The ultimate Japanese animation music (anisong) group in Japan known as JAM Project (Japan Animation Makers) have amassed a large fandom worldwide for their popular anime, tokusatsu (live-action) and video game theme songs.

The group consists of music artists who were known for their anime TV theme songs in Japan such as Hironobu Kageyama (“Dragon Ball Z”, “Saint Seiya” and “M.D. Geist”), Masaaki Endoh (“The King of Braves GaoGaiGar” and “Daigunder”), Hiroshi Kitadani (“One Piece” and “Madan Senki Ryuken-do”), Masami Okui (“Revolutionary Girl Utena”, “Slayers”, “Sorcerer Hunters” and “Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel Monsters”) and Yoshiki Fukuyama (“Macross 7”).

The group has released 39 CD singles in Japan and seven albums which include hit songs for “Super Robot Wars”, “New Getter Roboto”, “Shin Mazinger Shougeki! Z Hen”, “Scrapped Princess”, and many more titles.

The group’s music will now be available in the U.S. via iTunes on August 25th. J!-ENT recently had the opportunity to be a part of a media Q&A interview with one of the founding members of JAM Project, Hironobu Kageyama.
with the upcoming music release of JAM Project’s music on iTunes USA, J!-ENT recently participated in an Q&A roundtable style of interview with a few other media in which our questions were fielded to JAM Project member (and one of the founders) Hironobu Kageyama.

The following interview includes questions from J!-ENT and a few of the other media who took part in the Q&A session.

If you have one word to describe JAM Project what word would that be and why?

KAGEYAMA: “Challenge”—the attitude to strive for new things describes JAM Project itself.

Last year, you toured with JAM Project on your first world tour, WORLD FLIGHT 2008. What was it like to expand your performances beyond Japan?

KAGEYAMA: We were very moved no matter where we visited. We were impressed to know that the Japanese culture centering Japanese anime is received and loved this much by people all over the world while we—or most of Japanese people, I would say—are unaware of.

Which venue outside of Japan was the most memorable for you? What was the fan response to your group in the different venues around the world?

KAGEYAMA: Every venue was wonderful and I can’t pick one. The passion of fans in Latin countries is very frantic. The standing ovation that fans in Baltimore gave impressed us. And the other thing we were impressed with was the fans’ energy in Beijing. Before the concert, it was most difficult for us to get an image of how Beijing fans would be hyped-up.

Of all the songs that you perform live, which song would be your favorite and why?

KAGEYAMA: If I had to choose a song that I enjoy performing to fans…that would be “SKILL”.

You’ve just completed the most recent tour; HURRICANE TOUR 2009. Are there plans for JAM Project to perform future concerts? Will the United States be included?

KAGEYAMA: 2010 will be our 10th anniversary since we started. So if we could, we would like to do another world tour including the United States.

You have a rich legacy with your theme songs for many famous and internationally beloved anime. What is it about JAM Project’s music that you think seems to resonate so well with international audiences?

KAGEYAMA: The biggest reason JAM Project’s music is loved is that people all over the world like Japanese anime so much. In addition, the music JAM Project creates is all packed with positive spirits—energy, power and future.

Most recently, you teamed up with your former band, LAZY, for the opening theme of “Mazinger Edition Z: The Impact!”. What was it like to reunite with your original band?

KAGEYAMA: Since we have lost two members already, I thought there wouldn’t be a chance to reunite LAZY and perform once again. So this time, I’m more than thankful to get an offer to reunite LAZY to perform a theme song for “Mazinger Z”.

Were you a big fan of “Mazinger Z”? KAGEYAMA: Talking about my generation, we grew up as a first generation of the anime/tokusatsu’s golden era. At the time we entered school, “Ultraman” began airing and when we were in 5th grade, “Masked Rider” started. There is no doubt to say that “Mazinger Z” is the king of robots for us.

Throughout your career you have released many hit albums and singles. But among those releases, which song was the most challenging for you to create/develop?

KAGEYAMA: Probably “Crest of Z’s”. For JAM Project, fast tempo and power are the most critical elements and we put lots of effort into the song.

J!-ENT: Are there any genres of music that you would like to work on?

KAGEYAMA: We hope to join a big anime project that could be a theatrical film, and try to create a unique but powerful world of JAM Project.

In addition to touring around the world, you will also be expanding your fan base through this new project with Bandai Visual and iTunes. How will this affect JAM Project’s future? When you create music, do you consider overseas releases?

KAGEYAMA: Ever since WORLD FLIGHT 2008, I began writing lyrics with an overseas release in mind. Not limited to the song “No Border”, creating an English version of anime songs is necessary. Of course, I need to study English. (laughs)

This question is about a reaction of a Japanese audience. Many of your American fans are familiar with your music from “SoulTaker”, “ex-Driver”, “Scrapped Princess”, “Gravion” and “Super Robot Wars”. Of the songs that are performed in front of a Japanese audience, which song have you noticed get a tremendous response from your Japanese fans?

KAGEYAMA: In Japan, songs related to “Super Robot Wars” are far beyond popular. Last year, I realized that the show’s preferences between American fans and Japanese fans are different. I realized this during a panel at Otakon. An American fan asked us a question about “MD Geist” which I sang a song about.
Anime Songs
Now Available
on iTunes Store!

No Border
(Eng. and Jap. versions)

VOYAGER

mellow melody

GONG

DRAGON

Reflectia

Kurenai no Kiba

Melkku no Prisoner

JAM Project

No Border

The Gate of the Hell

The Gate of the Hell

G O  !!

DEPARTURE

JAM Project

No Border

SKILL

Sekai no Namida

G O  !!

DEPARTURE

JAM Project

No Border
(Eng. and Jap. versions)

SKILL

The Gate of the Hell

true tears

G O  !!

DEPARTURE

JAM Project

What songs are coming up next?

www.myspace.com/J_anisong

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J!-ENT INTERVIEW: JAM Project

for. That was a show that couldn’t draw any attention from Japanese fans at all. (laughs)

What is JAM Project working on currently? Could you tell us as much as you could?
KAGEYAMA: We are currently working on a these song for an anime based on a card game called “Battle Spirits”.

What is your favorite song that you have ever released?
KAGEYAMA: “Hero”. I wrote both the lyrics and music, but I like the song very much.

J!-ENT: What is your favorite series that you’ve worked on? And what is your favorite show that you didn’t work on?
KAGEYAMA: That’s “Garo”. I appeared as the voice of Zalba, too, and this is a show that I will never forget. “Spirited Away” and “Porco Rosso” are the ones I personally like.

Are there any shows, anime or tokusatsu, that you wish JAM Project had been given the opportunity to create music for?

KAGEYAMA: “Gundam” and “Doraemon”. (laughs)

Could you give us your definition of those words (songs)? Are there any songs that are unforgettable or have become a turning point for you? Are there any stories behind them?

a. VICTORY
A song recorded with current members.
The number of chorus parts increased.
This song was created when we transformed from various individuals into one team.

b. RISING FORCE
A song we strived for “trance” type of music as a challenge. We would like to keep challenging various types of music.

c. GENKAI BATTLE
An anime song of anime songs.

d. DIVINE LOVE
Danny Kitadani’s song. (Laughing)

e. CRAZY REVOLUTION
A coupling song for “Kaze ni Nare” used for “ex-Driver”. I miss this song. I like Rolling Stones so much, so I like this type of music.

Is there any message you’d like sent to the US fans of JAM Project?

KAGEYAMA: I would love to perform in the United States again. In order to do so, I have been studying English. Please keep supporting Japanese anime and JAM Project!

JAM Project’s songs are available on iTunes USA. For more information on JAM Project, please visit the following Website:

www.MySpace.com/J_Anisong
A J!-ENT SPECIAL FEATURE ARTICLE
BY DENNIS A. AMITH
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AUGUST 2009 | J!-ENT
AN ORDINARY DAY.
COUCH-SLOUCHING.
RUG-IMITATING. LAZY
MINUTE AFTER
(YAWN) LAZY MINUTE
WAS PASSING.

WHEN SUDDENLY...

TWEEEEEEEEEET!
PERSONAL
FOUL!
INACTIVE
ACTIVITY...

IT WAS MIKE "GOOD MANNERS"
MCMANNIS! AND WHO'S THAT
WITH HIM? NFL SUPERSTAR
RUNNING BACK, REGGIE BUSH!

HEY! PLAYERS DON'T
GET LAZY PENALTIES!

LET'S...

...ON A
GREAT DAY!

...SO PLAY THEY DID! THERE
WAS FUN (AND RUNNING)!
THERE WERE SMILES (AND
JUMPING)! AND LAZINESS
WAS CRUSHED!

YOU DON'T WANT ME
TO GIVE YOU A LAZY
PENALTY, DO YOU?

GET UP
AND PLAY
AN HOUR
A DAY!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN NFL STAR LIKE REGGIE BUSH TO BE A PLAYER! JUST GET UP
AND PLAY AN HOUR A DAY! IT'S A GREAT WAY TO BE HEALTHY, HAVE FUN, AND AVOID A
LAZY PENALTY. BEING HEALTHY AND STAYING ACTIVE IS IMPORTANT. VISIT SMALLSTEP.GOV
TO LEARN ABOUT FUN WAYS TO GET AN HOUR OF EXERCISE A DAY!

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