

Japanese Culture Now

モーニング娘。^{むすめ} Morning Musume: With a little effort, anyone can shine

The group of teen pop stars known as Morning Musume has brought high spirits and optimism to Japan as the country languishes in a long-drawn-out recession. With sales topping 1.6 million CDs for their hit single "Love Machine" in 1999, the group has hooked a broad fan base, from children to adults.

Morning Musume is composed of teenage girls who don't make the final round in the television program ASAYAN, which features aspiring young music stars auditioning for a chance at fame and fortune. In other words, the group is "a collection of scraps from the cutting-room floor." What has transformed these girls into a group of popular teen idols is their producer Tsunku, who composes the group's songs and writes the lyrics himself.

In his book *LOVE ron* [Theory of Love], Tsunku explains, "In this world, only a handful of people are geniuses. Ninety-nine percent of us are ordinary people, who, no

matter how hard we try, will never be prodigies. Everyone, however, has at least one strong suit. And depending on the effort invested in those abilities, I believe anyone can excel and even beat out the natural prodigies of the world.

Most important is how you go about finding and cultivating your particular strengths. If you can discover what you have a knack for and develop it yourself, people around you, even if they think you odd at first, will eventually come to appreciate the appeal that your special ability gives you. It does not matter how many deficiencies or complexes you have, as long as you excel in at least one area."

The secret to Morning Musume's success is that the members accept themselves for who they are, and give their all to what they do. By keeping the group going, that is the message Tsunku wanted to send to the people of Japan.

Photos: zetima Inc.



I WISH

I Wish

(music and lyrics by Tsunku)

This song will cheer you up when you're feeling lonely. Many fans say it is their favorite. Released in September 2000.

All alone and nothing to do tonight
Am I the only one feeling lonely? Ooh ah
You message me a little note, so silly
As to make me laugh
But I just can't stop crying
Oh, thank you

No one knows me better 'n me, so
No one's gotta believe in me more 'n me!

Life is wonderful!
Hey, why not try meeting someone new
And falling in love?
Ah, it's amazing! With all your heart
You can laugh, you can cry

Some days it's scary to talk to that someone,
But I'll gather my courage and speak
About me

There are sunny days ahead
And some days the rain's gonna fall
So, hey, one day it'll all work out!

Life is wonderful!
Hey, even if you take the same old path,
Try finding something new
Oh, amazing! Oh, make it a path
Toward a meeting with that someone



でっかい宇宙に愛がある

Love in an Infinite Universe

(music and lyrics by Tsunku)

As a song to aid the charity program 24 Hour Television, this tune was sung by a large number of people using sign language while singing the words. Released in July 2001.

On the round, round Earth
In the wide, wide universe
An itty bit of kindness
Can become a whole lotta love

Because this feeling's true
I want it to grow and spread
If it doesn't happen today,
Someday soon 'd be O.K.

Even if I can't put it in words
Even if we are apart
I'll try to believe
In telepathy

Rather than blaming someone
Rather than shedding tears
It's better to love yourself

Even an itty bitty baby
Cries and cries with all its might
You and me, and me and you
Should search with all our might
And discover what we can do

Morning Musume Website (zetima Online)

⇨ <http://www.zetima.co.jp/artist/Morning/>

If you would like to obtain CDs by Japanese vocal artists, please check the following sites.

⇨ amazon.co.jp (<http://www.amazon.co.jp/>)

⇨ [Fujisan.com](http://www.fujisan.com/) (<http://www.fujisan.com/>)