

“Realism” in late 1930s Japanese Films and Shiro Fukai’s Accompaniment Music: Contemporary Arguments for the Rejection of Non-diegetic Music

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In the late 1930s, one of the most famous Japanese film directors Kenji Mizoguchi produced three masterpieces: *Naniwa Elegy [Osaka Elegy]* (1936), *Aienkyo [The Straits of Love and Hate]* (1937), and *Zangiku monogatari [The Story of the Last Chrysanthemums]* (1939). None of these films featured non-diegetic music (accompaniment music) [1], except for the opening and ending parts. Such a thorough exclusion of non-diegetic music was unusual then [2]. However, some contemporary articles noted a decrease in the amount of non-diegetic music heard in some of the narrative films. The Japanese composer Shiro Fukai wrote in 1937, “It is interesting for me that the Japanese films seen as today’s masterpieces, *Sobo* [Hisatora Kumagaya, 1937], *Hadaka no machi* [Tomu Uchida, 1937], and *Aienkyo*, are the ones which do not require what we call [accompaniment] music” [3]. In the following year, the critic Kaoru Murao also wrote as follows in regard to *Abe ichizoku* (Hisatora Kumagaya, 1938), whose music was composed by Fukai, and *Nakimushi kozo* (Shiro Toyoda, 1938): “Less and less music accompanies films these days,” but “it is no surprise that accompaniment music falls into disuse as films become more realistic (*shajitsuteki*)” [4]. Just as Murao used a word (*shajitsuteki*) referring to “realistic,” Fukai also described the abovementioned three films as “realistic” with its Japanese transliteration (*riarisutikku*) in another article [5]. Certainly, the latter half of the 1930s in Japanese film history saw a rising interest in filmic “realism.” These remarks made by both Fukai and Murao suggest that the tendency for excluding accompanying music emerged as interest in “realism” grew stronger in the latter half of 1930s [6].

Though a similar tendency can be found in the U.S., as Claudia Gorbman (1987) noted, it was supposed to be a particular phenomenon seen during the transitional period from silent films to sound films. Contemporary audience, who had been used to silent films, experienced sound films as something extremely realistic and true to life. Such an “impression of reality” [7] that they initially perceived from sound films led them to reject non-diegetic music as being incompatible with the audiovisual representation of sound film, which acquired diegetic sounds (at least until the practice of non-diegetic music prevailed again). Similar statements can be found in Japan during the early 1930s. Keizo Horiuchi, a contemporary musical manager in Shochiku (one of the major Japanese film production companies), wrote in 1934 that “in most of Japanese talkie films,” music was used as diegetic music (source music) in a “proper,” “formulaic and safe” manner and that, because non-diegetic music has no visible sound sources on screen, it was perceived to be “unreal” and “a residue of the silent film era devised to cover the absence of sound – the essential shortcomings of silent film.” However, as Horiuchi also

noted in the same article that the use of non-diegetic music was gradually increasing, it might be said that such a negative opinion regarding the use of non-diegetic music was calming down by the middle of 1930s [8]. If this is the case, how should we understand the remarks by Fukai and Murao indicating the decrease in the use of non-diegetic music as if it were a newly emerging affair in the second half of the 1930s?

To answer this question, this study examines how the growing interest in filmic realism in Japan influenced the use of non-diegetic music in narrative films in the late 1930s. The first half of the paper presents an analysis of the contemporary discourse on filmic realism and the discussions surrounding the rejection of non-diegetic music, which will reveal how non-diegetic music was considered unsuitable for realistic films. Film music composers in Japan, however, did not completely abandon the use of non-diegetic music. In the second half of this article, I will show, especially examining the literature [9], how Japanese film music composers of the late 1930s explored effective ways of using non-diegetic music in realist films by looking at the film music of Shiro Fukai.

1. Filmic Realism in 1930s Japan

Japanese film scholar Tadao Sato called the period from the middle of 1930s to the early 1940s, marked by the rise of Japanese fascism, as “the age of Japanese Realism” [10]. Such a view is reflected in the fact that a Japanese film magazine published an issue featuring “Film and Realism” in 1936, in which one of the critics remarked “the slogan of ‘realist film’ clarifies what today’s film art should aim for” [11]. The concept of “realism” (or “reality”) was so vague and complicated that the writers of those days discussed their interpretations of “realism” in various ways. In regard to the issue of non-diegetic music, we should consider two aspects of the contemporary discussions on realism: one concerns the naturalist realism and the socialist realism in literature, and the other is on a new conception of filmic representation after the emergence of sound film. [12]

In his article “Proposal of Filmic Realism,” the critic Tsuneo Hazumi criticized Japanese filmmakers for being satisfied with “inferior artificial nonsense” that had “nothing to do with today’s reality.” In Hazumi’s opinion, filmmakers should “gaze starkly at new materials extracted from reality” and “weave their interests with our society” into their works [13]. This kind of statement certainly seems to be influenced by socialist realism, but not all of its advocates asked for such an interest in society. For instance, while critic Takeshi Tanaka asked filmmakers to “analyze, assemble, and reconstruct reality” objectively, rather than emotionally, through one’s “realistic intelligence,” another critic and scenario writer Tsutomu Sawamura noted the importance of “scientific accuracy in representing social phenomena” [14]. Some of the filmmakers who often depicted oppressed people in their works were indeed already dealing with social issues. However, what these critics demanded from them was a cool, objective stance toward reality, which would prevent films about the oppressed from being mere sob stories. In this way, Japanese film critics and filmmakers in the second half of the 1930s attempted to keep themselves in touch with reality through capturing the matters that had been usually disregarded in “romantic” or “melodramatic” films. Such a “realistic” attitude was a result of Japanese cinema

turning to naturalism or socialist realism under the influence of literature and was in accord with the general trend within the wider Japanese art world.

Such a naturalistic view was not unique to this period, and a similar trend can be found in “*Keiko eiga*” (left-leaning film) of the late 1920s. The factor that was characteristic of the 1930s was the expectation for the newly emerging audiovisual reality that was enabled by sound film. In this respect, we might call this type of realism as “sound film specific realism.” In the silent era, the basis for the film art was usually thought to be montage or editing, which enabled film to detach itself from reality, while also enabling filmmakers to express their authorial presence. Critic Heichi Sugiyama, for example, wrote in the late 1930s that “the basis for film art” was “the physical representation of reality” and said that “film art can be achieved only with tracking shot, without any cutting” [15].

Additionally, Sugiyama suggested in a different text to include regional dialects and accents, which should be used “as a method to draw [film] closer to reality.” He noted that “only voice is genuine within the reality of film” and “it is through voice that ideas gain bodies and become art” [16]. Tsutomu Sawamura also emphasized the importance of words and voices as “a direct method to communicate thoughts,” and criticized the montage theory of the silent era as an impossible project that required filmmakers to represent thoughts only through moving images [17]. Such an opinion would have been attacked in the silent era for disregarding the aspect of films that was considered to differentiate them from mere representation of reality in stage play. In the 1930s, however, the conversion to sound film gave birth to a new conception of film.

As mentioned earlier, the contemporary discussions surrounding filmic realism included a variety of opinions. For instance, contrary to Sugiyama who stressed the importance of the tracking shot, critic Takeshi Tanaka argued for “editing” as “the basis for film art” [18]. Notwithstanding such disagreements among critics, the contemporary discussions of realist films presented two types of “realism”: naturalistic realism as an artistic trend and audiovisual realism that emerged as a sound film specificity. I argue that these two types of realism influenced the decrease in usage of non-diegetic music in films during the late 1930s.

2. Filmic Realism and Contemporary Arguments for the Rejection of Non-diegetic Music

In the introduction of this article, we saw two remarks made by Shiro Fukai and Kaoru Murao each reporting the decrease in the amount of non-diegetic music heard in films in the late 1930s. This section will examine the reasons behind such a change by looking particularly at two types of arguments for the rejection of non-diegetic music, which relate to the types of realism mentioned in the previous section and themselves are intertwined.

In 1936, despite his position as the musical director of Toho (one of the major film production companies alongside Shochiku), Keikichi Kakeshita wrote against the use of non-diegetic music in film: “Realistic talkie films, which are frequently being discussed these days” are “the most difficult type of sound film in regard to the use of accompaniment music” [19]. Five years later, when he published a book that summed up all of his previous writings, he listed “realist film” as one of the film genres, along with melodrama, romance, spectacle, comedy, and musical, and noted that “it is better to reduce the use of accompaniment music to minimum or

even zero” in “the narrative films that employ realistic expression” [20]. Kakeshita did not specify his reason for such a rejection of non-diegetic music in this particular context, but the possible logic behind it can be inferred from the following line that appears in his 1936 article: “As for lyrical or emotional scenes, even in realistic talkies, the use of [accompaniment] music is acceptable, as far as it contributes in making the filmic depiction more suitable to the scene” [21]. From the distinction he made between the “realistic” aspect and the “lyrical or emotional” aspect of talkies, Kakeshita certainly considered the use of non-diegetic music to be suitable for lyrical or emotional scenes, but not for realistic depictions. Such an attitude toward realism can be seen as a musical counterpart of the realist film argument discussed in the previous section, which demanded filmmakers to present narrative in a calm, objective manner, and to disregard non-diegetic music that had been used for emotional depiction since the silent era.

The other type of argument against the use of non-diegetic music was a more extreme one, built on the idea of realism as a medium specificity of sound film. In his article “Expulsion of Music” (1937), composer Kohei Kubota wrote, “It is expected to end in failure if one uses sound other than diegetic sound, or some other sound in place of it, for realistic moving image, which is the right path for film to take.” He further argued, “If film were to develop into 3D, or to gain colors or smells, it would acquire a much stronger sense of reality and the aid of music would be considered unnecessary. Just as musicians were dismissed from movie theatres after the emergence of talkies, old form of music would also be destined to vanish with the disappearance of films that require such a music to cover up their shortcomings” [22]. Critics like Kubota expected film to develop by approaching reality, and non-diegetic music was disregarded as a remnant of the silent era. A similar view can be observed in the writings of critic Akira Iwasaki. Praising the film *Tsuchi* (Tomu Uchida, 1939), which had very little music, Iwasaki insisted, “I thoroughly object to the use of accompaniment music. Music is just a camouflage for unskillful filmmakers who cannot handle the means of the talkie” [23]. The notion that non-diegetic music ideally should not be used for films had been present since the Pure Film Movement around 1920. In this respect, the rejection of non-diegetic music in sound film can be viewed as a revival of an ideal that had been held since the silent era, which was triggered by the arrival of sound film [24].

As these remarks suggest, the arguments for the exclusion of non-diegetic music in the late 1930s related to the two types of “realism”: naturalism, which was part of the wider artistic trend; and the audiovisual realism, which emerged from the medium specificity of sound film. But these two threads of arguments regarding non-diegetic music were also intertwined. For example, while Kakeshita’s argument mentioned earlier was linked to the naturalism trend, the absence of non-diegetic music in film, which he advocated, was intimately connected with the anticipations for the use of other sound elements, or what Iwasaki called “the means of talkies.” Kakeshita wrote “In regard to the issue of realism in talkies, unnecessary sound effects should be eliminated as much as possible, and such diegetic sound should be made into art, using cinematic techniques such as nuancing and close-up of sound” [25]. Contemporary critic Taihei Imamura, with a reference to Luigi Russolo’s futurism, even wrote in an article titled “Sound of Realism” that “beautiful tones of musical instruments are not significant in talkies anymore” because “all the sounds of objects are now asserting their incredible musical significance” [26].

What was brought to the surface by the rejection of non-diegetic music that results from the naturalist trend, therefore, is the realistic sound representation through voice and sound effects, in which critics like Sugiyama and Sawamura saw possibilities. As for Kubota’s notion of realism as “the right path for film to take,” he was referring to film as an artistic expression rather than a medium in general, as entertainment films filled with non-diegetic music were not even considered to begin with. Murao, for instance, declared that “the stereotyped American films still uses a lot of accompaniment music,” but “Japanese films, which are more advanced in regard to their contents, are barely using [such] music” [27]. Murao’s comment implied a presupposition that the issue of realistic representation only becomes an issue for films that pursue realism as an artistic trend, and not for entertainment films. The arguments for the exclusion of non-diegetic music, therefore, gained traction from both types of realism – that deriving from the wider artistic trend and that emerging from the medium specificity of sound film – and increased its momentum.

In addition to the critics’ arguments for the rejection of non-diegetic music, the decrease in the use of non-diegetic music was also influenced by a different factor. At the time, Western music had not been an integral part of ordinary Japanese peoples’ lives. As such, although Western music had established itself as the standard style for non-diegetic music, it was regarded incompatible with realist films, which sought to get closer to the everyday reality of Japanese people. Such a discrepancy between reality and musical style was an extremely pressing issue for composers. The composer Tadashi Hattori, for example, noted that in spite of Japanese musical tradition exemplified in “*gagaku*, *shyamisen* music, *nagauta*, and vocal music like *kiyomoto* and *dodoitsu*,” composers were required to write Western style music for films because “Western music seems to be more suitable for a technologically advanced stuff like talkie.” However, as such music cannot be well-integrated with Japanese films, he especially felt “at a loss” when attempting to “work under the banner of realism.” Therefore, Hattori wrote, “Ultimately, the best solution is to use no Western music in such a case” [28]. The problem of harmonizing Japanese films and Western music had been an ongoing challenge for composers since the silent era, but the increasing interest in realist film made the problem more prominent in the late 1930s.

In this way, there were several intertwined factors behind the discussions regarding the use of non-diegetic music in late 1930s Japan, and it was the context for the discourse on the decrease in use of non-diegetic music. However, the various factors presented here so far did not necessarily put an end to the use of non-diegetic music. As mentioned in the introduction, there were composers who explored the possibilities of non-diegetic music for realist films. The following section will focus on one of such composers, Shiro Fukai. Fukai responded to the growth of realist films and hoped to find ways to solve the issues surrounding the use of non-diegetic music.

3. Shiro Fukai’s Argument for the Rejection of Non-diegetic Music in Realist Films

Shiro Fukai made his debut as a film composer in 1935, the time when the production of sound films was nearing its full swing in the Japanese film industry. Soon after, he was confronted with the issues surrounding the use of non-diegetic music in realist films.

A year before he first composed for a film, Fukai wrote an article that discussed a conception of sound film in terms of “counterpoint” and “harmony” [29]. He wrote a number of articles on film music thereafter, but he scarcely discussed the narrative function of film music. Fukai, who was not interested in the aspect of narrative, perceived sound film as a compound that was organically formed by a union of simultaneously variable elements, such as image, speech, sound, and music. He saw such a compound as a defining characteristic of sound film and described the difference between silent and sound films by providing an analogy with the comparison between “an unaccompanied solo piece for an instrument that can only play a single melody and a piece for an ensemble of several instruments” [30]. Fukai noted that while “holding a single note over tens bars” in a solo unaccompanied piece instantly makes the music “dull,” it does not cause any problem in an ensemble piece because “the important melody can be played by other instruments.” The characteristic of sound film, as Fukai perceived it, was in the musical ensemble-like organic relationship, which he called “counterpoint,” that emerged among various elements constituting film as a whole [31]. Fukai’s analogy between film and ensemble music was borrowed from Rudolf Arnheim’s *Film als Kunst* (1st edition, 1932). The word “counterpoint” can also be found in Arnheim’s book, as well as in earlier writings on sound film, such as “A Statement [on Sound film]” (1928) by Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Alexandrov. What is important here, however, is not such pervasiveness itself, but the intention for the use of such terms. It was to show the alternative to the style of sound films, which was, for the opponents, based on its power of audiovisual illusion of the real life or stage drama. In this respect, Fukai’s first discussion of film music can be understood similarly in the sense that he was trying to detach his argument from the “impression of reality,” to which Gorbman referred for the phenomenon of the transitional period; in other words, his argument can be regarded as an attempt to pursue the potential of non-diegetic music in those days.

Two years later, however, Fukai, too, was perplexed by the power of audiovisual reality of sound film. In 1937, while watching *Aienkyo*, Fukai confessed that the film reminded him of the “terrible error” that he made in his score for *Taii no musume* (Akira Nobuchi, 1937). Both films were set in Shinano, a rural district in Japan, but while no non-diegetic music was used in *Aienkyo*, Fukai’s score for *Taii no musume* accompanied “the snowy sky of Shinano” with Western music, although in reality, such a setting “should not be evoking an impression of Western music resounding eloquently.” Fukai wrote, “I failed for this simple reason” [32]. This remark reflects the conflict between Western music and what is being depicted in Japanese film, with which Hattori was faced. However, this does not mean that Fukai thought that sound film should not use non-diegetic music or that sound film was a medium for realistic audiovisual representation of actual reality. As mentioned in the introduction, Fukai had described *Aienkyo* as one of the films with “realistic mannerism,” which are contrasted with those “made with a stylized manner,” and he noted that the latter has “more space available for music and enables music to exhibit its power effectively” [33]. Fukai’s hesitation in using non-diegetic music, at least in 1937 was therefore limited to the genre of realist film and was certainly not his general stance toward all genres of sound film.

Fukai’s awareness of the issues surrounding the use of non-diegetic music in realist film is clear from his writings, but it must have been embarrassing for him to see films that succeeded

only with diegetic sound and image; that is, without non-diegetic music. Although he had not acquired an alternative idea until 1937, he also wrote interesting remarks for exploring the possibility of non-diegetic music in 1938.

4. Shiro Fukai’s Struggle with the use of Non-diegetic Music for Realist Films

In his 1938 article “Toki ongaku oboegaki” [A note for Music of Talkie], Fukai “revised” his previous wording (“there is no room for music in a realist [*riarizumu*] film”) and stated that “the so-called accompaniment music is unnecessary for *shajitsushugi* film” [34]. Both terms, *riarizumu* and *shajitsushugi*, can be used synonymously: the former is a transliteration of the word “realism,” whereas the latter is a semantic translation of the same word [35]. However, by carefully distinguishing these two terms, Fukai suggested that Japanese films had not gained “filmic *riarizumu*” and hence remained as *shajitsushugi* films. For Fukai, “realistic film” (or those Fukai referred to as *riarizumu* film) was the goal toward which *shajitsushugi* film should move. Although Fukai had praised films like *Sobo*, *Hadaka no machi*, and *Aienkyo* for their “realistic style” in the previous year, he was now rather critical of them. According to Fukai, “the successful relationship between sound and image found in films such as *Sobo*, *Hadaka no machi*, and *Aienkyo* is nothing but the result of boycotting romantic music to accompany *shajitsushugi* film” [36]. In other words, it is because these films were still *shajitsushugi* films, and not *riarizumu* films that Fukai approved of the use of music (or the lack of it) in them. Fukai wrote that “filmic realism and music do not necessarily conflict with one another if they are properly handled,” but Japanese films, in his view, “had still not achieved filmic *riarizumu*” in the first place [37]. What did Fukai mean by “properly handled” music that does not conflict with filmic *riarizumu*?

Fukai did not specifically state what he meant by the “proper handling” of music, although clues for it appear in his writings. Interestingly, just as he perceived Japanese films as still falling contained within the purview of *shajitsushugi* and not arriving at the state of *riarizumu*, Fukai thought Japanese film music, too, was “hovering within the romantic world” and cannot be called “realist music” [38]. Although the term “realist music” might sound strange to us today, it was used not only in Fukai’s writings but also in the writings on film music by other contemporary writers. An example can be found in the film critic Akihiro Tsukatani’s review for the music of *Kuso buraku* (Yasuki Chiba, 1939) composed by Fukai, mainly for piccolo and percussions [39]. Tellingly, Shuichi Tsugawa, a critic and a composer, described “realist music” in 1953 as “the newest, objectivist music” that used “wind and percussion instruments” instead of “feminine, string instruments” [40]. Tsugawa also used the term *riarizumu* to describe Fukai’s film music. To him, Fukai’s music possessed the qualities of “a kind of *riarizumu*” and Stravinsky’s music, in contrast with romantic music expressive of the “subjective, emotional state” [41]. These remarks suggest that music of realism is the kind that appeared after the romantic age or can be called modern music, and it was also the personal compositional style of Fukai, whose style can be called modern. Nevertheless, such modern music that Fukai supposed as realist music for realist film had not been standardized and stereotyped yet. As briefly mentioned earlier, it was not the use of non-diegetic music in general but the use of romantic music, or formalized musical

rhetoric of emotional expression, in realist film that Fukai saw as a problem. In 1938, he also wrote that composers should develop alternatives to traditional musical practice for stage drama and silent music [42]. To be sure, we cannot infer he had brought his considerations into practice since he declared that Japanese film had not reached “filmic realism.” Although the abovementioned film *Kuso buraku* survives today, it is a satirical film with much non-diegetic music, which seems unsuitable to be called realistic. [43]

In his published conversation with director Teinosuke Kinugasa in 1936, Fukai said he was expecting Kinugasa’s next film *Osaka natsu no jin* (1937) to be “the most realistic film that I have ever worked for,” and told the director, “I have been thinking about taking up the issue of realism on the part of music for talkies.” Admitting that “if we are to produce a truly realistic film, [non-diegetic] music would be [...] unnecessary,” Fukai also expressed his intentions to avoid the use of formalistic music in *Osaka natsu no jin* as much as possible, and was hoping to “write music that is similar to sound effects taken from real sounds” and “find some hints for [such a music] from the sounds of cannons, rifles, and battle cries” [44]. Unfortunately, we cannot tell whether Fukai put his ideas into practice as most parts of *Osaka natsu no jin* did not survive [45]. Two years later, in 1938, Fukai reiterated the same idea in a different conversation, this time with specific reference to the Swiss composer Arthur Honegger’s film music. Fukai said that “the kind of music that we have been used to as music is not the kind that is suitable for realistic films,” and “the reason Honegger often writes successful film music is that his music is different from what we have been calling music.” In Fukai’s view, Honegger’s music, despite its “melodies,” would be “unbearable to listen to when it is performed on stage” because his “music effect-like music,” as Fukai called it, “only becomes effective when it is put together with moving images” [46]. In his earlier-cited article from the same year, 1938, Fukai commented on how Honegger “boldly turns music into sound effect” [47].

Fukai’s comments suggest that he considered “music effect-like music” or “music that is similar to sound effects” to be an ideal type of music for realist films. Given Honegger’s film music, we can presume that what Fukai meant by “music effect-like music” was not a straightforward musical imitation of object noise or the sounds of nature. Interestingly, there is a review of Fukai’s film music that described it as “sound effect-like.” Music critic Kamesuke Shioiri noted that Fukai’s music in the sword fight scene of *Musashi Miyamoto* (Seichi Ishibashi, 1937) was “mainly played by the mandolin whose tremolo gradually increases in tempo and dynamics in accordance with the overall, imminent emotion of the scene,” and “[Fukai] used different instruments as a sort of sound effects rather than music” [48]. Although *Musashi Miyamoto* has no surviving prints, we can find an example of Fukai’s “sound effect-like” use of musical instruments in a different film produced in the same year, *Hanabi no machi* (Tamizo Ishida, 1937). In the scene where the protagonist is being attacked by ruffians, the sound of percussion instruments is heard continuously over three to four minutes. In another film, *Hebihimesama* (Teinosuke Kinugasa, 1940), the climax scene is accompanied by a repeated hammering of a kind of metal percussion instruments for several minutes. These examples demonstrate how Fukai experimented with musical language that was different from the more traditional, romantic rhetoric of musical expression. Fukai’s conception of as “music effect-like” music was an accumulation of such unmelodic, fragmentary musical materials and harmonies.

Such music might sound odd when heard on its own without the accompanying images (just as Fukai thought of Honegger’s film music as being unbearable to listen to when performed on stage as a concert piece). However, here Fukai did earlier describe sound films in terms of “counterpoint” in his 1934 article. In comparing the various aspects of sound film (e.g., moving images, sound effects, and music) to the different parts making up a piece of contrapuntal music, Fukai stated that the criticism of the use of non-diegetic music in talkies must start with conceptualizing film contrapuntally and recognizing that music is only one of several parts that make up sound film as a whole. “Music of talkie,” in other words, “is supposed to be incomplete [in and of itself]” [49]. Although Fukai’s idea of the incompleteness of non-diegetic music discussed here is referring to film music in general, such an idea is also manifested around 1938, when he started pondering the function of film music in the more specific context of realist film. Confronted with realist films, Fukai seems to have deepened his awareness of the function of film music that he had started exploring in his earlier writings on sound film, which then led him to see the possibility of “sound effect-like music.” In this respect, realist film did not merely cause arguments against the use of non-diegetic music; for composers like Fukai, it provided an opportunity to cultivate and explore the possibility of new ways of writing film music [50].

Conclusion

This work looked at how interests in filmic realism influenced film music in Japan in the latter half of the 1930s. Realist films and the discussion surrounding them led many Japanese critics and composers to confront the issues with the use of non-diegetic music. As a result, there was, indeed, a decrease in the use of non-diegetic music in films. There were also composers like Fukai who saw it as an opportunity to reconsider their conceptions of sound film and film music and to look for a more suitable way of composing for realist films.

There are certainly many other points of discussion that have been left untouched in the interest of space. Here, I will list four of them, which might initiate further discussion: 1) As the concept of “realism” has recurrently been discussed in film history, the Japanese examples discussed here may be discussed in a broader context; 2) Fukai’s later works, most of which still exist today, also deserve attention because they show different conceptions and practices of film music composition from those discussed in this article; 3) Although the concept of “realism” was consciously left rather vague in this article, it needs to be discussed more concretely and such a discussion should include other contemporary genres of film, such as “*Bungei eiga*” (films based on literary works) and “*Rekishi eiga*” (historical film), in which the issue of realism was also relevant; 4) Although this article focused only on Fukai, his works and ideas should be compared with other contemporary composers’, such as Noboru Itoh, Tadashi Hattori, Kosaku Yamada, and Fumio Hayasaka, each of whom dealt with the issue of realism differently in their works.

Notes

- [1] Scholarly writings on film music today often use the term “non-diegetic music” for the music in film whose source is neither visible on the screen nor has been implied to be present in the diegetic

- world. In this paper, the word “accompaniment music” is sometimes used when it is cited from primary sources (which often used the Japanese term “*banso ongaku*” [accompaniment music]), but what it refers to is the same as “non-diegetic music.”
- [2] Yohei Nagato has examined this topic so far. However, he mainly discusses the “lack” of accompaniment music, as his main point is to consider the works of Mizoguchi in regard to their sound and music. Nagato, Youhei. *Eiga onkyo-ron: Mizoguchi Kenji eiga wo kiku [Film Sound: Listening to the Films of Kenji Mizoguchi]*. Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 2014, 101-38.
- [3] Fukai, Shiro. “Boku no suki na toki sakka” [My favorite Talkie Composers]. *Kinema junpo* (June 1937), 7. Unfortunately, no surviving prints of *Sobo* and *Hadaka no machi* exist; *Aienkyo* exists and, as is shown in the first two sentences of this paper, does not have non-diegetic music.
- [4] Murao, Kaoru. “Eiga ongaku no chikagoro” [Today’s film music]. *Eiga hyoron* (June 1938), 109. *Abe ichizoku* only has one piece of non-diegetic music for the main part of the film. *Nakimushi kozo* has no fewer than five cues, most of which are heard in the latter half of the film.
- [5] Fukai, Shiro. “Toki ongaku-ron izen” [Introductory Remarks on Music for Talkie]. *Ongaku hyoron* (October 1937), 111.
- [6] These Japanese terms, “*shajitsuteki*” and “*riarisutikku*” are usually used synonymously, although, Fukai, at least in 1938, used them to mean different things. For Fukai’s usage of these two words, see the fourth section of this paper.
- [7] Gorbman, Claudia. *Unheard Melodies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987, 42. See also Koga, Futoshi. “Eiga ongaku no kouko gakuteki ichi kousatsu” [An Archeological Essay on Film Music]. *Eigagaku*, 1987.
- [8] Horiuchi, Keizo. “Eiga ongaku no jikken” [Experiments of Film Music], *Eiga hyoron* (November 1934), 36-37. For similar comments, see Yoshida, Shigeo. “Toki ni okeru bansogaku to bansogakuteki kouka” [Accompaniment music and its effect in talkie], *Kinema junpo* (21 January 1933). The critic and poet, Fuyuhiko Kitagawa, recalled the inversion to sound film as “a relentless invasion of reality into films” (Kitagawa, Fuyuhiko. *Gendai eiga-ron [On Films Today]*. Tokyo: Mikasa Shobo, 1941, 15).
- [9] As for the early films that Fukai composed for, especially those from 1935 to 1940, only eight works survive out of the total of 26.
- [10] Sato, Tadao. *Zoho nihon eigashi [History of Japanese Cinema, an enlarged edition]*. vol. 1. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006, 361. As Naoki Yamamoto indicated, Sato’s remark on “Japanese realism” should be taken with caution because it can give a false impression that there was some nationally specific type of realism. There was, however, the movement of documentary film in Britain and other trends like poetic realism in France and Socialist realism in the Soviet Union, so attention to realism itself is not specific to Japan. See Yamamoto, Naoki. “Toki riarizumu e no michi” [The path to Talkie Realism]. In *Nihon eiga wa ikiteiru [Japanese cinema is alive]*. Ed. Kiyoshi Kurosawa et al. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2010.
- [11] Kurushima, Yukio. “Eiga to rializumu” [Film and Realism]. *Eiga hyoron* (July 1936), 48.
- [12] See Yamamoto (2010) for the historical discussion on the relationship between the term “*rializumu*” (realism) and 1930s Japan films.
- [13] Hazumi, Tsuneo. “Eiga rializumu no teisho” [Proposal of Filmic Realism]. *Kinema junpo* (1 December 1935), 75.
- [14] Sawamura, Tsutomu. “Eigateki rializumu no tameni” [For Filmic Realism]. *Eiga hyoron* (September 1936), 63.
- [15] Sugiyama, Taihei. *Eigaronshu. [Essays on Cinema]*. Tokyo: Daiichi Geibunsha, 1941, 19.
- [16] Sugiyama, Taihei. “Toki no koe” [Voice of Talkie]. *Eiga to ongaku* (April 1938), 24-25.
- [17] Sawamura, Tsutomu. *Eiga no hyogen [Cinematic Expression]*. Tokyo: Suga Shuppan, 1942, 23-32
- [18] The term translated as “editing” here is actually “*kattobakku*,” which is the transliteration of “cutback.” This term was usually used in Japanese to refer to “crosscutting.” However, Sugiyama

may have used this term more vaguely here to mean “editing.”

- [19] Kakeshita, Keikichi. “Geki toki ni okeru ongaku shoriho” [The Use of Music in Narrative Talkie Film] (firstly published in 1936). In *Eiga to ongaku*. Tokyo: Shinko Ongaku Shuppansha, 1943, 140.
- [20] Kakeshita, Keikichi. *Eiga ongaku no sousaku to rokuon kikou [Composition of Film Music and the Recording Systems]*. Tokyo: Shinko Ongaku Shuppansha, 1943, 43.
- [21] Kakeshita. “Geki toki ni okeru ongaku shoriho,” 140.
- [22] Kubota, Kohei. “Ongaku tsuiho” [Expulsion of Music]. *Eiga to ongaku* (September 1937), 150. Kubota also accepted the possibility of the survival of non-diegetic music, and argued that music, in such a case, would “break away from the dualistic quality of music (means of counterpoint between image and music)” and would lose its “uniqueness as music” and “become a [sound] effect of film.” As you will see in the 4th section of this paper, some of the words Kubota used are the same as those used by Fukai. However, unlike Fukai, Kubota did not provide concrete examples.
- [23] Iwasaki, Akira et al. “Tsuchi wo meguru zadankai” [A Roundtable on *Tsuchi*]. *Eiga no tomo* (June 1939), 82.
- [24] Kaeriyama, Norimasa. *Katsudoshashingeki no sousaku to satsueiho [Creation of Photoplay and Shooting]*. Tokyo: Seikosha, 1917, 3-4.
- [25] Kakeshita. “Geki toki ni okeru ongaku shoriho,” 140.
- [26] Imamura, Taihei. “Riarizumu no oto” [Sound of Realism], (firstly published in April 1939). In *Eiga geijyutsu no keishiki*. Tokyo: Oshio Shobo, 180. Imamura was interested in sound effects, but he did not discuss the topic of the exclusion of non-diegetic music from films. Imamura is one of the earliest theorists in Japan who discussed film music diligently.
- [27] Murao, Kaoru. “*Eiga ongaku no chikagoro*,” 109.
- [28] Hattori, Tadashi. “Toki no michi” [A Path to Talkie], *Eiga hyoron* (June 1938), 39.
- [29] Fukai, Shiro. “*Ongageijutu ni okeru kontorupowan to arumoni*,” *Toki ongaku* (September 1934), 392-98. Fukai commented on the climax scene in Papst’s *Don Quixote* (1933) and praised its “good combination” of image, sound, and music in terms of counterpoint. The term counterpoint was also used, albeit differently, by Fumio Hayasaka and Akira Kurosawa later. Fukai meant the changing combination of various elements, whereas Hayasaka and Kurosawa meant a contrasting effect of music and image: using happy music in a sad scene, for example. Such a contrasting effect, for Fukai, was to do with vertical *harmony*, and not counterpoint. Fukai referred to a scene in *Sniper* (Semyon Alekseyevich Timoshenko, 1932), which Hayasaka and Kurosawa praised as an ideal form of the counterpoint effect. However, Fukai analyzed the “dissonant” tone created by the “jolly” sound, which has a completely different mood from what is being depicted in the image and thereby becomes effective only with the presence of the scene that follows it in which the music and the filmic world are in “harmony” (where the same music is now used as diegetic music). This particular scene was censored when it was shown in Japan.
- [30] Fukai, Shiro. “*Ongageijutu ni okeru kontorupowan to arumoni*,” 393.
- [31] Fukai, Shiro. “*Ongageijutu ni okeru kontorupowan to arumoni*,” 394.
- [32] Fukai, Shiro. “*Boku no suki na toki sakka*,” 7. In another review of the music of *Aienkyo* (1937), Kamesuke Shioiri criticized the opening jazz music, one of the two pieces used in the film, for the sense of incongruity that it creates, and also criticized the fact that the film used music only scarcely for the purpose of “realistic manner.” He, in addition, requested Mizoguchi to search for a “more effective way of using music” and suggested to include more regional characteristics depending on the scene. (Shioiri, Kamesuke. “Eigaongaku Geppyou” [Monthly Review of Film Music]. *Nihon Eiga* (August 1937), 104.
- [33] Fukai, Shiro. “*Toki ongaku-ron izen*,” 111.
- [34] Fukai, Shiro. “*Toki ongaku oboegaki*.” *Eiga hyoron* (June 1938), 34. In this article, Fukai criticized both lines of argument for the exclusion of non-diegetic music from films in general and from

realist films. Two things should be noted here. The first is the fact that Fukai's mention of realist film suggests the importance he placed on this genre. The second is the context in which he criticized the exclusion of non-diegetic music. Fukai had previously been "involved in the discussions for the exclusion of non-diegetic music," which, he said, was a counteraction against the flooding of non-diegetic music in sound films. Previously, Horiuchi mentioned an extreme increase of the use of non-diegetic music in 1934. We cannot actually confirm whether they were referring to the same trend in Japanese film music, but at least these two contemporaries perceived such a trend.

- [35] This is why these two words were both translated as "realism" at the beginning of this paper.
- [36] Fukai, Shiro. "Jidaigekieiga to ongaku" [Japanese Period Drama and Music]. *Waseda daigaku shinbun* (21 April 1938), 8. In this article, Fukai wrote that "*shajisushugi* music easily fits *shajisushugi* films." The term "*shajisushugi*" here may be translated as "merely objective." Fukai did not provide further explanation for this word, but he was also interested in *source* music (diegetic music) as well as accompaniment (non-diegetic) music. In a 1934 article, Fukai specifically referred to the use of player piano in René Clair's *Quatorze Juillet* (1932). He himself then used the Japanese flute *nokan* for source music in *Abe ichizoku*, which was one of the most highly praised realist films then. In *Hebihimesama*, he also used the sound of flute as diegetic sound, which was also used in the opening music of the film.
- [37] Fukai, Shiro. "*Toki ongaku oboegaki*," 35.
- [38] Fukai, Shiro. "*Jidaigekieiga to ongaku*," 8.
- [39] Tsukatani, Akihiro. "Eigaongaku sandai" [Three Film Music]. *Eiga to ongaku* (July 1939), 44.
- [40] Tsugawa, Shuichi. "Genroku chushingura no ongaku" [Music of Genroku Chishingura], *Nihoneiga* (January 1942), 114.
- [41] Tsugawa, Shuichi. "Eiga-ongaku" [Film Music]. In *Eiga koza [Lessons on Cinema]*, vol. 2, Tokyo: Mikasashobo, 1953, 123. Although the instruments Fukai used for his music of *Kuso buraku* coincided with the instrument groups that Tsugawa thought composers should use for realist music, we cannot simply assume that Fukai also considered such instruments as being ideal for realist music.
- [42] Fukai, Shiro. "*Toki ongaku oboegaki*," 34.
- [43] Realism-oriented films tended to have little music except for the opening and ending. *Abe ichizoku* (Hisatora Kumagai, 1938) only has one piece of non-diegetic music (see footnote 4), whereas *Zangiku monogatari* (Kenji Mizoguchi, 1939) has no non-diegetic music at all. It seems that both directors were trying to reduce the amount of non-diegetic music from their films around this time. Fukai did write "romantic" music even for *Abe ichizoku*, but the scene that the music was written for was a romantic scene with a servant whose scenes are contrasted with the main realistic scenes of his master. Fukai noted that a careful handling of music is required to make a natural shift from a sequence with no music to one with music. (Also see footnote 44, 45)
- [44] Fukai, Shiro and Kinugasa, Teinosuke. "'Eiga to ongaku' no shokakudo" [Several Perspectives on "Film and Music"]. *Ongaku sekai* (October 1936), 123. Fukai stated in another roundtable, "It is difficult to find a space for music in a film that deals with realistic things [...] in such a case, starting the music from diegetic sounds (reality sounds) can be very effective." (Fukai, Shiro et al. "Zadankai okesutora no shojo wo chushin ni eiga to ongaku wo kataru." *Eiga to ongaku* (January 1938), 136). The opening music of *Abe ichizoku*, for instance, does the opposite where the music dissolves into the sounds of a volcano.
- [45] We can find an interesting example for such a transition, though conversely, from music to sound effect. In *Abe ichizoku*, Fukai begins a piece using only two notes, and hence blurs the line between sound (effect) and music. Such a careful use of individual sounds might be seen as an example of the "sound effect-like" style.
- [46] Fukai, Shiro et al. "*Zadankai: Okesutora no shojo wo chushin ni eiga to ongaku wo kataru*," *Eiga*

to *Ongaku* (January 1938), 136.

[47] Fukai, Shiro. “*Toki ongaku oboegaki*,” 35.

[48] Fukai, Shiro et al. “*Zadankai: Okesutora no shojo wo chushin ni eiga to ongaku wo kataru*,” *Eiga to Ongaku* (January 1938), 136.

[49] Fukai, Shiro. “*Toki ongaku oboegaki*,” 34.

[50] The interest in realist film in Japan, however, faded around the early 1940s, when Japanese militarism and fascism had spread. The discussion on it also disappeared.

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