

LAD



FEEL THE VIBES

## NIPPON PROJECT SPECIAL EDITION

Written by Christine S.  
Photos Courtesy of Pony Canyon



Don't worry about the future of Japan's "boy bands", if you've been wondering just where Japan's boy/girl bands have been going, look no further. Hip hop dance units such as Lead have made their way into mainstream media seemingly paving a way for a new generation.

Looking at the vast majority of boy/girl bands in Japan appearing after 2000, taste in mainstream society has turned to cute boys and girls singing catchy karaoke -style tunes (more so than before) that sell and often make Oricon Chart rankings (equivalent to the Billboards). When you think of Japan's music industry and its ability to produce legions of pop groups, one may wonder just where the good ones have gone. Well like most, they're all underground, under-rated and/or under promoted. After all, Japan is known for its cute idols, cute groups and catchy tunes, but when it comes to hip hop (or "hip pop") and R&B, the only popular

names include ZEEBRA, KREVA, Crystal Kay, m-flo, A.I. and Namie Amuro who crossed over from "Pop Queen" to the "Queen of Hip-Pop".

Most dancers who grow up with the passion for dancing and possess the skill to do so, progress to become professional dancers for major artists. Hardly ever do you get a whole crew to become a "boy band", especially in Japan. However, some management companies in Japan have managed to take young aspiring artists, train them and then send them off to the appropriate labels resulting in groups like w-inds., FLAME and Lead (also referred to as wFL). No, Lead isn't your average "boy band", they are a group of young guys who trained to become what they wanted to be without losing sight or falling into the trap of the typical "boy band" stereotype.

***Kickin' it old school*** – is not something you hear everyday in the current Japanese music scene. Of course you will always have the J-“Pop” artists, but when it comes to hip hop dance units in Japan, Lead is “kickin’ it old school” and bringing it back. They aren’t your average dance crew; they sing, rap and are b-boys. The group is known for their hip-hop and break dancing moves making them one of the few “boy bands” in Japan’s mainstream music scene that are truly hip-hop.

Every group has its roots, and while some would like to say that they aren't really a dance crew, their roots are hip hop and along the way pop played a role in melding them into their current form.

Starting off at the average age of 14, Hiroki Nakadai, Shinya Taniuchi and Akira Kagimoto all shared the same passion when they met *Caless Vocal and Dance School* in Osaka,

while Keita Furuya was back home in Fukuoka doing his thing to get into the industry. Their inspirations for becoming what they are today stem from both Japanese and American artist alike. Japanese 90's artist, DA PUMP, has been an inspiration for the group since they formed (they are Lead's "senpai" (older brother); also Nujabes, a hip hop Japanese producer/DJ. Some American inspirations range from Shawn Desman to Ne-Yo to Justin Timberlake.

Some fans seem to think they are one of the more under rated groups in Japan. They're not a group formed by a company for mere show and looks. Lead is a talented group of guys who started out just like any dance crew. Dance training at a young age, forming their own crew and performing wherever they can. They were't put together randomly from different parts of the country. They were brought together through their love of dance and singing.

The original crew, ryhmix (later changed to "flow"), was founded in March 2002 by Hiroki, Shinya and Akira. They performed on the streets of Shiroten in Osaka. During that time Keita Furuya (from Fukuoka) auditioned and won the Kyushu Okinawa Starlight Audition held on April 13, 2002. Hearing of his win, flow tracked Keita down and he officially joined flow on May 22, 2002. After his joining they changed their name to Lead (aka the 4 MCs). The name change was made "*in hopes to become a leading group of the age.*"

Their first live together as Lead, was held at Osaka Castle Park.

In front of 7,000 spectators and they presented the crowd with not only their dancing, but singing and rapping as well, making their first street live a great success. This paved an opportunity for the group, to become the opening act for already established group, w-inds., in their 2002 ~1st Message~ Tour in front of 120,000 people. This surprised the group tremendously as it was their first time in front of a huge audience.

After such a succesful tour, they released their debut single, "Manatsu no Magic" (Midsummer's Magic) and won the award for "Best newcomer" at the 44th Japan Record Awards in December of 2002. Their second single, "Show me the way" outsold their first single, selling 38,000 copies and charting in at #7 on Oricon Charts. From then on the group has released at a steady flow resulting in 12 more singles that charted in the top 20 on Oricon. Their singles have been used as theme songs for several shows including, Shounen Chample (a hip hop dance show), Mezashi TV, the movie "Deep Love ~Ayu's Story~" and many others. Their first album, "Life on da beat", was a mere introduction into what was to come.

A mixture of pop, hip hop, electronica, funk, mixed in with a bit of (American) '70's flavor and a tad bit of rock, this was a group well on their way to becoming the future of hip pop.

To date, the group has released 14 singles (2002-2008) and five albums (2003-2008) including a "**Singles Collection**" (09.14.2007) released only in Taiwan, reaching #1 on

Lead CD Single Release Event, "STAND UP!" Live





Hiroki Nakaddi

1985.07.26, AB  
Osaka, Japan



Akira Nagimoto

1988.08.20, O  
Nara, Japan



Shinya Taniguchi

1987.09.23, A  
Osaka, Japan

Keita Furuya

1988.06.13, A  
Fukuoka, Japan



on the country's charts. "Summer Madness" (2006) sent them south of Japan, to film the promotional video in Saipan.

The twelfth single, "Drive Alive" gained them massive attention from overseas fans (old and new alike), as the song was catchy and had an image of maturity mixed in. They appeared on Yahoo! Live Talk in a "Dream Collaboration" to promote this single with another group. Their thirteenth single, "Umi" (Ocean), has a Chinese (Beijing) version which they sang at their Taiwan live in October 2007. Lead marked their way into Taiwan charts in 2005 with their release of "Virgin Blue" (a remake of Japanese pop artist SALLY's 1985 song) in early 2006. This opened the way for an opportunity the group had been waiting a long time for: to perform overseas.

Following in the footsteps of most Japanese artists, they held their first overseas live in Taipei, Taiwan. On September 25, 2007, Lead was greeted by 1500 fans at their first one-man live held in Taipei's main hall. On September 23rd (prior to their arrival in Taipei), 500 fans waited for them at Taipei International Airport on and greeted Shinya with a "Happy Birthday". Turning 20, he stated, "*It's different to celebrate your birthday overseas, but I'm really happy*". On the day of the live, they presented Shinya with a cake, making it a birthday he wouldn't forget.

The group mentioned that they experienced something different from Japan. Leader of the group, Hiroki, stated that "*the feeling here is different from Japan, it's more loud.*" For Akira, this would be his first time visiting his mother's native country, Akira hoped that the audience could feel the message of their songs. While for Keita, his was a different feeling, "*It's not something every 19 year old can experience and for t*

*hat I'm grateful*", he said. It was an exciting experience for all of them.

Since early on, their songs have had some English phrases (like all Japanese artists) and somewhat risqué lyrics for boys of such a young age. Songs such as "Night Deluxe" and "Extreme Girl" from their second album, "Brand New Era" (08.25.2004) raised eyebrows. The third album, "Lead! Heat! Beat!" (08.10.2005) was to be the beginning of their transition into their fourth album.

The fourth album, *[4]*, was titled so because it was their fourth album, fourth year together and was dedicated to the fans, the concept being that if you rearranged the letters and you'd get, "*For U*". The group's music was gradually changing and maturing. Lyrics were getting more risqué, the beats were following that of a more western style, and dance moves were becoming more provocative. The group was now showing more sex appeal and appealing to a broader audience other than the teenage-girl. Not just young girls, but young boys look up to Lead when it comes to dancing. They are b-boys incorporating popping, and old school locking in their dance, rarely seen in Japan's boy band industry.

It's a new year for them and they have certainly stepped up to a style that might be nostalgic to music lovers of the nineties. This year proves to be the year where we can experience what Lead is *really* about.

Going back to their old school hip hop roots, their recent single, "STAND UP!" (02.05.2008) is written by the members themselves and seems to date back to American hip hop in the early nineties (this single is also the first tie-in they have with an anime, being the ending theme to *Katekyō Hitman REBORN!*). Having writ

Lead UPTURN 2007 ~B.W.R.~ Live Tour (Taipei, Taiwan)



*"It's different to celebrate your  
birthday overseas, but I'm really happy"*



ten the lyrics and composing the melody proved to be a challenging task for them, but has been in the works for some time (since 2007). This single seemed to center on what they wanted to do most and something that represented them as *Lead*. Beats such as the one's used in the song are common among hip hop artists all over the world; but from a "boy band" in Japan? Hardly. Take your old school beats and mix it with some Japanese flavor because

the 4 MCs are bringing it old school.

The bus doesn't stop there. Take a listen to their latest songs on their new album, "*Feel the Vibes*" (03.15.2008). It's been a year and seven months since the group released a full length album. The fifth album by the group is said to be their first "*real*" album. Some may ask "why?" when they have released previous albums, but this album seems a bit more personal. The members were involved

in the process of making this album. They thought of various ideas for the album, what they wanted, and the feelings they wanted to convey.

Some of the toughest parts of creating the album revolved around how they could improve certain songs. Shinya seems to have had the most challenging task as he co-wrote a few songs (lyrically) on the album (along with Akira and DJ Taku). The album also has special guests from America, *The Substitute Teachers*, a hip hop group



Lead CD Album Release Event, 'Feel the Vibes'

hailing from California. The album itself shows a strong influence in R&B and hip hop. Adding some new texture to the group; they worked with LL Brothers for the first time. The change in style required a lot of study. Each member has their "own" song (more like dominant singer) and includes a mixture of R&B, hip hop, electronica and a tad bit of pop/rock. Look forward to upcoming releases as the guys plan on writing more of their own music.

To celebrate their newest single and album, the group held two release events. The first event "*STAND UP!*" was held in Kawasaki on February 8, 2008. Three-thousand fans waited for the group

as they performed their new single and some previous singles. They also held a hand-shake event, in which 3,500 lucky fans were able to meet and shake hands with the members (a special coupon was needed to attend the event, available only in the limited edition of the single). Needless to say they finished in three and half hours. Some fans even cried after shaking hands with the group.

The second release event was the "*Feel the Vibes*" event, which was held on March 15, 2008 at Yoyogi Park. The outside arena filled with three-thousand fans, who patiently awaited for the group as they performed songs including "*Drive Alive*", "*Umi*" and "*STAND UP!*" from

the new album and old singles such as "*Night Deluxe*". The event that day was cloudy but this didn't stop them. The group itself was determined to perform in any condition. Even Hiroki, who was getting over a cold was unfazed.

Not only are they accomplished artists, but they've appeared in several movies and dramas. The group itself starred in two movies, "*Baoutaoshi*" (2003) and "*Kamachi*" (2004). In 2004, Keita starred in the TV Drama and Movie, "*Deep Love ~Ayu no Monogatari~*" (Ayu's story) (2004). Their seventh single "*Tenohira wo taiyo ni*" (Palm to the sun) was a double A-side single, with "*Delight*" as the opening theme to

the drama. Akira starred in the movie, “*Tenshi ga kureta mono*” (A gift from an Angel) (2007).

Starting in 2007 they appeared in various drama's on Vision Cast which is only viewable by cell phone in Japan. Hiroki, Shinya and Akira all starred in “*Natsu owaranai!?*” (It doesn't end in Summer!), while Keita starred in “*Kanojo to boku to toshokan*” (“She, the library, and I”; which also starred Akira) and “*FLOWERS Jyunketsu no Yuri*” (FLOWERS- The Lily of

Purity) and Shinya in “*Toy Fireworks*”. Since starting their career, they appeared in various shows as guests as well as having their own shows. The first show they appeared on was an Osaka TV show, “*DOYAH*” (2003-2005) which features various celebrities as well as other artists. From 2003-2005 they've appeared in *PikaPuri*, *XEBEC Online* and *Factory Generation*; a show that featured Vision Factory artists. After three years, the group had their

very own show, *Lead Generation*, which only aired for one season. They are also frequent guests on the TV show *Make on the Holiday (M-ON)*, and was offered a mini corner on the show called “*Bura-lead*” in 2006.

This year proves to be a breaking point for them as they seem busier than ever. With the release of a single and an album in a month's time; release events, their annual fan club event. Last year they did a collaboration concert with fellow manage



Lead CD Album Release Event, ‘Feel the Vibes’

ment artist, *FLAME* called “**BIGUP! LIVE**”. This year's fanclub event included five shows in three days with *FLAME* at the end of April called “*FLAME & Lead Bigup Live*” during Golden week. They also participated in the “*One + Love World Down Syndrome Day*” event held on March 20, 2008 in Osaka; along with other musical guests and dance crews for a street live performance. Many organizations around the world participate in this event to raise public awareness of Down Syndrome. Right now, the group is preparing for their summer tour, “*Upturn 2008*”, which will start in early August and will show in five cities.

In October 2007, Lead started their own video blog. The blog shows snippets of the group's daily activities to their fans. In some cases they show behind the scenes of their work and private lives. They even help the fans prepare for their lives by showing them how to do dance moves that the group asks the fans to participate in during the live itself. Fans can leave comments as well, showing that interaction with their fans is important to them. □

As they start off their year with a bang, we were able to catch up with the guys for a one on one.

**Please introduce yourselves.**

**We are Hiroki, Akira and Shinya from Osaka, and Keita is from Fukuoka. The average age is around 20.**

**When and how did you first become interested in music/dancing?**

**Keita:** When I was in my 4th year in elementary school. Da Pump is one of my inspirations and that's when I started dancing.

**Akira:** I've always wanted to be in entertainment world, and so I started going to dance school and would commute back and forth when I was in elementary and junior high school.

**Shinya:** When I was in elementary school, my little sister was going to dance school and I used to go with her, and then I started to want to dance as well.

**Hiroki:** My mother was always interested in the entertainment world, and she left it to me, so needless to say that's when I started going to dance school.

**What/who are your musical/dance influences? What is your favorite style of dance?**

**Keita:** Da Pump. We started off hip hop, so its hip hop.

**Your formation as a group is still a bit un-clear, can you explain how LEAD came to be?**

**Hiroki:** Well Shinya, Akira and myself went to the same dance school, we even formed our own crew and did street performances. Keita had won an audition and was chosen



for our group, and that's how we were formed.

**Who came up with the name LEAD? What does it mean?**

**Akira:** Well at the time, the four of us were thinking of a name and we wanted to be a leading group of the age, and we thought that, that would be the perfect name, so we chose Lead.

**You toured with w-inds. before LEAD's debut, what was that like?**

**Shinya:** I was so surprised, because we were in front of 10,000's of people. At first I was so nervous that I couldn't even look forward.

**When it was announced that you would debut how did you feel?**

**Hiroki:** Well it was decided after only being together for a month, so it was like a dream.

**What were your feelings after that first single/album release?**

**Hiroki:** We all went out and bought the CD's.

**You released a Taiwan Singles Collection, can you describe your feelings/thoughts when hearing that it made #1 on Taiwan charts?**

**Akira:** I thought, "I love Taiwan!"

**You also sang in Mandarin, was it harder to convey the songs in a different language?**



**Keita:** Well even though its not our native language, I thought that they can still understand our songs regardless.

**Speaking of singles, your newest single, Stand Up, I see you guys wrote the lyrics for it. What were your thoughts on writing?**

**Shinya:** They just kinda came out for during event and concert.

**Were you the one's who approached this idea?**

**Akira:** Yeah

**What was the creative process behind this single?  
(design, concept, production)**

**Hiroki:** To stand up on our feet, be independent and be poppy.

**Did you have someone in mind to write the song?**

**Shinya & Akira:** The members, fans and our friends.

**Did you have a say in the composition of the song or did you write the lyrics first then music?**

**Keita:** It was from the music first.

**What was the hardest part in doing this single?**

**Keita:** We made sure tha none of us overlapped each other.

**Did you also choreograph the dance to this song as well?**

**Keita:** Yeah, recently we've been doing it ourselves.

*After getting a taste of being a part of a composing team, is this something you all plan on doing in the future? How about as solo artists?*

**Hiroki:** We do plan on continuing writing and making our own songs. We've never even thought about doing solo work.

*Can we expect any more future releases with LEAD as a composer as well as the lyricist?*

**Akira:** We're gonna do our best!

<Taiwan Concert 2007/ Performing outside of Japan>

*How do you prepare yourselves before each live during the tour?*

**Shinya:** We usually think of a concept first.

*Are there any easy or hard parts when on tour?*

**Hiroki:** Watching our [physical] conditions.

*What is the happiest memory you have being on tour?*

**Keita:** When were in the middle of the doing the tour.

*What was/is the most challenging thing you've had being on tour?*

**Akira:** That the hard things are also the fun things.

*When you were told about doing a live in Taiwan, how did you feel?*

**Hiroki:** We finally made it! Taiwan here we come!!

*Did you do anything different in terms of preparation for this live?*

**Akira:** Singing in Mandarin.

*How different is the atmosphere from Japan and Taiwan?*

**Shinya:** Taiwan has such an exciting image.

*Are the fans (the audience) different from your fans in Japan? If so, how are they different?*

**Keita:** The Taiwan fans are more straight forward, they're so enthusiastic and thankful.

*This question is for Shinya, were you surprised when fans greeted*

*Knowing that many artists have done overseas lives, do you feel your future will follow the same path?*

**Keita:** If you call for us, we will be happy to go.

*If not/so, can you please share your thoughts on this?*

**Akira:** No matter the time or place I would love to go.



*you on your birthday?*

**Shinya:** I was deeply moved by it.

*Were you surprised that you have many fans in Taiwan?*

**Shinya:** I was pretty amazed by it and I'm thankful for it.

*Did you guys get to do any sightseeing in Taiwan? Visit any famous places? Eat authentic Taiwanese food?*

**Keita:** We went out to the night markets. Had some "shouronpau" and went to a Ma po noodle shop.

*Were you easily recognized?*

**Hiroki:** Where ever we went we were surrounded by our loving fans.

*You have many fans outside of Asia, where would you like to go next?*

**Hiroki:** We are all so inexperienced so we would like to go to many different places.

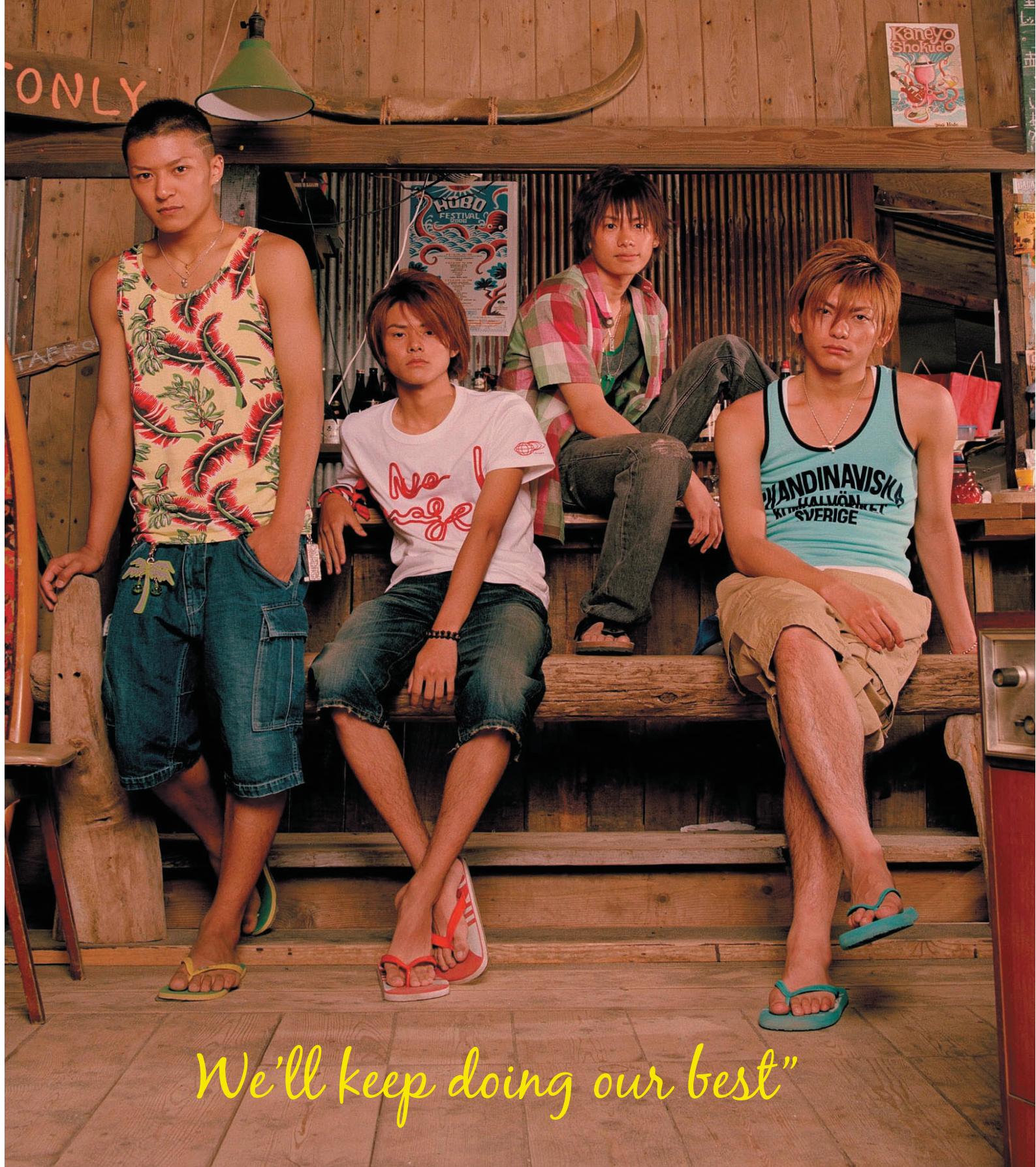
*There are many Japanese artists that have come to America and Europe, would LEAD be interested in breaking outside of Asia and coming to America and Europe?*

**Shinya:** Of course! We're going to do our best!

*Please give a message to all your overseas fans.*

**Hiroki:** There are so many challenges and various things we'd like to do. Please continue to support us! (continued on the next page)

*"I'm looking forward to the day that  
I'll be able to meet you all."*



*We'll keep doing our best"*

“STAND UP!” CD Release event  
&  
“Feel The Vibes” CD Release event  
(February & March 2008)



# AVAILABLE NOW!!

## ANNA TSUCHIYA



SEDUCING THE WORLD,  
ONE SONG AT A TIME

NIPPON PROJECT SPECIAL EDITION

INTERVIEW & ARTICLE BY: CHRISTINE SUNGA  
EDITOR: RIN

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AVEX ENTERTAINMENT, INC

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group

MAD PRAY  
RECORDS

# NIPPON PROJECT PON-UP



Pony Canyon

## Drive Alive

Regular Edition (CD)  
PCCA-02430 1,260yen  
release: 2007.03.14

M-1 Drive Alive  
M-2 GET DIZZY  
M-3 Love&Everything  
M-4 Drive Alive (instru)



The 12th installment from the group, this single is diverse in the musical sense. The song “Drive Alive” fuses electronic rock and pop beats that make this song great when heard live. The title might seem a bit off, but it’s a very “I won’t give up no matter what people tell” me song. It will get you going no matter what, and some people might think of a car commercial when they hear this song (not just cause of the title but it can resemble that feeling in the music itself). It uses a lot of electronic beats and synthesizers. “Get Dizzy” is your hip “poppy” song, it would not be a single by the group if they weren’t rapping and you didn’t hear the DJ scratches embedded in the song. It’s a catchy, happy and poppy tune that you’ll find yourself singing or whistling to it. The third track, “Love & Everything” is the slowest song of the single, it’s not a ballad but more of a track made for a concert. It’s very simple and easy going, lyrically and musically. Overall this single is a hip pop type single with electro thrown in. A bonus is the DVD, with the PV making and offshoot.



Limited Edition (CD+DVD)

PCCA-02429 1,575yen  
release: 2007.03.14

M-1 Drive Alive  
M-2 GET DIZZY  
M-3 Love&Everything  
M-4 Drive Alive (instru)

DVD: PV, Offshoot, Making

## Umi

The second single that is made for the summer time love (Summer Madness was the first). This song should appease a majority of people who are open to all sorts of music. “Umi” (Sea) starts off with a little bit of that rock flavor because it fuses rock and rap then goes into a reggae tone with a bit of that jazz bass thrown in. It’s a fuse of different styles thrown into a blender. It’s a song that is great to listen to because its soothing (musically). “Sora no Kanata e” (Beyond the sky), you almost think its some mellow rock song then goes into a gospel type vocal via a cappella-ish in the beginning. The song is pretty mellow, its really

made to be the ending song for a concert. The vocals on this track and “Umi” are very nice to listen to and very pleasing. “Kimi wa nani ka ga dekiru” (What can you do?), is your typical J-Pop song. If the J-Pop fans of boy bands heard this song, they probably would like it as it fits into the whole typical pop group category. The CD also comes with a bonus DVD that includes the PV, making and offshoot.



CD+DVD  
PCCA-02531 1,575yen  
release: 2007.07.18

Limited Edition  
(CD+DVD)  
PCCA-02609 1,575yen  
release: 2008.02.06

Regular Edition (CD)  
PCCA-02610 1,260yen  
release: 2008.02.06  
\*1/5 photos incl.

M-1 STANDUP!  
M-2 Load  
M-3 Sleepin' Flower  
M-4 STANDUP! (instru)

DVD: PV, Offshoot



## STAND UP!

The latest single from Lead, is written by the guys themselves and has a very old school flavor to it. If you lived and liked the 1990’s then you’d appreciate this song as it is old school in every sense of the way. The PV for the song is very environmental conscious as well, as the theme revolved around corn (bio-fuel). The song is also is their first anime tie-in; it is the ending theme song to the anime, *Katekyō Hitman REBORN!* The second track, “Load” is a mellow rock track, there is rap so it does end up being a rock/hip hop-ish type song. The last song, “Sleepin’ Flower” is a the first of its kind for the group. It is a song only sung by Keita and is a slow pop song. Overall this single is very diverse and if you’re a lover of 90’s American music and Japanese pop music, one would definitely enjoy the single as it has a little bit of both.

# Feel the Vibes

This album is tied for first place in terms of "Which one of the Lead albums is best?". It really depends on taste. This album has all the elements of hip hop, R&B and pop. *The Substitute Teachers*, a hip hop group hailing from California are guests in this album and do the first and last tracks on the album. You can hear the strong influence of hip hop and R&B in tracks such as "Baby what turns you on", "Tani☆Rap", "STAND UP!", "Taisetsuna mono" (My treasure), "Fall in Love" and "Thanks for...". Each member has their "own" song on the album, Shinya's "Tani☆Rap" (Taniuchi is his last name), Akira's "Wicked Wicked SUMMER PARTY", Hiroki's "Tasogare Gradation" (Twilight Gradation), and Keita's "Sleepin' Flower". Shinya's song is pure old school hip hop, Akira has the acoustic pop rock sound (very summer style song), Hiroki's gone technologic and Keita's is your J-Pop ballad song. "TOKIO NIGHT" is a favorite among fans as the song very popish. Recommended tracks: *Taisetsuna mono*, for the all the lovey dovey mushy people out there. *Baby what turns you on* and *Fall in Love*, for all the hip hop, R&B dancers who want to get down and everything else for everyone.

M-1 THE VIBES

M-2 Baby what turns you on

M-3 TOKIO NIGHT

M-4 Umi

M-5 Tani☆RAP

M-6 STAND UP!

M-7 Wicked Wicked SUMMER PARTY

M-8 Tasogare Gradation

M-9 Sleepin' flower

M-10 Taisetsuna Mono

M-11 Fall in love

M-12 GET DIZZY

M-13 Drive Alive

M-14 Thanks for...

M-15 Sora no kanata e

M-16 feel



Limited Edition

PCCA-02623 3,300yen

release date: 2008.03.05

\*bonus: 44 page photobook

Regular Edition

PCCA-02624 3,000yen

release date: 2008.03.05

\*bonus: 1/5 original trading cards

PCBP-51910 5,000yen  
release date: 2007.12.12



## Lead UPTURN 2007 ~B.W.R~

One of the most invigorating concerts of 2007. If there is any concert you should watch from 2007, this is the one. From beginning to end, it is non-stop movement, non-stop excitement and overall entertainment. If you enjoy dancing and great vocals you, you will not be disappointed. The filming also makes this DVD great. If you've watched dance movies, think of it just like that. You get the feeling that you are there at the concert watching it live. There are some artists who sound awesome live and some who sound great live. They are above and beyond. Not only do they sound great live, but many prefer to hear the live versions of this DVD above studio recordings. It's that good. Some people who watch this have been quite impressed by group, stating, "*I would watch them perform if they came here.*" and "*That's tight how they sing but they can really dance. You don't see that \*\*\*\* here in America, where its all of them and not just 1 or 2 main people sticking out. I'd watch them perform if they were here in America.*"\* For some it's not their taste, but if your into hip hop then this is a concert you will love for the mere fact there are two dance corners. One is a choreo corner and the other is a b-boy corner. You get a mixture of hip hop, rock, R&B, '70's music thrown in with some old school locking, hip hop choreo and b-boying and you have a formula for an awesome concert.

M-01. B.W.R

M-02. What cha gonna?

M-03. LOVE RAIN

M-04. PRIVACY

M-05. Night Deluxe

M-06. Extreme girl

M-13. Dear

M-07. Deep in my heart

M-08. Jewel of Queen

M-09. SWEETEST TABOO

M-10. No doubt

M-11. Love&Everything

M-12. Boku ga inoru yoru  
(my prayer to the moon)

M-13. Dear

M-14. Red Eye Night

M-15. Cosmic Drive

M-16. Drive Alive

M-17. FEATURES

M-18. Umi

M-19. ONE FOR DA SOUL

M-20. Funky Days!

M-21. Summer Madness

M-22. Baby' cuz U!

M-23. Virgin Blue

M-24. Sora no kanata e

M-25. High Time

★ ROCK THE LM.C ★

FEATURE ARTICLE



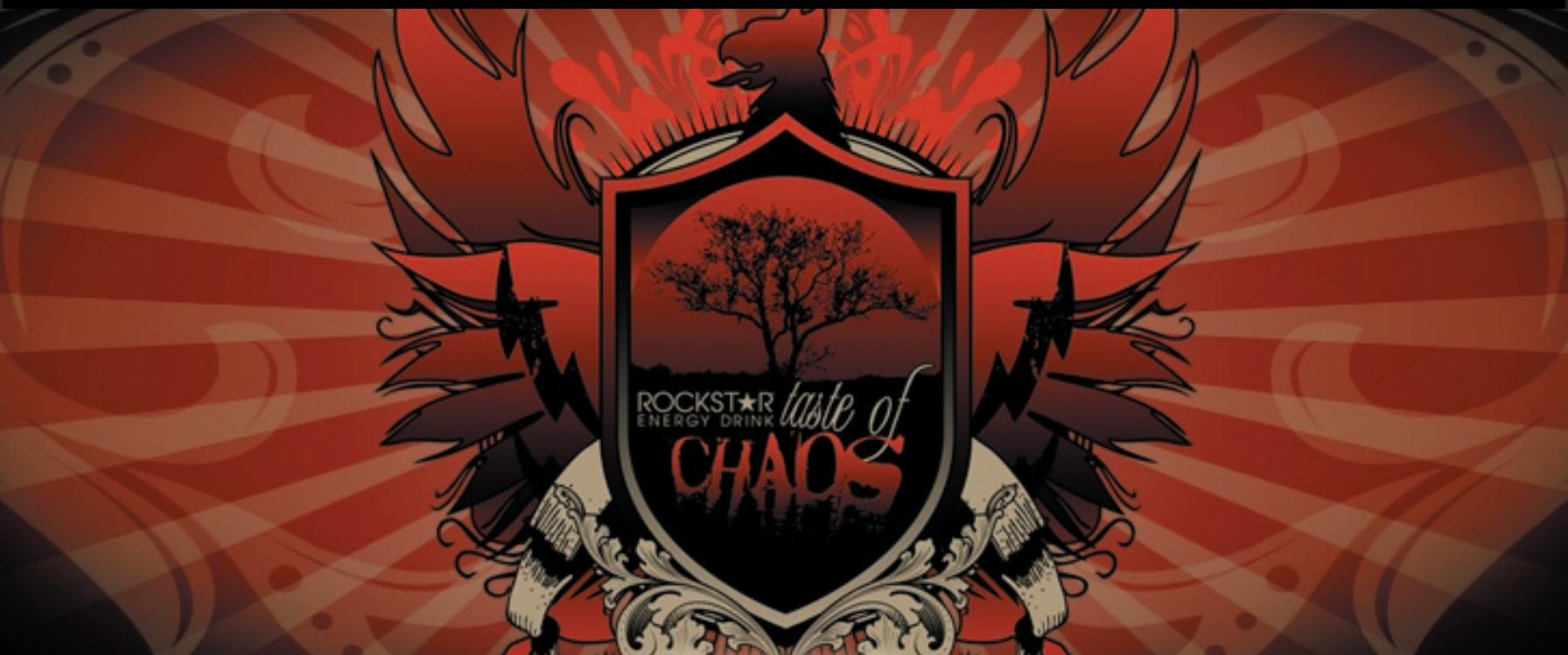
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# COMING SOON

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# Artist Check-Up!

Guest artist, The Substitute Teachers, featured two tracks on Lead's new album, "Feel The Vibes". Hailing all the way from California, we caught up with the duo to find out what it was like to work on the album!

**How were you approached to do this album? Like how did the management/company approach you about it? How did they hear about you guys?**

**Chris Gatsby (Chris Saiz):** Basically what happened was that we were actually asked to do a song for Idoling!!! The track was used for the opening song of Idoling's debut album "*Daiji Na Mono*". Pony Canyon liked the song. Apparently they liked it so much that they allowed us to submit a track for Lead's new album "*Feel the Vibes*". The producer for the Idoling and Lead track is M.H (name withheld). M.H was our connection to Pony Canyon and he got our foot in the door. They most likely heard about us through M.H. Our network connection to M.H is a story in itself. M.H knew someone in LA who knew Iori. We were first approached by our connection in LA to do the Idoling track for M.H who would later submit the track to Pony Canyon Records. That is how the label heard us for the first time.

**IO Hustle (Iori Omura):** We were approached by the producer who was contracted to do the introduction track for Lead. We had worked with him on a previous project and he told us that we should do the intro track for Lead. We came up with the raps, and he arranged them. I guess Pony Canyon liked it so they went with it. We have yet to officially hear from anyone at Pony Canyon though haha.

## What made you decide to do the album?

**Chris Gatsby:** There were no complicated decisions really. Speaking for myself and I am sure Iori feels the same way, we decided to do it for fun. Hip-Hop music is one of our passions and we'll make a track even if we are not approached by any labels or major artists. We are also willing to try new things and be creative. Hip-Hop is in need of originality, freshness and dope music. But looking at it from a business stand point, collaborating with Lead gave us the opportunity to spread our music and talents further across the globe. I think there is definitely a deeper appreciation for Hip-Hop music in other parts of the world and not just in the US. Hopefully, some Lead fans will like our material and become fans of our work as well.

**IO Hustle:** Personally, I liked the challenge of having to come up with a song that was outside of our normal comfort zone. We like to think that we are versatile artists and can pretty much collaborate with anyone. This project turned out to be pretty fun, and we would love to do more stuff like this in the future.

## So this was something that was out of your comfort zone? How so?

**IO Hustle:** It just doesn't happen. I don't really know to what degree Lead's popularity and fan base is but from what I gather they have a pretty good following and also they are with a major label. We're just two dudes from California that somehow got on the intro track. The producer that we worked with submitted the tracks to Pony Canyon, and from what I heard "loved it" so I think it's safe to say that we got on because they actually liked the song and felt that it should go on the album. But now that you mention it, maybe it does happen here too. Especially in rap where the rapper that makes it big will feature his friends on their records- never heard of them before and they're usually not that good. But for the most part, I don't see random collabs like this in the pop genre.

## What did you think of Lead (assuming they gave you their early material??) Because you talk about them and their dancing etc, so I'm curious as to what your thoughts were when you guys were introduced to them.

**Chris Gatsby:** Actually, we kind of walked into this project blindly. M.H basically gave us a beat and said "Can you make a track to this in two days". He did not give us a theme or any



*(cont.)*

guidelines. He did not give us too much background or previous work. Which is fine; because it allowed our creativity to take its course. Anything we found was on the internet. The music that I did find and the videos that I did see were impressive. My first thoughts were, "Wow, look at how far the Hip-Hop culture has spread." Here are a group of Japanese dudes who can flow and dance. The amazing part is that they are half way across the globe from where Hip-Hop originated (New York). Their music was definitely a different type of Hip-Hop but in the end it's all expression and there is no right or wrong way to do Hip-Hop, you are Hip-Hop, it reflects who you are.

**IO Hustle:** I have actually never heard of Lead before this project so I didn't know what to expect. We only had what M.H told us and online research to go by. We found out that the first three members of Lead met each other at a dance school in Osaka and formed a dance crew, which I thought was cool. It's nice that hiphop has been infused and incorporated into many styles of music. I know that hiphop is pretty big in Japan, and I like the fact that if the end product sounds dope, artists are willing to collaborate. I don't think this kind of collaboration with us and Lead could have happened in America.

**Would you guys be down to perform with them anytime in the future? Do more work with them or any other artists?**

**IO Hustle:** Yes we would actually, we pitched the idea to the producer that we worked with if we could tour with them haha. I mean, we did the intro track so who better to open for them than us? We never really got any inquiries so maybe the idea didn't fly... we're still waiting for the call! But yeah, we would be down to collaborate with them or other artists; it was a fun project. Maybe this time we could actually do an actual collaboration where we would be on the same track, that would really be cool.

**Has this project "opened your eyes" in terms of how music is in Japan?**

**IO Hustle:** Well, it did get me to scan the Jpop section more at the record store. Sometimes I'll check out the top sellers list and then go back on line to check out some of their stuff. I'm sure there's a lot more to it, I wish someone could kinda show me around.

**Have you listened to the album? Your thoughts on it if you have.**

**Chris Gatsby:** I thought the album was pretty entertaining. One reason is because I have never listened to J-Pop before. It was really different from what I expected. But being exposed to other types of music is really good. The music was pretty melodic and the way they harmonize and integrate each of their voices was pretty cool. I thought another interesting thing was that their single and video "Stand Up" was environmentally conscious. It shows that the same issues affect people around the world and we all communicate that through music.

To find more information visit:

<http://www.steachers.com>

<http://www.myspace.com/hiphopsubs>



Chris Gatsby and IO Hustle, *The Substitute Teachers*

It was great being able to contribute to the Lead album with the opening song. Lead has a smooth pop sound, making it for an enjoyable listen. The production has a nice range, fusing electronica, rock, and hip hop which complements the artists very nicely. While we never got to meet the group personally, they seem to be a talented collective, and being that this is their fifth release, they have obviously shown longevity in the music business. It is nice to see that collaborations between successful artists and relatively unknowns such as ourselves can occur in the Japanese music industry. We believe the end result turned out great!

This was our second time in the last two months working with a pop group from Japan. Growing up in America, where foreign music is not in the mainstream we were not too familiar with Japanese Pop music. We didn't really know what to expect but working with the likes of Idoling!!! and Lead really broadened our musical horizon, gaining an appreciation for the variety of music that is out there, in this particular case Japan. We hope to work with more artists out there in the future.

**IO Hustle:** I listened to the album; I thought it was pretty cool. I don't have their old stuff to compare it to but it's a fun listen in the car. I can't say that I listen to J-pop very much but I'm somewhat familiar with some of the big stars like BOA, Namie Amuro, SMAP, and etc, because my family watches Japanese TV, and sometimes I'd catch them on the music variety shows like Hey, Hey, Hey when it was still on. It has a very boy band feel to it, which kind of went out of style in the US, but hey, good sounding music is good sounding music. Lead has energy and a positive vibe in most of their songs, which I thought was cool.

**Can you give a message to Lead?**

**Chris Gatsby:** Lead...keep holding it down in Japan, you guys are sick!

**IO Hustle:** Keep up the good work guys... to-morokoshi rocks!

# LEADへ

私はLeadの皆さん大好き！！ Leadさんはたぶん知らないけど、たくさんファンいる(世界が)。

音楽続きくださいね！(と海外ファンに含む  
(笑)上がり下がりを通して、行ったことがある  
のをからかうけれども、それは、熱心に働くこ  
とを一度も防いだことがなく、私はそのため  
にあなたを賞賛します。 - Jessica S. (U.S.A)

私はリードファンに2004年から。リードさん大  
好き！！ 貴方達のダンスももっともっと大好き  
や！ Hirokiの本腰、Shinyaはカコイイ、Keitaは  
可愛いとAkiraのセクシーの声、全部はLeadです  
よね？ 皆さんがんばってね！ 歌のより多くを樂  
しみにしますか OK？ :) ~Celine Zhou (Singapore)

本当にありがとうございます。  
あなたの音楽を聞いています、  
だから私は感します。  
とくに、いつか私の世界は崩れ落ちた、  
Leadのみなさんは私に勇気をくれました  
ありがとうございます。  
このままでがんばって、負けないでください。  
私は永遠に応援します。  
私のこころこめてThank you.  
-Charmaine N. (U.S.A)

こんにちは！私はリード大好きそしてもっと知  
りたいな！応援します、ずっと！ ありがとうございます！ ~ Fon (Thailand)

Leadさん... がんばってね！  
いつも応援します、永遠に。ラブ・ユー  
-ケオ(タイランド)

がんばって！  
～ミシャー (U.S.A)

私はリードさんは「ココイイ」と思うです。私  
はリードさすがいいダンサーとシンガー、だから  
私はあなたは大好き。私のフェボロリートメン  
バーはShinyaさんです、Shinyaさんはクール  
帽子だから。私の好きな曲は「STAND UP！」、  
私はあのソングがダンスと一緒にだからな。リ  
ードのメンバーさんはfunと良い性格見たい。

私の夢はLeadのライブ行きたい！！  
ネバーギブアップ！あなた達はたくさん世界  
ファンいるから、私達はずっとサポートでよ。  
～メイソン アベリー (U.S.A)

Akira - お大事に！  
Hiroki-最高のリーダー！  
Leadを世話してください！  
Keita - あなたのダンス大好き！  
かわいいもん！  
Shinya - カコイイと良いラバーですよ

こんにちは！僕の名前はJuan Pabloでペルー  
に住んでいる23歳です。僕がどうしてLeadの  
ファンになったのか聞いてください。僕はペル  
ーの日系の小学校／高校に行って日本文化と強  
いつながりをもっています。。そして日系ペル  
ー人の友達を多くもっています。子供の頃から  
日本の音楽を聞いていて年を重ねるに連れて  
ヒップホップを聞くようになりました。ある日  
Youtubeで日本のヒップホップのビデオを探して  
いるとGetWildLifeが出て来てLeadの音楽が好  
きになりました。Leadの情報をいろいろ探して  
みて海外のLeadのファンのためのフォーラム、  
Le-volutionに参加するようになりました。それ以来ずっとLeadの応援をしています。Leadは  
すごい才能をもっていますし、曲を楽しめてと  
てもプラス思考になれます。ライブでのパフォ  
ーマンスも素晴らしいです！歌とダンスともに  
最高です。

～ Juan Pablo (Peru)



~Beyond the Horizon~  
Fan site & Blog  
<http://yunyiyi.blog3.petitmall.jp/>

Siyan helps fans in the English and Chinese speaking communities, by translating interviews, articles that feature LEAD.

## INTERNATIONAL FAN SITES.

If you don't speak Japanese, that's OK!  
Here are some great sites to find out the latest information in either English or Chinese.

The sites are updated daily when news about Lead is officially released in Japan.

**radio.blog**  
click to listen

**ARCHIVES**

- March 2008
- February 2008
- January 2008
- December 2007
- November 2007
- October 2007
- September 2007

[RSS Feed](#)

**LE-VOLUTION.COM** HOME HELP SEARCH PROFILE CALENDAR LOGOUT

Lead the Revolution

**News**

Announcement 1 of 1

Jan. 27, 2008: Most of the forum is now accessible to the general public. However, to gain full access, please fill out the [registration form](#) here. Make sure to fill in all the required fields. Thank you!

**RESPECT OUR MUSIC! LOVE MUSIC! SAVE MUSIC!**

**STOP! ILLEGAL COPY**

**Welcome**

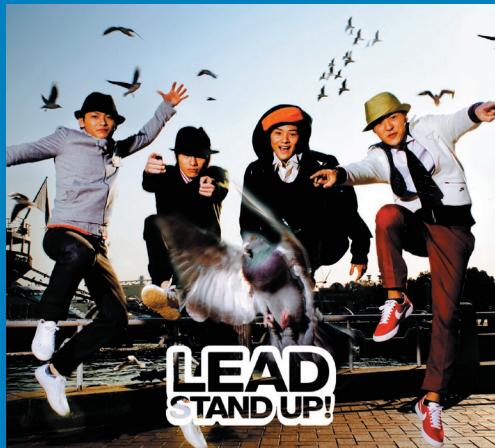
Ramen & Hamabagu  
Please read the Rules & Regulations. As well as the FAQs before posting.  
Plus, read up on our general information.

Udon & Takoyaki  
Site updates & special announcements.

**LEAD THE REVOLUTION**  
Lead "Unofficial" International Fan Club.  
They thoroughly support their artist by advertising  
**"RESPECT OUR MUSIC."**  
**Love Music? Save Music!**  
**STOP ILLEGAL COPYING!"**  
They also have contest within the community, such as banner contests that advertise the newest release.  
<http://www.le-volution.com/forum/>



# ON SALE NOW!



Available at CD Japan, Amazon Japan, HMV, Tower Records, YesAsia - Online  
All shops ship internationally.

Lead are  
Hiroki Nakadoi  
Shinya Taniuchi  
Akira Kagimoto  
Keita Furuya

## Credits

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Lead Official Site  
<http://www.lead.tv>

Lead Official Blog - Lead DO-GA  
<http://lead.vision-blog.jp>

Lead Official Fan Club "LEADERS"  
<http://www.visionfactory.jp/artist/lead/index.html#funclub>

PONY CANYON  
<http://www.ponycanyon.co.jp/>

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<http://www.visionfactory.co.jp>

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