

# Trends in Japan

## Pop Culture

Discover manga, anime, J-pop, and much more in this section showcasing the latest pop culture phenomena to capture the imagination of Japan's young people.

Web Japan <http://web-japan.org/>  
Trends in Japan <http://web-japan.org/trends/>

## Emoji Express a World of Emotions

*Emoji* (literally "picture characters") is the Japanese word for the faces and other symbols people use to convey their feelings in e-mails and text messages. They have become an everyday feature of sending and receiving messages in Japan. Here we present a look at how *emoji* are used and how they differ from Western "emoticons" and "smileys."



The *emoji* for "happy." (C) KDDI



The *emoji* used to express consternation.  
(C) KDDI

(T\_T)

A *kaomoji* representing "crying."  
(C) NTT DOCOMO



A text message composed with *emoji*.

## Multitalented Voice Actors Gain Popularity

CDs by *seiyu*, the actors who provide the voices for characters in anime and video games, routinely appear on Japan's music charts. In addition to stepping into their on-screen roles to sing theme songs and other musical numbers, it is not uncommon for Japanese voice actors to perform as artists in their own right. As *seiyu* achieve new levels of popularity, more and more people are aspiring to careers in voice acting and trying their hand at dubbing using karaoke-like facilities.



A CD by *seiyu* Mizuki Nana.



A CD by *seiyu* Hirano Aya.



A cafe where patrons can try the Afrec! service.



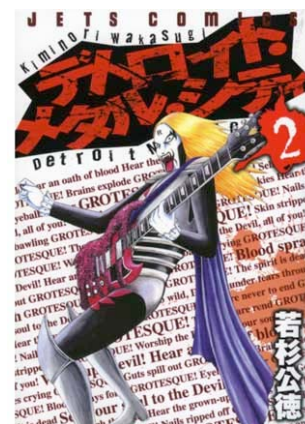
Makino Yui performing at Anime Song Live.  
(C)proof

## Tales of Young Musicians Set for Movie Debuts

Manga that depict the lives of young musicians have recently been capturing the imagination of comic fans, and some are being made into anime and live-action movies. Their success has not only led to a boom in sales of related merchandise, but has also spurred increasing numbers of young people to take up music and join bands with their friends.



*Nodame Cantabile.*  
(C) Tomoko Ninomiya / Kodansha



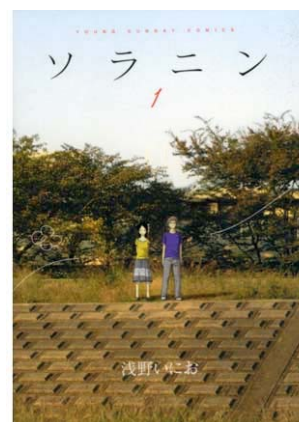
*Detroit Metal City.*  
(C) Kiminori Wakasugi / Hakusensha



*Beck.* (C) Harold Sakuishi / Kodansha



*K-On!* (C) Kaki Fly / Houbunsha



The front cover of *Solanin*.  
(C) Asano Inio / Shogakukan



A scene from the movie *Solanin*, to be released in Japan in April 2010.  
(C) 2010 Inio Asano / Shogakukan / *Solanin* Production Committee / Photo by Yoshiharu Ota

# "Visual" Bands Rock the World

## Fans Flock to First V-Rock Festival



Kagrra (C) V-ROCK FESTIVAL

A genre of Japanese rock music known as *V-kei* ("visual" style), is enjoying growing popularity in the United States, Europe, and the rest of Asia. Visual-style artists are distinguished by their striking appearance, featuring ostentatious makeup, hair styles, clothing, and props. In October 2009, the first international festival of *V-kei* groups was organized, with the goal of cementing Japan's place as an exporter of musical culture.



the GazettE  
(C) V-ROCK FESTIVAL



Alice Nine (C) V-ROCK FESTIVAL



Tsuchiya Anna  
(C) V-ROCK FESTIVAL