



# MAXIMUM GROOVE

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PART OF THE INITIAL WAVE OF POP TALENT TO EMERGE FROM THE OKINAWAN ACTORS SCHOOL, THE QUARTET KNOWN AS **MAX** HAVE BEEN ENTERTAINING MUSIC LISTENERS WITH THEIR MUSIC FOR OVER A DECADE. EVEN NOW, THE WOMEN CONTINUE TO EXHIBIT THE SENSUALITY AND GRACE ON STAGE AS THEY HAVE BEEN DOING SINCE THEIR TEENAGE YEARS WHEN THEY WERE KNOWN AS THE SUPER MONKEYS.

NOW, THEY ARE BREAKING NEW GROUND AND TAKING THEIR MUSIC OUT OF JAPAN AND ENTERTAINING THEIR FANS THROUGHOUT THE US AND ASIA.

WELCOME TO OUR SPECIAL J!-ENT TRIBUTE TO **MAX**. WE SPOTLIGHT THE GROUP'S CAREER AND FOLLOWUP WITH A SPECIAL INTERVIEW.

BY DENNIS A. AMITH & HIROSHI TAGAWA

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF AVEX ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

VELFARRE LIVE PHOTOS BY T. HASEGAWA, ANIMEFEST PHOTO BY JACK THIELEPAPE

# THE BEGINNING

I can easily remember when I first saw the members of MAX, at the time in the early 90's they were known back then as Super Monkeys 4. Talent that came from the Okinawa Actor's School, they performed together with Amuro Namie (a teenager who would become the queen of pop in the mid-to-late 90's) and had a bubblegum pop type of sound with hit songs such as "Dancing Junk" and "Aishitte Masukatto".

But it was on March 3, 1995 that I posted a message on the J!-ENT BBS after watching a performance on TV Asahi's "Music Station" by the group who changed their name to Namie Amuro with the Super Monkeys.

*"I just finished watching "Music Station" and Moritaka Chisato, SMAP and Fukuyama Masaharu performed. But the group that caught my interest was Namie Amuro with the Super Monkeys. Dressed in black and looking very hot! These girls can dance! The song is called "Try Me ~watashi wo shinjite~" and I'm loving it!"*

Suffice to say that from that moment on, I became a big fan of Amuro Namie with the Super Monkeys buying all merchandise that I could find.

Although Amuro Namie and the Super Monkeys have been somewhat of a regular fixture on the NHK show "POP JAM", I would regularly watch NANA (Takushi Nanako), Mina (Ameku Minako), Reina (Miyuchi Reina) and Lina (Matsuda Ritsuko) perform on a J-POP celebrity karaoke show on NTV's "The Yorumo Hit Parade".

Around April 1995, I remember watching them perform a song from Lindberg one week and then TOKIO's "Uwasa no Kiss" the following week and realized that the Super Monkeys were more than just background dancers for Amuro, they can also sing.

It was until one day, they were called "MAX" (Musical Active eXperience) and really, I didn't know why they called themselves that name until seeing a brief clip on another music show that they have a new CD single titled "Koisuru VELFARRE Dance ~Saturday Night~" (AVDD-20089).

Having come off the Juliana's Tokyo High, VELFARRE was the hot disco club in Roppongi that Avex was pushing and MAX and the group trf were on the forefront of performers from Japan performing at the club.

But as trf were about techno/rave at the time, MAX was all about Eurobeat or what some would call "J-Euro". Catchy style of music that I was enjoying, especially watching these ladies on TV dance and performing it.

In August 1995, the group released their second CD single "Kiss Me, Kiss Me Baby" (AVDD-20098) and their performance was shown on the video release of "Avex Dance Matrix '95: DISCO WEEK IN VELFARRE".

Of course, 1995 became a big year for Avex with the careers of trf, globe, Uchida Yuki, Shinohara Ryoko blossoming, the collaboration between Amuro Namie and mega-producer and famous musician



(and TM Network member) Komuro Tetsuya would be the music relationship that would ultimately become successful, that success also transcended to MAX and Okinawan performers.

I would continue to watch Amuro and MAX perform on "The Yorumo Hit Parade" and watch as another group of young girls from the same Okinawan Actors School who went by the name of SPEED would make their appearance on the show.

With my interests growing with the Avex artists, I was still awaiting that hit which would possibly bring MAX to the top of the charts.

The day would come in February 21, 1996 with their third CD single "TORA TORA TORA" (AVDD-20115). Debuting on the Oricon Charts at #19, the song would bring the group to the lime-light by their sexy dance moves and their stylish nature. Let alone helping establish Euro Beat music to the Japanese masses through that song alone.

The ladies would then appear with Amuro Namie in her first major video "AMURO NAMIE FIRST ANNIVERSARY LIVE in Marine Stadium" as they would sing background and do vocals of their past hits and although known for being the SUPER MONKEYS with Amuro, on this concert, Amuro referred to them as MAX.

Also, a film starring the quartet titled "Ladie's Max" showing that the girls can do more than just singing and dancing. To show that they can also act.

As the group's popularity continued to grow, it wasn't until their fourth CD single "Seventies" (AVDD-20129, released on July 17, 1996, CM song for "Mister Donuts") debuted on the Oricon top 10 when interest in the group significantly grown.

It was from this point on where MAX could be seen on many publications, all over television and their fifth CD single "GET MY LOVE!" (AVDD-20146, released on Oct. 9th) continued to top the charts.

It wasn't until December 11, 1996 which MAX would release their first album titled MAXIMUM (AVCD-11512). The album debuted at #1 on the Oricon Charts and sold over a million copies.

The album was classified as J-Euro and every track on the album featured the Euro Beat sound which the quartet would be known for.

In 1996, the year featured an Okinawan explosion of talent with Amuro Namie becoming the biggest music star and selling artist, MAX topping the charts and also groups like SPEED, D&D (Dance and Dream) and artist Chinen Rina starting to gain more visibility musically and on television.

Around this time, MAX and SPEED became synonymous as the two groups co-hosting on NTV's "The Yorumo Hit Parade" and as D&D started to incorporate the J-Euro sound, MAX would stray away from it.

MAX's 6th CD single "Give me a Shake" (AVDD-20178, released on April 9, 1997) was the entry to pop R&B getting away from it's Eurobeat music and became the group's first #1 song on the Oricon Charts.

The song was used for a "Sweetie Sweetie" Tarami CM song but also the theme for their second film "Give Me a Shake ~Ladies MAX~".

As Amuro would get involved with acting in the film "That's Cunning", the ladies would show that they also have acting talent.

"Give Me a Shake ~Ladies MAX~" revolved around a group of girls who enjoy singing at a family pub and dream about one day becoming a singing group but one of their members (played by NANA), struggles between becoming a singer and staying in a biker gang. Unfortunately, the biker gang that she belongs to are not so keen with NANA hanging around these girls or singing and trouble ensues dampening the women's dreams of being a music talent.

The group continued their trend of hits with their 7th CD single "LOVE IS DREAMING" (AVDD-20189, released on July 20, 1997) which was used for the Family Mart '97 CM song and their 8th CD single "Shinin' on-Shinin' love" (AVDD-20199, released on Oct. 29, 1997) which was the theme song for NTV's "World Grand Championship Cup '97" image song.

The group released their first live concert video "J-POP GIG TOUR 1997" on October 8th and that fall continued their sold out national tour.

Their second album "MAXIMUM II" (AVCD-11614, released on Dec. 25, 1997) became another album selling over a million copies.

The group continued to flourish on television and publications and earned them a spot on NHK's New Year Eve special "Kouhaku Uta Gassen".

In 1998, the group started off the year with their second video "MAXIMUM CLIPS" featuring music videos covering their third CD single "TORA TORA TORA" through their 8th CD single "Shinin' on-Shinin' Love".

In April, the group released their 9th CD single "Senkou Hikari no Veil" (AVDD-20231) which was the CM song for the coffee Vise.

In July, 1998 the quartet had their own drama series on TV Asahi titled "Sweet Devil". The nine episode drama series is about four college students, one who is born with Extra Sensory Perception (ESP) and become embroiled in a serial murder case and use forbidden magic and the help of their ESP'er friend to solve the case.

The ending theme song for the "Sweet Devil" was their 10th CD single "Ride on time" (AVDD-20252, released on July 23) while the c/w song "DON'T YOU LOVE ME" was used as the opening theme song for the drama series.

In Sept., MAX released their 11th CD single "Grace of my heart" (AVDD-20269) which was used for a bourbon commercial and the c/w song "GETTING OVER" was used for Taito's "Mysterio" CM.

In Dec., MAX released their third album "MAXIMUM GROOVE" (AVCD-11686).

In 1999, they continued to release a string of hits "Love impact" (AVDD-207299, released on March 3), "Ano natsu he to" (AVDD-20321, Released on May 26), "Ginga no Chikai" (AVDD-20328, released on August 25) and their first best album "MAXIMUM COLLECTION" (AVCD-11752, released on Sept. 29, 1999) and followed by their third video "MAX LIVE CONTACT 1999 - Sunny Holiday" (AVVD-90061, released on Nov. 1999).

The group made one last CD single release for 1999 with "Ishouni..." (AVCD-30072, released on Nov. 25) which was used for a Nikon CM and NTV's "GIRLS2" ending theme.

In 2000, MAX entered a new stage as the group now entered the realm of songwriting and producing. The move to the new millennium will also bring major and unexpected change.



# THE NEXT STAGE

In 2000, MAX started off the year with their 16th CD single "Never gonna stop it" (AVCD-30076, released on Feb. 16th). The next month the group would release their fourth video "MAXIMUM CLIPS II" (AVVD-90070, released on March 29th). The video would include music video clips from their 9th CD single "Senkou Hikari no Veil" to their 16th CD single "Never gonna stop it".

The group would release two more CD singles that year: "MAGIC" (AVCD-30098, released on May 24th) and "Bara iro no Hibi" (AVCD-30114, released on September 6th) which both made its entries into the Oricon top 10 Daily Chart and one more video "MAX LIVE CONTACT 2000 ~No boundary~" in September.

Their latest concert video was filmed in Osakaji Hall on June 11th that same year and was part of the "MILLENNIUM LIVE" concert.

In 2001, MAX released their 19th CD single "always love" (AVCD-30205, released on Feb. 15th) which was the ending theme song for NTV's "SPORTS MAX".

The group will release their fourth full-length album on March 14th titled "EMOTIONAL HISTORY" (AVCD-11919) which would contain their 1999 15th CD single "Ishouni..." (1999) through their 19th CD single "always love" (2001) and would be the first full-length album in three years since the release of "MAXIMUM GROOVE" back in Dec. 1998.

In 2001, MAX released their 20th CD single "Perfect Love" (AVCD-30229, released on May 16, 2001), their 21st CD single "moonlight" (AVCD-30260, released on September 27th) which was used as the opening theme for TV Tokyo's London Boots variety show opening theme and the c/w song "Paradise Lost" was used as the opening theme for TV Tokyo's "Kurukuru Ami".

The group released their third concert video (6th overall) titled "Bitter (4) Sweet - LIVE CONTACT 2001" (AVVD-90118).

The group would release one more CD single to end 2001 with "Feel so right" (AVCD-30206, released on December 5th).

In 2002, the year would mark the most significant change for the group.

In February 20th, the group released their 23rd CD single "Spring rain" (AVCD-30312) which was used as the ending theme for "Captain Tsubasa".

But most surprising was when one of the original SUPER MONKEYS members and MAX member, MINA would announce that she was pregnant and will be getting married and will be going on a temporary hiatus from the group.

The state of MAX was now in limbo and no one knew what would happen to the group from that moment on.

Instead of releasing a new album that would contain their last four CD singles, the group would release their second best album titled "PRECIOUS COLLECTION 1995-2002" (AVCD-17111, released on March 20th).

The best album would consist of their first CD single "Koisuru VEL-



MAX returns in November 2002 with a new member named AKI. Pictured are covers of CD singles featuring AKI "Be With You", "Eternal White", "Festa" and "LOVE SCREW".

FARRE Dance" through their 23rd CD single "Spring Rain".

Also, released simultaneously with the best album was their 7th video "PRECIOUS CLIP COLLECTION 1995-2002" (AVVD-90145).

A special album "MAXIMUM TRANCE" (AVCD-17123) was released on August 21st. The album would feature 13 remixed tracks of their past hits and would be the final album to feature MINA on the cover.

The group went on hiatus for several months as speculation and rumor grew if the group would continue on as three members or add a new member to the group.

At a meeting with their official fan club in July, the group introduced Maeda Aki. Media reported Aki as a temporary replacement thus giving the impression that MINA may come back.

But on November 20th, MAX which included AKI was featured with their new CD single "eternal white" (AVCD-30383) and would release their 25th CD single "FESTA" (AVCD-30431) on March 12th. AKI would become a permanent member of the group.

The Summer of 2003 would bring their 26th CD single "LOVE SCREW" (AVCD-30500, released on August 2003).

In 2004, MAX would release "Be With You" (a Japanese cover of the hit song by UK's Atomic Kitten, AVCD-30596, released in June 30, 2004).

That same year, MAX would make their first major US performance at AnimeFEST in Dallas, Texas in September.

In 2005, the group celebrated their 10 year anniversary and kicked off a hotel tour dubbed the "MAX LOVE TRIP 2005" tour.

Their 27th CD single "Niraikanai" (AVCD-16070, released on July 6th) was a fresh new sound as they combined House music with traditional Okinawan music.

The group released their Christmas CD single, their 28th, titled "Anata wo Omouhodo" (AVCD-16075, released on Nov. 30, 2005).

In 2006, the group would take a major step in their careers as they focused on quality of their music and also on performances that would take them to the United States and China.

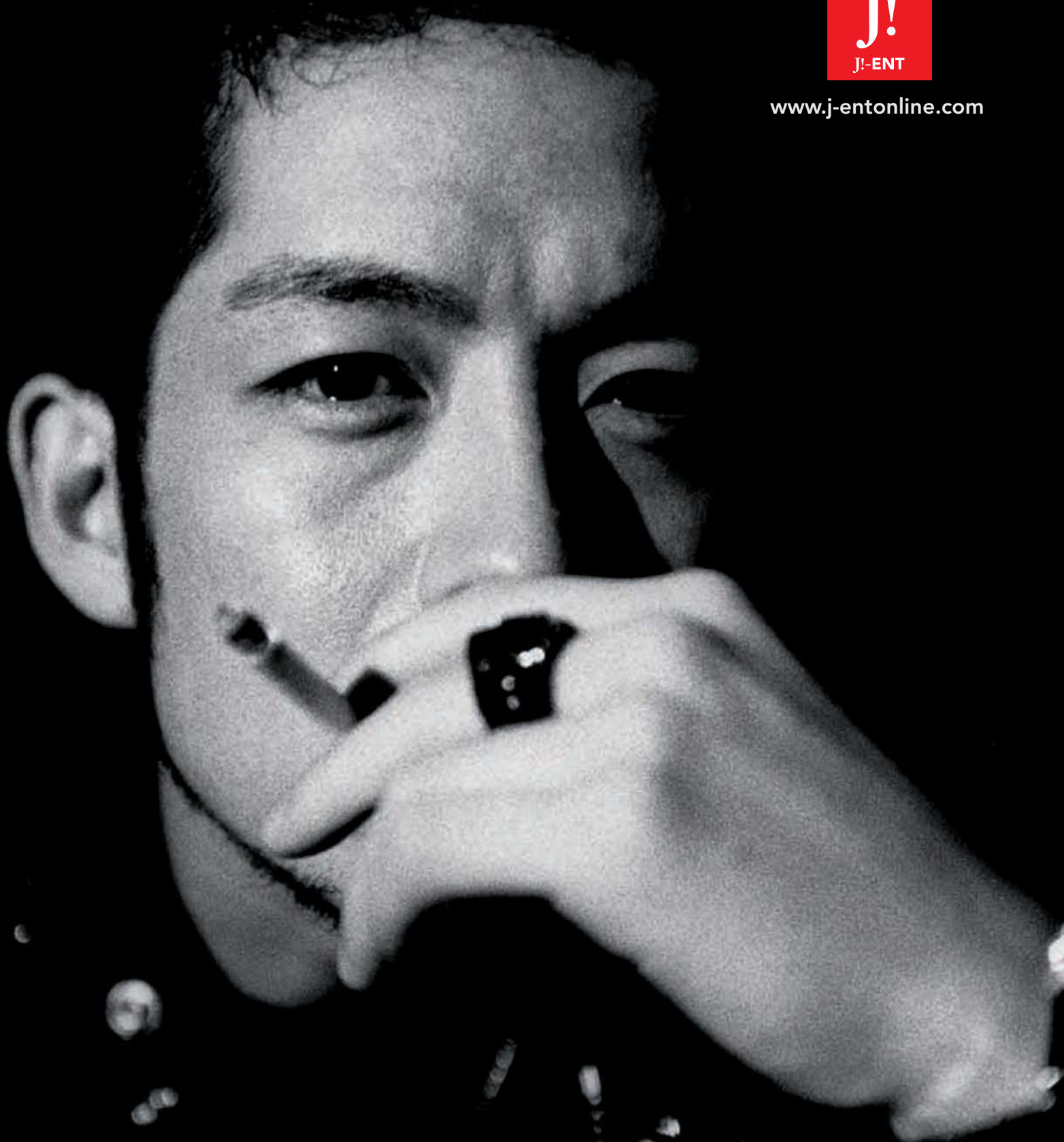
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# OVERSEAS PART I (2004)

ANIMEFEST - DALLAS, TEXAS (SEPTEMBER 2004)



avex group **SONIC GROOVE**

MAX (LR): LINA, AKI, REINA and NANA.  
Photo courtesy of Avex Entertainment, Inc.  
AnimeFEST concert photo by Jack Thielepape



It was announced that the MAX would be coming to Texas for AnimeFEST 2004, an anime convention in Dallas, which would be their first major US live performance.

Their debut performance took place in Sept. with over a thousand people in attendance.

The group performed past hits such as "Ride on time", "Give Me a Shake" and

their most recent hits such as "FESTA" and "Be With You".

The group began their concert sporting colorful outfits and later changed into Dallas Cowboys sports clothing.

With the first concert performance doing well in Texas, MAX's next US performance would take place in 2006 at Anime USA in Vienna, Virginia.

## MAX ANIMEFEST - SEPTEMBER 2004 SET LIST

1. Don't Lose Yourself
2. Give Me a Shake
3. Grace of My Heart
4. Dance
5. Bara-iro no Hibi
6. Shinin' on Shinin' Love
7. Dance
8. EASY EASY
9. Be With You
10. Perfect Love
11. Ishouni...
12. Ride on time

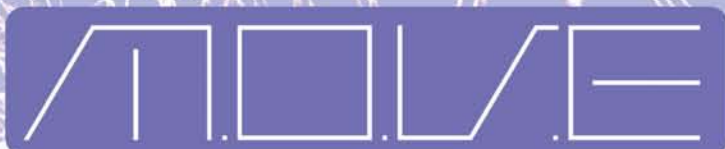
### ENCORE:

13. Sunny Holiday [encore]
14. Festa [encore]

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# OVERSEAS PART II (2006)

MAX IN CHINA (SHANGHAI AND BEIJING)



TOP PHOTO (from L-R): MAX members AKI, LINA, REINA and NANA taking part in the ANA Beijing International Marathon in October.

BOTTOM PHOTO: MAX taking a photo with a few of their fans in Beijing at the ANA Beijing International Marathon.

With a dedicated fan base in Asia, MAX had performed in Taiwan previously but in 2006, the quartet made their debut in Shanghai and Beijing.

In July, MAX had an opportunity to have a special live performance and an up-close live interview for their fans at the Ark Shanghai Xintiandi where they performed five songs which included a Chinese version of their hit song “Ride on time”.

In October, the quartet took part in the ANA Beijing International Marathon and their first mini-live performance in Beijing.

This is only the beginning and we expect to see more of MAX performing throughout Asia.

## MAX ARK SHANGHAI XINTIANDI (JULY 2006) SET LIST

1. Give me a Shake
2. LOVE SCREW
3. Ishouni...
4. Niraikanai
5. Ride on time (Chinese Ver.)

## MAX BEIJING MINI-LIVE (OCTOBER 2006) SET LIST

1. It's time to Shine
2. Give me a shake
3. Niraikanai
4. SPLASH GOLD
5. Perfect Love
6. Ride on time (Chinese Ver.)
7. Ishouni... (Chinese Ver.)

# OVERSEAS PART III (2006)

MAX AT ANIME USA - VIENNA, VIRGINIA



MAX returned to the United States for their second major live performance in Vienna, Virginia for Anime USA (A three-day event that attracts around 5,000 people) on November 18th.

Learning from their performance at AnimeFEST in Texas back in 2004, MAX prepared for two weeks for their performance at Anime USA.

With over a thousand people filling the capacity of the room, many in attendance had a chance to see the group perform songs from their new album "Jewel of Jewels".

Afterwards the group traveled to Washington D.C. to visit popular monuments around the city.

Anime USA and Washington D.C. Photos courtesy of Avex Entertainment, Inc. LEFT (L-R): LINA, REINA, NANA and AKI

## MAX ANIMEUSA - VIENNA, VA (2006) SET LIST

1. Don't Lose Yourself
2. It's Time To Shine
3. Festa
4. Ride on Time
5. Eternal White
6. Ishouni...
7. Medley
  - a. Wonder Woman
  - b. Magic
  - c. LOVE SCREW
  - d. Give me a Shake
  - e. Ginga no Chikai
8. Be With You
9. Melty Love
10. Perfect Love

### ENCORE:

11. Nirai Kanai
12. Tora Tora Tora

# PRESENT TIME: THE INTERVIEW



avex  SONIC GROOVE

ON FEBRUARY 22ND, 2006, MAX HAS RELEASED THEIR FIRST FULL-LENGTH ALBUM (FIFTH OVERALL) TITLED "JEWEL OF JEWELS" (AVCD-16086 [NORMAL], AVCD-16085 [CD+DVD]), THEIR FIRST SINCE "EMOTIONAL HISTORY" (2001). AN ALBUM PRODUCED BY MAX FEATURING 15 TRACKS AND SONGS WRITTEN BY THE GROUP AND AN A DVD WHICH FEATURES MUSIC VIDEOS FOR THEIR LAST SIX RELEASES.



The album signified a mature side of MAX and showing how the women are taking charge and having more input with their work.

Upon listening to “Jewel of Jewels”, you realized how far these women have evolved from their debut CD single and their first album.

The album contains a total of fifteen tracks which include their 24th CD single “eternal white” featuring the debut of AKI, “Festa”, “LOVE SCREW”, “Be With You”, “Niraikanai” and “Anata wo Omouhodo”.

Although keeping the harmony that MAX is known for, the group delves into different musical territory and adapt to more modern R&B styles as well dabble with experimentation.

“It’s time to “SHINE!” features MAX singing an all English track.

For the ballad “mirage”, the song had a lounge and Caribbean-like feel that was very different to previous ballads in their album.

Let alone “Anata wo Omouhodo” (their 28th CD single) which is a beautiful

Christmas song and surprising to hear MAX release a ballad when the majority of all releases have been fast tracks.

For the track, “eternal white” (their 24th CD single) would feature a mid-tempo beat with acoustic guitar in the background and a mix of hip-hop as the song featured rap lyrics by NANA.

Also, their inclusion of Okinawan music in their tracks such as their ballad “Kirari” (which the group wrote) and one of my favorite tracks to come from the group “Niraikanai (kariyushi remix).

For those who yearn for MAX’s musical past will find tracks like “MELTY LOVE”, “What’s going on”, “FESTA” and their atomic kitten cover of “Be With You” to their liking.

And of course you get the R&B tracks such as “Naughty Boy” and “LOVE SCREW” to make up this well-balanced album.

So, for this long awaited album, you literally see the groups individual musical tastes make it into this album.

But what about the remainder of 2006?

The group known to release several CD singles in a year have decided to focus on releasing CD singles which they feel is confident to be released to the public.

So, don’t be surprised if you see one or two single releases in a year.

Their first and only CD single of 2006 (29th overall) titled “Splash Gold/Prism of Eyes” (AVCD-16106, released on August 2nd) continued their efforts to bring back Okinawan house and Okinawan musical flavor used in their “Niraikanai” CD single and their “Jewel of Jewels” album.

Also, 2006 proved to be a busy year internationally for MAX as the quartet returned to the United States for a performance at Anime USA in Virginia and a performance at ARK in Shanghai, China as well as other appearance which include a marathon in Beijing.

Because of their growing fandom overseas, this has led to the group pursuing songs featured in English and Chinese lyrics.

Outside of their music careers, in an ef-

fort to show their individuality and sexiness was through individual photo books released by LINA and REINA.

And to finally end the year, on Christmas day, MAX performed at VELFARRE, the disco club that MAX began with a live performance (and incorporating the name in their first CD single) and to complete one final performance days before VELFARRE was to close down permanently.

For over a decade, many of us have enjoyed listening and watching MAX and to see them accomplish so much in their career.

In February, J!-ENT had the opportunity to interview MAX (each member individually) to celebrate their career, their accomplishments and to get to know a little more about the group and their individual personalities.

**J!-ENT: LET'S FIRST START OF WITH A FEW BASIC QUESTIONS. AFTER THE SUPER MONKEYS, HOW DID THE GROUP COME UP WITH THE NAME "MAX"?**

**LINA:** The name of MAX came from Musical Active Experience, but actually it came from a middle name of Mr. (Max) Matsuura, President of AVEX.

**J!-ENT: WAS THERE A CERTAIN MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER**

**THAT YOU FELT THAT YOU WANTED TO BECOME A SINGER? OR DID YOU IMAGINE YOURSELF BECOMING SOMETHING OTHER THAN A PERFORMER?**

**NANA:** When I was young, I was watching a very pretty idol singing like a bird. At that time I thought that I wanted to sing like that girl wearing a pretty costume. That was the first time I felt I wanted to be a singer in the future but I don't remember who that girl was.

**LINA:** I wanted to be a singer when I began to understand things. When I was in elementary school, the idol group called Onyanko-club was very popular. And I was longing to become member of Onyanko-club. Also if I were taller, I would be a volleyball player or model.

**AKI:** I really love to sing songs, so I really wanted to become a singer. I'm very happy that my dream came true!

**REINA:** I was also longing to become a member of Onyanko-club when I was in elementary school. Since then I wanted to be a singer. When I was in sixth grade, twelve years old, I wrote a composition for the future. In this composition I wrote I would be a singer. And my dream came true and I'm happy about that.

**J!-ENT: WHEN YOU LOOK BACK WHEN EACH OF YOU DEBUTED AS A MEMBER OF MAX, WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST LEARNING**

**EXPERIENCE FOR YOU. IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NOW AND THEN AS AN INDIVIDUAL?**

**LINA:** When we made our debut, everything was the first experience for me, so to the work is very hard. But through the many experiences we had every day, I met many nice people. And these meetings made my conscious mind for my work ethic to be very high. I felt our changes and evolution as MAX through many performances through the live stage. That let me grow up.

**J!-ENT: LET'S NOW TALK ABOUT VELFARRE? WHEN I THINK ABOUT VELFARRE, I THINK ABOUT MAX. MY FIRST EXPOSURE OF MAX WAS "DISCO WEEK IN VELFARRE" IN 1995 AND YOU PERFORMED THE SONG "KISS ME, KISS ME, BABY". CAN YOU PLEASE TALK ABOUT YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCE PERFORMING AT VELFARRE, HOW WAS THAT FOR YOU?**

**REINA:** At our first Velfarre performance, no one knew us because MAX was just born and not even known. So, I remember dancing and seeing the cold eyes from the ladies.

**J!-ENT: YOU PERFORMED ON CHRISTMAS DAY 2006 AT VELFARRE WITH TRF AND A SEVERAL OTHER PERFORMERS, DAYS BEFORE THE CLUB OFFICIALLY CLOSED DOWN. WITH MAX BEING VERY CLOSE TO**



MAX promotional photo for "Niraikanai". From L-R: AKI, LINA, NANA and REINA. Photo courtesy of Avex Entertainment, Inc.



MAX performing at VELFARRE on Christmas Day. This would be their final performance at the famous club before it closed down. Photo by T. Hasegawa

**VELFARRE, HOW WAS THAT EXPERIENCE?**

**REINA:** MAX started with VELFARRE and I saw our eleventh year live memory flashing on the stage. It's very sad that the place where our history exists has now disappeared, but I was very glad to share the final stage with people who love Velfarre. Thank you, VELFARRE... Great job!

**AKI:** I felt that it was uplifting and better than usual because of the last performance at my favorite club VELFARRE where there are so many memories. Our fans and MAX became one and we were all very excited. That was very exciting and an enjoyable performance which became a very important moment in my life.

**JI-ENT: LET'S TALK ABOUT MAX GOING WORLDWIDE. LET'S FIRST TALK ABOUT THE UNITED STATES. HOW WAS YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCE PERFORMING IN THE US?**

**REINA:** The first work in America was for a TV program. I sang at live house performance in New York and I was worried that people might not warm up to us, but everybody got moving. I was moved because through our music, people enjoyed

it despite our language barrier.

**JI-ENT: YOU PERFORMED LAST NOVEMBER AT ANIME USA IN VIRGINIA. HOW WAS THAT EXPERIENCE FOR YOU?**

**AKI:** I was very surprised to see the costume of American fans. It's like everyone was in the anime world so it was fun. The live warm up was very exciting because of the fan's cheering for us. I am very happy and thank so many fans in America. I want to go and do a live performance in the US again.

**JI-ENT: DID YOU GET TO DO A LOT OF SIGHT SEEING DURING YOUR FREE TIME WHILE IN AMERICA?**

**AKI:** We went shopping and went sight-seeing in Washington D.C. and saw the monument of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. I want to go there in my private time.

**JI-ENT: HAVING PERFORMED IN THE US A FEW TIMES, HOW DOES THE AUDIENCE DIFFER FROM JAPAN? ARE THEY DIFFERENT?**

**NANA:** Not so much different from Japanese fans but American fans are more

wonderful because they are dancing and screaming throughout the live performance.

**JI-ENT: LET'S TALK ABOUT CHINA. YOU PERFORMED IN SHANGHAI LAST SUMMER, HOW WAS THAT EXPERIENCE?**

**NANA:** I have sense of closeness because we are Asian, so I didn't feel uneasy about our first live performance in Shanghai. But I was very surprised of the energy of the Shanghai fans and the city. I really want to go there again.

**JI-ENT: YOUR FANBASE HAS BECOME GLOBAL AND CONTINUES TO GROW. HAS THAT CHANGED YOUR PERCEPTION AS PERFORMERS WHO HAS JAPANESE FANS BUT KNOWING NOW...YOUR FANDOM IS INTERNATIONAL?**

**LINA:** I'm very happy to hear that there are many fans outside of Japan. When I read the messages such as "Please come to the USA to perform live" on a website, I felt very glad that people treasure MAX and I feel that we share music beyond the wall of language around the world. I had a few live performances in the US, China and Taiwan so far. I really want to



avex group **a** **SONIC GROOVE**

MAX photo from their single "Anata wo Omouhodo".. From L-R: AKI, LINA, REINA, NANA and AKI. Photo courtesy of Avex Entertainment, Inc.

do live performances in many countries, therefore in our last album "Jewel Of Jewels", I wrote an all-English song (It's time to "Shine"!)). In our future album I want to try to make another English song, a Chinese song and so on.

**J!-ENT:** IN ALL OUR J!-ENT INTERVIEWS, WE GIVE OUR READERS, YOUR FANS A CHANCE TO ASK YOU A QUESTION. LET'S START WITH JASON G. FROM NEW YORK.

**HI LADIES! I'VE BEEN A BIG FAN SINCE YOUR SUPER MONKEYS DAYS AND ALSO WATCHING YOU ON "THE YORUMO HIT PARADE!" SHOW BACK THEN. I REMEMBER WATCHING THE MOVIES "GIVE ME A SHAKE ~LADIES MAX" AND YOUR DRAMA "SWEET DEVIL" BEFORE. BUT ARE YOU EACH OF YOU INTERESTED IN ACTING?**

**ALSO, DO YOU KEEP IN TOUCH WITH OTHERS FROM THE OKINAWAN ACTORS SCHOOL SUCH AS AMURO NAMIE AND THE FORMER MEMBERS OF SPEED?**

**NANA:** Hello Jason! Thank you for listening our music. When our schedule works out, we do meet each other and go out to dinner with members of Okinawa Actors School. We have a blast even though we don't meet often because we spend a

lot of our time singing and taking dance lessons. As for acting, I have a few experiences acting in a drama and movies but I am very interested in acting, so if there is a chance, I want to do it.

**J!-ENT:** THE NEXT QUESTION COMES FROM DAVID FROM SAN RAMON, CALIFORNIA.

**HI MAX! I BECAME A BIG FAN AFTER HEARING THE SONG "LOVE IS DREAMING". MY QUESTION IS FOR LINA. LINA, YOU RECENTLY RELEASED A PHOTO BOOK WHICH THE PHOTOS WERE TAKEN IN NEW YORK. HOW WAS THAT EXPERIENCE DOING THIS PHOTO BOOK.**

**LINA:** This is the second time for me to release my solo photo book. This time, it's different from the last. I entrusted everything to my staff. Every photo was first challenging for me but I was very satisfied with the photos which were very different from the ones before. I want to try to do a more fashionable element style of photo book next time. Also, I want to release a photo essay in which I want to show people the way I am.

**J!-ENT:** THE FINAL FAN QUESTION COMES FROM NATALIE GOMEZ FROM SEATTLE,

**WASHINGTON.**

**HI LINA, NANA, REINA AND AKI! I LOVE YOUR MUSIC AND I WAS WONDERING WHAT YOU LIKE TO DO WHEN YOU ARE NOT BUSY WORKING? WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE HOBBIES? THANK YOU AND KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK!**

**NANA:** Hi Natalie! Thank you very much for cheering us on! My hobby is watching movies and drinking wine. Whenever I have free time I usually go to the theater or hold wine parties with my friends at my house.

**AKI:** I usually go to the gym and take lessons for singing and dancing. Also, I go to the theater and cafe with my friends.

Non-work days always goes so fast, so I always hope that they last longer.

**LINA:** When I am free, I usually go to the gym and go shopping with my friends and have lunch or dinner with them. Recently, I bought a car, so I often drive around with my friends. Also I am very interested in bedrock baths. I also like to work out at the gym.

**REINA:** I often go shopping and drinking with my friends. When it's warm day, I enjoy fishing at the river and enjoy barbecue.

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◎ \$20, \$25 (Before 2/28)

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(Photo ID required. Student ID not accepted.)

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Contact: [info@tokytonight.org](mailto:info@tokytonight.org)

Location info: [www.queenmary.com](http://www.queenmary.com)





MAX singing live at Tower Records in Japan to promote their CD single "Niraikanai" back in 2005. Photo courtesy of Avex Entertainment, Inc.

**J!-ENT:** REINA, YOU'VE BEEN IN THE NEWS RECENTLY FOR YOUR NEW PHOTO BOOK AS WELL. I SAW THE BEAUTIFUL PHOTO OF YOU IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. HOW WAS THAT EXPERIENCE FOR YOU?

**REINA:** I had only three days for our photo shoot but I think I could express everything of me and enjoyed the photos taken of me. Actually, it was a very cold day and it was very hard to stand cold by the sea.

**J!-ENT:** IF WE WERE TO LOOK INTO YOUR CD OR MP3 PLAYER, WHICH ARTISTS OR STYLE OF MUSIC WOULD WE FIND YOU LISTENING TO?

**LINA:** Double, m-flo, Jennifer Lopez, Beyonce. Many R&B music in my MP3 player.

**NANA:** Bossa nova and Latin music.

**REINA:** I like rock n' roll, Japanese songs. In the car, I usually listen to Red Hot Chili Peppers and JET very loudly when I drive my car.

**AKI:** Hip-hop and rock and various genres. I always listen to certain favorite songs over and over again. Right now my favorite song is "The Sweet Escape" by Gwen Stefani.

**J!-ENT:** NOW IF YOU HAD ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF, WHAT WORD WOULD THAT BE AND WHY?

**REINA:** Innocent. I am always free and I enjoy every day.

**NANA:** Simple. When I am happy, I

laugh. When I feel regretful and frustrated, I cry. I challenge what I want to challenge and sometimes seriously worry about thing and get over it. I live the way I am every day.

**AKI:** Peace. I want to live peacefully and in tranquility. That's why I chose this word.

**LINA:** Ten-nen. I'm naturally fun! It hasn't changed much now and forever, but I'm still surprised at my slip-ups and strange actions. (laughing) To put it good, I am spontaneous..

**J!-ENT:** IN EVERY J!-ENT INTERVIEW WE HAVE A WORD PLAY. I GIVE YOU A TOTAL OF FIVE WORDS, YOU GIVE ME YOUR DEFINITION OF EACH WORD. THE FIRST WORD IS:

**HAPPINESS:**

**REINA:** LIVE!

**LINA:** Brilliance

**NANA:** Various colors

**AKI:** Shiawase (happiness)

**LOVE:**

**LINA:** A supplement for doing well. Full of energy.

**AKI:** Ai (love)

**NANA:** Strong power

**REINA:** Family, lover, friend

**SUCCESS:**

**NANA:** Believe

**AKI:** Seikou (success)

**REINA:** Having a dream

**LINA:** Confidence

**SHOPPING:**

**AKI:** Kaimono (shopping)

**REINA:** Can't stop!

**LINA:** Reward

**NANA:** Impulse, meeting

**OKINAWA:**

**LINA:** Treasure

**NANA:** Nature, myself

**REINA:** Kind people and warm heart

**AKI:** Okinawa

**J!-ENT:** BEFORE WE GO, WHAT FINAL WORDS WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAVE WITH YOUR FANS?

**NANA:** Thank you for everyone cheering us every time! It has been 12 years since MAX was born. We want to improve ourselves as individuals and as MAX. Also, we want to work harder to make music that will make our fans life more enjoyable. Please look forward to our work. ■

DENNIS A. AMITH is the founder/owner of J!-ENT and is an entertainment-writer-at-large.

HIROSHI TAGAWA is J!-ENT Chief of Operations, Japan

For more information on MAX, visit their official website at: [www.avexnet.or.jp/max/](http://www.avexnet.or.jp/max/)

COMING IN MARCH 2007

J!-ENT'S HIROSHI TAGAWA & DENNIS A. AMITH  
INTERVIEWS

*my little lover*

