

CAL ANIMAGE ALPHA presents

Konshuu

Volume XLVI, Issue I

HAPPY 10TH ANNIVERSARY!
10周年おめでとう!

HATSUNE MIKU

初音ミク

SEPT
07
2017

Art by Rajuu and Zeolch

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Hello CAA club members, old and new! I'm the Editor-in-Chief of **Konshuu**, Josh. We are excited to start a new semester of sharing articles, art pieces and our favorite anime with our readers. We will be returning to a weekly, eight-page format that will be distributed online and at CAA's weekly meetings. Each one will have new articles from our talented pool of writers, as well as art covers from our fantastic artists. Articles and art requests for Konshuu will be available this semester!

CAA will be holding a **weekly social** event for members to discuss anime, manga and play games in a relaxing space. More information will be available on our Facebook page.

Another exciting project this semester involves the revival of our club's **visual novel**, which will try to bring Berkeley life to the visual novel format! We anticipate a release some time next semester, and more information on the project will be posted on the CAA Facebook page.

Our main goal this semester is to provide the best content that we can with a unique college voice. Ongoing news about CAA and **Anime Destiny**, our club's yearly anime convention, can be found in Konshuu. We will also provide summaries for our weekly anime showings and other events. As Editor-in-Chief, I'd like to thank our readers and longtime fans as we move towards a successful Fall 2017 semester! Go Bears!

ANIME DESTINY

UC BERKELEY'S ANIME CONVENTION

NOVEMBER 5, 2017

MARTIN LUTHER KING STUDENT UNION

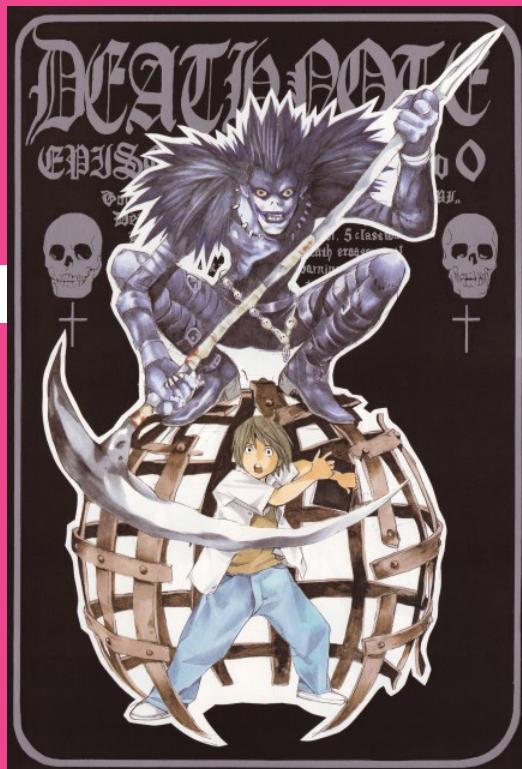


THIS WEEK'S FEATURED SERIES

ANIME RECOMMENDATION **HAVEN'T YOU HEARD? I'M SAKAMOTO**

Spring 2016 | Studio Deen | Directed by Shinji Takamatsu

(*Sakamoto desu ga?*) After beginning his first year of high school, Sakamoto attracted the attention of every student in school. There is no apparent reason for him doing things in his graceful and extravagant way. Because of his demeanor, jealous and bitter male students try to upstage him while female students try to get closer to him.



MANGA RECOMMENDATION **DEATH NOTE (ONE-SHOT PILOT)**

Story: Tsugumi Ohba, Art: Takeshi Obata | 2003

Taro Kagami is a young adolescent who finds a Death Note. He uses it as a diary, but accidentally kills his classmates with its supernatural power. Fearing the Death Note, he stops using it, but deaths caused by heart attacks continue to occur. This is the one-shot pilot of the famous *Death Note* series, with a few significant differences.

VAMPIRE MANIA: CASTLEVANIA AND VAMPIRES IN ANIME

KATRINA LUQUE

4th year, English Literature

Music to live by: *Panty & Stocking*
Soundtrack.



Vampires have been all the rage in anime and other pop culture mediums, but this season the vampire genre is enjoying a renaissance due to Netflix's sensational *Castlevania* series. *Castlevania* is based on the video game series by the Japanese gaming company Konami. Although *Castlevania* is technically an American television series, it was heavily influenced by anime and the artwork of Ayami Kojima who illustrated the games. In order to understand why *Castlevania* is a success within the vampire genre, I have to first provide a brief history of vampire-centric shows in anime.

Vampire Hunter D and *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust* (gotta love the D) are considered cult sensations within the genre and feature a mysterious protagonist, the titular D, who is a half-vampire half-human hybrid. The *Vampire D* franchise created a precedent for vampire shows in anime by building a unique dystopian universe that highlights the alienation from human society that the vampire race experiences as their population dwindles. *Vampire D* excels at creating a sympathetic yet complex portrait of the vampiric race, without oversimplifying characters or their motivations. D's character avoids falling into the "broody and tortured" vampire stereotype while maintaining a stoic and analytical disposition. What *Castlevania* borrows from *Vampire Hunter D* is the complicated relationship dynamics between humans and vampires. In *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust*, a vampire and human fall for each other in a society that discourages their elopement; this forbidden relationship drives the plot of the movie as the human woman's father hires bounty hunters to "rescue" her from her vampire lover. Similarly, the action in *Castlevania* revolves around the illicit relationship between a human woman and Count Dracula, indirectly resulting in Count Dracula's hellish revenge spree upon the humans who objected to his wife's attitude regarding magic and science.



Vampire Hunter D (1985 film, Ashi Productions)
Based on the novels by Hideyuki Kikuchi.

Capitalizing on the tensions produced by the overlap of the human and vampire realms is a common practice in vampire anime, but *Castlevania* and *Vampire Hunter D* are able to capture the dynamics between humans and vampires without adding sleazy sexual elements or unnecessary sentimental

dialogue. When watching these anime, I was drawn to vampire and human characters who were able to form attachments with each other despite the animosity that they felt towards the other species as a whole. Dracula Tepes in *Castlevania* despises the ignorance of the human race, but he is able to make an exception for his wife, just as Charlotte in *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust* can forgive the sins of her vampiric paramour and claim that he is unlike other vampires that prey on humans in order to satisfy their sexual needs. Although *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust* and *Castlevania* are able to successfully capture the complex nature of human/vampire relationships, not every (in)famous vampire anime is capable of depicting interesting characters, much less tolerable interpersonal relationships.



Vampire Knight (2008 anime, Studio Deen)
Based on the manga by Matsuri Hino.

Vampire Knight is a prime example of horrendous character archetypes, dialogue, and plot that draw upon the worst tropes that the vampire genre has to offer. *Vampire Knight* is a wildly popular anime (I assume among twelve year old girls who don't know any better) and has served as inspiration for some truly dreadful anime, like *Diabolik Lovers* (ugh). The plot of *Vampire Knight* is fairly straightforward and may sound familiar to those of you who have heard of *Twilight*. It's along these lines: 1. Passive, one-dimensional Mary Sue doormat character attends an exclusive academy where humans and vampires coexist; 2. Mary Sue-chan is torn between two equally dull male leads, "childhood friend with a bad case of the angst" Zero and "ice cold, elite, sexy, Vampire King who is also your brother" Kaname; 3. Mary Sue-chan chooses her brother because incest is always the right way to go.

While *Vampire Knight* is well-known and influential

within shoujo and the vampire anime genre at large, fortunately it has not left its insidious mark on *Castlevania*. One reason I believe that *Castlevania* is an outstanding anime is that it deviates from popular vampire anime like *Vampire Knight* by avoiding cliche love triangles and boring character archetypes right out of the YA vampire character traits bargain bin.



Hellsing Ultimate (2006 OVA, Satelight)
Based on the manga by Kouta Hirano.

Hopefully, *Castlevania* will create a precedent for future vampire anime with its high octane action packed plot, three-dimensional characters, and multifaceted human-vampire relationships. Either that, or reboot the *Hellsing* series. *Hellsing* involving Alucard obliterating the Trump administration (Mike Pence stars as a soulless robot)? A *Hellsing* and *Rick and Morty* crossover where Alucard is the Rick's arch nemesis (a girl can dream)? Actually, I don't care about the content of the show, as long as Alucard is involved, it's going to be wicked awesome vampiric madness.



DESCENT INTO IDOL HELL: THE STORY OF HOW I GOT INTO THE LOVE LIVE! FRANCHISE



BOGEUN CHOI

3rd year, Applied Math

Nico best µ's girl.

But Yoshiko best Love Live girl.

It was late 2015, which was around the time I really started getting into anime. Being the young lad I was, naive to the world of Japanese animation, I explored shows from all sorts of different genres, from the fantasy worlds of *Sword Art Online* to the not-so-fantasy worlds of *K-On* and everything in between. There were a few genres I would not touch with a five-foot pole. One of them was the horror genre, which makes sense given the dearth of quality horror anime as well as my fear of anything gore and scary. But then there's the other genre I didn't go near, one that didn't seem bad at first glance. That was the genre of idol anime. *Love Live*, *iDOLM@STER*, etc.. The anime where the girls (or guys) sing, dance, and do the idol routine. The high-selling franchises with tons of media and merchandise attached to them. You may be thinking, "well, why did you avoid idol shows? What's so bad about them?" For me the reason for that can be summarized in one word: K-Pop.

As someone who's Korean, I know just how bad the K-Pop industry can get, and I've always made a connection between that and the Japanese idol industry. From how much the managers control the artists' lives to how the groups are formed, I was always a bit skeptic about the darker side of the industry (though I still listened to songs because they are pretty good). Not to mention the many cases where fans can get a bit too intimate with their "loved one," as documented with the phenomenon known in Korea as "sasaeng fans."



A perfectly normal fan picture until you realize there are tons of stalkers in the background...

And because of all that, I felt kinda uncomfortable watching something that I thought supported that kind of behavior. But that all changed with one little mobile game.

Fast forward to around a year ago, circa late 2016 or so. I'm in school, studying and doing all things college. During one of CAA's Game Nights (which you should come to if you don't already, shameless plug), I saw somebody playing this rhythm game. Well, I like rhythm games. I've played Elite Beat Agents and some osu! in my spare time. So I lean in closer and see... *Love Live*? Oh yeah, I recognize that. Even in my quest to avoid idols, I knew some of the characters, like the Nico Nico Nii. Curious me decides to look up the game on the app store, and finds *Love Live! School idol festival*. Curiouser me decides to download the game and try it out for myself. Lazy me didn't like the bombardment of instructions they gave, so he quit the game and left it on my home screen for a few days. Then one day bored me decided to pick it back up. That was the beginning point of a slow, but accelerating descent into idol hell.

As I started playing the game, I got familiar with the songs. As I got familiar with the songs, I started liking some of them (and started putting them into my playlists). As I started liking the songs, I started to get curious about the characters, so I played the little stories that are included in the game. As I read those stories, I started to get a sense of the personality of each character. Keep in mind that through all of this, the fact that there was an anime series for this franchise was on the back of my mind. So as I started to get to know each of the Love Lives, my interest in watching the anime grew more and more until, one day last summer, I decided to just give it a shot.

And... it wasn't too bad, but it wasn't great. By episode 3, I realized the show was, for lack of a better word, pretty cheesy. The drama was somewhat realistic but very exaggerated. And the solutions to the problems felt very "the power of friendship" to me. Usually that's enough for me to drop a show and move on with my life. Yet there was something about *Love Live*: I had a whole list of shows I wanted to watch over the summer (*NGE*, *Gurren Lagann*, *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya*), yet whenever I had time to watch anime my brain said "yay let's watch *Love Live*" and I watched another episode while seeing my summer plans slip slowly but surely away from me. This continued for about two months, and now here I am: writing about the *Love Live* franchise after watching both seasons, the movie, and the spinoff/sequel show *Love Live!! Sunshine*, while in preparation to watch the second season of *Sunshine* coming out in around a month. So how? How did we get from point A (avoid all instances of idols) to point B (listening to idol songs while writing an article about said idols)?



A screenshot from the game *Love Live! School Idol festival*. Annoying character popups optional.

First off, my opinions on idol culture hasn't changed through this experience: I'm still weary on that subject. But I think the main reason I liked *Love Live* comes from the characters, namely the 9 main girls. Before getting into *Love Live*, one complaint I've heard about it was that the characters were too cookie-cutter, that they weren't unique and pretty much just tropes. And honestly that has a lot of merit to it. But just because they're generic doesn't mean they're necessarily bad characters. Because I think all of them work well off of each other. It's fun to see the different interactions between characters who you wouldn't think would normally hang out together. I mean you have the strict Umi being best friends with an (usually) unmotivated Honoka. The serious Maki with the not-so-serious Nico. The energetic Rin with the shy Hanayo. Well actually at this point I'm just talking about the popular ships. But you get the idea. The slice-of-life moments in the show were in my opinion the best moments of the series.

It's like *The Breakfast Club*. Wait, I never actually watched the movie... but I kinda know what it's about. And I can say that both it and *Love Live* for the most part have a bunch of different characters who work together and become friends through the trials they face. Yeah. Something like that (I hope).

Although those trials are cheesy (and I cringe at how exaggerated the drama is), it still develops the characters and their relationships, and they have some depth to them in regards to themselves and their motivations towards becoming school idols (which in my haste to ignore everything idol, was something I never really saw). Even if it is cheesy, the idea of entertaining and inspiring a whole mass of people is something that I can understand.

If you ever take a peek at either the *Love Live* subreddit or the *School Idol Festival* subreddit, it's interesting to see the people there talking so fervently about their idols. Sure, sometimes it's taken a bit too far. But it's nice to see the passion that goes into the fandom. I think this is where everything comes full circle: one of the biggest reasons I hated the idol culture ends up becoming one of the biggest reasons why I appreciate idol culture (though the over passionate people are still a bit too much for me). I guess it says something about how a vocal, crazy minority shouldn't define a fandom of relatively normal people. Truly a lesson we can all learn from. And it's all thanks to a little mobile game.

Volume XLVI, Issue I – September 07, 2017

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Konshuu accepts guest submissions from club members! If you'd like to have content featured, please visit:
J.MP/KONSUB

calanimagealpha.com

facebook.com/calanimagealpha

twitter.com/calanimagealpha.tumblr.com

WEEKLY EVENTS

Weekly Social: To be announced
Game Night: Thurs, 8:00pm - 10:00pm
Check Facebook for location announcements!

Cal and Annie May (CAA Mascots)
Art by Don Arboleda

