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## LIFESTYLE

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### Shonen Knife focuses on fun

By: Tom Lanham  
Special to The Examiner  
September 8, 2010

Almost three decades into its career, the Osaka trio Shonen Knife has a brand-new lease on life in the U.S., thanks to the Goo Goo Dolls' enterprising bassist Robby Takac. His J-Rock-themed Good Charamel Records is unleashing three new releases from Naoko Yamano and crew — English-language versions of their last two Japanese albums "Fun Fun Fun" and "Free Time," plus a full-length concert DVD, "Live at Mohawk Place." The band plays two Bay Area shows this weekend.



Still going strong: After nearly three decades, Japanese popsters Shonen Knife continue to make happy music and go on tour. (Courtesy photo)

**Can you believe it's been almost 30 years of Shonen Knife?** I know! For me, if I stop and think that 30 years have passed, it's amazing. But I spend almost every minute of every day working, so I don't feel like such a long time has passed. I've been very busy.

**Did you find time to get married, have children?** Yes. I have just one child, a daughter who is 10 years old. And she respects me doing Shonen Knife, but she doesn't like rock music. She prefers classical music. Children don't usually listen to their parents anyway, so if parents like classical music, their children listen to rock. And if the parents like rock music, their children might instead choose hip-hop or classical. But she has started to play harmonica, keyboards and vibraphone, although she is so shy, she doesn't like to play in front of people.

**Were there times when you considered quitting?** From the beginning, when I first asked Michie and Atsuko to be members, I was never even thinking I would create Shonen Knife. But fortunately, over the years I could always find good new members, so I could continue the band. And I'm still having fun with the new members, so I hope Shonen Knife will never die. Just like a zombie!

**Were you recently invited by curator Matt Groening to play the All Tomorrow's Parties Festival in London?** Yes! And I didn't know that he was a big fan of Shonen Knife. But I like "The Simpsons." A lot. We even covered the "Simpsons" theme song, "Do the Bartman," a long time ago. So I was so honored to be chosen by him, and now I have his autograph on my ATP backstage pass, and he drew Simpsons characters on it.

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**What is the most important lesson you've learned in Shonen Knife?** I think just having fun with music. And also I would like our audience to have fun through our music, as well. I think that is the most important thing.

**IF YOU GO**

**Shonen Knife**

**Where:** The Uptown, 1928 Telegraph Ave., Oakland

**When:** 9 p.m. Saturday

**Tickets:** \$14

**Contact:** [www.ticketweb.com](http://www.ticketweb.com)

**Where:** Bottom of the Hill, 1233 17th St., San Francisco

**When:** 9 p.m. Sunday

**Tickets:** \$12 advance, \$14 door

**Contact:** [www.bottomofthehill.com](http://www.bottomofthehill.com)

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