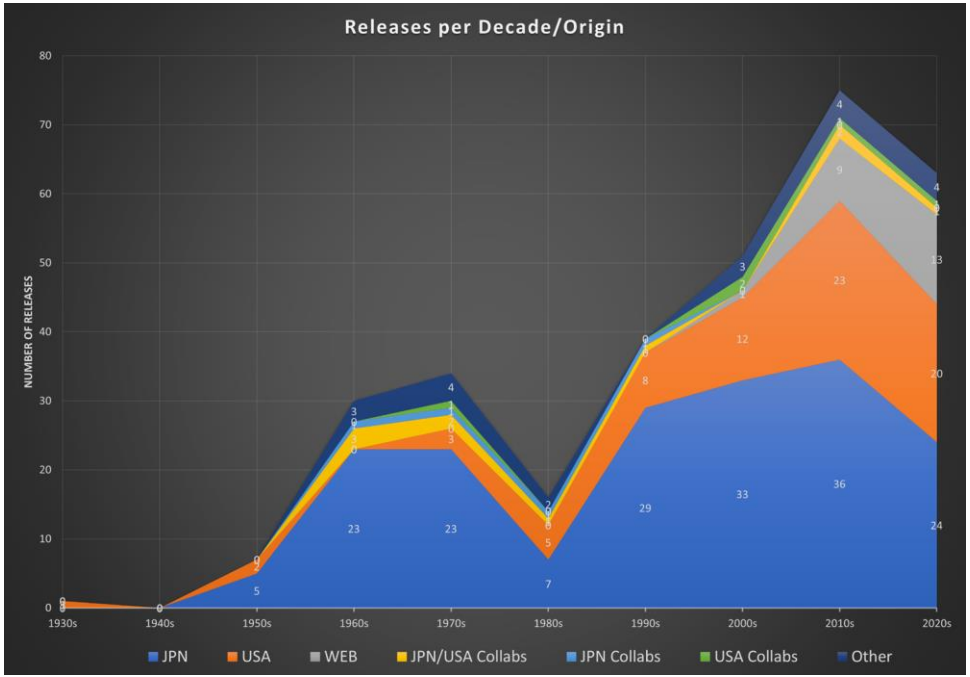
2021

12.17 The Name of Life / Tomonori Sato MYCL-00024 Arrangement

2020

07.22 Mononoke Hime Image Album TJJA-10024 Prototype
07.22 Mononoke Hime Soundtrack TJJA-10025 Soundtrack, Vocal
07.22 Symphonic Suite Mononoke Hime TJJA-10026 Arrangement

Case Study #2: Historical development of releases



Historical development of kaiju tropes

Epistemic Power

Deconstruction of hegemonial archives, catalogs, and canons

- bottom-up discursive power of fan/enthusiast communities
- challenge hegemonial archives and established catalogues

New forms of the distribution of power

- visibility and invisibility of content/data/information → gate-keeping mechanisms on participation and knowledge
- distortion and bias

Potentials

- Bottom-up approach
- Access to fan-epistemologies that are actively and collaboratively constructed, negotiated, as well as aesthetically and discursively expanded
- Inclusive contributions (sensus communis)
- Dynamics of social tagging (living archive)

Challenges

- fan-curated databases as archive and the role of ”archons”
- Legal issues
- Controversies around censorship (visibility/invisibility)
- Incomplete data and contradicting perspectives within a community
- Constant transformation of provided data
- Changing values and taste of a community
- Cultural biases

Thank you for your attention!

Get in touch with us:

Email: pfeffer@hdm-stuttgart.de

Email: christopher.zysik@uni-tuebingen.de

Website: https://mediagraph.link/