

Interview – Kyary Pamyu Pamyu

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[Lewis]: Hi Kyary. It's great for us that you're coming back to tour Australia again. Was there anything you missed on your last visit that you wanted to see?

[Kyary]: Last time I was able to visit the zoo and the aquarium, so it was such a fulfilling trip. I enjoyed it very much. At the zoo, I was looking forward to seeing koalas but they were sleeping, so hopefully this time I can cuddle them.

[Lewis]: In the last five years, I think you and just a few other Japanese artists such as Perfume and Yasutaka Nakata have changed pop music forever, not just in Japan but all over the world. There's definitely a new generation of people from the USA, Europe, Brazil, even Australia making music who are inspired by your sound. How does it feel to have your work reflected back at you like this? I imagine it would be a strange experience?

[Kyary]: It is very strange but I feel very happy at the same time. There is a lot of cool Japanese music and I'd love more fans overseas to know about it.

[Lewis]: Most people will have found your music through music videos, which have become a central part of your work. Whenever I watch a new video of yours, at first, it's just like a simple pop-music clip, but then it becomes more and more captivating. There's always complex symbolism, mixing the scary and strange with the cute and friendly. There are often monsters and wild animals like sharks, bears or aliens, and it's not clear if they are your friends. In this way, they remind me of many fairy-tales, which on the surface are quite cute, but can also be very dark, and gruesome! Are there particular movies or folk-stories that have had a big influence on you?

[Kyary]: I love watching many movies. I watched JAWS when I was little and it made a huge impact on me as a child. I was really scared to be eaten by sharks, it was sort of a traumatic experience, but so addictive to watch over and over. Since then, I've started to think that sharks are such cool animals. That's why I try to express those scary, gruesome things in a positive way in my work.

[Lewis]: Actually, before you were releasing music you were a fashion blogger right?

[Kyary]: I wouldn't think of myself as a fashion blogger. I just enjoyed my high school life by taking photos and writing blogs.

[Lewis]: Through your music videos and costume design, the first Japanese word most people in the West learn is Kawaii. In the same way, the first Tokyo suburb people learn about is Harajuku. How do you see the relationship between fashion and music in your work?

[Kyary]: I was walking along a street in Harajuku when I was a high school student and by chance a fashion magazine photographer took my photo, and that led to my interest in fashion. At the same time, I was interested in music, so I listened to various types of music. Among those, I particularly liked the music that Yasutaka Nakata creates. I'm so fortunate that now I am able to work with fashion and Yasutaka Nakata's music.

[Lewis]: I know you work closely with Yasutaka Nakata on your albums. He has become a kind of cult genre with legendary status amongst composers now. I also heard a little while back that you were writing some music with Sophie MSMSMSM too. Is this true? I think a lot of people are hoping it is!

[Kyary]: All of my music is produced by Yasutaka Nakata! This year marks my 5th anniversary since the debut and I've announced some special projects, including "collaboration," so I'd love to collaborate with international artists someday.

[Lewis]: You have become a kind of ambassador for J-pop music in the west, if I can say that. With your work as a gateway, I think people have discovered many other Japanese artists as well. Maybe because your music is deeply connected to a J-pop tradition, going all the way back to bands like the Yellow Magic Orchestra. Please tell us, are there any bands or artists from Japan that we need to check out? Anything we might be missing out on?

[Kyary]: Japanese bands I often perform with at festivals include Frederic, Sōtaisei Riron, Rekishi. I really like them, please check them out.

[Lewis]: My last question is a silly one I'm sorry, haha. Will you be performing 'Ninja Re Bang Bang' at your Australian shows. Can I make a request!

[Kyary]: 'Ninja Re Bang Bang' is a very popular song overseas, and I think I'll perform it. Keep your expectations high!