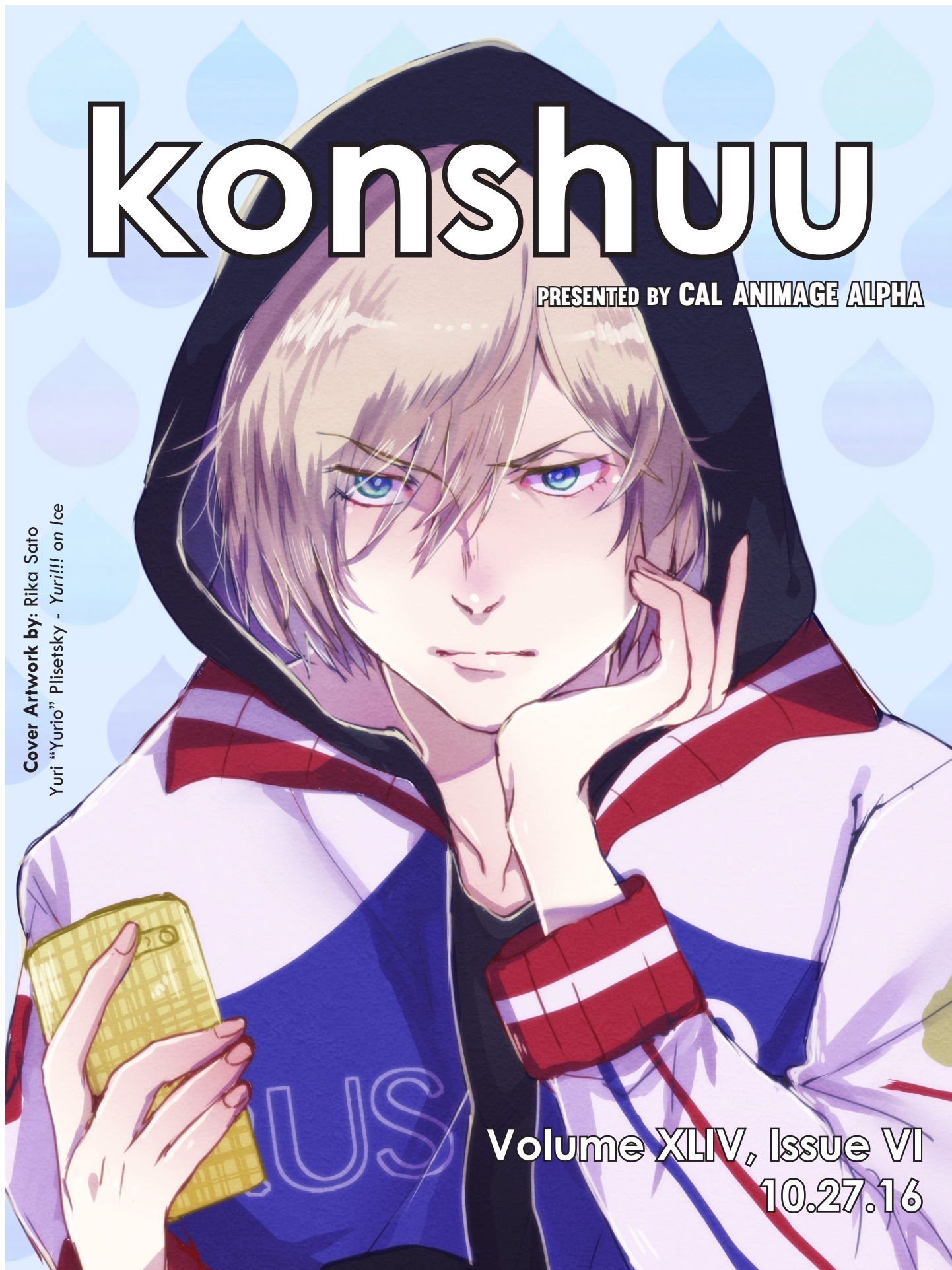


# konshuu

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Yuri "Yurio" Plisetsky - Yuri!!! on Ice

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# THIS WEEK'S SERIES

## ► ANIME RECOMMENDATION

### KAMISAMA NO MEMOCHOU

*Heaven's Memo Pad* is a summer 2011 mystery anime series that revolves around Fujishima Narumi, an introverted high schooler who is not involved in an active school life. However, after being dragged into joining the school's gardening club by his upperclassman Ayaka, Narumi also finds himself with involuntarily involved with "NEET," an amateur detective agency whose members consist of unemployed oddballs. Yet each of these misfits, with their varied backgrounds, prove to be capable and effective members of the detective agency. Leading NEET is "Alice," a smart yet childish anti-social hacker who shuts herself inside her room, surrounded by computer monitors. Throughout the course of the story, Narumi joins the NEET detective agency in solving crimes and murders, some which are simple but many others that are veiled under dangerous mysteries.



**Studio:** J.C. Staff

**Written by:** Seishi Minakami



**Illustrated by:** Kwangsu Lee

**Written by:** Jaeho Son

## MANGA SOCIAL ◀ NOBLESSE

Every so often, a manhwa goes above and beyond, achieving mainstream success in Japan and, sometimes, even the rest of the world. *Noblesse* is one of these shining stars, notable for being one of the few webcomics that has received an OVA adaptation. In particular, *Noblesse's* is produced by none other than the famous studio Production I.G—responsible for big names such as *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and *Ghost in the Shell*—which is a feat in and of itself. The story focuses on a young noble from the past named Cadis Etrama di Raizel; he has been asleep for 820 years and is blissfully unaware of mankind's societal and technological advances. With the help of his loyal servant Frankenstein, he manages to integrate into this new world, living life as a high school student. But Raizel's new day-to-day life is far from normal, as he soon finds himself accosted and attacked by a hostile group known as the "Unions."





**Spoilers for:** *Madoka Magica*, *The Ambition of Oda Nobuna*, *Say I Love You*

AMVs, or Animated Music Videos, have been a staple of the anime fandom since the early days of Youtube. Now, you can type in “[anime of your choice] AMV” and are guaranteed to find at least one result—dozens if it’s a popular series. For a long-running show like *One Piece*, the 10th page of the search “One Piece AMV Centuries” still produces relevant results. With so many options, what makes an AMV worth watching? Music selection, scene selection, editing, and how the AMV enhances the experience of the anime all contribute to the elevation of certain AMVs above others.



Music selection plays a large part in the AMV experience, since it instantly primes your expectations. Indeed, if you have not seen a series, music selection alone for AMVs could spoil it for you. Anyone who thinks *Puella Magi Madoka Magica* is a fluffy magical girl series may be surprised to find that the best AMVs for it are set to songs like “A Demon’s Fate” by Within Temptation, “Gasoline” by Halsey, or an English cover of “Bad Apple.”

In reality, the dark desperation of all these songs perfectly fit *Madoka Magica*’s tone. The lyrics are also key. The English version of “Bad Apple” begins with the verse: “Ever on and on I continue circling/With nothing

but my hate in a carousel of agony.” Given Homura’s experience in *Madoka Magica* of living the same hellish month over and over, failing to save her friend and becoming more embittered each time, such a song fits the series well.

Conversely, other songs chosen for *Madoka Magica*—like Marina and the Diamond’s “Oh No”—attempt to evoke the same feeling of despair, but fail as the singer speaks of “Don’t want cash, don’t want car/want it fast, want it hard”—something entirely irrelevant and out of place in the world of *Madoka*. The best AMVs will select songs that feel like they could have been inserted into the show itself, capturing both the tone and some of the show’s messages.

Scene selection and editing also play an important role in elevating an AMV. Look up any popular older anime and be prepared to witness an onslaught of screenshots from the show mixed with fanart that, at best, might relate to the topic of the chosen song. As editing software has improved and become more widely available, such AMVs are less common now.

That being said, even modern AMVs are not all created equally in terms of scene selection and editing. The worst offenders are those who fail to strip irrelevant and distracting subtitles off the scenes before editing; only slightly above this are those editors who believe any scene from a given anime works, regardless of how it fits with the lyrics or tempo of the song.

For example, *The Ambition of Oda Nobuna* gender-bends the great historical *daimyo* Oda Nobunaga into a girl and pairs her with the main male character. Yet in an AMV using the song “Start a Fire,” the editor chose to pair fighting scenes as the singer asks if “this is love or just sexual desire”—even though there are plenty of romantic moments between the main characters in the show that fit the song far better. This includes a moment

where the main characters almost kiss when there is a fire in the background—given the title of the song, you would think the inclusion of that scene would be a no-brainer, but alas, it is not so.



Conversely, a better AMV—like the one for the anime *Say I Love You* set to the song “This Kiss”—takes advantage of the fact that the main characters are actually in a romantic relationship for almost all of the show and uses different kisses for each instance of the main chorus. This seemingly basic element of scene selection is sadly lacking for many AMVs. Finally, many AMVs falter because the editors fail to realize that just because you have many editing tricks available, doesn’t mean you should combine all of them into one video. Overlays of random words and changing the colors of the show to that out of an out-of-control disco ball are far less effective in creating a pleasing AMV than smoothly transitioning from relevant scene to scene.

Ultimately, both music choice and scene selection and editing contribute to the most important function of a great AMV: adding something to the experience of the anime it uses. There’s nothing wrong with AMVs that seek to remind you of the cuteness of a couple, or the hype a certain arc of a shounen series, and they may serve this purpose admirably. However, the best AMVs act not just as a summary to a series, but as a companion piece, exploring and highlight the key elements and themes.

The “Devil’s Game” AMV for *Madoka Magica* exemplifies all of these traits and as such is my personal candidate for best AMV. To begin, the song used, “A Demon’s Fate,” is not a generically dark song; it plays with the same themes of ambiguous morality and religion as *Madoka Magica*. The song speaks of “angels,” which at the beginning of the AMV are shown to the main magical girls, along with a mysterious “him”—a fallen angel, or the Devil. At the beginning of the AMV, the mentions of the Devil in the song are matched with clips of Kyubey, who appears to be the main villain, stealing

the magical girls’ souls. As the singer pleads that she does not “want to be a part of his sin,” “get lost in his world,” or “[play] this game,” the editor splices Homura’s desperate attempts to save Madoka from having to give up her soul and become a magical girl. Much like the character of the song, Homura does not want to be a part of Kyubey’s plan.

Yet even as she tries to rebel against the Incubators, she inevitably executes their will. After all, it is her repeated time loops that give Madoka the power she will eventually wield, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy around Madoka’s unprecedented magical girl power that Kyubey seeks out. Thus, as the AMV and song both conclude, the editor illustrates how the “ashes of hate” and “cruel demon’s fate” in the lyrics parallel Madoka’s eventual god-like status and Homura becoming her counterpart—the devil.



What makes this AMV excellent is not just the apt song selection, or the seamless editing, but that it prompts the viewer to consider the morality in the show and to have empathy for the plight of the characters. Whether Homura did anything wrong may have reached meme status, but this AMV casts her character arc in a tragic yet thought-provoking light that adds something to the conversation surrounding the show, even five years after its release.

Not every AMV needs to be a work of art. The numerous, poorly constructed AMVs out there are not evidence that AMVs cannot be a valuable addition to an anime. With fitting song choice, appropriate scene selection, and editing, an AMV may act as an entertaining summary of an anime, reminding viewers of its best moments. The best AMVs take these elements and use them to contemplate the themes of an anime, challenging viewers to think of its message a new way. For me, the existence of thousands of subpar AMVs will always be outweighed by the contributions made by the best AMVs to my anime viewing experience.

# A CLOSER LOOK: YOUR LIE IN APRIL

ANDREW "ARCHED" OEUNG

**Warning: Contains major spoilers for *Your Lie In April*.**

Music, romance, and loss—*Your Lie in April*, or *Shigatsu wa Kimi no Uso*, starts off with a cliché opening but captures the hearts of all of its viewers with its profoundly touching and emotional story. As gentle-hearted, expert pianist Arima Kousei abandons the piano and begins to lose his purpose in his ashen, gray-colored existence, violinist Miyazono Kaori appears and breathes color into Kousei's life.

The story opens up with Arima Kousei meeting Miyazono Kaori, the new girlfriend of his childhood friend Watari Ryota. Sawabe Tsubaki, Kousei's next-door neighbor, attempts to rekindle Kousei's passion for music by forcing him to befriend this eccentric violinist. Yet, Tsubaki's desire for Kousei to move on in his life will ironically force him down a tragic and life-changing path.



Arima Kousei falls in love with Miyazono Kaori at first sight. Enthralled with her personality and her musical talent, he hesitantly places his fingers onto the piano to play it once more. Originally, Arima Kousei abandoned the piano after his mother's death, because his traumatic past made him feel that he was unable to play the piano. He continually gives excuses that he cannot "hear" the piano, but he eventually overcomes his emotional trauma with the help of Kaori. Throughout this first half of the show where Kousei fights to play the piano once more, we can see several motifs and symbols sprinkled within *Your Lie in April*, and the recurrent symbolism heavily adds to the depth and enjoyment of the show overall.

Light, color, birds and the season of spring emphasize Kousei's new outlook on life as he encounters Kaori. Before he meets Kaori, the images of his past are dark, colorless, and often monochrome. This is a clear sign that he displays regret towards his past, in that he harbors resentment and fear towards his deceased mother. But he meets Kaori at the beginning of spring, and we can see cherry blossoms and birds swirling around her as Kousei stares at her fixedly in a trance. The vivid colors and imagery are a sign that Kousei's life has been revitalized upon meeting this beautiful violinist, while the bird motif serves as a symbol for freedom. Spring obviously symbolizes rebirth in Kousei's life: his passion for piano revives and his love for Kaori causes him to move forward in life.

Unfortunately, as soon as Kousei's passion for piano rekindles, things take a turn for the worse. The show starts to foreshadow that Kaori has a serious illness by hinting that Kaori has several hospital visits, and also showing several moments where she collapses spontaneously. Here, we can see a striking parallel between Miyazono Kaori and Kousei's deceased mother, Saki. Saki slowly fell victim to an unnamed and incurable illness, and her death culminated into a traumatic experience where Kousei abandoned the piano for two years. A different illness begins to affect Kaori, and Kousei begins to lament that life is tearing him away from all of his loved ones. Kousei witnesses Kaori's deteriorating condition firsthand, and it rends him apart, once again shattering his will to play. However, we see some serious character development in Kousei when he not only begins to play piano with an unstable mental state but also inspires Kaori to live and not give up on life; Kaori begins to see "the light" as Kousei plays music for her sake.

As Kaori's health begins to falter, several new symbols appear intermittently throughout the show. Fireflies, winter, a starry night, and a black cat frequently appear throughout the second half of the show. In this show, fireflies, winter, and night all symbolize death and loss. As Kousei and Kaori interact in a very touching moment near a river, fireflies flicker away and die, which is a bad omen of things to come. The coming of winter complements the beginning of the show, which took place in spring.



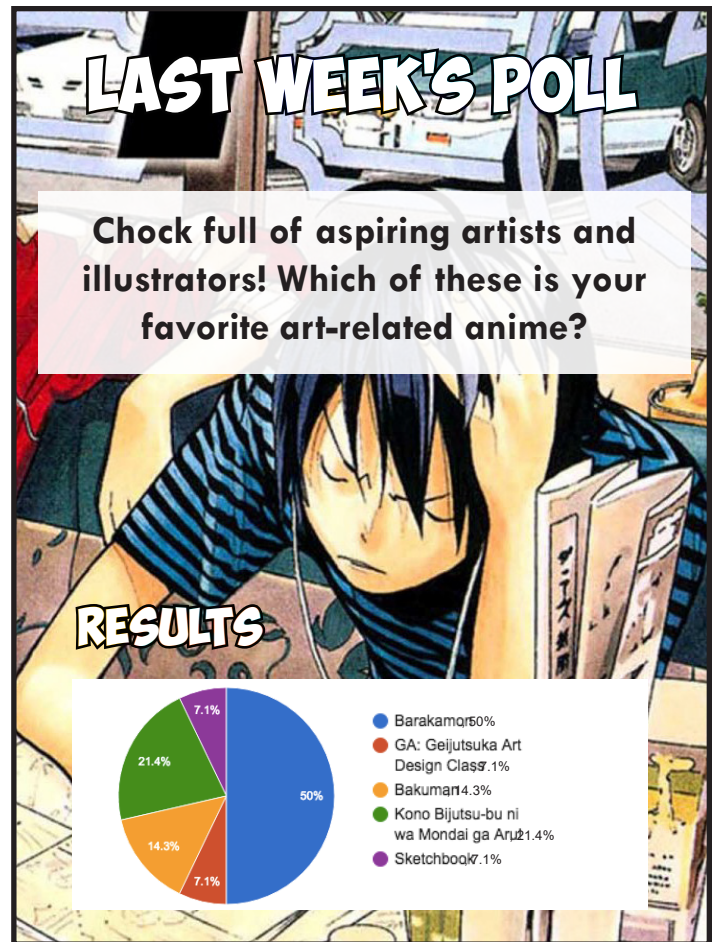
During Kousei's hospital visit to Kaori, the dark and tense atmosphere barely has any light; this adds to the gloomy and morose situation.

The frequency of starry nights also creates a duality in the show: a bright and sunny day represents freedom, happiness, and life, while a starry night represents death and sadness. The recurrent symbol of a black cat is perhaps the most important symbol of all in the show. As a little kid, Kousei originally owned a black cat named Chelsea, but after it injures Kousei's hand, Kousei's mother throws it out of the house, fearing that it would affect Kousei's valuable piano-playing hands. Kousei painfully regrets the loss of his black cat, and in the show he periodically sees a stray black cat (a cat that is seemingly unrelated to Chelsea) whenever Miyazono Kaori is present. In a way, both the black cat and Kaori are Kousei's objects of affection.

So, in a sense, the stray black cat represents Kaori, his love interest. In an ominous display of foreshadowing, the stray black cat gets hit by a car as Kaori's condition unexpectedly worsens, and the black cat eventually dies from blood loss. In my opinion, this is probably the best usage of foreshadowing and symbolism in the entire show. In addition, *Your Lie in April* utilizes perspective in a very unique way. We never see Kaori's thoughts throughout the show. Kaori's actions don't always add up and make sense to the viewer. For example, she displays profound sadness when she attempts to convince Kousei to be her accompanist during her violin performance. It's a little strange that she would choose Kousei to play with her, considering that Kousei hasn't played piano in over two years at the time. However, Kaori's actions take on an entirely different meaning after the sudden plot twist at the ending of the show. But you'll have to find that out for yourself.



In the end, *Your Lie in April* will certainly live on as a true favorite in my heart. It can be a little too melodramatic and slow-paced at times, but at its core, it sets out to tell a brilliant story and executes the plot very well. Its musical soundtrack is spectacular as well, because each tune can easily make you feel a pang in your heart. In the words of Miyazono Kaori, "I... won't forget" this anime.




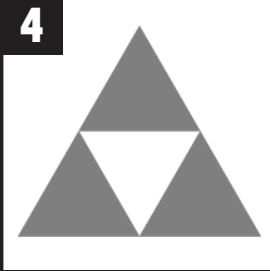










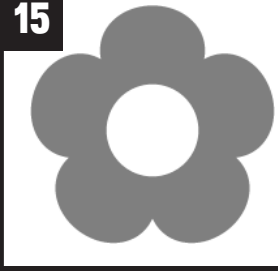






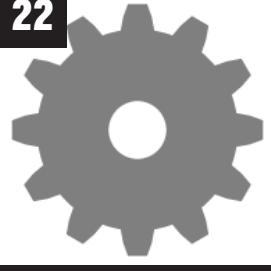
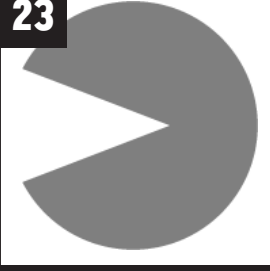






# THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITY

## SUPER SMASH QUIZ

Do you recognize these *Smash 4* icons? See if you can name all of the corresponding franchises!

1 	2 	3 	4 	5 
6 	7 	8 	9 	10 
11 	12 	13 	14 	15 
16 	17 	18 	19 	20 
21 	22 	23 	24 	25 

1. Animal Crossing, 2. Mario, 3. Donkey Kong, 4. Zelda, 5. Metroid, 6. Kirby, 7. Metal Gear, 8. F-Zero, 9. Pokemon, 10. Mother, 11. Fire Emblem, 12. Game & Watch, 13. Kid Icarus, 14. Mario, 15. Pikmin, 16. Sonic, 17. R.O.B Universe, 18. Punchout!, 19. Wii Fit Trainer, 20. Xenoblade, 21. Duck Hunt, 22. Megaman, 23. Pacman, 24. Street Fighter, 25. Final Fantasy



Konshuu proudly accepts  
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content featured, please submit to:  
**J.MP/KONSUB**



## PUBLICATION STAFF

**Editor-in-Chief:** Austin Tai

**Managing Editor:** Josh Roque

**Layout Editors:** Edward Hong, Nimsi Garcia, Jamie You

**Writers:** Andrew Oeung, Andy Chen, Andres Gonzalez,  
Takayuki Yokota, Cassandra Sonne

**Illustrators:** Rika Sato, Lulu Wang, Helen Wang

## REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS

### Manga Socials

GBC Patio

Thursdays, 5:30 - 6:30pm

### Game Nights

234 Dwinelle

Thursdays, 8:00 - 10:00pm



Artwork by: Andy Chen  
Sana Inui - Mashiroiro Symphony

calanimagealpha.com | facebook.com/groups/calanimagealpha  
twitter.com/calanimagealpha | calanimagealpha.tumblr.com