

# 1 **Music Tourism: A Qualitative Analysis of Musical** 2 **Pilgrimage in the Case of "Hamasaki Ayumi Effect"**

3  
4 *The Japanese singer Hamasaki Ayumi has been changing the aesthetics of a*  
5 *generation for the past 25 years, boosting the music industry and the tourism*  
6 *industry. Many overseas tourists come to Japan to attend a concert for*  
7 *Hamasaki Ayumi. Based on the theory of musical equilibration, this paper*  
8 *analyzes Ayumi Hamasaki's work to explain the emotional efficacy for the fans;*  
9 *through qualitative analysis of the interview data, it explains the necessity of*  
10 *transnational music tourism and the irreplaceability of concert. The objective*  
11 *of this paper is to analyze how music affects people's emotions thus becoming*  
12 *a motivation for musical pilgrimage and driving the development of tourism.*

13  
14 **Keywords:** *Music Tourism, Music psychology, Theory of Musical*  
15 *Equilibration, Japanese pop music*

## 16 17 18 **Introduction**












19  
20 Hamasaki Ayumi is one of the most influential figures in Japanese pop  
21 music (Lisa Takeuchi Cullen., 2002). In Japan, Hamasaki Ayumi is known as a  
22 "super money-printing machine"; who was regarded as Japan's Madonna (Chart  
23 masters, 2019). Hamasaki became the first female singer to sell more than 50  
24 million CDs on record in Japan. At one point in her heyday, Hamasaki's annual  
25 income was as high as 1.2 billion yen (Shingo Kimura, 2022). In 2000, she was  
26 the only Asian artist to reach the top of the list of "Albums with sales of 20  
27 million albums" (Nilatch.com, 2024). Hamasaki Ayumi celebrates the 25th  
28 anniversary of her debut in 2023. She performed 53 concerts from July 2023 to  
29 March 2024 in 47 regions in Japan.

30 There is a global artist ranking called the Artist Success Rate (ASR), which  
31 consists of two parts, EAS (Equivalent Album Sales) and EDS (Equivalent  
32 Discography Sales). This is a rating method used to evaluate the overall strength  
33 of a musician. Hamasaki Ayumi's latest global ranking is 123.

34

1 **Figure 1.**

### Top artists – Artist Success Rating (ASR)

#	Pic	Artist	EAS	EDS	ASR
1		Michael Jackson	336,792,000	102,007,256	1,000
2		The Beatles	422,001,000	70,953,823	934
3		Queen	277,668,000	84,091,841	824
...					
120		Avril Lavigne	47,942,000	14,985,010	145
121		Ozzy Osbourne	53,294,000	13,498,163	145
122		Evanescence	32,430,000	22,284,106	145
123		Ayumi Hamasaki	61,863,000	11,313,478	143
124		Nicki Minaj	53,832,000	12,791,279	142
125		Justin Timberlake	55,981,000	12,245,296	141
126		Bad Bunny	76,854,000	8,484,148	138
127		Fugees	23,106,000	27,602,211	136

2

3 Source: <https://chartmasters.org/top-artists-asr/>

4











5 A concept called CSPC refers to the "concept of sales that match  
 6 popularity." In short, it's a ranking of sales across music distribution channels  
 7 such as Spotify or physical record store. For example, 1,500 audio streams are  
 8 equivalent to one record sale (one CSPC). This ranking reflects the global  
 9 ranking of a musician's work.

10

11

1 **Figure 2.**

**Top artists-CSPC best selling artist of all-time**

g#	Pic	Artist	Studio Albums (EAS)	Other LPs (EAS)	Physical Singles (units sold)	Digital Singles (units sold)	Streams (EAS)	Total EAS
1		<b>The Beatles</b>	160,650,000	203,392,000	116,080,000	35,230,000	21,903,000 (05/05/24)	426,053,000
2		<b>Michael Jackson</b>	182,600,000	101,997,000	79,350,000	79,990,000	20,468,000 (05/05/24)	340,914,000
3		<b>Elvis Presley</b>	53,150,000	212,309,000	135,210,000	37,470,000	10,991,000 (05/05/24)	322,632,000
4		<b>Queen</b>	90,230,000	139,348,000	49,960,000	59,650,000	29,281,000 (05/05/24)	282,797,000
5		<b>Madonna</b>	146,450,000	64,420,000	75,210,000	42,100,000	10,062,000 (05/05/24)	249,810,000
...								
108		<b>Ayumi Hamasaki</b>	21,810,000	19,339,000	46,480,000	1,642,000 (05/05/24)	62,312,000	
109		<b>Crosby, Stills &amp; Nash</b>	34,420,000	21,902,000	8,310,000	825,000 (05/15/21)	60,902,000	
110		<b>Post Malone</b>	2,344,000	18,000	17,190,000	55,741,000 (05/05/24)	60,641,000	
111		<b>Jackson 5 &amp; The Jacksons</b>	26,400,000	19,027,000	14,260,000	2,904,000 (05/05/24)	60,294,000	
112		<b>Nickelback</b>	40,500,000	1,824,000	57,280,000	7,642,000 (05/05/24)	59,552,000	

2

3 Source: <https://chartmasters.org/best-selling-artists-of-all-time/>

4

5 It is called the "Hamasaki Ayumi Effect" because not only in the music  
 6 industry, but also in the fashion industry, she has had a huge influence. Hamasaki  
 7 Ayumi created various trends, from short blonde hair to leopard prints, makeup  
 8 and nail art, she won the Best Dressed Award. The "Y2K fashion" of the Heisei  
 9 era is still the center of attention (Tajimax, 2023). The "Ayu effect" has  
 10 influenced not only the aesthetics of the youth, but also the music and tourism  
 11 industry over the years. She is one of the most influential female singers in Asia.  
 12 Many people come to Japan from afar in order to go for a music tour for  
 13 Hamasaki Ayumi.

14

15

## 1 Research objective

2  
3 This study aims to explain the contributing factors that have made Yoyogi  
4 Gymnasium a sacred site for music pilgrimage by analyzing the psychology of  
5 foreign tourists. As well as analyzing the reasons that concerts as a form of  
6 performance will not be replaced nowadays even when the quality of recordings  
7 is close to perfect. This will provide further reference for the music and tourism  
8 industries.

## 10 Methodology

11  
12  
13 The research was conducted through semi-structured interviews with 11  
14 fans from overseas who participated in Hamasaki Ayumi's New Year's Eve  
15 concert on December 31, 2023, at the Yoyogi National Gymnasium (1st  
16 gymnasium). The interviews lasted an average of 40 minutes and included both  
17 offline and online interviews. The online interviews were conducted using SNS  
18 video or audio calls. The interviewees all used their native language, which was  
19 later translated verbatim into English. Considering that the author is a native  
20 Chinese speaker, it is possible to understand the content of the interviewee's  
21 intended expression very effectively. In the process of translation, the  
22 interviewee's intention was represented to the maximum possible extent. The  
23 interviewee was given a nickname. The use of images in the paper was approved  
24 by the interviewees. The interview questions centered on the following  
25 dimensions: the emotional efficacy of musical structure; the irreplaceability of  
26 live concert; the construction of musical pilgrimage destination; the spiritual  
27 significance of icon; the difficulties that cross-national music tourism requires  
28 to overcome. The interviewee's answers were categorized and coded.

29  
30 **Figure 3.** *Taiwan Fan Group on December 31, 2023*



31  
32 *Source: interviewee*

1 **Figure 4.** *Chinese Fan Group on December 30, 2023*



2  
3 Source: interviewee

4  
5 **Figure 5.** *Chinese Fan Group on December 31, 2023*

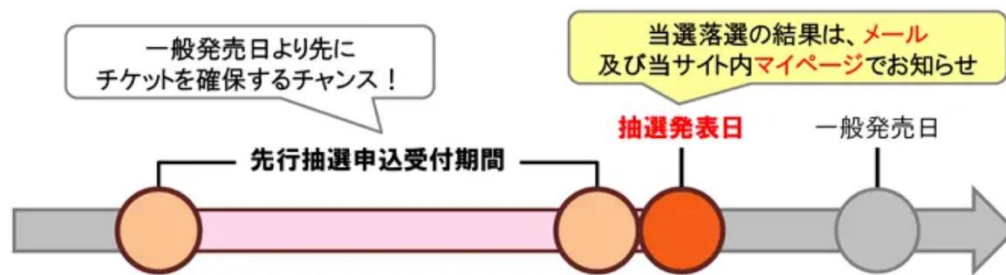


6  
7 Source: interviewee

1 Through the answers of the interviewees, it was found that the fans of  
 2 Hamasaki Ayumi are different from the fans of idols that became popular  
 3 overnight since they still listen to the same old songs as 20 years ago. Therefore,  
 4 in this paper, the interviewee's "fan age" will be labeled. This relates to the fact  
 5 that the songs they listened to in their youth had a huge impact on their lives.  
 6 Except for one interviewee whose "fan age" is 1 year, the average "fan age" of  
 7 the other interviewees is 17 years. While as of 2023 Ayumi Hamasaki's debut  
 8 was 25 years.

9 There's a lottery system for concerts in Japan. This means that not everyone  
 10 is successful in purchasing a ticket. Therefore, all of the people came to Japan  
 11 only after confirming that they had drawn tickets, which means that concert was  
 12 the main motivation for their trip.  
 13

14 **Figure 6.**



15  
 16 Source: <https://md.pia.jp/sumo/guide/prereserve.jsp>  
 17

18 The interview questions were centred around the following points: The  
 19 emotional efficacy of musical structure; The irreplaceability of live concert; The  
 20 construction of musical pilgrimage destination; The spiritual significance of icon;  
 21 The difficulties that cross-national music tourism requires to overcome.  
 22

## 23 Qualitative Analysis

24  
 25  
 26 The interviews were coded sentence-by-sentence and eventually resulted in  
 27 four formative factors for people's cross-country concert attendance.  
 28  
 29



1 to me..... When I was at the concert, the intro of "Walking proud" started and  
 2 my eyes got red, and I couldn't control the tears that were streaming out of my  
 3 eyes. I felt like I had been there before. It was a feeling of reconciliation with  
 4 my past self. She gave me the strength and courage to regain my confidence.  
 5 (Audi, Male, 34, Taiwan, 17 years fan)  
 6

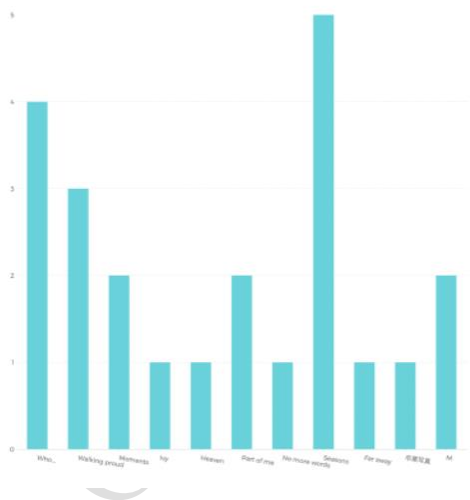
7 Sometimes a person may feel lonely and listen to Hamasaki Ayumi's songs to  
 8 express their emotions. Most pop music is about love, but her songs are about  
 9 not being loved. In some moments, it's a saving power.  
 10 (Luke, male, 35, Taiwan, 25 years fan)  
 11

12 I'm actually a rather tough person. But when Hamasaki Ayumi sang  
 13 "SEASONS" live in concert and all the audience sang along with her in chorus  
 14 I cried.  
 15 (Liu, Male, 28, China, 9 years fan)  
 16

17 Interviewees repeatedly mentioned that they felt "healed and empowered" by  
 18 listening to Hamasaki Ayumi's songs. The interviewees mentioned many songs that  
 19 resonated emotionally or that they had enjoyed for more than 10 years during the  
 20 interview. The most frequently mentioned song was released in 2000 called "seasons".  
 21 This song was also the CSPA #1 single of Hamasaki's songs. The song belongs to the  
 22 album "duty", which is her best-selling albums. 24 years ago, it also had leading sales  
 23 in China and Taiwan. Meanwhile, Hamasaki Ayumi had the song live at her Tokyo  
 24 concert.  
 25

26 **Figure 8.** Interviewee's favorite song

**Figure 9.** Source: chart master



**CSPA Singles Ranking**

- 2000 – Ayumi Hamasaki – Seasons [Duty] – 5,470,000
- 2000 – Ayumi Hamasaki – M [I Am...] – 3,840,000
- 1999 – Ayumi Hamasaki – Boys & Girls [Loveppears] – 3,250,000
- 2002 – Ayumi Hamasaki – Dearest [I Am...] – 2,220,000
- 1999 – Ayumi Hamasaki – To Be [Loveppears] – 1,950,000
- 1999 – Ayumi Hamasaki – A Song for xx [A Song for xx] – 1,940,000
- 2002 – Ayumi Hamasaki – Voyage [Rainbow] – 1,890,000
- 2001 – Ayumi Hamasaki – Evolution [I Am...] – 1,620,000
- 2000 – Ayumi Hamasaki – Surreal [Duty] – 1,530,000
- 1999 – Ayumi Hamasaki – Appears [Loveppears] – 1,460,000

**Duty (2000)**

Asia	3 520 000
Japan	2 985 000
China	127 000
Taiwan	65 000
Rest of Asia	55 000
Exports	290 000
<b>GLOBAL SALES</b>	<b>3 520 000</b>

27  
 28  
 29 According to the author's observation, the audience has a profound sense of  
 30 harmony when singing along with Hamasaki's chorus, as well as the energy generated  
 31 by the soundstage of around 10,000 people is tremendous in the venue of Yoyogi  
 32 National Gymnasium (1st gymnasium). Humans of all cultures have been exposed to  
 33 music and may have an innate ability to understand and respond to it (Durgesh, Ridhima,  
 34 Viveka, & Manju, 2017). Therefore, music has been emphasized as the common  
 35 language of mankind, which does not even require special learning, it enables people  
 36 to communicate smoothly whether it be through rhythm or pitch.

37 There are many factors that contribute to a musical pilgrimage sacred place.  
 38 Because music preferences directly influence the choice of destination, the analysis  
 39 should begin with the music itself. According to the Theory of Musical Equilibration  
 40 (Daniela and Bernd Willimek, 2013), musical structure directly affects emotion.



1 Therefore, I take the song "seasons" as an example to analyze the relationship between  
 2 music structure and emotion from a musicological perspective.

3 In terms of tonality, the song contains E major, G flat major, F major, and A flat  
 4 major, which are four tonalities that transform a total of eight times. The whole song is  
 5 richly layered. According to Norio Umezu (2011), different tonality represents different  
 6 colors, while this song contains glorious sapphire, brilliant gold, grassy green, and  
 7 grayish purple. The theme of the song is the seasons, the variation in tonality perfectly  
 8 represents the changing of the seasons. The tonal alternation causes the colors of the  
 9 music to switch, making this song a constant source of emotional stimulation.

10 In terms of chords, the subdominant with a major seventh chord occurs a lot in this  
 11 piece, according to Daniela and Bernd Willimek (2013), the major subdominant with a  
 12 major seventh is particularly suitable for interpreting longing emotions such as  
 13 farewells. The major subdominant can be used to express a feeling of serenity. If a  
 14 major seventh chord is added, then this major chord is given a dissonance, which  
 15 traditional harmonic theory suggests requires a resolution, meaning a search for  
 16 equilibrium. In simple terms, according to "musical equilibrium theory," the idea of  
 17 solving a musical problem can be understood as a desire to make sure things stay the  
 18 same. In other words, every time this chord occurs, the music needs to be resolved. In  
 19 the process of the music being resolved repeatedly and constantly, people are able to  
 20 gain a sense of comfort and thus become attached to the music. In this song, which was  
 21 mentioned several times by the interviewees, the richness of the tonality and the high  
 22 frequency of the subdominant with a major seventh triggered a desire to resolve the  
 23 "dissonant" intervals, while the music was resolved to obtain a sense of emotional  
 24 fulfillment. This is the explanation for people listening to the same song over and over  
 25 again, as this emotional stimulus can be felt repeatedly.

26 **Figure 10.** Partial sheet of the song "Seasons"

28  
 29  
 30 I'm not sure if she's going to have a concert in Yoyogi next, so I'll feel very  
 31 fortunate. Yoyogi is where she started. She's always singing here, it's her territory.  
 32 That's why Yoyogi is so representative, a holy place of pilgrimage.  
 33 (Howard, Male, 29, Taiwan, 15 years fan)  
 34

1 I gave myself a life goal to definitely go to Yoyogi to see a New Year's Eve concert  
2 of hers.

3 (Audi 34 Taiwan 17 years fan)  
4

5 I knew from childhood that the venue for her New Year's Eve concert had to be  
6 Yoyogi. It doesn't matter where the concert seats are, what matters is entering the  
7 venue.

8 (Luke, M, 35, Taiwan, 25 years fan)  
9

10 My deduction is that people become attached to a place because of the music.  
11 Firstly, it is the dissonant harmonies in the music that stimulate the desire for resolution.  
12 In the process of the music being resolved, people's desire to "stay the same" is fulfilled.  
13 Then, as the dissonant chords are repeated, the music is repeatedly resolved  
14 accompanied by a repetition of emotional fulfillment. Thus, the music triggers a sense  
15 of attachment. And Yoyogi is a representative location that is directly associated with  
16 Hamasaki Ayumi. At this point, the music and the singer are symbols of the topophilia<sup>2</sup>,  
17 which makes the place where the music takes place a sacred site for musical  
18 pilgrimage.  
19

20 *Concerts not replaceable by recordings: a sense of connection*  
21

### 22 Connections with like-minded people

23 At the concert we interacted with Hamasaki Ayumi, and with the surrounding  
24 audience. I think the most precious thing is the atmosphere. For her, concerts should  
25 not be replaced by recordings.....I participated in a group photo of Chinese fans. I  
26 saw fans traveling from different parts of China to gather here at Yoyogi  
27 Gymnasium. I was touched and shocked to see everyone coming together for this  
28 one moment.

29 (Liu, Male, 28, China, 9 years fan)  
30

31 When I went to the concert, I felt that I had finally found the like-minded person, I  
32 was not alone. There are so many people like me who love her so much. I follow all  
33 the fans, to move, to laugh, to express love to her. (Audi, Male, 34, Taiwan, 17 years  
34 fan)  
35

36 Concerts must not be replaced. The live atmosphere of Hamasaki Ayumi's concerts  
37 can drive my emotions, an immersive feeling. I love the feeling of being close to  
38 my idol and interacting with others who love her as much as I do. (Tutu, Male, 30,  
39 China, 19 years fan)  
40

41 The atmosphere at the concert was stunning, with all the fans shouting together.  
42 Concerts are necessary. Going to a live concert to see her sing passionately, it can  
43 also inspire me. (Nan, female, 35, China, 20 years fan)  
44

45 A concert is when we all go to a venue and enjoy the feast of sight and sound. We  
46 can yell her name from there.

47 (Howard, Male, 29, Taiwan, 15 years fan)  
48

49 When I saw so many fans taking a group photo, I suddenly felt that I'm not alone on  
50 this journey.

51 (Huahua, Female, 28, China, 15 years fan)  
52

53 In this section, the interviewees talk about one reason that concerts cannot be  
54 replaced by recordings is the desire to seek out their "community".

---

<sup>2</sup>The source of the word is Greek and implies a deep attachment to a place. This concept is cited in Bolderman, Leonieke (2018).

1 This section is the first part of the reasons given by the interviewees that concerts  
 2 cannot be replaced by recordings, and it mainly centers around the audience's desire to  
 3 find a like-mindedness as well as the demand for a sense of interaction. Emotional  
 4 experiences are brought about by the immediacy of a live concert, therefore, listening  
 5 to a recording even with perfect sound quality cannot bring about this intuitive feeling.  
 6 As an obligate grouping species, we humans not only need a sense of belonging in the  
 7 abstract, but also need to physically come together (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008; PENG,  
 8 2024). The act of attending a concert satisfies the fulfillment of belonging even if it is  
 9 temporary. Although it is not possible to stay with the so-called "like-minded" on a  
 10 permanent occasion, concerts provide an opportunity for people to sympathize with  
 11 their group in the same place on a regular basis. By the very nature of group living,  
 12 people are unable to tolerate loneliness for long periods of time. Interviewees also  
 13 mentioned this point several times: 'not feeling lonely when seeing other people like  
 14 me'. The significance of the concerts is significant for certain long-term and loyal fans.  
 15 People would sing and dance to the same beat at a concert venue, which in a way was  
 16 similar to the ritualistic sense of the community. Familiarity with the performer and  
 17 musical style (Listener-preference) led to increased movement and entrainment, while  
 18 the live performance (Concert-status) led to a significant increase in movement vigour.  
 19 Because synchronous movement can lead to prosociality (Hove and Risen, 2009;  
 20 Wiltermuth and Heath, 2009; Valdesolo et al. Rennung and Goritz, 2016; Woolhouse  
 21 et al. 2016; Dana, et al. 2019;). Reflected in this process remains social dimension.  
 22 When people complete movements in the same rhythm, their behavior also implies  
 23 finding the same breath rate and audio pitch because of the moment. In this process,  
 24 people develop the same emotions as the singer as well as other fans, thus gaining a  
 25 sense of belonging.

26 An iconic aspect of popular concerts is engaging with other audience members  
 27 through moving to the music (Dana, et al., 2019). The process of being in the same  
 28 space and doing the same thing with people who share a common purpose avoids  
 29 feelings of isolation. Human beings are social species which require safe and secure  
 30 social surroundings to survive. Satisfying social relationships are essential for mental  
 31 and physical well beings. Impaired social relationship can lead to loneliness (Mushtaq,  
 32 R., Shoib, S., Shah, T., & Mushtaq, S., 2014). People seem particularly prone to seek  
 33 social relationships when they have experienced a recent decrease in happiness (Thayer  
 34 et al., 1994; Jordi, 2021). Seeking social connections enhances happiness, which  
 35 concerts provide an opportunity for.

### 37 Connection to the Idol

38 The concert is very important, the atmosphere and the mood of the moment cannot  
 39 be brought by a recording. I think human beings are far more powerful than  
 40 machines. I can see Hamasaki Ayumi so close to me, alive in front of me. This  
 41 person she is real, she is accessible. I was also quite impressed with the New Year's  
 42 Eve countdown, with the ribbons and balloons. It was a special feeling to be in the  
 43 same place with my favorite Hamasaki Ayumi at such an important moment.  
 44 (Huahua, Female, 28, China, 15 years fan)

46 Going to a concert is about getting the sense of involvement of being in the same  
 47 space and time as Hamasaki Ayumi, an immersive experience that can only be felt  
 48 by those who have been there. I think concerts are the best way for fans to visualize  
 49 what Hamasaki is trying to express in her work.  
 50 (Koala, Male, 40, China, 22 years fan)

52 I love Ayumi Hamasaki so much that I have to see her live. You're Ayu today, I'm  
 53 Ayu today, everyone's Ayu today, you see Ayu fans dress up very nicely to imitate  
 54 her, to learn from her and to be like her.  
 55 (Luke, Male, 35, Taiwan, 25 years fan)

57 I will have a sense of anticipation and hope to interact with her and catch her eye.  
 58 (Howard, Male, 29, Taiwan, 15 years fan)

1  
2 I was counting down 15 seconds with her and the moment I synchronized with her  
3 I understood why so many people love concerts.  
4 (Audi, Male, 34, Taiwan, 17 years fan)  
5

6 Concerts must not be replaced. Because this way I can be close to my idol.  
7 (Tutu, Male, 30, China, 19 years fan)  
8

9 In this section, the fan mentions the link established with the idol in the scene.  
10 People need to compulsion to proximity (Urry & Larsen, 2011) to their idols and being  
11 in the same space as them is the psychological appeal, which is similar to pilgrimage  
12 behavior. Another internal demand of the audience is "to be seen". Even for "a brief  
13 moment in time". For example, being able to look Ayu in the eye at the concert. The  
14 process of connecting with one's idol through the eye's means being seen by someone  
15 important, while being seen by others is a basic human need. It is founded in evolution,  
16 which means that without being seen by the tribe, there is a risk of being left behind  
17 when the nomadic life of early humans demanded migration. And loneliness equals  
18 death (Shala Nicely, 2020). Overcoming loneliness has always been a life issue, and  
19 music has the exact function of bringing people together on a large scale.

20 In addition, the sense of interaction with others makes the day unique. This  
21 distinguishes it from any high-quality recording or any other conventional concert.  
22 From the visitor's perspective, the concert becomes a musical event customized  
23 exclusively for them. Moments are unforgettable and irreplaceable in terms of life  
24 experience due to the fact that they come only once. People are always looking for  
25 something unique about themselves to give new meaning to their lives. Memorable  
26 events that occur at certain moments can constitute the meaning of life. This is one of  
27 the reasons that people travel from afar to a concert time after time.  
28

### 29 Connecting with past selves: the meaning of life

30 This section is about a connection to a past self that can be created by going to a  
31 concert. It explains here why people are still deeply in touch with songs from 25 years  
32 ago.  
33

34 Hamasaki Ayumi attended my entire youth and was my initiation into Japanese  
35 pop culture.

36 (Koala, Male, 40, China, 22 years fan)

37 If she sings a song that connects and resonates with me, I will definitely cry  
38 because of the memories of my own past. I think without Hamasaki Ayumi there  
39 would be no us. It can be lonely when growing up ..... When I was a kid, I once  
40 proposed to Hamasaki Ayumi when she came to Taiwan, and it even made the  
41 newspaper. When she debuted in her first year, I was ten years old, and I was  
42 attracted to her.

43 (Luke, male, 35 years old, Taiwan, 25 years fan)

44 As a fan from overseas being able to come to Japan to support her, I have the  
45 feeling that it's a dream come true.

46 (Koala, male, 40, China, 22 years fan)

47 My parents don't support me at all when it comes to my idolizing. I went to this  
48 concert without my family's permission, I went to Japan secretly. Hamasaki  
49 Ayumi was at the top of my Life Plan List. I was thinking that I would have no  
50 regrets if I could see her in concert. When I saw her in person, I cried because I  
51 thought that she was my motivation for learning Japanese, and she was my youth.  
52 (Huahua, female, 28, China, 15 years fan)

53 When I was at the concert it felt like I had finally accomplished a list of dreams in  
54 my life. It's a great feeling to have a dream and make it come true.

55 (Audi, Male, 34, Taiwan, 17 years fan)  
56

57 This study specifically labeled the participants' 'fan age', which is how long they  
58 have liked Hamasaki. The average 'fan age' was more than 15 years, and the actual age

1 averaged 30 years. In other words, they have been into this music since they were  
 2 teenagers. There is a cascading reminiscence effect on music preferences during  
 3 adolescence. Music is to some extent intrinsically linked to personal memories  
 4 throughout one's life, and the efficacy of music in triggering vivid autobiographical  
 5 memories in everyday settings provides further impetus (Kelly, Tuomas, Barbara,  
 6 Fabien, Lizette, 2020). Music becomes part of the self-narrative, as such listening to a  
 7 song is a link to a past self.

8 In addition, people prefer music consistent with their personalities (Rentfrow &  
 9 McDonald, 2010; Durgesh, Ridhima, Viveka, & Manju, 2017). People's preferred  
 10 music is actually on a certain level about identifying with their personalities. The  
 11 audience is outwardly talking about identifying with Hamasaki Ayumi and her music,  
 12 but the actual kernel is recognizing themselves in turn through Hamasaki Ayumi's  
 13 music. For example, many of the interviewees repeatedly mentioned that "she gives me  
 14 power," which is a wishful thinking on the part of the audience. The interviewees,  
 15 through their own understanding and identification with the song, gave it additional  
 16 meaning, such as "courage" or "strength". Veltri (2010) argued that although research  
 17 has examined music from many different angles, there is a lack of literature addressing  
 18 the influence of personality on music listening preferences. Because of the  
 19 omnipresence of music, the amount of time and money spent in consuming music, and  
 20 its role in communicating one's personal image, it deserves to be well studied in  
 21 conjunction with personality and individual preferences (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003).  
 22 Regardless, Hamasaki Ayumi did fulfill the audience's emotional desire in a way.  
 23 Rather than idols, the interviewees liked their inner selves. The idol is a medium to  
 24 externalize their inner selves.

### 25 26 *Singer's 'Sacrifice'*

27  
28 Recordings can't compare to the explosive power and random emotions of a singer  
 29 in a concert. Even if the singer's live singing may be flawed, it is a real feeling.  
 30 (Siyecao, Male, 30, China, 1 year fan)

31  
32 There will be a real orchestra accompanying her live, so I can feel the details of  
 33 the sound and hear her singing as hard as she can.  
 34 (Audi, Male, 34 Taiwan, 17 years fan)

35  
36 I can feel the real emotion as well as the rendering power of the live performance.  
 37 The concert is very necessary, it's like her graduation work for a year. (Chen teng,  
 38 M, 37, Taiwan, 20 years fan)

39  
40 We all want to go to a concert in which our favorite stars sing for life. This is  
 41 something that can't be recorded with technology.  
 42 (Howard, Male, 29, Taiwan 15 years fan)

43  
44 The above is to illustrate that the audience was concerned about the details of the  
 45 live performance, which were characterized by randomness, such as the sound effects  
 46 and the singer's performance. One of the interviewees mentioned that even though the  
 47 live performance was not as perfect as the recording, this imperfection was what made  
 48 it feel "real". In other words, the sense of realness is one of the motivations for going  
 49 to the concerts. People pay a lot of money for airfare and concert tickets in exchange  
 50 for the chance to see a singer perform their best. As one of the previous interviewees  
 51 said, "Hamasaki Ayumi is real".

52 Interviewees referred to the singer's live emotional expression and the "sense of  
 53 sacrifice". Some interviewees mentioned the phenomenon of "lip-synch" at concerts in  
 54 some regions. However, Hamasaki Ayumi sings for real at all her concerts. This means  
 55 that the sound is not always stable and perfect. But this is exactly what the audience  
 56 needs for "realness". It is precisely this cracked voice that makes the audience feel that  
 57 she is giving her life to sing. Therefore, the very thing of her singing the song has a  
 58 sense of sanctity.

1 *Representative symbol*

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**Figure 11.**



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Source: <https://www.instagram.com/a.you?igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==>

According to the above picture, the figure has been used in many of Hamasaki's concerts as well as in her related products. It has become a symbol for people to recognize Hamasaki Ayumi and the community. The symbol allows people to identify each other's groups immediately. This is also one of the elements of the pilgrimage.

### *Self-sacrifice*

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A usual pilgrimage is defined as people travelling on a journey to so-called heaven, such as temples and high mountains. During this time, many pilgrims, died due to hunger, illness, and cold (Xie, 2016). Pilgrimage involves self-sacrifice. The music pilgrimage is not that serious, but all of the interviewees said that the journey was physically tiring, and the flights were expensive because it was the last day of the year. But in the process, they felt happiness and they thought they were doing something great. It's a self-identity and people are able to get positive emotional feedback, so they do it over and over again.

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Flying in for a two- or three-day trip must be tough. I have to go to the airport early in the morning. But when I can really feel her presence, it's really worth it. I was most impressed when I saw a man in a wheelchair at the concert. I felt that he wanted to hear his idol sing live more than I probably did. I think it might be Ayu's music that gave him hope and courage to face life.

(Audi, Male, 34, Taiwan, 17 years fan)

30

31

32

33

I wouldn't go to a concert across the country for anyone but Hamasaki Ayumi. Only she is worth it.

(Huahua, Female, 28, China, 15 years fan)

34

35

36

I think the moment I saw her; it was worth it. I am willing to travel thousands of miles for her. (Howard, Male, 29, Taiwan, 15 years fan)

37

38

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Traveling was hard because there was a lot of preparation. I didn't know all the places in Japan after all, and I hadn't been there before.

(Hung, Male, 31, Taiwan, 15 years fan)

41

42

43

Of course, it can be tiring to go to a concert abroad, but it's all worth it.

(Tutu, male, 30, China, 19 years fan)

44

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The interviewees above mentioned that the high amount of money and physical effort spent on traveling to concerts abroad is "worth it" because it is the process of traveling to the ideal. The physical is hard work, but the mental is fulfilling. In a way, the time and energy spent is a proof that one is passionate enough. Since all of the

1 interviewees traveled to Japan from overseas to attend Hamasaki Ayumi's concerts,  
 2 they faced many trials and obstacles. For example, language barriers while traveling,  
 3 the lottery system for concert tickets, complicated visa procedures required for some  
 4 countries, and high-value air tickets purchased on a temporary basis. It is not until all  
 5 of these challenges are overcome that this "life list" can be accomplished. Therefore,  
 6 from the point of view of the series of difficulties faced by overseas tourists, this can  
 7 indeed be called a musical pilgrimage. For "suffering" itself is one of the elements of  
 8 pilgrimage.  
 9

## 10 Conclusion

13 As the tonality transforms, the emotions of people would switch with it. Hamasaki  
 14 Ayumi's song verifies the different emotional responses to different chords and  
 15 tonalities as mentioned in the theory of musical equilibration. It states that when a  
 16 dissonant chord appears, people's sense of anticipation of the next movement of a song  
 17 will be affected, at which point they will want the music to achieve a sense of  
 18 equilibrium and harmony. Often the end of the song comes back to the dominant note,  
 19 creating mood swings before the sense of harmony created by the dominant note comes  
 20 is what makes a song so appealing. The popularity of Hamasaki Ayumi's songs over  
 21 the years is closely related to the structure of her music.

22 Live music is not replaceable by recordings, even if the recording technology is  
 23 very advanced. Because live performances bring a sense of connection with like-  
 24 minded people, idols, and past selves. This sense of connection is the original  
 25 motivation for overcoming the difficulties of traveling to a concert in a foreign country.  
 26 In addition, the imperfect sound quality of the scene is part of what the audience is  
 27 searching for, because imperfection represents a sense of the real and a "spirit of self-  
 28 sacrifice". The act of traveling to a foreign land for an idol can be rewarded with a sense  
 29 of satisfaction after giving time and effort. The process of accomplishing an ideal is  
 30 also a process of self-identification, which proves that it is great to devote oneself to  
 31 something that one loves. The self-identity gained from this process is the fundamental  
 32 reason for running to idols. Therefore, rather than being a pilgrimage goal for tourists,  
 33 Hamasaki Ayumi provides an opportunity for people to reach a deep self-identity. In  
 34 any case, people need such a spiritual monument.

35 In conclusion, the concerts are irreplaceable in the foreseeable future. However,  
 36 with the popularization of the Internet, it is difficult to replicate the 25-year "Hamasaki  
 37 Ayumi effect". Nevertheless, the psychological and emotional demands of the audience  
 38 as well as the tonal characteristics of the songs themselves reflected in these concerts  
 39 represent a valuable reference for the tourism and music related industries.  
 40

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