

The Music Business and Music Production Companies in Japan

In Japan, a company that is engaged in the management of artists, such as musicians or songwriters, as well as the general production of music is referred to as a 'production'. This term probably sounds strange to a foreign company, and it could cause confusion. But it literally means 'music-production company'. We shorten it for simplicity.

This might be unique to Japan, but 'productions' play a wide range of roles in our music industry. For instance, they may undertake the roles that in Europe or the USA would fall to a producer, business manager, personal manager and agent. In some cases, they also own music-publishing companies or master-production companies and operate their own independent labels.

'Productions' provide crucial support for their artists. They often hold various rights of the acts they manage, such as neighbouring rights and rights of publicity. In addition, they negotiate on behalf of artists when licensing to record labels, publishers, distributors and merchandisers. 'Productions' may also collaborate with their artists in the general creation process, as a producer, to help them build the foundations for their career.

FMPJ's Role in Japan

The FMPJ (the Federation of Music Producers Japan) currently has around 230 'productions' as member companies. It is approved by the Agency for Cultural Affairs (an extra-ministerial bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Education) as an incorporated association that represents various rights for artists, such as the neighbouring rights of performers. Through the CPRA (Center for Performers' Rights Administration), in whose operation FMPJ participates, it receives royalties due under neighbouring rights (royalties for rental phonograms, secondary-use fees for commercial phonograms, compensation for private sound recordings and compensation for private visual recordings) and distributes them to each 'production'.

In Japan, there are two associations of which 'productions' can become members, and one of them is the FMPJ. There is also an association called JASRAC (the Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers), which manages music copyrights. In addition to those associations, there are other music-oriented associations in Japan such as the RIAJ (Recording Industry Association of Japan), an association of record companies; the MPA (Music Publishers Association of Japan), an association of music-publishing companies; and the A.C.P.C. (All Japan Concert Tour Promoter's Conference), an association of concert promoters. This may seem unusual to overseas artists and management companies, but having segmentalised associations within the music industry enables us to provide targeted support to each artist according to their needs or situation.

The FMPJ proudly represents the largest number of member companies and artists (over 7,000 of them), who entrust us with their rights. These include world-renowned performers such as Ryuichi Sakamoto as well as other emerging J-pop or J-rock acts.

■ Artists who belong to the affiliated companies include ■

Ryuichi Sakamoto / POLYSICS / MUCC / GUITAR WOLF / TOWA TEI / CORNELIUS / MIGHTY CROWN / Hiromi Uehara / Joe Hisaishi / Southern All Stars / Mr Children / L'Arc-en-Ciel / Spitz / BUMP OF CHICKEN / m-flo / B'z / HOTEI / MONGOL800 and more

Major Activities of FMPJ

In the fiscal year 2008, the FMPJ distributed fees totalling ¥2.3 billion (approx. US\$25.7 million) to member companies and artists who had delegated their rights to us. This breaks down as:

¥792 million (approx. US\$8.8 million) in royalties for rental phonograms

¥1,404 million (approx. US\$15.6 million) in secondary-use fees for commercial phonograms

¥77 million (approx. US\$855,555) in compensation for private sound recordings

¥39 million (approx. US\$43,333) in compensation for private visual recordings

The FMPJ's role goes far beyond the handing of royalties for neighbouring rights. It also proactively contributes to the whole music industry by carrying out the following activities:

- Running educational campaigns aimed at the general public, highlighting the importance of copyrights
- Circulating a free magazine
- Operating a website (www.musicism.jp) that enables artists and producers to share information
- Offering human-resources development, with an eye towards future generations of the music industry
- Running proactive social-action programs, such as providing support during natural disasters
- Conducting test demonstrations of the digital archiving of audio and visual content
- Conducting continuous research on the production of TV programmes and how best to handle the related rights of artists



The FMPJ's board includes representatives of key member companies, and meets to discuss policies for its activities.



The FMPJ also organises an annual live event; this had been titled LIVE MUSIC ism, but will relaunch with exciting improved features as NEXUS in November 2009.



Over 1,000 music-industry professionals gather at our New Year party every January.

Message from the President

The history of popular music in Japan began with the imitation of American and European music. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the Japanese eagerly absorbed jazz and rock music; yet despite millions of songs bearing a heavy Western influence, the language barrier meant that, aside from some rare cases, none of this music spread outside of Japan.

It was Yellow Magic Orchestra (YMO) who opened the door to the world. Their music was basically fusion, but it was unique in that it used computers, which had not been done in Japan before; as such, they were credited with the creation of the technopop genre. They released an album in Europe and North America in 1979, and hit the road to tour those countries. Their music was largely instrumental, but the buzzword “TO-KI-O”, which was repeated in one song, helped change the West’s perception of Japan. Rather than dusty images of Mount Fuji and samurai, Japan came to stand for something cool and cutting-edge. YMO became the first Japanese act to break the language barrier – not only with their music, but also their fashion, which received kudos from music neophiliacs and then spread to regular music lovers. As recording technology became more advanced through the '80s and '90s, more and more Japanese artists applied their originality, natural dexterity and diligence in study to what we call ‘international music’.

In the '90s, manga and anime – which were early exports among Japanese pop culture – presented a great opportunity to draw attention to Japanese music. Japanese TV programmes were also broadcast in various countries, and remakes and live-action versions of Japanese anime were produced in Hollywood. Anime theme songs gained worldwide attention through the internet, which at that time was rapidly developing.

In the 2000s, Japanese music has continued to develop, in collaboration with not only anime, but also fashion and design. There are many foreign

websites whose users are eager to exchange information about Japanese culture, and the number of overseas exhibitions and music conferences featuring Japanese culture and music in which we are asked to be involved is rapidly growing. These phenomena made us realise that modern Japanese music is now mature enough to proactively approach overseas markets; and in order to respond to demand from overseas businesses, we are determined to organise more live showcases and distribute Japanese music content more aggressively.

In 2009, despite the global recession, the Japanese music market has remained profitable. This is largely because proper copyright-protected music distribution has been established on mobile phones, known as ‘Chaku-uta’ (Real Tones). In this regard, as well, the Japanese innate affinity for technology has been effectively employed.

The FMPJ is an association consisting of the music-production companies and creators who have been shaping Japan’s culture of popular music and supporting the Japanese music industry on a daily basis. We aim to further promote Japanese music around the world, creating new opportunities to showcase this talent. We are committed to this goal and will continue to be proactive to achieve it. We would appreciate your support and partnership for the success of the music industry as a whole.



Masahiro Oishi
President