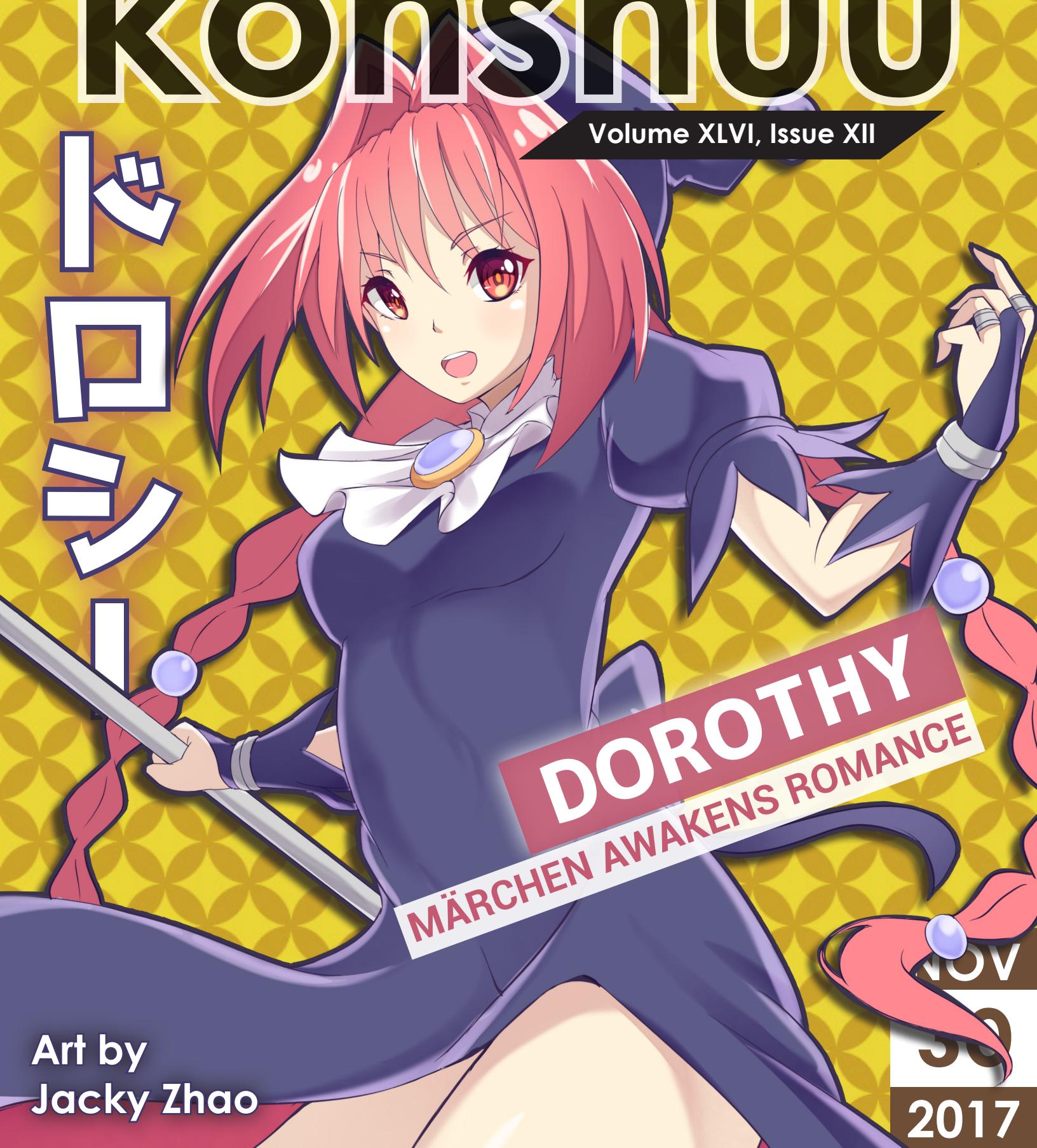


THE OBSCURITY ISSUE

CAL ANIMAGE ALPHA presents

# Konshuu

Volume XLVI, Issue XII



Art by  
Jacky Zhao

DOROTHY  
MÄRCHEN AWAKENS ROMANCE

NOV  
30  
2017



# THIS WEEK'S FEATURED SERIES

## ANIME RECOMMENDATION PING PONG THE ANIMATION

Spring 2014 | Tatsunoko Pro | Directed by Masaaki Yuasa

Everyone in town seems to know that Makoto Tsukimoto does not play at his best in ping pong; he is uninterested in victory. His best friend Yukata Hoshino may even be better than him, but he has become cocky and uninterested in improvement after years of being a child prodigy at the sport. The two have always stuck together as best friends, but neither have realized their full potential. The qualifier tournament for nationals is coming up, and their coach has his eye on Tsukimoto to overtake their school rivals and shoot to the top.



## ANIME RECOMMENDATION AOI BUNGAKU

Fall 2009 | Madhouse | Directed by Tetsuo Araki

(Blue Literature) *Aoi Bungaku* is an anthology of anime adaptations of Japanese literature. Six modern classics are revisited by the series, each with their own varying style: *No Longer Human*, by Osamu Dazai, heads the series with a chilling retelling of a newspaper cartoonist's descent into insanity after years of affairs and substance abuse. Other stories include *Kokoro* by Natsume Soseki, *The Spider's Thread* by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, and *In The Forest, Under Cherries in Full Bloom* by Ango Sakaguchi.

# GAME SHOW GOVERNMENT

## The Garish Dystopia of Kokumin Quiz



by **JAMIE YOU**

3rd year, Cognitive Science

**Flexing is called a gun show because they're arms.**

Written by the otherwise unknown Reiichi Sugimoto and illustrated by mangaka Katou Shinkichi, *Kokumin Quiz* was totally unrelated to any of the shōnen manga I obsessed over circa 2013. I have no idea how I found it, but I'm glad that I did since it is now one of my favorite series because of its memorable premise and main character.

Containing a single arc and spanning less than 50 chapters, the whole manga can easily be read in one sitting, which I'm convinced is the best way to experience it. Taken in all at once, the manga reads like a fever dream, a bizarre alternate universe that manages to seem a shade too real.

*Kokumin Quiz* is set in a dystopian future where Japan controls the world and a game show controls Japan. The titular National (kokumin) Quiz trumps all other forms of Japanese government. Entrants, if they succeed through numerous rounds of grueling trivia, may have one wish granted. All public resources are but tools to fulfill the wacky winner's wish, no matter how unreasonable, unethical, or grandiose.



The manga focuses on the game show and its host, Prisoner KK47331. Better known as K-i K-ichi, our protagonist is an actor who went on the National Quiz and lost. As punishment for losing, K-i now hosts the very show that imprisoned him.

Readers begin the manga knowing nothing about K-i except his game show persona: bombastic and utterly devoted to the morally bankrupt Quiz. His development revolves around the struggle, both by him and others, to maintain, control, and balance this role.

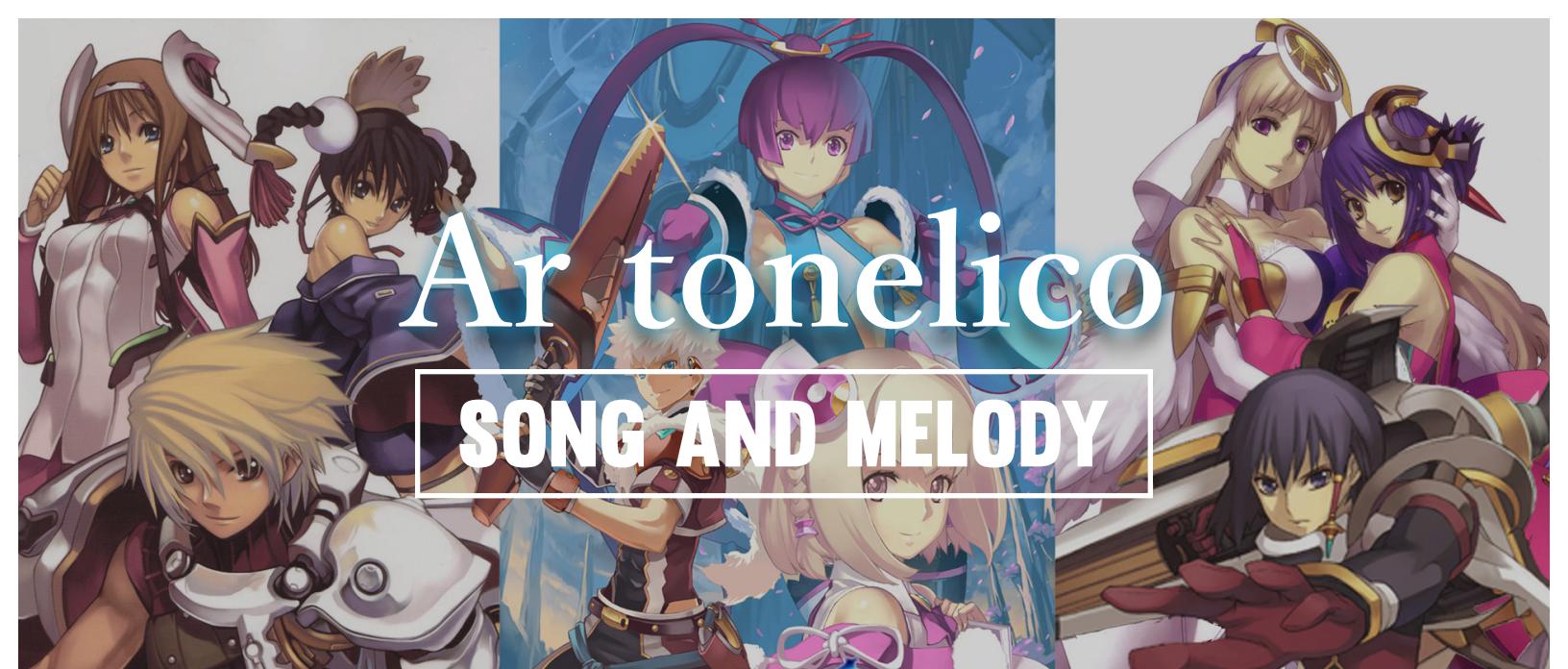
Unpredictable, conflicted, and a genius at what he does, K-i is a joy to watch. He drives the story forward. K-i's influence on the world, however, is tempered realistically by the rest of the cast, considering its political leaders, hardened extremist groups, and middle managers.

Overall, *Kokumin Quiz* is riddled with moral ambiguity. Every character, no matter how twisted, has a chance to justify themselves; the manga spoofs human nature, yet gives no clear instruction on how to improve it. Clearly, the world of the Quiz is crap. But the authors refuse to offer an easy way out.

Despite the goofiness *Kokumin Quiz* radiates, this manga treads deep waters. Death, torture, corruption, depravity—the uglier parts of human nature unfold chapter by chapter, deep-fried in dark satire. Like K-i's theatrics, the overblown quality of the manga's premise and cast deliberately highlights the wretchedness of what's really going on. *Kokumin Quiz* pokes fun at the stupidities of contemporary society while demonstrating how they can, nevertheless, overpower and trample the opposition. Most threads are wrapped up by the end, and while I felt the epilogue to feel shoehorned and rushed, the climax itself is a delicately wired pipe bomb of subplots.

Likewise, every stray, "ugly" line in Shinkichi's art is masterfully placed with intention. The composition and expressions contained in many panels, especially toward the end, have remained in my mind for years and strongly influenced my own writing and artwork.

Boasting definite influences from US and UK underground comics, *Kokumin Quiz* looks nothing like manga on the market today. In terms of character development, art direction, pacing, and sheer fun, it's more than worthy of a one-night binge.



# Ar tonelico

## SONG AND MELODY



by **ANDREW OEUNG**

3rd year, EECS

I have double-jointed elbows!

If you're looking for obscurity, look no further! *Ar tonelico* is a trilogy developed by Gust Co. Ltd and Banpresto. The first and second games were released on PlayStation 2 and the final game was released on PlayStation 3. Overall, *Ar tonelico II: Melody of Metalflica* is the best game in the trilogy. In terms of innovation, *Ar tonelico* blows most series out of the competition.

All of *Ar tonelico* takes place on a planet called Ar Ciel, which lost its land after a layer of plasma engulfed it. The survivors cling to three enormous Towers that serve as the settings for each individual game in the series: together, these three towers are called *Ar tonelico*. Each tower serves a different purpose, but the main tower is the First Tower because it functions as a power source for every Reylateil's Song Magic. A Reylateil is a unique race in the game series that can convert sounds into visible power. Reylateils look like humans and can even interbreed with them! However, only females can be Reylateils since the Y chromosome impedes the ability to become one. Song Magic is the manifestation of a Reylateil's words as powerful magic. So, a Reylateil's song has the power to change the world. Reylateils don't just sing in plain English, though! They sing in a language called Hymmnos: an entire language created exclusively for the *Ar tonelico* series. Even the title itself has a meaning in Hymmnos! "Ar tonelico" roughly translates to "The only divine tree."

Enter the region of the Second Tower: Metafalss, where *Ar tonelico II* takes place. Metafalss is a tragedy-ridden and artificially-made land with frequent outbreaks of Infel Phira Dependency. Infel Phira Dependency, or IPD for short, is a Reylateil-specific disease that causes Reylateils to go berserk and harm people with their uncontrollable Song Magic. However, tragedy does not stop there. The land of Metafalss is slowly breaking apart over time and falling into the Sea of Death, an enormous sea of poisonous clouds. If complacency continues, none of Metafalss will remain. Due to civil unrest regarding these problems, two factions arose: Grand Bell and the Sacred Army. The Grand Bell, led by Chancellor Alfman and the Holy Maiden, Cloche Leythal Pastalia, seeks to declare war against the Goddess Frelia who maintains Metafalss. Frelia refuses to let the people of Metafalss create more land, but Grand Bell wishes to create more land so that people may live and prosper once more. The Sacred Army is a rebel army that opposes the Grand Bell and sides with Frelia's intentions.



Although these factions may be separated now, in the past, the people of Metafalss used to agree on one thing: the dream of a legend known as Metafalica. Metafalica is a paradise-like land that will save the people of Metafalss from their cursed fate. The people tried to create Metafalica through song centuries ago, but they failed. However, the Reyvateils Luca Trulyworth and Cloche Leythal Pastalia seek to save the land of Metafalss by fulfilling the dreams of the people and creating Metafalica. Croix Bartel, a Grand Bell knight and our protagonist, follows the journey of these two Reyvateils as their chief protector.

These three characters are really deep, but going in-depth would fall into heavy spoiler territory! Croix Bartel is a "white knight" character who will gladly follow orders but eventually begins to question the righteousness of his actions. Cloche is a pampered, stuck-up tsundere princess who is initially ignorant of the world around her but will go to any length to help the people of Metafalss. Lastly, we have Luca Trulyworth, a woman who is capable of betraying any of her friends at any moment in order to survive due to her perilous and poverty-stricken past.

We get to see the inner workings of Cloche and Luca when Croix dives into their Cosmosphears, the manifestations of a Reyvateil's feelings, memories, fears, and traumas. You could say it's like peering into her soul because you get to see who the Reyvateil is like. The Cosmospheare could take any shape: it could be an innocuous city with buildings made of sweets or it could be a perilous volcano with lava! Diving deeper into a Cosmospheare is one way for Reyvateils to learn more powerful Song Magic.

#### Chorus

xA harr hUmmOrO eje ag dazua/.

*She sings her heart and darkness out*

xA sorr kUvUr du qejuu dn balduo/.

*It covers the people into darkness*

xi rre cEzE firIU hillsUsU ayuisa dazua, vega ouvyu giz sphaela/.

*It becomes the grieving and terrific darkness. This is a fabricated world of terror*

xA harr nAtAnO hymmnos

Credits to aguagon for the translation.

Repeatedly mentioning Song Magic's all fine and dandy, but what's the point without an example? Here's an example of a song called METHOD\_REPLEKIA/. The context behind the lyrics of these songs: Cloche is activating a powerful weapon in order to attack the place where the Goddess lives, Sol Marta. The

Hymmnos is the first line, the pronunciation is the second line, and the English translation is the third line. Hymmnos is not based off any previous Roman language and primarily involves the usage of glyphs.

Every major song in *Ar tonelico* conveys a lot of emotion in a novel way. The only other games with their own language that I've played are *NieR* and *NieR: Automata* with their respective Chaos language. Still, *Ar tonelico*'s Hymmnos language has more substance behind the lyrics of each song.

*Ar tonelico*'s uniqueness doesn't end there! *Ar tonelico II* has an interesting battle system. The player can control up to four characters in battle, which are divided into two pairs: one vanguard unit and one Reyvateil. Each turn has an Attack Phase and a Defense Phase. During each phase, if a Reyvateil is singing Song Magic, they will channel power into the magic at the expense of their MP, and a Song Magic's power is represented by a "Burst Gauge." In the Attack Phase, you can choose between a Harmonic Attack, Burstech Attack, Psychological Attack, or a Care Action. Harmonic Attacks increase the potency of Song Magic and allow the vanguard to use stronger types of attacks. Burstech Attacks vastly increase the charge of the current Song Magic being used. Psychological Attacks reduce the Burst Gauge loss incurred if a Reyvateil is attacked. A Care Action restores a Reyvateil's MP. You can spam any combination of these actions multiple times until the Attack Phase runs out after a few seconds. Afterwards, the battle will switch to the Defense Phase. Enemies will attack Reyvateils a set number of times and it is the player's job to protect them! A bar will appear over a vanguard, and lines heading toward the edge of the bar will represent attacks. Almost like a rhythm game, the player must press the square or X buttons with specific timing, and your timing will be considered Poor, Bad, Good, Great, or Perfect! Better timing means more damage reduced. The system sounds complex, but you only need to understand it if you play *Ar tonelico II*'s modded hard mode, which can be found online in the *Ar tonelico II Retranslation Project* (a community-driven retranslation of *Ar tonelico II*).

*Ar tonelico II* is a really unique game that definitely deserves more love and attention. It is not flawless by any means, but it has aged well and I highly recommend it, so go give it a try if you're interested at all!

# THE OBSCURE WORLD OF ANIME SHORTS



by BOGEUN CHOI  
3rd year, Applied Math  
Probably gained 5 pounds over Thanksgiving Break.

When I was thinking about which series to write about for this week's "Obscurity" theme, I looked at the list of anime I watched and came to a realization: I haven't actually watched that many obscure shows. I'm still a newbie to anime—I haven't watched many shows in general. I noticed that most of the anime I've watched were mainly shows that aired within the past two years. Now I know what you're thinking: "Surely there must be some obscure show from within that time frame that you could write about?" That... unfortunately isn't the case. There are definitely shows I've watched that are fairly obscure. Ever heard of *Amanchu?* *Battery?* *91 Days?* If you have, then good for you. For the majority, though, I assume you haven't. The problem is that there is not much to discuss for the majority of these shows.

However, there is something that I did notice while looking for obscure shows: a pattern, if you will. Most of the obscure shows I watched were short-length anime.

Short-length anime (AKA anime shorts) are an interesting sub-group. As the name implies, an anime short is shorter than the standard 23-minute airtime of regular anime. There is no standard length of an anime short, though the most common lengths tend to vary between 3 minutes and 12 minutes. One of the most famous shorts, *Teekyuu*, is only 2 minutes per episode! How could anything good come out of just 2 minutes? Well, in *Teekyuu*'s case, the pace of the show is lightning fast and the jokes are delivered in a similar fashion. It can be a lot to process, but luckily *Teekyuu* is the exception rather than the norm.

To be frank, most anime shorts are bad. I can say that, even with the short length, most of the 3-minute shorts I've watched felt like they went on forever and ended up at the bottom of my rankings list—shows like *Pan de Peace* and *Fudanshi Koukou Seikatsu*. It makes sense: shorts are easier to produce, and usually unknown and unfamiliar studios are the ones making them, which means quality is a gamble.



Please don't watch this show. Please. (*Pan de Peace*)

Like everything in life, you have to sift through most of the bad stuff to get to the good stuff. There are some very good shorts that I really enjoyed, two of which I recommended in the last issue (*Oshiete! Galko-chan* and *Honobono Log*). One of the great things about anime shorts is that the shortened length is beneficial for shows with separated skits, as is the case in comedies.

One example of this can be found in *Saiki Kusuo no Ψ-nan*, a fairly recent comedy short. *Saiki* was a weird show that aired 4 days a week, with a compilation episode at the end of the week. Each 5 minute episode consisted of one scenario or mini-scene. During its second half, the format switched to a regular length anime with multiple skits per episode, which made it grow stale. Having only one skit per episode kept things fresh.

The world of anime shorts is pretty vast with nice surprises: try one today!

## STAFF PICKS

# 8 OBSCURE ANIME YOU NEED TO WATCH

### AKU NO HANA (THE FLOWERS OF EVIL)



BORAH

Zexcs (2013)  
psychological, drama

### CHEER DANSHI!!! (CHEER BOYS!!!)



BOGEUN

Brain's Base (2016)  
slice of life, sports

### ANGELIC LAYER



ZIANA

Bones (2001)  
shōnen, comedy, game

### GUNGRAVE



ANDREW

Madhouse (2003)  
seinen, action, drama

### DEAD LEAVES



JOSH R.

Production I.G (2004)  
sci-fi, psychological, comedy

### SO RA NO WO TO (SOUND OF THE SKY)



KUNO  
ちゃん

A-1 Pictures (2010)  
military, music, slice of life

### INTERSTELLA 5555



JOSH S.

Toei Animation (2003)  
sci-fi, music, adventure

### UN-GO



EDWARD

Bones (2011)  
supernatural, mystery

# Volume XLVI, Issue XII – November 30, 2017

## STAFF



Josh Roque  
Editor-in-Chief



Edward Hong  
Layout Editor



Andres Gonzalez  
Layout Editor



Andrew Oeung  
Writer



Ziana Deen  
Writer



Jacky Zhao  
Head Artist



Jamie You  
Artist



Joseph Chan  
Artist



David Chang  
Artist



Deborah Lim  
Artist

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Konshuu accepts guest submissions from club members! If you'd like to have content featured, please visit:  
[J.MP/KONSUB](http://J.MP/KONSUB)  
[calanimagealpha.com](http://calanimagealpha.com)  
[facebook.com/calanimagealpha](http://facebook.com/calanimagealpha)  
[twitter.com/calanimagealpha.tumblr.com](http://twitter.com/calanimagealpha.tumblr.com)

## CLUB EVENTS

**Weekly Social:** Thurs, 5:30pm - 6:30pm, Barrows 170  
**Game Night:** Thurs, 8pm - 10pm, Barrows 170  
**Anime Marathon:** DEC 2, 12pm - 8pm, Barrows 140

渡我 被身子  
HIMIKO TOGA  
Boku no Hero Academia

Art by Rika Sato