



Search



ABOUT | SU



FEATURES ▼ COLUMNS ▼ BLOGS ▼ NEWS ▼ MUSIC ▼ FILM ▼ TELEVISION ▼ DVDS ▼ BOOKS ▼ COMICS ▼

DVDs

[Home](#) > [DVDs](#) > [Reviews](#) > [Lewis Rapkin](#) > [Live From Tokyo](#)



Media Junkies Exploding with Creative Energy: 'Live From Tokyo'

By **Christel Loar** 11 October 2011
PopMatters Associate Music Editor

Director Lewis Rapkin's documentary *Live from Tokyo* explores the nearly endless variety and incredible intensity of that city's independent underground music scene. As demonstrated by the film's kinetic interstitial segments showing neon-lit skyscrapers, rushing traffic scenes, anime graphics and quick-cut editing, Tokyo is a crowded, fast-paced, futuristic city that inundates its population with an overwhelming and incessant stream of cultural and media stimuli, and that over-stimulation obviously spills over into the way that its musicians create.

Several musicians, journalists, promoters, label owners and venue owners, and other members of Tokyo's music scene point to the internet's ability to connect people in remote places as one of the major influences on the explosion of musical creativity in recent years. The Japanese consumption of American culture is another big influence ("They are media junkies," says one interviewee of the average Japanese citizens).

As in other parts of the world, downloading mp3s has contributed to a decline in album sales, but it also means that more and more people have easier, quicker access to a greater variety of music without needing to search for and wait for expensive, imported discs. Add to that the fact Japan has always been both technologically innovative and adept at incorporating elements of many different cultures into its own, and the artistic diversity in Tokyo makes perfect sense.

Live music shows are thriving in Tokyo According to Rapkin's subjects, there are literally thousands of bands playing on any given night in Tokyo. This is somewhat surprising, given the still-



Live From Tokyo

Director: [Lewis Rapkin](#)

Cast: DMBQ, d.v.d, Kirihito, Kuruucrew, The Zoobombs

(US DVD: 23 Aug 2011)

[Amazon](#)

Like 26

12

PRINT

EMAIL

0 COMMENTS

SHARE

Text: **A A A**

prevalent practice of Noruma—which means that bands essentially “pay to play” at the live houses—and it is just one of the fascinating facets of this film. Most interesting, though, are the artists themselves. The bands profiled are presented largely through their live performances.

The candy-colored pop of Tokyo Pinsalocks leads naturally into the Japanese punk rock of DMBQ. The eclectic influences that inspire the Zoobombs is followed shortly by a segment on the hand-made electronic instruments of Makoto Oshiro. Combining music and video is, of course, also very prevalent in the Tokyo scene. Collaborative projects between musicians and visual artists have lead to groups such as Sexy Synthesizer, with its video game-style electronic music; D.v.D., whose compositions translate on the screen behind the stage into something that looks like a live game of Pong; Optrum, which plays psychedelic sounds on fluorescent light tubes. A segment on the live performance of Yudaya Jazz + Plugdead reveals a live, improvisational collaboration.

There are no bonus features on *Live from Tokyo*, but there is a code included in the DVD, with which you can download a compilation featuring artists from the film. Additionally, ten percent of the profits from DVD sales will be donated to the Red Cross for earthquake relief.

Rating: 

Christel Loar is a freelance writer and editor, a part-time music publicist, and a full-time music fan. She is often an overreactor and sometimes an overachiever. When not dodging raindrops or devising escape plans, Christel is usually found down front and slightly left of center stage reveling in a performance by yet another new favorite band.

Like

12

0



submit

MEDIA



COMMENTS

Like

1 person liked this.

Add New Comment

[Login](#)



Type your comment here.

Showing 0 comments

Sort by popular now ▼

✉ [Subscribe by email](#) 📡 [RSS](#)

© 1999-2011 PopMatters.com. All rights reserved.
PopMatters.com™ and PopMatters™ are trademarks
of PopMatters Media, Inc. and PopMatters Magazine.

[ABOUT](#) | [SUBMISSIONS](#) | [A](#)

PopMatters is wholly independently owned and operated.

