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"STAY HOME & PARAPARA": THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC ON THE PARA PARA SCENE IN JAPAN (2020-2023)

Dissertation to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain a
Master's Degree in Asian Studies

By

Ana Raquel Romeu Aguiar

Faculty of Human Sciences

September 2024



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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to analyze the evolution and changes of the Japan-based para para dance scene (JP: パラパラシーン), focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic period from 2020 to 2023. Our main goal is to determine the impact the pandemic had on the scene. I start this dissertation by conducting a literature review to examine how para para has been discussed within academic circles. Following this, I provide a historical overview of para para and trace its origins from its precursors and its emergence in the mid-1980s, through its peak in the late 1990s, and its presence in the contemporary Japanese pop culture. I then analyze the evolution of the scene since the beginning of the pandemic. The methodology employs both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and is divided into three parts: observational techniques during my fieldwork in Japan from August 2023 to January 2024; interviews with event hosts, dancers, DJs, labels, and content creators from the scene; and a survey targeting people who had some prior knowledge of para para, which garnered 104 responses. I conclude that the pandemic turned several events into hybrid events rather than being exclusively on-site whilst increasing the number of events and slightly increasing the number of regular customers. I also highlight how para para has adapted to the online world, especially on social media platforms such as TikTok. However, the online para para scene might not necessarily translate into increased participation in events.

Keywords: COVID-19; Eurobeat; Gyarū; Para Para; Subculture.

RESUMO

Esta dissertação busca analisar a evolução e as mudanças cena da dança japonesa para para (JP: パラパラシーン), com foco no período da pandemia da COVID-19, de 2020 e 2023, visando definir o impacto da pandemia na cena. Para o primeiro capítulo desta dissertação, foi realizado um estado da arte para compilar as discussões sobre para para no mundo acadêmico. No segundo capítulo, a história do para para é explicada desde os seus precursores e o seu início em meados dos anos 80, passando pelo seu auge nos anos 90, até a sua presença na cultura pop Japonesa dos dias atuais. Por fim, o capítulo 4 foi focada na evolução da cena desde o início da pandemia. A metodologia, tanto quantitativa quando qualitativa, foi dividida em três partes: técnicas de observação com base em trabalho de campo em eventos de para para do Japão entre agosto de 2023 e janeiro de 2024; entrevistas com pessoas da cena, desde organizadores de eventos, dançarinos e DJs, a gravadoras de música eurobeat e criadores de conteúdo; e um formulário respondido por 104 pessoas que já tinham conhecimento prévio da cena para para. Conclui-se que a pandemia transformou diversos eventos presenciais em híbridos, bem como que após a pandemia houve um aumento no número de eventos e um pequeno aumento na clientela dos eventos. Além disso, o para para se adaptou ao mundo online, principalmente a redes sociais como TikTok. No entanto, a cena do para para online e a cena dos eventos de para para são dois universos que não necessariamente se encontram, já que muitos entusiastas de para para não frequentam eventos, consumindo o para para majoritariamente pelas redes sociais.

Palavras-chave: COVID-19; Eurobeat; Gyarū; Para Para; Subcultura.

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Romanization of words in Japanese

The romanization of Japanese words follows the Hepburn romanization system (JP: ヘボン式), widely used throughout Japan. Meiji Gakuin University provides a table¹ of how each character should be romanized, and it is the main reference for romanization in this dissertation.

¹ <https://mgda.meijigakuin.ac.jp/waei/hepburn.html>

Introduction

What makes Japanese culture so popular? The first detail one should know is that the interest in Japan is not recent. If we trace back to the 19th century, the West, especially countries like England, France, and the US, were already appreciating Japan's art and literature (Alt, 2020, p. 5).

Japan took a heavy toll due to World War II, as Westerners started switching their views about Japanese content from admiration to mockery. Japan became the synonym for cheap, low-quality goods (Alt, 2020, p. 6).

However, as the new generation of Westerners was growing up, they did not have the political bias adults had and started appreciating some Japanese products and brands. The 1970s marked the emergence of popular characters like Hello Kitty and hobbies such as karaoke. (p. 7)

Japan's economy was thriving in the 1980s, in a period defined as the Bubble Period. The advances in technology and the country's futuristic image were challenging the Western hegemony. However, the Bubble Burst in the early 1990s resulted in economic crisis and stagnation. (pp. 9-10)

While Japan was dealing with an internal crisis due to the Burst, the Japanese animation featuring teenage girls in sailor suits fighting evil by moonlight was a huge success in the West. *Sailor Moon* (1992-1997) is just one example of 90s anime that crossed the Japanese borders: *Dragon Ball Z* (1989-1996) was another worldwide success. Allison (2000) states that both shows had similar archetypes that were pleased universally: the heroes were human and full of relatable emotions, whereas the enemies had an alien-ish appearance and a more ludicrous, unrelatable personality, and the mix of these two groups created a well-developed, dramatic, and entertaining story (pp. 266-267). The two series helped form a worldwide anime culture, which remains strong to this day.

Another aspect where Japan surpassed countries like the US was the female representation in media. Back to *Sailor Moon*, not only did the protagonist Usagi Tsukino and her friends bring visibility to girls, but their sailor suits were a remarkable fashion

statement, much more memorable and, once again, relatable than the US's Wonder Woman (pp. 268-269). The sailor suits were also the basis for one of the most iconic symbols of Japan: schoolgirls. The schoolgirl uniform is so representative of Japanese women that it can be spotted among popular artists, like J-rock all-female band SCANDAL and massive idol group AKB48, and in movies like *Battle Royale* (2000) and *Kill Bill* (2003) (Ashcraft & Ueda, 2014, pp. 34, 54, 60, and 69).

The image of schoolgirls was crucial to emphasize “Cool Japan”, a term frequently used by the Foreign Ministry (Linhart, 2009, p. 217) while promoting the country overseas. It is also an expression that explains Japan's soft power, as they export several types of media around the world so that those who are consuming it create a positive, prestigious, and sympathetic impression of Japan based on what they consume and adore. The strategy of soft power is using culture to influence, even if unconsciously, the one who consumes it into supporting Japan's political agenda (McLelland, 2017, p. 6).

However, not every element of pop culture in Japan is exported and becomes extra successful worldwide - a few might be impactful mainly or solely in Japan. An element that might fit this description is para para (JP: パラパラ).

The word para para is an onomatopoeia that might indicate a light rain, a pinch of salt being sprinkled, or even the flipbook technique. In the case of this dissertation, para para is a synchronized dance, focused on arms, with angular movements, and danced to Eurobeat music. It originated in the 1980s and it officially had three booms, that is, moments when the dance was trending in Japan. Many schoolgirls loved to dance para para, and the association between them and the dance is still huge. Despite the three booms, para para seems to be overlooked by many books and studies on Japanese pop culture, perhaps because it is mainly a Japanese phenomenon instead of a worldwide one.

Para para will be the main subject of this dissertation. Because the timespan of para para is gigantic, I decided to focus from 2020 to 2023. The reason for that is the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted the para para scene as a whole by changing the way para para is consumed, making para para routines more accessible, turning on-site events into hybrid events, and even increasing the number of customers at events in Japan. The objective of this dissertation is to thoroughly analyze such impact.

In chapter 1, I conducted a state-of-the-art review on para para and related topics. If pop culture studies rarely mention para para, which kinds of studies do? The number of studies was low and very few had the dance as the main object of study. Most of them approached para para as a form of exercise and an activity for community bonding.

In chapter 2, I wrote an overview of the history of para para, although more focused on the Tokyo area. Details may differ from region to region. First, I presented the likely precursor of para para dancing, followed by its origin in Tokyo nightclubs. Then, I explain in detail the motives para para became a trend, especially during the late 1990s. This chapter crosses several subcultures together, in particular the musical genre Eurobeat and *gyaru* fashion subcultures. I conclude the chapter showcasing recent appearances of para para in Japanese and in a few international media.

In chapter 3, I explain the methodology for this study and the questions I intend to answer in chapter 4. In short, the methodology was both qualitative and quantitative and divided between observational techniques, interviews with people from the para para scene, and a survey with people interested in para para.

In chapter 4, I explain how a para para event works nowadays, and state my perceptions about the scene - again, details may differ from region to region, and my study was focused on the Tokyo area. The first part of the chapter focuses on the structure of the average para para event and which regions hold these types of events the most. Then, I show what impact the pandemic had on the scene as a whole, backed by the interviews and the survey.

Finally, the annex is divided into three parts: first, a glossary with all the terms from the para para scene that I used throughout the dissertation; second, all the complete interviews translated to English; and third, the survey's complete results.

Chapter 1: State of the Art

Para para (JP: パラパラ), also romanized as parapara, is a dance that originated in Japanese clubs during the 1980s. The term likely originated from the onomatopoeic way the Japanese sang the hook of *Take On Me* (1985), by A-Ha. However, Nakamura (2018, as cited in Wajima, 2022, p. 119) states that the term came from the hook of *Living On Video* (1982), by Trans-X. Whichever is true, both songs share Western origins (Norway x Canada) and belong to synth-pop.

Para para is mainly danced with one's upper body, especially arms, to Eurobeat music, a genre that is mostly produced by Italians targeting the Japanese market. The genre's origins are traced back to Italo-Disco. Each Eurobeat song has its routine, choreographed by official labels and clubs as well as non-official choreographies by para para dancers, also called paralists.

Para para is also an umbrella term for other synchronized dances belonging to what we will call “para para scene” throughout this study. Other “para” dances besides para para are danced to in events. Techpara (JP: テクパラ) is danced to (Hyper) Techno² and Eurodance music. It started in the 90s and is heavily influenced by the way of dancing from the famous nightclub Juliana's Tokyo (1991-1994). It is also mostly composed of arm movements but it is more freestyle compared to para para. Trapara (JP: トラパラ) is danced to trance music and, compared to para para and techpara, it is the one with the least leg movements. Fire Step (JP: ファイヤーステップ), on the other hand, is mainly composed

² Hyper Techno has no relation with the “Hypertechno” subgenre coined by German DJ Macon in the early 2020s.

of leg movements. It is danced to Italo-Disco and early-era Eurobeat (usually from the 1980s and early 1990s, when it sounded more similar to Italo-Disco). Finally, Yogore (JP: ヨゴレ) is usually danced to pop music. It is more common in the Kansai Region (a region where Kyoto and Osaka are located).

Para para was a phenomenon in the 1980s and the 1990s, and could be spotted in other media or subcultures, e.g., video games and anime. Despite the phenomenological value, its fame was not translated into the scholarly world. There are a few academic studies on para para, but the quantity is not expressive.

First, I searched for "パラパラ" on Google Scholar and found around 4,300 results. However, パラパラ is not exclusive to para para dance - it is also the Japanese term for flipbook. Skimming through the pages, almost all studies related to パラパラ refer to パラパラ漫画 or パラパラアニメ, that is, manga and anime using the flipbook technique.

After searching for "パラパラダンス" (para para dance, in English) to specify the genre of dance パラパラ, the number went down to 14 results.

Some of these studies used para para as an example of exercise. Morikawa & Kanamori (2009) analyzed it as a possible exercise for middle-aged and elderly people. Morikawa (2007, 2010) targeted the same audience. The studies concluded that the 'exercise' improved the participant's health, and those who noticed the effects more quickly were more likely to find it an appropriate exercise.

Tsuda et al. (2007), on the other hand, targeted children with disabilities. Para para was the chosen exercise, and research participants were divided into two groups: those who danced during lunch break, and those who did not. They concluded that the exercise had

more effect on the mental health of the participants than the physical health, especially among children with mental disorders and autism. Therefore, from both Morikawa's and Tsuda et al.'s studies, one can conclude that para para can be used to improve one's physical and mental health.

Suzuki (2001) tested how TV programs could raise viewers' interest in dancing, and para para was one of the examples. For para para, they chose a song by Hikaru Utada - one of the biggest artists in Japan during the time the study was conducted - and targeted university students.

Finally, a few studies just briefly mention para para, such as Fujita (2003), and Ishida & Kuroki (2001), who commented about SDR 3X, the Sony robot released in 2000 that danced para para. Yamashita (2007) studied how to involve children in the community they live in, and highlighted a poster drawn by one of the children of people dancing para para. Aoi & Ogawa (2009) attempted to strengthen parental participation in kindergartens, and one of the proposed activities was dancing a para para routine of a children's song called お魚天国 (Fish Heaven, in Japanese).

Cho (2016) studied the Okinawan identity and highlighted a case where a performance of *Eisa* (JP: エイサー), a traditional dance from Okinawa, was adapted by adding new moves unrelated to the dance, perhaps to “modernize” the performance and attract a new audience. The author also mentioned a performance by an *Eisa* community called Tingara. They performed a song called ニライカナイ (Nirai Kanai), by MAX, a girlgroup from Okinawa. The song was named after a place similar to heaven or paradise believed by worshippers of the *Ryukyuan* religion (JP: 琉球信仰), based in the Ryukyu Islands, nowadays part of the Kagoshima and the Okinawa Prefectures. In this performance,

para para is added to the choreography. It is, however, important to remember, that MAX has had an important connection to the para para scene since the beginning of their career, and several of their songs either have para para routines or have para para-influenced choreography. Therefore, such a connection is not random.

When I searched for “para para” on Google Scholar, I found more than 200,000 results. However, they were all a mix of other themes, such as the chemical “Para-para 'phenol–phenol’” and the Brazilian state of Pará. When searching for “para para dance”, the number went down to 29.

Most studies were in English, but some of them were in Mandarin (2), Bahasa Indonesia (3), and Portuguese (2). Because I do not speak Bahasa Indonesia, I used Google Translate to grasp the general idea of the content.

The Indonesian papers were focused on *gyaru* (JP: ギャル, gal in Japanese), a fashion sub-culture characterized by extravagant looks, long lashes, leopard prints, and tanning. Ariestafuri (2017) focused on *gyaru-moji* (JP: ギャル文字), their form of online communication, in which they tended to mix hiragana, katakana, kanji, and other symbols when typing. Para para was briefly mentioned as one of the most common activities among *gyaru*. Augustine et al. (2023) highlighted the *ganguro* (JP: 顔黒), a sub-type within the *gyaru* fashion culture in which girls are more tanned than the usual *gyaru*. Para para was mentioned in the context of the “CAFE&BAR GANGURO”, a *ganguro*-themed cafe based in Shibuya that closed in 2018. Employees from this cafe (who were *ganguro*) danced to para para - and a few customers would dance with them. I could not access the papers in Mandarin but from the preview, I noticed that the one from Jiang Nan (2003) mentioned the Hong Kongese artist Aaron Kwok, the main actor in the popular rom-com movie *Para Para Sakura* (2001). He

plays the role of a dance instructor who teaches para para - back when the dance was at its peak -, and the original song *Para Para Sakura* was a phenomenon during the early-2000s in Hong Kong, and it has been performed in idol shows to this day.

As for studies in English, para para is a side theme. Some focused on the rhythm game called Para Para Paradise (PPP) (Blaine, 2005; Smith, 2006; Höysniemi, 2006) as an object in comparison to other rhythm games (e.g., Dance Dance Revolution, or DDR). In PPP, one has to follow a certain para para routine, and sensors will indicate how accurate the movements are. The routines featured in PPP were official and played in official events. They are also available on VHS and DVD. The game does not exist anymore but a few routines made it to other rhythm games: *Mickey Mouse March* became a Japan-exclusive track on *Just Dance 2*, whereas *Night of Fire* is featured on *Dance Evolution*. Both cases maintained the original choreography.

Cheng (2011) also mentioned para para along with DDR but in the context of being one example of how Japanese pop culture spread in Hong Kong back in the 1990s, despite the economic crisis happening in Japan after the bubble burst (p. 40). Hao & Teh (2004) did a similar study to Cheng's but in Singaporean society instead. Examples between both studies were similar (music, anime and manga, games, fashion) but the latter also included frequency of consumption - as expected, para para consumption was not as big as listening to J-music or watching anime (p. 25).

Like the studies in Japanese, para para was also used as an “exercise”. Ip & Yeung (2004) added para para dancing to other activities like jumping rope and relaxing the eye in the exercise category of a health program targeting a school in Hong Kong. Lam (2006) also carried out a study in Hong Kong on family volunteering. Para para dancing, described by

the author as a “trendy dance” (p. 3) was destined for secondary school students and their families so that they could feel more at ease during the volunteering. Given that both cases targeted school students, we can infer that para para had some popularity among young people in Hong Kong during the early noughties. Also following studies in Japanese, Lin et al. (2013) compiled a list of performances by humanoid robots, including a para para routine.

Ishida (2010) mentioned para para dancing as one of the activities at anime conventions in Finland - even pointing out that it was female-dominated (p. 54). The connection between para para and anime events was not exclusive to Finland - it was a pivotal part of Western anicons during the noughties, and some still have a moment for para para to this day. Therefore, para para still has an image of an “otaku dance” despite not being necessarily related to anime in Japan.

The main connection para para has in Japan is with the *gyaru* subculture, so it is no surprise that most para para studies are related to the *gyaru* subculture or Japanese fashion. Black (2009) mentioned para para when talking about the *kogyaru* (JP: 子ギャル), a subtype of *gyaru* fashion in which they wear school uniforms - or at least outfits based on them. *Kogyaru* is amongst the most popular types of *gyaru* subfashion, and one can see such style in several official para para routines. The term *kogyaru* was coined by journalists in the 1990s, who imagined it would become the new trend, replacing the *bodikon gyaru* (JP: ボディコンギャル), who rose to popularity in the 1980s and early 1990s (Kinsella, 2014, p. 60), being usually connected to the club called Juliana’s Tokyo (JP: ジュリアナ東京), or Juliana’s.

Juliana’s was an important milestone in para para history as it marks the origin of techpara, and one can still clearly see the club’s influence on techpara routines. Despite being

a phenomenon in Japan, its fame was not translated overseas and it was barely mentioned in Japanese studies on pop culture - Schilling (1997) was the only author who did so in a book in English. Furthermore, searching for "Juliana's Tokyo" led to only three results (one being in French, which I can't speak). They did not focus on the venue or the event, but on how women dressed up - the *bodikon gyaru*. *Bodikon* is short for "body conscious", that is, women dressed up in bodycon dresses and emphasized their sexiness. It showed a contrast to the modest, feminine figure of the Japanese woman in the 80s, as pointed out by Kerr (2017).

In Japanese, “ジュリアナ東京” leads to 69 results, 18 of which from 2020. However, I could only access five of them (and one had to be excluded for being written in Korean, which I do not speak). Fujikawa (2021) just described Juliana's image as “too mature and related to money” (JP: 「爛熟」 「お金」 のイメージ) (p. 15). However, for some reason, the author described it as a symbol associated with the Showa era (1926-1989), despite having started business in 1991, that is, during the Heisei era (1989-2019). We believe its relation to the Showa era might be its connection to the Bubble Era (1986-1991), which started in Showa. Shimizu (2020) reflected on the “Bubble Culture” 30 years later, and concludes that Juliana's became (retroactively) the symbol of the Bubble and that “Bubble Culture” does not carry the same negative image as before (p. 188). Saitoh (2021) highlighted Juliana's popularity and affirmed that, in the early 1990s, the activities in Tokyo were focused on the bay area (JP: 湾岸地区) (p. 43). Juliana's was located in Minato District, in the bay area. Inoue (2020) mentioned that, although the Bubble Burst in 1991, the closure of Juliana's in 1994 was a consequence of the burst, three years later (pp. 45-46).

If Juliana's was not mentioned in most studies on Japanese pop culture, then what was? Comparing a few studies, more specifically the books by Freedman & Slade (2018), Craig (2000), Alt (2020), and Kelts (2006), the common themes were anime, manga, video games, music - highlighting idols, cosplay, karaoke, *dorama*, and fashion - highlighting cute fashion and sailor suits/schoolgirl outfits. These authors also approached some specific aspects of Japan in their books - Craig commented on the Imperial Family; Freedman & Slade, on mascots; Alt, on robots; and Kelts, on toys - figures, *gacha*, etc. We should remember that some of these books do not necessarily analyze the consumption and reception of Japanese pop culture in Japan itself.

Now searching for "Heisei Era" on Google Scholar and limiting the results to studies post-2020 (after Heisei Era had ended), we can analyze over 700 results. The first one that caught my eye was Murai et al. (2022) who organized a book about the Heisei Era and divided it into several themes, from the Imperial Family, Okinawa, economy, and fights for equality to cinema, soft power, nostalgia, and cinema. As for other studies, it seems that most focused on the economy, which is not surprising, since it was a rough economic era because of the Bubble Burst and the crisis.

For topics on nostalgia and Japanese pop culture, we can see two approaches more frequently: nostalgia and sports, and nostalgia and music, the latter especially between Japan and South Korea in the City Pop genre (Chen, 2023), which was extremely popular in Japan during the 80s, and it has become popular in K-pop in the past years.

This chapter shows that studies on para para are still scarce despite it being a mark in Japanese pop culture. Furthermore, the few studies that mention para para do not consider

it the main object of the research. It will be the main topic for this study, and we hope it will become a starting point for whoever wishes to delve into para para, whether scholarly or not.

The next chapter will explain how para para started, how it became part of the Japanese pop culture and why it started to fade away from the mainstream trends. Related topics like the *gyaru* and Juliana's will also be covered when it is related to para para.

Chapter 2: The History of Para Para

This chapter will explain some of the story of para para. What is its precursor? How did it originate? Which years were the years of the so-called booms? Why did those booms happen? How did it start to become a fad? How does para para show up nowadays? Which other subcultures does para para cross with? I will explain it throughout this chapter.

Before starting, there are three points to highlight. The first is that the history is almost completely restricted to the Tokyo area because nearly all of the references I found analyzed the phenomenon in Tokyo. Therefore, some aspects might differ according to the city, especially Osaka, the other big metropolis in Japan.

The second is that there might not be some consensus among paralists about how many booms (periods where something is trending) have existed and what their timespans are. I decided to follow what was said in the Eurobeat and para para episode of the TV show *BAZOOKA!!!* (Nakamura et al., 2017), as it was defined by people who have been involved with the scene for decades. They divide it into three booms, as opposed to four booms.

The third is that during my research I found that, among the international para para scene, there was a group of blog posts that is referred to as “Ken-ya’s book”. Ken-ya is the artistic name of Toru Sakai, a Tokyoite who has experienced a huge part of the para para scene, especially during the third boom. In 2009 he decided to post, on the SNS Mixi, details about the story of para para - from how the booms started and ended to the media’s and the average Japanese’s perception of para para and everything surrounding it. Because it explained many aspects I could not find in academic research, I decided to include it in my bibliography. I could not find the Mixi account where the original posts were posted³ but international fans uploaded the content on a Facebook group called “ParaPara International パラパラ・インターナショナル”⁴.

2.1. Before para para

³ Because I did not find the original publication, I do not know how Ken-ya called those posts on Instagram but I decided to add it to my bibliography as “The Hidden Story of Para Para” since it is the title that seems to be used the most among international fans.

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/574543875892033/>

Para para originated in clubs but not only was its likely precursor performed on the dancefloor - it was also in the middle of the public. Yoyogi Park, at the heart of Shibuya Ward, in Tokyo, was the place where many adults and teenagers gathered to dance in the 1980s, and it was baptized by Littleton (1987, p. 119) as the “Yoyogi Scene”. Yoyogi Park was and still is a huge spot for both tourists and locals, whether it is for seeing cherry blossoms and Christmas lights or going to concerts and sports events.

As for the Yoyogi dancers, the author divides them into two groups. The *Bōsōzoku* (JP: 暴走族), also referred to as *Amerugazoku* (JP: アメルガ族), dressed up in 1950-style American clothes as if they were cameo in the 1961 American movie *West Side Story* (p. 121). They were inspired by American motorcycle gangs; therefore, leather jackets were crucial garment. The Japanese media and Japanese outsiders depicted the group as actual delinquents, and their image was involved in scandals like violence in schools and vandalism on the streets - in fact, the “暴” (*bō*) kanji from *Bōsōzoku* means violence and is combined with other kanji to create words meaning “violent” (暴挙), “reckless” (無暴), and “barbarous” (凶暴). They were the older of the two groups, both in average age of its members and in existing time. The *Bōsōzoku* were also connected to the start of Japanese street fashion in the early 1980s, which was inspired by American fashion before Japanese-owned fashion brands started to appear and change the fashion world (Wansan, 2021, p. 40).

The other group was the *Takenokozoku* (JP: 竹の子族). They were mostly composed of minors. They and the *Bōsōzoku* were aesthetically opposites. While the *Bōsōzoku* wore some leather jackets that could be perceived as “aggressive” from outsiders, the *Takenokozoku* wore colorful outfits and heavy make-up. Littleton defines it as “neither Western nor exclusively Japanese” (1987, p. 124). The name came from the boutique shop Takenoko, in Harajuku (next to Yoyogi Park), where people bought most of the outfits they wore when dancing in public. Tochinai (1999) also highlights that some members of *Bōsōzoku* switched to *Takenokozoku* after a revision of Road Traffic Law in 1978 that prohibited joint rides. (as cited in Namba, 2005, p. 52)

The author describes it as a type of “‘Asian’ Fantasy”. He also points out that they did not go to Yoyogi already dressed up - they actually brought a change of clothes and wore it

at the park -, a different behavior from members of *Bōsōzoku*. They were also described as people with “an animated aura”, opposed to the average Japanese worker under a mask.

Despite their happy and carefree aura, their routines were not improvised. In fact, the steps were all thoroughly rehearsed. They danced to Japanese rock and Yellow Magic Orchestra in a circle, and their hand movements were smooth. Littleton affirms that the dance style was reminiscent of traditional Japanese dances. Their looks were colorfully based on Ancient Japanese garments. (p. 125).

The *Takenokozoku* are believed to be the precursor of para para (Nakao, 2015 as cited in Silva, 2021) as they share similarities in how they perform. The steps are thoroughly rehearsed, as well as performed in circles, and the angular arm movements look similar, as shown in Figures 1 and 2.





Figures 1 and 2. People from *Takenokozoku* dancing in Yoyogi Park in the 80s⁵.

However, because the *Takenokozoku* were “mannered” compared to other tribes, like the *Bōsōzoku*, the media stopped being interested in them and tribe members started to leave the tribe (Schilling, 1997, pp. 319-320). As *Takenokozoku* became less popular over time, at one point the movement stopped altogether. Thereafter, many Japanese people labeled this period a “phase” that youngsters lived before entering the workplace and having to conform to its rules and norms (Littleton, 1987, p. 126).

2.2. In the disco: the first para para boom (1986-1989)

Disco music in Japan had its first boom in the 1970s. From the first venue in 1965, the scene evolved, and two districts, to this day, have become the spot for nightclubs: Shinjuku and Roppongi, both in Tokyo. During this period, people already danced to rehearsed routines taught by the staff. Wajima (2022) points out that this is a characteristic of disco dancing in Japan (p. 105). A venue would create the choreography and transmit it to those who were present that day, and these people would transmit the learned routines to people in other parties. Because technology was not as advanced as it is today, one would only know the choreography if they frequented these parties.

⁵ The pictures were taken from the following article, published by Shibuya Books. <https://www.shibuyabooks.co.jp/post/974/>. The second photo is also described as people rehearsing “a strange dance” (JP: へんてこりんな踊り).

The first disco boom happened in the mid-1970s, when disco music from overseas became popular in Japan, and Japan started to sell Japanese disco overseas, especially after the domestic success of *Sexy Bus Stop* (1976), by Dr. Dragon & The Oriental Express. The first attempt was not successful, but it was the starting point of what we know today as Japanese city pop. Tetsuji Hayashi, one of the composers from The Eastern Gang (including the period of worldwide ambition) was the composer of the city pop hit *真夜中のドア/Stay With Me* (1980), by Miki Matsubara (p. 114).

The second disco boom can be traced back to Maharaja. The first discotheque from the chain, Maharaja Tokyo, opened in 1984. Before that, disco music in Japan was changing gradually as they started to import and promote pop disco music from Europe with female vocals, in particular after the success of Arabesque's *Hello, Mr. Monkey* (1977) and Dschinghis Khan's self-titled song (1979) (p. 116). One of these genres was Eurobeat. The name "Eurobeat" came from a (failed) attempt in relabeling Hi-NRG music, which is one of the pillars of Eurobeat alongside Italo Disco (p. 117). Eurobeat was mostly produced in Europe, in particular Italy, but it targeted the Japanese market. Syrgak (2024) theorizes that the worldwide popularity of the umbrella term "Euro Disco" (which includes both Eurobeat and Italo Disco) broke continental barriers and not only was it successful in North America and Europe, but also in Japan. The author also argues that Euro Disco songs are fairly easy and cheap to produce and quickly catchy to the audience, which also explains its success between the Japanese (p. 18).

To understand the basic structure of a Eurobeat song, I picked *Night of Fire* (1999) by Niko, one of the most popular Eurobeat songs worldwide. First up is the intro, where synths and riffs take place; after that, there is the A-Melody (or A-Melo), which are the first verses (in our example, from "Welcome to the broken low" to "Come on lady get me once and right"); the B-Melody (or B-Melo) follows the A-Melo and is like a pre-chorus of a song (in our example, from "Not a danger, not a blacky stranger" to "Fly to me, get ready for the"); the chorus (or sabi) kicks in (in our example, from "Night of fire, you've better better stay" to "You'll have a night of fire"), followed by another intro (p. 16); the A-Melo - B-Melo - Sabi - Intro structure is repeated at least once more. After that, the structures might vary.

Maharaja Tokyo started business during the thriving economic period known as Bubble Period. Whilst the Bubble Period only officially started in 1986, the economic

growth started at the beginning of postwar Japan. From 1955 to 1973, the Gross Domestic Fixed Capital Formation increased, peaking at a 40% increase in 1960 (Iyoda, 2010, pp. 37-38). Iyoda points out that the development in technology, the high savings rate, the military funds being transferred to infrastructure, and balancing funds are reasons why the economy improved during that period (pp. 41-42). Despite the positive impact of the economic growth, it was also the turning point where everything was concentrated in Tokyo and metropolitan areas, causing the depopulation in the remaining areas - from rural villages to cities with over 1 million inhabitants outside the Tokyo and Osaka metropolitan areas, which remains a problem in Japan to this day (p. 57). The graphic below (Figure 3) illustrates the number of migrants.

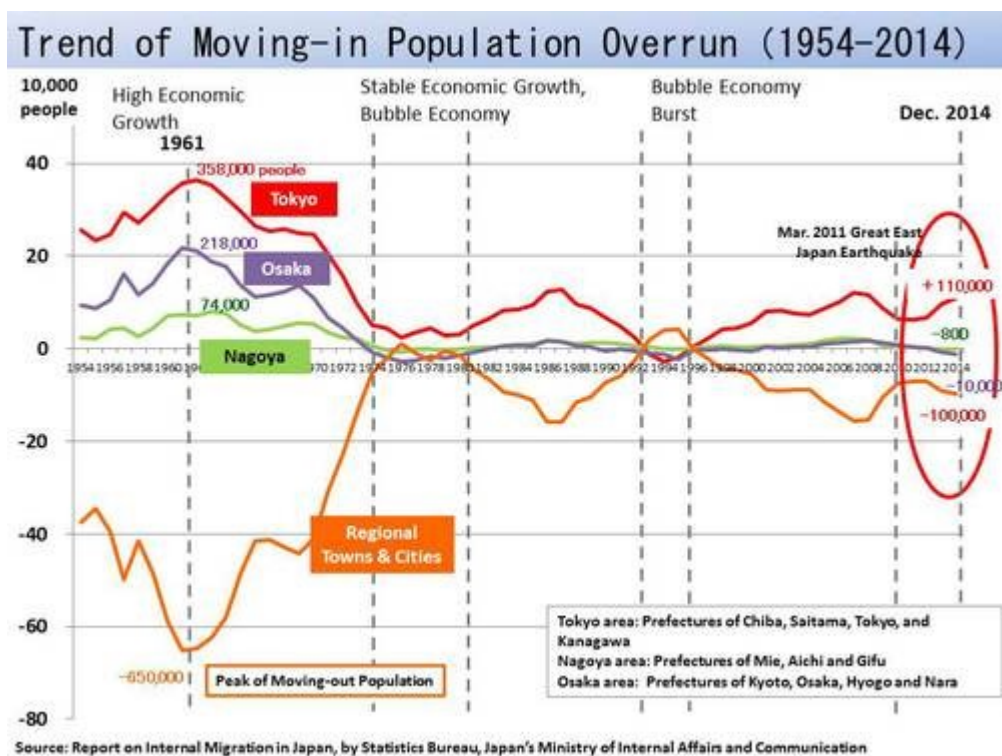


Figure 3. Rate of migrant population in Japan and its key-periods⁶.

The start of the 1980s was marked by settled down inflation and increased stock prices. Stock prices started to increase in 1983, a year before Maharaja opened, and peaked in 1989.

⁶ This graphic was taken from an article on Japan For Sustainability.
https://www.japanfs.org/en/news/archives/news_id035317.html

Land prices also increased up to five times during this period and peaked in 1990 with capital gains of 1,448 trillion yen (pp. 69-72).

Because of the skyrocketing economy, consumer habits also changed in Japan. International brands, which were once ignored by the average Japanese citizen, became part of their lives (Amano, 2023, p. 50). The author also states that the average Japanese mass consumer based quality on the already existing popularity of a product (p. 53). Tetsuya called this generation of young people in the 1980s *shinjinrui* (JP: 新人類), as their consumer habits were different from the ones from older generations since they were not as mass consumerists as people in the 1970s but were more influenced by mass media. He also described the *shinjinrui* as those who preferred to spend their money on luxury goods and experiences (as cited in Amano, 2023, pp. 51-52). Kerr (2017a) complemented that the *shinjinrui* were a type of Bubble phenomenon as this term faded in the mid-1990s, following the Bubble Burst (p. 36). Not only was their way of consumption affected but also their stance regarding politics. In contrast to the previous postwar generations, the new motto is not the economy, the society, or the politics, but “to live comfortably” (p. 56). All in all, an adjective that could describe the consumption habits from the Bubble Period was individualization (p. 60).

Thanks to this context, it becomes more evident why Maharaja thrived during this period. Maharaja Tokyo’s opulent interior design shined gold, and the venue also featured a VIP room. Figures 4 and 5 show the inside of the discotheque:





Figures 4 and 5. Maharaja Tokyo, in Roppongi (1984-1997)⁷.

Wajima (2022) affirms that Maharaja symbolizes the second disco boom, also associated with the Bubble Period and its flashy nature. The chain also collaborated with music labels Alfa and Avex to promote Eurobeat, consequently being frequently associated with the genre (p. 118). Maharaja was so popular that it had dozens of venues open in Japan and the United States, specifically in Honolulu, Hawaii (LIST OF MAHARAJA, n.d.).

It was also inside Maharaja where para para had its first boom, which lasted until 1989. Like in the discotheques from the 1970s, a staff member (in this case, usually male) taught the choreography to the audience (in this case, mostly female), who wanted to show off their status, and it ended up spreading among regulars (p. 119). Again, like in the 1970s, one would only know the choreography if they frequented the venue since the technology was not as advanced. This is a fact that will influence the second para para boom a few years later.

2.3. Juliana's and the beginning of techpara (1991-1994)

Between the first and the second para para booms, a new venue influenced the brand new para para scene and the Japanese club culture. We leave the Showa Era (1926-1989) to enter the Heisei Era (1989-2019). Musically speaking, Euro Disco was losing its power worldwide, and Techno music was thriving. In Japan, it was no different (Syrgak, 2024, p.

⁷ Other Maharaja discos also had a similar color palette. Pictures taken from the official Maharaja website. Pictures from other clubs are also available there.
<http://nova21.web.fc2.com/maharajatokyo.html>

30). That was one of the main genres played at Juliana's Tokyo, the new club in Minato District (the same district as Maharaja Tokyo).

Like Maharaja, Juliana's also became a symbol of the Bubble Period, despite happening at the very end of it, a year before the Bubble Burst. On the other hand, an interesting difference between Maharaja and Juliana's is that the latter is not a discotheque chain from Japan. It is a British chain that opened its first club in 1966, in London, and then started to expand worldwide. The first international nightclubs opened in Amsterdam in 1974, then started crossing the continental borders in 1977, opening in the Middle East, Asia, and Australia. Two years later, it crossed the Atlantic and settled a spot in Chicago. Only in 1991 Juliana's Tokyo opened, and was labeled "the world's first and most successful Superclub" (Juliana's, n.d). Robinson (2015) argues that superclubs, which are more common in the British club scene, aim to reproduce the vibe of raves, targeting ravers with no place to dance anymore after drifting away from illegal raves (p. 37).

Schilling (1997) makes a visual description of what the club seemed like:

Located in a former warehouse in Shibaura, a district of Tokyo better known for its drab office buildings than its nightlife, Juliana's was built as a high-class, high-tech monument to boogie. After being vetted by a tall, imposing foreign doorman for age, dress, and overall hipness, patrons walked through the large fractured-glass doors and past the official greeters—six Japanese women in glittering green minidresses, all bowing in unison—to a cavernous room that would have made a great setting for a high-life scene in a James Bond film.

Underneath a huge chandelier imported from California, splashed by multicolored beams of laser light, bodies seethed to the Eurobeat produced by the twenty-six-thousand-watt sound system. On stage, foreign professional dancers dressed in minimalist assemblages of leather and metal gyrated in fifteen-minute shifts, while a bank of forty-nine monitors behind them showed music videos. Rich, famous, and other elite patrons who wanted a respite from the high decibels and masses of tightly packed bodies—Juliana's could fit up to three thousand people into its one thousand two hundred square meters of space—could retreat to two luxuriously appointed VIP lounges overlooking the dance floor. (p. 76)

The Bubble Period Japanese woman was also responsible for breaking stereotypes on how Japanese women should behave. Kerr (2017b) points out traits that were evident in the average Juliana's female regular: whilst the "ideal" woman should have been shy, modest, and feminine, the women at Juliana's embraced their sexuality in body-conscious outfits, that is, tight-fitted dresses (JP: ボディコン), and were loud and flirty with other customers (pp. 4-5). Hirota (2017) points out that Juliana's regulars and other women who defied the

idea of the ideal woman were negatively portrayed in the media. Regarding Juliana's, women who frequented it were called *otachidai gyaru* (JP: お立ち台ギャル) (p. 42). This is not the last time the *gyaru* (ギャル, the Japanese translation of gal) term will be mentioned in this chapter. Their connections will start to be explained in the next topic.

In a program by TV Asahi, a journalist who did not live in the Bubble Era experienced the vibe of Juliana's at a 2021 party celebrating the 30th anniversary of the club's opening. She dressed up as the regulars used to in 1991. One of the women at the party told the journalist that she was “wearing too much clothing” and that she was “not showing enough” (JP: これ洋服着すぎじゃない？出てなさすぎ。) (TV Asahi, 2021, 2:34-2:46). They also showed women dancing on a platform called *otachidai* (JP: お立ち台), waving their fans in sexy movements to the sound of Hyper Techno and Eurodance music. Greenfeld (1995) pointed out that only women danced on the *otachidai* (p. 126). The fans they waved differed from the average fan because of their feathers. While what we call the “average fan” can be made of distinct materials (e.g., plastic, silk, paper) and decorated with varied patterns (from a plain, beige pattern to a colorful, illustrative pattern), they are not feathered. The feathered fan, on the other hand, was so associated with the nightclub that it became known as *juli sensu* (JP: ジュリ扇子), as seen in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Model of a *juli sensu*⁸.

Juliana's is the main basis of what will be later defined as techpara. Despite having some similar movements to para para, the routines are not as choreographed as para para's. Some techpara routines have a freestyle moment where you do not have to dance a specific move. However, this moment is when dancers try to emulate a Juliana's regular waving their *juli sensu* on the *otachidai*. In some techpara routines, dancers actually use a fan, as shown in Figures 7 and 8.



⁸ One can still find this type of fan for sale at some events - Maharaja sold them on Agefarre. This photo was taken from Rakuten Shop. (<https://item.rakuten.co.jp/agep-shop/choi498/>)

Figures 7 and 8. Techpara routines with fans⁹.

A curious detail in a few techpara routines is that one can notice voguing movements, whether in older routines (e.g. *Success* by 94 Sale from Techno Classics 1) or recent ones (e.g. *Let Me Be Your Valentine* by Scooter from a collaboration uploaded in HI-CROSS Youtube channel). Therefore, it is likely that the techpara and the voguing scenes have crossed ways at some point in their histories. Nevertheless, I could not find that connection other than the choreographies.

Back to Juliana's, despite its success in the beginning, it was a short-lived club. The main factor for its abrupt ending is the Bubble Burst in 1991, just a few months after the club opened. Land prices, which had been increasing in the 1980s, started to decrease in 1990 because the government restricted real estate loans. Consequently, in 1992, the capital loss was around 229 trillion yen. Demand for goods was not as big as before, and industries were struggling to export products as imports and overseas products had become more affordable; the number of issued Nonperforming Loans (NPLs) increased from 1993 to 2001; stock prices sharply fell, and the public debt surpassed 800 trillion yen by 2003. The government tried several strategies to cope with the crisis (such as lowering the interest rate and starting emergency fiscal packages) but their efforts were in vain, and the Japanese economy stagnated until 2001 (Iyoda, 2010, pp. 81-89). Therefore, the luxurious and consumerist lifestyle of the 1980s was not doable anymore, and the nightclubs were likely affected by the crisis (taking Maharaja into account, several venues closed down in the 1990s).

Furthermore, as Juliana's was becoming more known nationwide, the conservative Japanese were irritated, especially after a photoshoot where women were nearly nude on a platform. In November 1993, the Tokyo Metropolitan Police asked Juliana's management not to let people dance on platforms, as it was not the proper place for dancing. They removed the platforms, in addition to tightening the dress code of its staff to a less provocative one. In the following months, the club had almost emptied with less than 300 people partying there (at its peak, around 5000 people attended). In August 1994, Juliana's closed its doors after a successful eight-day farewell party (Schilling, 1997, p. 78).

⁹ The first routine is *L.S.D=PINK SKELETON* by geiru, available at King of Techno, and the second routine is *上海麗舞 ABIME MIX* by 上海三姉妹.

2.4. VHS, Amuro, and the second para para boom (1994-1998)

Whilst Japan was in the middle of an economic crisis, Avex coped with the period quite well, compared to other companies. In 1990, they released (back then under another label) the first volume of *Super Eurobeat* (SEB), a Eurobeat series of albums that, up to this day, counts over 250 volumes (Syrgak, 2024, p. 82). Furthermore, in 1993 and 1994, they hosted two events under the name “Avex Rave”, which featured several Eurobeat artists alongside popular names of Eurodance and Techno music, such as 2 Unlimited, Cappella, Praga Khan, Bananarama, The Prodigy, Twenty 4 Seven, etc. Both events were held in Tokyo Dome, a huge arena where the most popular concerts are held to this day, and around 50 thousand people attended the 1994 event. (p. 87)

There was another reason Eurobeat gained some spotlight in the mid-1990s: Namie Amuro, who would later become one of the biggest names in Japanese music. The Okinawan singer started her career in a group called SUPER MONKEYS with four other Okinawan girls, who would later become the famous girlgroup MAX. Their initial singles were covers in Japanese of Eurobeat songs, and, in 1995, they had their first hit: *Try Me ~Watashi wo Shinjite~* is a cover of *TRY ME* (1994), by LOLITA, alias of British singer Annerley Gordon (released under Avex Trax). The track hit #8 on Oricon, Japan’s main music chart, and sold 732,950 copies (generasia, n.d.). After that, Amuro released two more Eurobeat covers as singles: *Taiyou no SEASON* and *Stop the music*.

In 1995, she started working under Avex Trax with Tetsuya Komuro, a producer in ascension that would later become one of the biggest names in J-pop - or, more specifically, J-euro, which was how dance J-pop music with Eurobeat influence was labeled (Negus & Shin, 2021, p. 2). Komuro’s first hit was TRF’s *EZ Do Dance* (1993), under Avex. In 1995, he started working with Amuro on her first solo releases, as SUPER MONKEYS had disbanded. Her first two singles with him, *Body Feels EXIT* and *Chase The Chance* sold 800 thousand and 1.3 million copies, respectively. (Schilling, 1997, p. 100)

Amuro also brought the *gyaru* back to the Eurobeat scene. Namie’s style became popular among young girls and was named *Amura* (JP: アムラー). Schilling (1997) describes it as “short pants, miniskirts, high boots, and shoulder-length hair dyed a coppery

shade that complimented Amuro's dusky beach-girl complexion.” (p. 100). Several magazines also taught how to look like Namie, as shown in Figures 9 and 10.





Figures 9 and 10. Magazines featuring Namie or her style¹⁰.

Therefore, Amuro's popularity attracted young people to the Eurobeat scene, and many went to clubs, eventually experiencing para para.

There was another difference between the first and second para para booms. In contrast to the former, technology had advanced, and Avex decided to use it in their favor. In 1994, they released, on VHS, *Para Para Kyouten* (JP: パラパラ教典), which contained over 40 official para para choreographies. Therefore, besides going to the clubs, people could also learn the dances at their homes and attend the club "prepared", that is, having already learned the choreographies. Moreover, the first DVD model was released in 1996 by Toshiba

¹⁰ The first Figure comes from Junon Magazine, May 1996. The second one comes from Spa! Magazine, August, 1996.

(Leadem, 2019), replacing the VHS, and was gradually introduced in the para para world, becoming one of the pivotal points of promoting para para, especially nationwide.

2.5. SMAP, cars, *gyarus*, and the third para para boom (1999-2000)

Whilst classic 1980s clubs like Maharaja were closing doors, two new clubs, which would later become pillars of para para, were opening. One of them was Twin Star, mentioned in an article on Japanese website Barks as “The Holy Land of Para Para” (JP: “パラパラの聖地”) (あの＜パラパラ講習会＞再び 聖地「ツインスター」が復活, 2008). In the case of Twin Star, which opened in 1992, it was one of the rivals of Juliana’s and managed to outlast other clubs by surviving the 1990s’ closures, ceasing activity only in 2003.

The main para para event was named HYPER STAR ENERGY, which is also the name of the collaboration between the club and Avex (the 1999 *Super Eurobeat Presents Hyper Star Energy* album). There are also a few eurobeat songs referencing the club and the event, e.g., *Dancing At Twin Star* (1998) by Tri-Star and *Hyperstar energy* (2001), by D-Essex. This is part of the lyrics of *Hyperstar energy*: “Please car take me to Twin Star really soon // Baby I can't wait I wanna run to you // This time I won't miss Hyper Energy // Take a look at there how many people!” Hoo!) (Eurobeat-prime, n.d.).

The other club was Velfarre, founded by Avex and Tetsuya Komuro in 1994 and lasted until 2006. The club was somewhat of a throwback to the Bubble Culture after the Bubble Burst (Green, 2020, p. 170). Not only was Velfarre important to the para para scene but also to the EDM scene as a whole (Syrgak, 2024, p. 40). One of the most benefited genres was Trance, thanks to Trance resident DJs and the *Cyber TRANCE* series, the Avex-published compilation of trance hits, from Darude to Ferry Corsten. The release of the compilation series lasted from 2001 until 2006 (Clubberia, 2017). Moreover, Avex also released *Cyber TRANCE* remix albums from artists under their management, such as Ayumi Hamasaki and Every Little Thing. An article from Time also states that Hamasaki was a regular at Velfarre and met her producer Masato "Max" Matsuura there, which consequently led to her career as one of the biggest artists in Japan (Cullen, 2002).

Velfarre also hosted one of the biggest para para events: Super Euro Flash (SEF), back then as SEF HYPER, is still active as SEF DX. In 2024, the event celebrated its 30th

anniversary with a non-stop mix compilation called *Super Eurobeat Presents SEF 30's Anniversary Non-Stop Mix*.

Like Twin Star, a few Eurobeat songs referenced both Velfarre and SEF, usually sung by Bazooka Girl, one of the aliases of Cristiana Cucchi. One song in particular, *Velfarre 2000* (1999), has become one of the most popular songs in the scene. Its para para video is the second most viewed one from the STAY HOME & PARAPARA campaign, which we will explain in detail in chapter 4. *Velfarre 2000* samples *TOKYO, GO!* (1993) by John Robinson, one of the regular DJs at both Juliana's and Velfarre.

2.5.1. Initial D: A new home for the Eurobeat fandom

Although more impactful on Eurobeat, another game changer to the scene was the anime *Initial D* (1998). *Initial D* is a six-season (and several spin-offs) racing-themed anime featuring Eurobeat as the main genre of its soundtrack. Most of its openings and endings were sung by the Japanese group m.o.v.e, and several now trademark Eurobeat songs (e.g. *No One Sleep In Tokyo* by Edo Boys, *Running In The 90s* by Max Coveri, *Deja Vu* by Dave Rodgers, and *Burning Desire* by Mega NRG Man) were featured in the show. It was thanks to the franchise that Eurobeat and cars/drifting became heavily associated (Syrgak, 2024, p. 44). Figures 11, 12, and 13 show the classic “[EUROBEAT INTENSIFIES]” meme, a new version of it with Luigi from the Mario series, and the album cover of Eurobeat artist Kaioh's *Eurobeat Intensifies* (2023):





Figures 11, 12, and 13. Versions of “[EUROBEAT INTENSIFIES]”¹¹.

It was also very likely that *Initial D* brought Eurobeat (and consequently, para para) to the West, as the anime was licensed in the US.

In 2023, the adaptation of *MF Ghost*, another racing manga by the author of *Initial D*, aired in Japan, and already counts with a confirmed sequel. Like its older brother, Eurobeat is the main genre in the soundtrack, and, although m.o.v.e has long disbanded, one of its former members, the rapper Motsu, is featured in the soundtrack as well.

2.5.2. Takuya Kimura and the boom trigger

However, the main catalyst to the next para para boom was a man called Takuya Kimura (or Kimutaku). He was known for being a member of the boy group SMAP, who was under the management of Johnny & Associates (or Johnny’s), the same agency behind the popular boy group Arashi. The group was active from 1988 to 2016.

The six-member group was so promoted on TV and radio media to the point that Schilling (1997) calls it an “invading army” (p. 232). They were an example of longevity despite two factors: boy groups usually did not last long because their fame is a temporary fad, and the members of SMAP could not sing - even fans joked about it (Darling-Wolf, 2004, p. 358). Furthermore, their fame was not restricted to Japan: one could see billboards of them in Hong Kong and Singapore as well. They also had moments of struggle: after their first hit with the debut single *Can’t Stop!! -LOVING-* (1991), they only topped the charts

¹¹ Luigi’s picture comes from a Eurobeat remix of Mario Kart 64’s “Raceways”, done by Swedish composer Dominic Ninmark, available on Soundcloud.

with their twelfth single *Hey hey ookini maidoari!* (1994). Schilling (1997) believes it was due to the band boom (from the latter 1980s, when bands were in the spotlight) that made the mainstream music scene harder for idols in general, not just SMAP (p. 234).

Darling-Wolf points out that their presence in multiple media vehicles, which she calls “intertextuality”, was one of the reasons for their long-lasting success. For example, the group performed on a TV show, and the following week a fashion magazine did a thorough analysis of their outfits. Another reason was their frequent presence in TV Shows, as it was a way to humanize celebrities (Stevens & Hosokawa, 2001, p. 241 as cited in Darling-Wolf, 2004, p. 359).

SMAP went beyond that: they hosted their own variety show, called *SMAPxSMAP*, which lasted from 1996 to their disbandment, in 2016. Their show ranged from comedy skits to interviews with famous stars, including Michael Jackson and Madonna. The author complements that proximity (in this case, caused by the humanization of superstars and idols) is especially appreciated by the female audience. Finally, the way the band played with their sex appeal and androgyny, yet maintaining their reputation as “good guys” solidified their audience as mainly female (p. 358-363).

Besides SMAP itself, Kimura had his achievements and fame. In a Style article released in 2022 (when he turned 50), his long-lasting popularity is highlighted, his role in *Long Vacation* (1996) is considered the turning point in his acting career, and he was considered a trendsetter, as whatever he wore would become a fashion reference. The biggest example was the ad for the lipstick “Kanebo” (Figures 14 and 15), when he broke boundaries and became the first man in Japan to star in a lipstick ad (Lau, 2022). The campaign was so successful that the lipstick sold over 3 million units in two months, a record high for the company (Schilling, 1997, p. 236). All in all, Kimura’s popularity was so huge it started to overshadow the other members (p. 237).



Figure 14 and 15. Kimura for Kanebo (1996)¹².

And it is in *SMAPxSMAP* where the third para para boom is triggered. From 1999 to 2000, Kimura had a character on the show called Bucky Kimura (JP: バッキー木村) where he para para danced to *Night of Fire*, by Niko. In a 2021 program of radio show Flow, hosted by him, he explained that para para became part of Bucky's skit because he found it funny how the dancers were “expressionless” (JP: 無表情) while dancing a two-step dance (木村拓哉「パラパラは何気にムズイ」みちよぱの“ギャル遍歴”トークで、“バッキー木村”誕生秘話を明かす, 2021). Skits ranged from Bucky dancing at his own funeral (パラパラヒストリー, 2018b), dancing with older people (in this case, a slower version of *Night of Fire*) (DJ Kazuya, 2019), being the director of the para para school (パラパラヒストリー, 2018c), his training for para para (a mix of gym exercises and evading lasers) (パラパラヒストリー, 2018c), and the list goes on. In one episode where singer Youko Oginome was a guest, he performed para para to a Eurobeat version of her 1985 hit *Dancing Hero*, whilst she sang it. At the end, she even para para danced with him (パラパラヒストリー, 2018a).

¹² The campaign also featured TV ads, such as this one: <https://youtu.be/HbRiWYfRyMA>
 Pictures taken from China Daily (left) and @startoarchives on X (right).

However, the version that burst the internet bubble was the collaboration between the show and Club Disney Super Dancin'mania (JP: Club Disney スーパーダンシン・マニア), a series of special performances held at Disneyland Tokyo from January 2000 to June 2000. Mickey and friends would perform hit songs from the 1990s (1st stage), the 1980s and the 1970s (2nd stage), and the 1960s (3rd stage). Although Eurobeat was more of a 1990s phenomenon, both 2nd and 3rd stages featured a Eurobeat song - *Mickey Mouse March (Eurobeat Version)/Macho Duck (Eurobeat Version)* - and danced para para to it (Figure 16). In 1st stage, they also danced in Juliana style with *juli sensu* to *Twilight Zone* (1992), by Dutch Eurodance duo 2 Unlimited (Figure 17). In 2007, there was a special 3-day event reminiscing Super Dancin'mania, and Mickey House March was para para danced (Figure 18). Therefore, we can conclude that collaboration between *SMAPxSMAP* and Club Disney happened during the first semester of 2000.





Figures 16, 17, and 18. Mickey and friends dancing to *Mickey Mouse March* and *Twilight Zone*¹³.

In the *SMAPxSMAP* skit (dainyanko, 2020b), a little girl called Ayumi was celebrating her birthday at Para Para Kindergarten (JP: パラパラ幼稚園), with her classmates and teachers dancing to para para while singing happy birthday. After that, one of the teachers

¹³ Video source for 16: <https://youtu.be/zTtN3d2RdHM?si=iWdpmSU2e1vnlAtN> from 17:50.

Video source for 17: <https://youtu.be/poTE25pBXfY?si=RfCNPS4nd-tLG2re> from 15:00.

Video source for 18: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BgYQUgONFM> from the start.

gifted her a Bucky Kimura stuffed toy but she was not happy with the present and said she liked Mickey instead. After such statement, the wall where the blackboard is located fell down and Bucky showed up para para dancing to *Turn The Beat Around* (1994), by Gloria Estefan. Still not satisfied, Ayumi said in Bucky's face that she preferred Mickey over him. He, then, covered the eyes of the little girl and made a gesture as if he was going to punch her. However, he did not do that, and a piano melody started playing. The melody stopped, and the classroom walls opened, showing a stage behind, where he started para para dancing to *Night of Fire* and *Mickey Mouse March* (Figures 19 and 20). The kids joined them in the middle of the latter and para danced.



Figures 19 and 20. Bucky Kimura and Mickey (& Friends) para para dancing¹⁴.

After this segment, they dedicated the rest of the show to Club Disney, and the characters performed tons of songs that were part of Super Dancin'mania, including another round of *Mickey Mouse March*, this time without Bucky.

As everything Kimura touched became a trend, it was no different for para para. *Night of Fire* is to this day one of the most iconic Eurobeat tracks and para para routines (if not the most iconic and well-known). Moreover, high school girls started para para dancing in the streets of Shibuya (Syrgek, 2024, p. 41). This was likely related to the *gyaru*.

2.5.3. Girls and tans: the association between para para and the gyaru

Within the *gyaru* style, there are several subtypes (like the *Amura* we mentioned a few pages ago). The most well-known type of *gyaru* is the *kogyaru* (JP: 子ギャル). The term

¹⁴ Video available on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=645gH3KS3-M>.

kogyaru was coined in 1993 by Spa! magazine in an article defining them as the successor of the *otachidai gyaru* (Kinsella, 2014, p. 60). In fact, the *kogyaru* and the *otachidai gyaru* from Juliana' had a similar goal: defying the stereotype of how a Japanese woman should look and behave. Despite challenging norms, hierarchies still exist within the *gyaru*, as Kawamura (2012) explains below:

Basically, *Gyaru* is a college student, and *Ko-gyaru* (a child of *Gyaru*) is a high school girl who is a *Gyaru* wannabe. Lately, there is *Mago-gyaru* (a grandchild of *Gyaru*), which is a middle school student. If *Gyaru* is considered a professional major league player, *Kogyaru* is a semiprofessional, minor league player. After *Gyaru*, one becomes *Onee-gyaru* (a sister of *Gyaru*). Those who used to be *Gyaru* and are now mothers are known as *Gyaru Mama*, and *Chibi Gyaru* is a child of *Gyaru Mama*. More recently, there are *Kuro-Gyaru* (black *Gyaru*) and *Shiro-Gyaru* (white *Gyaru*), depending on whether they tan their faces. But the distinctions are not clearly marked, and they are all known as *Gyaru* or former *Gyaru*. (p. 52)

The *kogyaru* are usually high school girls who challenged the strict rules of high school and the conforming norms of Japanese society by looking as cute as they could possibly be (Macias, Evers & Nonaka, 2010, chapter 5, para. 2). The most common features of a *kogyaru* are the high school uniforms with shorter skirt lengths, the loose usually white socks, the dyed hair, and the tan from tanning salons. A combination that Miller (2004) defined as an egalitarian defiance because it is an accessible way to rebel and every girl can achieve it (p. 226-228, as cited in Robertson, 2022, p. 182). Figure 21 shows how *kogyaru* usually dresses like.



Figure 21. A group of *kogyaru*.

What made the *gyaru* choose the Shibuya district as their spot? First, Shibuya was home to many defiant subcultures, such as the dancing tribes in Yoyogi Park. Second, a trendsetting department store called 109 Building is located near Shibuya's Scramble Crossing, and it is home to everything cool and trendy in the district. They first tried to target adult women during the bubble economy. However, the Bubble burst, and, in the mid-1990s, the shops switched their main clientele to teenage girls, as adults were too reluctant to spend money after the economic stagnation (Ashcraft & Ueda, 2014, pp. 97-99). 109 was the place for many subcultures, including the *gyaru*. Some shops targeting the subgroup were Cecil McBee, Egoist, and Alba Rosa (Kawamura, 2012, p. 52). Nowadays, 109 is still a fashion reference point, and a few of the *gyaru* shops still exist (like Egoist) but they have adapted to the current trends.

The association between *gyaru* and para para started with the media. When para para was the sensation of the moment to young people - first with Namie, later with Kimura -, high school girls would dance on the street because they were too young to go to the clubs. The dancing girls caught the media's attention, which started the association (パラパラの起源はギャルではない？意外と知らないパラパラの歴史！, n.d.). Avex, other labels, and event organizers were aware of the association and reinforced it as a marketing strategy. *Super Eurobeat* ads were placed in *gyaru* magazines. One example is this ad in the February 2000 edition of Egg magazine (Figure 22).

パラパラのバイブル、ここにリニューアル!

SUPER EUROBEAT

VOL.101

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600,000枚突破という歴史的快挙を達成した「SUPER EUROBEAT VOL.100」から4ヶ月、
最新ユーロビートに、洋邦ヒット曲のユーロビートリミックスをプラスした全18曲を収録!
パワーアップして生まれ変わった「SUPER EUROBEAT」! 今、新たな伝説が始まる...

●●●S.E.Bパラパラ・ミレニアム・カウントダウン●●●

下記カウントダウン・イベント会場に「ナイト・オブ・ファイヤー」でお馴染NIKOの他
人気ユーロビート・アーティストが出演! パラパラ・フリークは全員集合!

DANCE FIRE 2000!: 大宮駅西口「アルシェビル」1F、4F 18:00~21:00
氷川丸船上カウントダウンパーティー: 山下公園前面海上「氷川丸」20:00~25:00
avex MILLENNIUM Count Down 1999 / 2000: 六本木「velfarre」

詳しくは avex ホームページにアクセス → <http://www.avexnet.or.jp/>

avex trax

Figure 22. Announcement of Super Eurobeat Volume 101.

The ad promoted Niko's new song *Speedway* by mentioning him as “the familiar face from para para mega-hit *Night of Fire*”. They also announced a para para event that would be held at Velfarre.

Furthermore, Avex, as well as other labels, changed the visuals of their para para VHS and DVD in two ways. First, let's compare the first volume of *Para Para Kyouten* (1994) (Figure 23) and the new series *Para Para Stadium* (1999) (Figure 24):



Figures 23 and 24. *Para Para Kyouten* x *Para Para Stadium* - Cover art.

Several para para CDs, VHS, and DVD featured illustrations of *gyaru* instead of people but covers with real people also existed (e.g., *Para Para Paradise*, *Para Para Panic!*).

Not only did the cover featured the *gyaru*, but the dancers were also *gyaru*. Let's compare the two titles again (Figures 25 and 26):



Figures 25 and 26. *Para Para Kyouten* x *Para Para Stadium* - Dancers¹⁵.

What is noticeable right away is that the girls from *Para Para Stadium* are more tanned than the girls from *Para Para Kyouten*. Moreover, the Stadium girls have their hair dyed, some fully, others just with some highlights. Their outfits are also in distinct styles. Furthermore, at the end of the Stadium VHS, there is a cutscene of several people para para dancing to *Night of Fire*. One can spot many other girls with tanned skin and dyed hair. Although none of them seem to be dressed as *kogyaru*, there are other VHS/DVDs whose dancers are dressed *kogyaru* style, e.g., the *Gazen Para Para* series (JP: 俄然パラパラ！！), also by Avex.

Amongst the other *gyaru* subtypes, there are two in particular that appear in the para para scene frequently. The first one is the *ganguro* (JP: 顔黒, “black face” in English) subtype. Kinsella (2014) describes it as girls with:

¹⁵ Para Para Kyouten: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiQvKNx0070>
Para Para Stadium: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGGLiy4_-Bk

tanned and colored skin; white-, blond-, caramel-, and later orange-dyed tresses; colored hair extensions and contact lenses; theatrical platform boots and cowboy hats; tight-fitting glamorous outfits; and lamé glitter face paint and face stickers (p. 142).

The girls illustrated in Figure 24 are inspired by *ganguro*.

Ashcraft & Ueda (2014) state that the *ganguro* was a type of extreme fashion where girls competed against one another on who had the most tanned skin (p. 121). Their skin is so tanned that it sparks a debate on whether it is blackface or not (Macias, Evers & Nonaka, 2010, chapter 6, para. 1), and even the etymology might imply it is the same as blackface to outsiders of the *gyaru* culture, but Ashcraft & Ueda (2014) state that their goal is not related to become “black” or “African” but to catch the media’s attention (p. 122). A woman whose artistic name is Buriteri is considered the pioneer of *ganguro* style after she was the covergirl for Egg magazine in 2000 (Figures 27 and 28). To keep her skin dark she revealed that she used a foundation called “Max Factor NW55”, targeted at black women (Macias, Evers & Nonaka, 2010, chapter 6, para. 7).



Figures 27 and 28. Buriteri for Egg - March, 2000¹⁶.

¹⁶ “Gongal” is another word for *ganguro*.

An even more extreme type derived from the *ganguro*. The *yamamba* (JP: 山姥) applied a darker tan than most *ganguro* and lots of concealer to paint white their nose bridges, lips, and area surrounding the eyes. The name *yamamba* comes from a *yokai* (supernatural creatures from Japanese folklore) of the same name, a mountain witch known for their dark skin and white hair (Kawamura, 2012, p. 53). However, they did not use artificial tan to darken their skin - instead, they used dark foundation, as Buriteri did (Macias, Evers & Nonaka, 2010, chapter 7, para. 6). However, the aesthetic did not last long, likely because it was too extreme (Kawamura, 2012, p. 53). Figures 29 and 30 compare the *yokai yamamba* (left) and the *yamamba* fashion subculture featured in Egg Magazine, June 2004 (right).



Figures 29 and 30. The two types of *yamamba*¹⁷.

The *yamamba* loved to para para dance. The authors interviewed a para para dancer, who said that they felt more united with their friends due to para para's collective nature of dancing in groups (chapter 7, para. 8). Furthermore, Angeleek, one of Japan's most popular *gyaru* circles, had a list of requirements if someone wanted to join the group. One of them was that the interested party "must be able to dance para para" (chapter 7, para. 17). Within the Eurobeat/para para scene, there are songs dedicated to the *ganguro*, and there is also a

¹⁷ The kanji for "山姥" can also be read as "Yamauba", so one might find this yokai with both transliterations.

routine for a song called *Angeleek* (2006), available on the DVD *Love Para 3* (JP: ラブパラ 3) (2006).

The second subtype is the *gyaru-o* (JP: ギャル男), the male counterpart of the *gyaru*. They also share the tanned skin, the dyed hair, and the colorful outfits. Kawamura (2012) points out that the *gyaru-o* wanted, by using their fashion, to show that they were cool and “not normal people” (p. 54). Gardiner-Heslin (2021) distinguishes them and the *gyaru* by the period they became famous. The *gyaru* were in the spotlight from the mid-90s but the *gyaru-o* only got some attention around the mid-2000s (p. 40). What likely contributed to it was the Shibuya 109-2 building (nowadays, MAGNET by SHIBUYA109), where stores for men were located, and several *gyaru-o* brands occupied the space (Kawamura, 2012, p. 54). In 2004, a group called Centre Guys were in the spotlight for their similarities with the *ganguro* and *yamanba*, with the exaggerated tan, white nose bridge, bleached hair, and even skirts, being deemed as shocking for defying gender roles (Kinsella, 2014, p. 137).

2.5.4. A phenomenon also outside Japan

What also marked this boom was that para para managed to cross the borders of Japan and created a legion of international fans. Whilst it had become more popular within Asia, it also got their spot around the world, in most of the cases thanks to media such as anime, movies, and music.

In 2001, Hongkongese director Jingle Ma released the movie *Para Para Sakura* (芭啦芭啦櫻之花), a musical romantic comedy starring Aaron Kwok and Cecilia Cheung. Kwok played the role of Phillip, a dance instructor who teaches para para and falls in love with Yee (Cheung), who is trying to avoid an arranged marriage in Japan. The movie’s signature song, *Para Para Sakura* was nominated for Best Original Film Song at the 2002’s Hong Kong Film Awards (IMDb, n.d.). Also in 2001, South Korean actress So Yoo-jin released song and MV for *Para Para Queen* (KR: 파라파라퀸) (Old Kpop추억의뮤비, 2013). Hong Kong music had known Eurobeat before because in 1998 the producer Mark Lui created Eurobeat songs for artists on the rise, like Leon Lai and Kelly Chan (Chew, 2010, p. 141). In 2000, these artists, alongside Kwok, were constantly played in clubs (p. 147). Hao & Ten (2004) analyzed some elements of the Japanese culture among young Singaporeans. While

para para dance was not nearly as consumed as anime, manga, or j-music (p. 25), the fact that it was included among them should be enough to indicate that para para had some sort of impact in Singapore.

However, what triggered the worldwide recognition of para para was an anime called *Detective Conan* (JP: 名探偵コナン), which as of 2024 is still airing, and over 1000 episodes have been released since its start in 1996. In 2000, the anime's opening changed to *Koi wa Thrill, Shock, Suspense* (JP: 恋はスリル、ショック、サスペンス) (2000), by Rina Aiuchi. This opening showed the protagonist, Conan Edogawa, dancing para para (Figure 31).



Figure 31. Conan Edogawa dancing on the anime's 8th opening.

Not only has it become Aiuchi's second biggest hit ever, peaking at #5 at Oricon (垣内りかのシングル売上 TOP20 作品, n.d.), but the *gyaru* started para para dancing to this song. Thanks to its success, Eurobeat versions of anime songs started being released so that they could have their para para routine. This has been known as *anipara* (JP: アニパラ).

Furthermore, anime cons and Japanese culture events started including para para dancing as one of the activities, and people around the world began associating para para para with anime culture (Wajima, 2022, p. 121).

Around the same time, para para started being a part of the world of rhythm games. Konami, a Japanese videogame company known for popular games like *Castlevania* (1989) and *Silent Hill* (1999) has, since 1997, a special branch dedicated to rhythm games called Bemani. It was under Bemani that the first game of *Dance Dance Revolution* (DDR) was released in 1998. The game, where you have to step on specific arrows (up, down, left, and right) while the song is played, was a huge worldwide success, and it united people of different backgrounds thanks to being a game associated with both anime culture and hip hop culture (Smith, 2003, as cited in Höysniemi, 2006, p. 57). Cheng (2011) affirms that the popularity of DDR helped boost both J-pop and para para dance among teenagers in Hong Kong (p. 45).

In 2000, Bemani, inspired by the ongoing para para boom, released a rhythm game called *Para Para Paradise* (PPP). One would score in the game by how accurate they dance the five notes. The machine has sensors that detect hand movements and define accuracy. Figures 32 and 33 show the screen of the game and a PPP machine.





Figures 32 and 33. Para Para Paradise¹⁸.

However, the game was short-lived. After the 2nd Mix was released in 2001, the game was discontinued. I could not find any official reasons why it happened, but I would speculate that it might have been a mix of the para para boom dying out and the machine being too expensive, making the development of more versions not worth pursuing. At the present moment, it is nearly impossible to find the machine in arcades. An user uploaded a video on TikTok playing PPP 2nd Mix in an event called “TouhouFest” (patisseriepop, 2023), a yearly convention held in California dedicated to the Japanese game franchise known as *Touhou Project*. Moreover, para para routines could be found in other Bemani games, such as *Dance Evolution* (2010), for XBox 360.

2.5.5. The beginning of the end

¹⁸ The screen may vary depending on the version of the game. PPP 2nd Mix has a 3D character on the game screen instead of a clip of girls dancing. A version for PS2 of the game was also released but one needs a special controller set to play it.

Despite crossing borders, the popularity of both Eurobeat and para para started to decrease around late 2000-early 2001. Sakai (2009, chapter 8) points out a few reasons why it happened. First, to profit off the boom, companies were releasing too many Eurobeat songs and para para routines at the same time, and people were becoming overwhelmed. In a few cases, some events had different routines for the same song, therefore the dancer should know hundreds of new routines as well as each version of the routine. The exaggeration became more repelling than attractive. As the popularity decreased, the audience of these events changed, leading to a geekification of the trend, which made some casuals unmotivated to frequent the events. Furthermore, the media started depicting para para as “something of the past”.

Syrgak (2024) complemented the the image of *gyaru* para para dancing in Shibuya started to become negative (p. 42). Actually, the image of *gyaru* on media itself had been negative since its beginning. In 1996, media outlets started writing about cases of teenagers from the *gyaru* subculture who were involved in “compensated dating” (JP: 援助交際). It was labeled by Kinsella (2014) as a form of amateur prostitution (p. 60) where they would date or have sexual encounters with much older men. They would be paid in cash, luxury goods, or expensive experiences such as going to have dinner at a fancy 5-star restaurant (Robertson, 2022, p. 186). The *gyaru* gangs’ positive perception of what is considered morally, socially, or sexually “deviant” in Japanese society (Kawamura, 2012, p. 61-63) might have worsened their image among the Japanese.

2.6. A fourth boom? Revival attempts

Although the boom died out, Avex did not give up and started investing in techno. In 2000 alone, they released CD compilations called *Hyper Techno Museum*, where the term “techpara” was first introduced. The CD cover also had a call for action for the *otachidai gyaru*, the clubbers, and the *gyaru*, telling them to “if they don’t enjoy this chance, they will be left behind the new generation” (“現役最強クラブ、パラパラギャルはもちろん、ボディコンを着ていた貴女や貴男、このチャンスを逃すと、次の時代に取り残されてしまうぞ。”) (Various—Hyper Techno Museum 2001, 2000). In 2001, Avex released other techno compilations, such as *Hyper Techno Paradise* and *Hyper Techno Presents Juliana's 21*, the latter being an obvious ode to Juliana’s Tokyo.

Promoting techno was not as successful as they wished, and they decided to shift their investments to trance. The already-mentioned *Cyber TRANCE* series already started in 2001, and given it lasted more than five years, it was much a more long-lived investment. In 2002, AgeHa, which was considered the “largest club in Japan” (St. Michel, 2022b), opened doors, and, during 20 years, it was home to national and international concerts of DJs, and pivotal for nurturing the club/dance music culture among the Japanese - just not exactly para para.

In 2004 and 2005, Avex returned to para para and released two new series: *Gazen Para Para!!* - a mix of para para and techpara routines, and *We Love TechPara* - exclusive for techpara routines. Both series had several volumes, lasting until 2009. Around the same period, club CODE, a Shinjuku-based venue focused on trance music, started their series called *club complex CODE TRAPARA*, and became the main source for trapara routines. However, up to this day, the number of trapara routines is much lower than para para or techpara routines.

These new series were enough to boost, at least a bit, the para para scene. However, was it enough to be considered a boom? There is still controversy regarding this matter (Silva, 2021). Avex itself, who released the two new series, only considers the existence of three booms ([INTERVIEW]Current as the origin. SUPER EUROBEAT challenges 250th album in its 30th year, 2018). A boom is a period when something (para para, in our case) is trending. Perhaps, despite the increase in popularity, it did not burst the bubble to the same extent as the previous booms, or the newcomers attracted by the new DVD releases would quickly give up on the scene, therefore not being long-lasting enough to call it a “trend” or a “boom”. Sakai (2009) also implies that many people started leaving the scene during this period because they became tired of having to learn new routines, likely because of the new DVDs (Chapter 10). We can affirm that, at least, between the third boom and the start of the pandemic, this was the most boom-like period.

2.7. Eurobeat and para para appearances post-third boom

Although the pandemic period will be further explained in chapter 4, we separated a few moments where para para was spotted. Keep in mind that these are not all the moments para para appeared in the past years, just a few I stumbled upon throughout my research.

The main appearances of para para still seem to be related to the *gyaru* culture. In 2018, Japanese singer Thelma Aoyama release her 8th album, *HIGH SCHOOL GAL*, dedicated to “the music that colored her world during high school” (青山テルマオフィシャルサイト, n.d.). The MV of the single *世界を中心〜We are the world〜*, a Eurobeat-inspired song, featured the singer dancing para para with a group of *gyaru* in front of Shibuya 109 and at a few clubs (青山テルマ OFFICIAL YouTube CHANNEL, 2018).

In 2021, Japanese artist Manon released *Galchan Mode*, also about the *gyaru* culture. In an interview with Billboard Japan, she said that she decided to follow the *gyaru* theme because she thought of para para when she first listened to the hook of the song (Billboard Japan, 2021). The main difference to Thelma’s case is that *Galchan Mode* does not seem inspired by Eurobeat, and it is a Hyperpop song instead. In the clip, a 3D avatar of hers para para dances to the chorus (MANON, 2021). I had the opportunity to see Manon live at a Halloween party in Shibuya in October 2023, and when the chorus of *Galchan Mode* started playing, she para para danced alongside Utaha (part of the group Wednesday Campanella), who also played at the party.

In 2023, metal girlband HANABIE. released the MV for *今年こそギャル〜初夏 ver.〜* (or, as they translated it, *Be the GAL~Early Summer ver.~*). In the middle of the clip, there is dance battle between the “Reiwa *Gyaru*” (Reiwa Era started in 2019) and the “Heisei *Gyaru*”, and the latter started dancing para para (花冷え。 (HANABIE. Official YouTube), 2023). On the hardcore route, Fear, and Loathing in Las Vegas’s *Return to Zero* also counts with some para para inspired movements, in particular the serious face while doing synchronized angular arm movements (Warner Music Japan, 2017).

f5ve, a girlgroup who debuted in 2024 released *Underground* as their second single. In the MV, the members dance several styles of dances, one of which is para para. There was even a “para para” tag highlighted on youtube (f5ve, 2024). HiiT FACTORY is a girlgroup whose discography is inspired by Japanese music from the 1990s. *ICQ*, a collaboration with Motsu, is inspired by J-euro, and the girls dance para para in it (HiiT FACTORY, 2023). PANDADRAGON’s *パ°LIFE ! パ°LIKE ! パ°LOUGH ! パ°LOVE !* also features some para para (パンダドラゴン, 2023) and was a hit on TikTok. DELUXExDELUXE’s cover of *Dancing Hero* includes para para as well (デラックスデラ

ックス[公式], 2024). In an animated video, one of the themes for the game *NEEDY GIRL OVERDOSE* (2022), *INTERNET OVERDOSE* by Aiobahn feat. KOTOKO highlights a lot of para para dance in a video with over 20 million views (Aiobahn, 2021). The group CHAI released *PARA PARA* and danced para para alongside other styles of dances. The aesthetic of the music video is inspired by the 1980s and the style of music is clearly distinguishable from the 1980s Eurobeat people para para danced to (CHAI official, 2023).

Para para also entered the world of VTubers, youtubers who use virtual avatars. IRyS, from the popular VTuber company Hololive, released *Carbonated Love*, a Eurobeat song with several Initial D references and a para para choreography (IRyS Ch. hololive-EN, 2024). While other VTubers do not necessarily release original songs, some of them dance para para - whether it is an one-off moment or it is a part of its virtual persona. Izumi Mizuha is an example of a VTuber who frequently releases para para videos (和泉 みずは / Izumi Mizuha, n.d.). Numos (N. D. C., n.d.) and Anri Tsubaki (椿妃杏李 -Anri Tsubaki-, n.d.) go beyond uploading para para videos: they also upload self-made Eurobeat mixes. Lambda used to post several para para videos but their channel has not been active since 2022 (V キャス パラパラ部, n.d.). Out of these, only Mizuha and Lambda did techpara routines - and the number of techpara routines is way lower than para para routines.

Besides music, para para is also seen as part of comedy skits. SNL Korea did a skit on Detective Conan, and his dance at the 8th opening (see Figure 31) was one of the comedy points (MHJ. 2017). The Korean song *Parapara Queen* was covered by comedian Lee Eun Ji (1theK (원더케이), 2021). Ryoji Takarabe dressed up as Mickey Mouse and danced *Mickey Mouse March* (Ryoji Takarabe 財部亮治, 2023). Ryōtarō Kan created a character called Uncle Para Para (JP: パラパラおじさん) and went viral with his para para videos (Gada Ryzaev, 2020).

However, the most popular skits related to para para come from the Kitsune Brothers, part of the TV show *Ariyoshi no Kabe*. The most popular video was *Driver's lesson 90s* (有吉の壁【公式】壁チャンネル, 2023b). It is mainly a reference to Initial D, so the joke is that driving in the 1990s including drifting (common part of the *Initial D* lore) while a eurobeat song is played - in this case, it is a parody of *Running in the 90s*, which was also

played on the anime. Around the chorus, another person appears and started dancing para para. It was so popular that it became the second most viewed video on the channel and they decided to release a music video of a revamped version of the song, featuring Motsu (有吉の壁【公式】壁チャンネル, 2023a).

Other examples of para para being showcased are as follows: the *Bubble Dance*, a video from an Osaka-based dance company, went viral and surpassed 100 million views on YouTube. The dancers explored how dances looked like during the Bubble Period. A small part is dedicated to Juliana's: they take their *juli sensu* and started waving it to the sound of *CAN'T UNDO THIS!!* (1992), by MAXIMIZOR, which is one of the main songs from Juliana's era. (akanekikaku / avantgardey, 2017). Speaking of Juliana's, the duo Bed In release an ode to the *juli sensu* named ジュリ扇ハレルヤ (*Juli Ōgi Halleluyah*) (KING RECORDS, 2018).

There have been some commercial attempts as well. In 2015, a *ganguro*-themed cafe opened in Shibuya. Whilst it only lasted three years, a part of the experience included para para dancing (Gurunavi, 2015). At the 2007 "Great Robot Exhibition" in Tokyo, one of the robots, ASIMO, showcased its kinesthetic abilities by dancing para para (Silva, 2021). In 2006, Spanish artist Manuel Saiz released a project called *Parallel Paradises*, where two video installments were added: one from Japan, and the other from Ecuador. The one from Japan was taken in a forest in Yamanashi Prefecture and features two dancers - Rin and Mai, who form the duo HYPER TECHNO FAIRY, para para dancing to "Hyper Techno Fairy" with no sound at all (Saiz, 2010). Finally, while I was in Japan in the second semester of 2023, an ad about the .jp domain constantly played on Tokyo's trains and metros. They showed examples of what was achievable thanks to the internet, and one of the examples was a group of girls para para dancing, as "thanks to the internet, one can dance together with their friends overseas" (JP: 海外にいる友人と一緒に踊った。) (Yoshiboo, 2023).

Furthermore, I would like to highlight two moments related to Eurobeat. The first one is the opening of the anime *Paripi Koumei* (2022). The song *Ciki Ciki Bam Bam* was arranged by M.O.R (an alias of FN2) of Eurobeat Union and was a hit. It peaked #4 at Oricon (オリコン週間 デジタルシングル (単曲) ランキング 2022 年 05 月 16 日~2022 年 05 月 22 日, 2022). The second one is *Power of the Beast*, a song by Finnish Band Beast In

Black (Nuclear Blast Records, 2024), that fully embraces the Eurobeat genre. On their website, guitarist and composer Anton Kabanen pointed out that the song is heavily influenced by the Super Eurobeat series (BEAST IN BLACK official website, n.d.).

This chapter aimed to give the reader some notion of how para para dance started, what helped it go viral, especially in the late 90s and in the Tokyo area, and possible reasons why it shifted from the “trend of the moment” to just a “niche”. Nonetheless, I also showed a few recent examples of para para in media - a significant part of them coming post-2020, the start of the pandemic era. Could these two facts be connected? I will try to discover it in chapter 4 after describing my methodology in the next chapter.

Chapter 3. Methodology

Now that the previous chapters helped us understand some of the history of para para, we will hereafter focus on a particular period, which is the pandemic period. This dissertation aims to answer the following question: What changes COVID-19 brought to the para para scene?

Furthermore, these are the following subquestions I aim to answer:

1. Did para para become more popular after COVID-19? Has the number of events increased, decreased, or stayed the same?
2. Did the audience in those events change after the pandemic?
3. With restrictions being lifted, what changed from the pandemic period to the post-pandemic period?
4. What would be the main differences between hosting an event in the early 2000s and one in the late 2010s? Did the pandemic affect them differently? Did they overcome it with different approaches?
5. Was the pandemic or the post-pandemic period some sort of a para para boom?

Before answering these questions, I will explain how a para para event works and answer the following:

1. How long is an event?
2. Are they present throughout the entire country, or are they limited to a particular area?
3. How are the para para variants included in these events?
4. What is the usual audience?
5. What are the hidden hierarchies in the scene?

In order to properly develop the responses, we must look back at the history of the scene in detail and understand what originated it, how it peaked, and how it faded away from the mainstream. This way, we can compare both the old and the current scene. The history was thoroughly explained in chapter 2.

Before starting this research, I was observing para para more casually, and even as someone who had not been to any events, I was able to notice a few changes in the Para Para scene (as well as the Eurobeat scene) which was even noticed by the Japanese media (「パラパラ」再熱。“おうち時間”の運動不足解消にも, 2020; 自粛生活で「パラパラ」に注目、元“ヤマンバギャル”が目指すブーム再燃, 2020; St. Michel, 2022a) . That motivated me to start this research.

The methodology of this dissertation was both quantitative and qualitative, and was mainly based on direct intensive observation (Marconi & Lakatos, 2003, p. 190). For this study, I had the opportunity to do fieldwork in Japan myself. From August/23 to January/24 I was an exchange student at Akita International University, in Akita Prefecture, Tohoku region. Because there were no para para events in Akita, I made short trips to the closest cities with events, Sendai and Tokyo. Para para events are not limited to these cities but the trips to further cities were unaffordable, therefore my observations are limited to the Tokyo and the Tohoku area. Comparisons with the para para scene from Osaka, Nagoya, Sapporo, and Fukuoka, among other cities, might be carried out in future studies. Moreover, my observation was based on what was happening by 2023. In case of changes from 2024, I may not be able to document it as I am not in Japan anymore.

As I mentioned, there are not many studies on para para. However, I would never be able to write about the entire history of the dance all by myself; therefore, I decided to pick a timespan to analyze in detail. The selected timespan was 2020-2023, from the start of the pandemic to the last event I have been to. One reason for this selection is that we can perceive how a moment of emergency such as a pandemic changes various aspects of one's daily life, including cultural consumption. Another reason is that it is easier to find information about para para during this period if compared to the booms in the 1980s and the 1990s, where technology was not as advanced as now. The final reason is that it was the period I had a direct experience with para para, as I attended events for the first time.

I divided the analysis into three parts based on methodology as follows:

3.1. Observation

Following the categorization by Ander-Egg (1978, p. 96 as cited in Marconi & Lakatos, 2003, p. 192), I did a systematic, participant, individual, real-world observation.

In systematic observation, also called structured observation, the researcher goes to the field with a structured plan on what to research under a more controlled situation than the more casual and improvised unsystematic observation (Marconi & Lakatos, 2003, p. 193). I visited events with the planning of what answers I was looking for. I did not use any particular devices, but my main questions were related to the number of regulars, their characteristics, how they differ (or resemble) compared to other events, the most popular dances, and specific routines by parties or regions.

Participant observation implies that the researcher is part of, or incorporated into the community/group they are observing (Marconi & Lakatos, 2003, p. 194). I was interacting with my surroundings rather than analyzing from afar. Moreover, my participant observation is also qualified as a natural participant observation because I am part of the community I am researching (Marconi & Lakatos, 2003, p. 194). Despite never having danced para para before the study, I was aware of the dance for years and have been part of the Eurobeat community (which, as shown in chapter 2, is undeniably tied to para para) for nearly ten years, so I was not a complete outsider, and it was not that complicated to blend in.

Individual observation means that the researcher conducts the investigation all by themselves, and real-world observation is the synonym for fieldwork (Marconi & Lakatos, 2003, pp. 194-195). I did all the fieldwork by myself, and I attended the events instead of, for example, watching the online streamings or acquiring all my information through academic studies and SNS.

During my stay in Japan, I went to the following events:

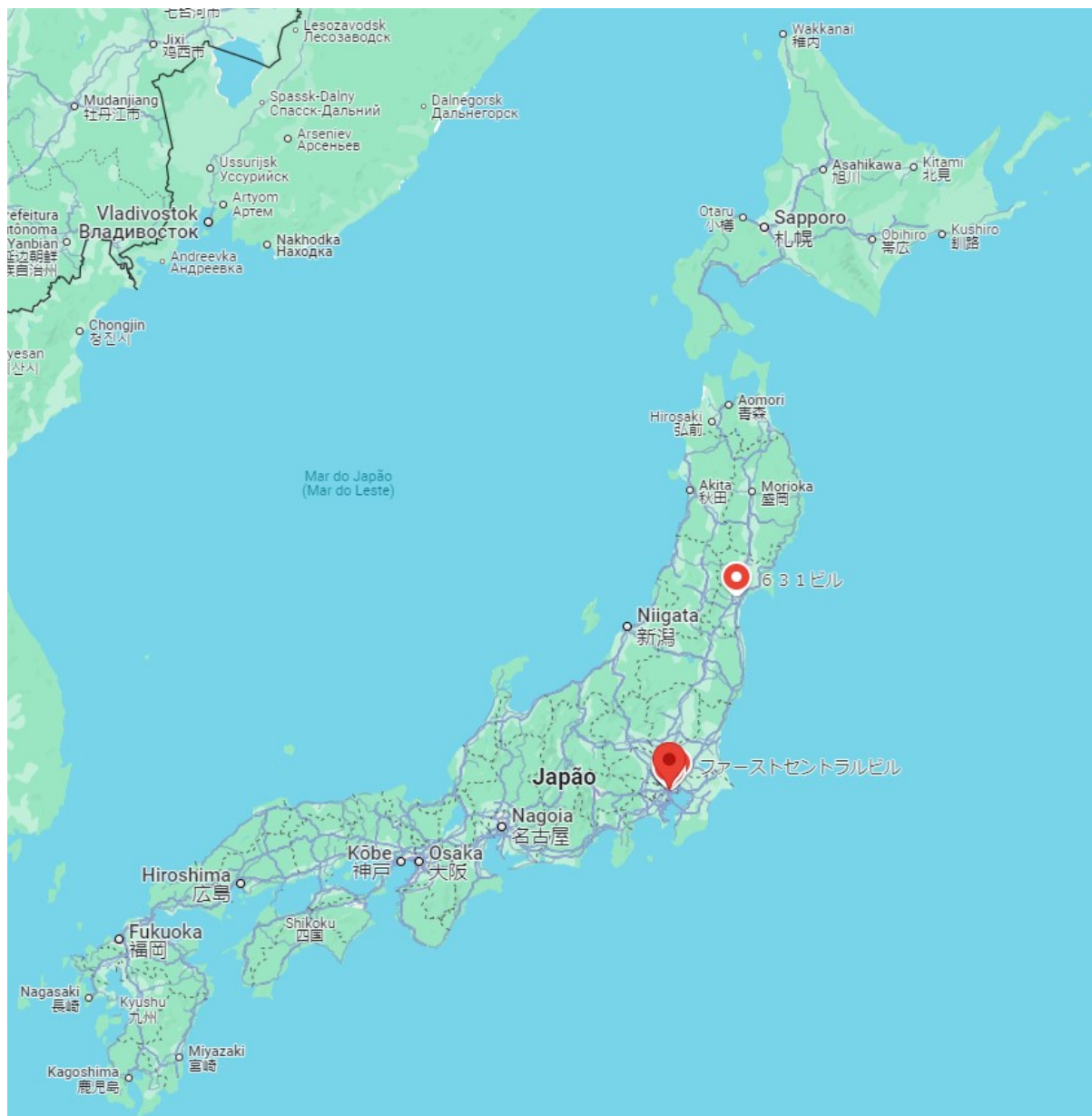
1. Eurobeat Stadium (Tokyo, September and December '23, on Sundays)
2. GO GO FIRE (Tokyo, September '23, on a Sunday)
3. Agefarre (Tokyo, October '23, on a Sunday)
4. Para Para (Tokyo, October '23, on a Tuesday)
5. Kin Para (Tokyo, October '23, on a Friday)
6. Star Fire (Tokyo, October '23 and December '23 - October's was on a Saturday, and December's was on New Year's Eve)

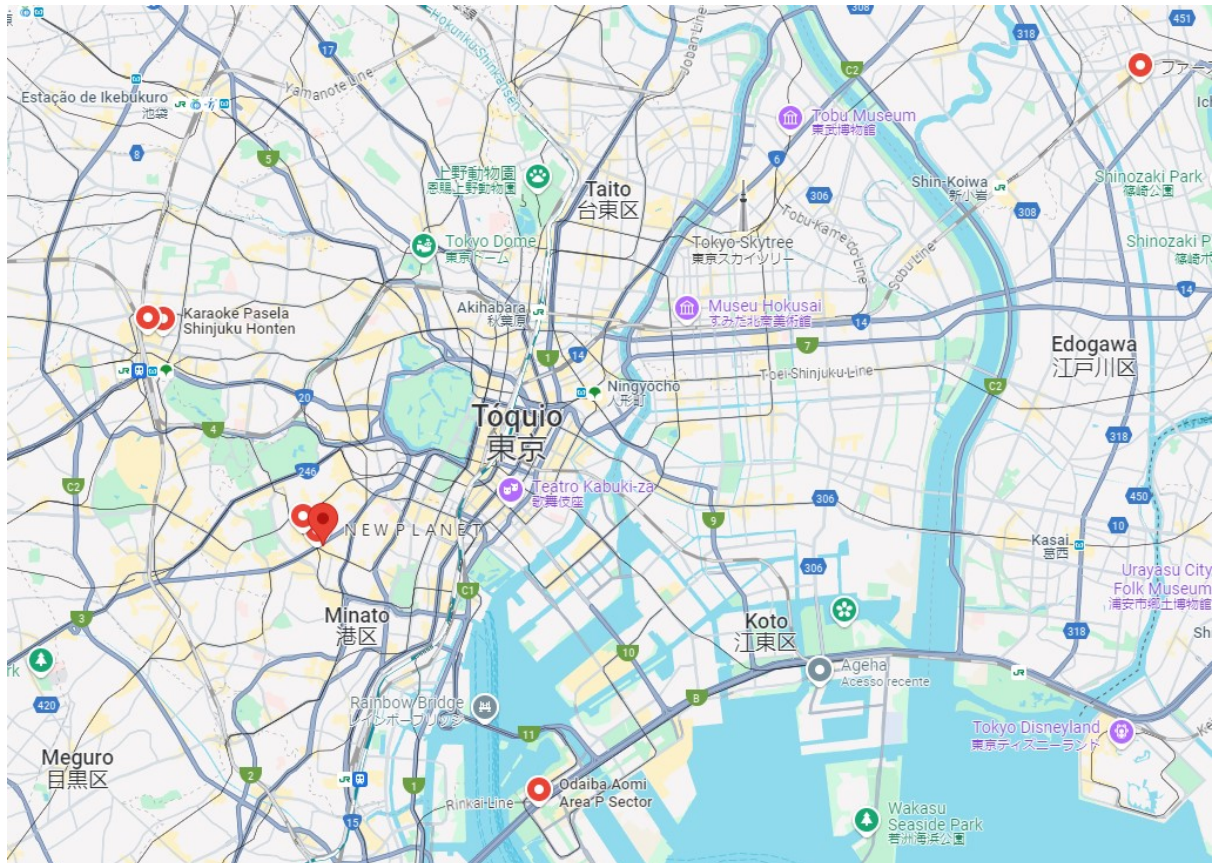
7. Neys (Sendai, November '23 and December '23, on Saturdays)
8. SEF (Tokyo, November '23, on a Sunday)
9. B-1 Dynamite!! (Tokyo, December '23, on a Wednesday)

I, then, recorded a few videos to re-analyze as I write this dissertation and to help my supervisor understand a bit more how a para para event works. I paid attention to the clientele to figure out who attends these events. I also observed the songs that were played to see if some did so more frequently, and if there were any differences between events based on the sets. I mainly presented myself as a new costumer but some people also introduced me as a para para researcher, therefore my role ended up being a mix of the two.

The other two events related to the scene that I went to were “SUPER MULTI BEAT supported by OMOTENASHI BEATS” and “Bubbly Disco”. The former was promoted by Omotenashi Beats, an Avex project to “introduce Cool Japan to the world by fusing elements of J-Pop, dance music and DJ culture and releasing entertainment based on club style, centering on anime songs that are representative of Japan.” (OMOTENASHI BEATS, n.d.) One of its goals is to bring tourists to other areas of Japan besides the most popular ones, like Shibuya and Akihabara, and give people another new place to enjoy anime songs (or anisongs). (Avex, 2019). The event that I went to featured several subgenres of electronic music. Still, the main acts were Dave Rodgers (Eurobeat singer and producer) and Motsu (part of several J-euro groups, especially m.o.v.e.), both pivotal to the euro, thus the para para scene. The latter was an event more related to Juliana’s Tokyo and the popular hits back then, therefore more focused on the techpara/juliana part of the scene, although Eurobeat songs were also played.

For better reference, Figures 34 and 35 map where those events were held.





Figures 34 and 35. Events I have been to - Japan and Tokyo.

There were more events than places because a few were held at the same venue (e.g., Eurobeat Stadium and B-1 Dynamite!! both happened at New Planet). In the case of Eurobeat Stadium, the event was held in two clubs next to each other (New Planet and JUMANJI55) but I only included the former on the map as it was only one event.

Out of all the events, a few have been taking place for over 20 years, like Neys, and Star Fire, whereas some started within the last 10 years, like Kin Para and Eurobeat Stadium. Most of these events happen monthly but a few occur twice a month (Para Para, Kin Para) and even weekly (B-1). Unfortunately, because I was not living in Tokyo, I have only been to the events once - Neys, Eurobeat Stadium, and Star Fire were exceptions.

The reason I picked those events was based on schedule, importance and variety. Schedule was the main factor, as I was not living in either Tokyo or Sendai, therefore I had fewer opportunities to go to para para events. Nevertheless, I tried to align my schedule in Akita with the main events. I created a post in ParaPara International パラパラ・インター

ナショナル on Facebook¹⁹, a group for para para enthusiasts all over the world - including foreign nationals - on which the pivotal events were. After replies from members who have mostly followed the scene for ages, SEF DX, Star Fire, and Eurobeat Stadium were pointed out as the main monthly events in Tokyo. They also highlighted Agefarre, which is yearly. Other mentions were SEN (Osaka) and NRG Revolution (Sapporo). Neys was highlighted as the only monthly event in Tohoku but I was also presented to EURO BLAST, an irregular event in Koriyama, Fukushima Prefecture. While I was in Japan, EURO BLAST took part in December, the day after December's Neys. I was not able to go to Fukushima because of transportation logistics but several people from the Tokyo scene came to Tohoku for the weekend just to go to Neys and EURO BLAST. We will delve into it throughout the next chapter.

3.2. Interviews

Because the number of current studies on para para is still scarce, I used interviews to complement the information from the observation and the existing studies. Based on the objectives proposed by Selltiz (1965, 286-95 as cited in Marconi & Lakatos, 2003, p. 196), the ones that suited the most are the discovery of their opinions about the facts, and the past-current conduct, that is, assuming what the future actions might be based on past and current actions. Thanks to the interviews, we were also able to grasp their feelings and ambitions regarding the para para scene. The interviews were unstructured (p. 197) as the questions were subjective and specific for each interviewee.

For this study we interviewed the following people:

1. Arthur (Aru), a Brazilian-born Sendai-based paralist. He moved to Japan in the early 10s and has been part of the para para scene even before that. He is also one of the techpara dancers at Eurobeat Stadium;
2. Yukine, the host of Neys, in Sendai;
3. Banchou, the host of Star Fire and B-1 Dynamite!!;
4. Jun Suzuki (Suzujun), the host of Eurobeat Stadium (or Eurosta);
5. Matsumoto "NEON", the host of Shinjuku NEON and the creator of the Para Para Calendar which indicates the upcoming para para events nationwide;

¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/574543875892033/posts/6293384997341197/>

6. Akira Yokota (DJ Boss), one of the biggest DJs in the Eurobeat scene. He is one of the regular DJs at Maharaja Roppongi and used to DJ at Velfarre, one of the biggest clubs in Japan during the nineties and noughties. He is also involved with Super Eurobeat, the main eurobeat compilation published by Avex;
7. SCP Music, one of the main Eurobeat labels. The questions were answered by composer Evelina Somenzi;
8. Caio, a Brazilian tiktoker part of the Brazilian para para group Renegade. He publishes several refilms, original choreographies, and information on para para on his TikTok account (@renegade_caio techno).

I chose to interview Aru because he has been part of the scene for nearly two decades, and has been living in Japan for a decade. Therefore, he is aware of the state of the scene before the pandemic started and what changed from 2020.

As for SCP Music, I believed analyzing the popularity of Eurobeat from the perspective of one of the main Eurobeat labels would be intriguing, and perhaps it would be possible to cross the “pandemic aftermaths” in both the Eurobeat and the para para scene, as we could see in the previous chapter that they have been connected for decades.

Yukine, Banchou, Jun Suzuki, and Matsumoto are event hosts, therefore their vision was crucial for this study. Moreover, each of them has a factor that distinguishes one another. Yukine is the only host from the Tohoku region, so we could perhaps identify a few differences between the pandemic impact on Tokyo events and Sendai-based Neys. Matsumoto Neon is the creator of the Para Para Calendar so he might have a better notion on how the pandemic affected events as a whole or whether the number of events increased or not. Banchou and Jun Suzuki host two of the main para para events as of 2024, but Banchou’s Star Fire is an over-two-decade-old event, whereas Suzuki’s Eurobeat Stadium is a five-year-old one. The impact of the pandemic on both events is likely different because of that.

DJ Boss, being one of the main eurobeat DJs, can explain his set choices based on events (whether it is a more general one or a more specific one), his experience as a DJ in former Velfarre, and more details on the Super Eurobeat Series.

Finally, Caio can enlighten us with how social media (especially TikTok) helped spread the word of para para, and which type of para para content tends to engage other users. It is just important to point out that because of TikTok's algorithm, Caio usually gets views and engagement from Brazilian users, therefore para para content creators in Japan might have a different content preference.

All the interviews were conducted online, by e-mail and SNS (in particular, LINE and Facebook Messenger). The full interviews will be available in the Appendix. Interviews that were not conducted in English were translated from either Portuguese or Japanese to English by me. To ensure accuracy, I cross-checked my translations using Google Translate and asked JP-EN translators for help. All in all, the final translations were fully human-generated, not machine-translated.

3.3. Survey

Finally, I created a survey on Google Form to complement the interviews and figure out similarities and distinctions on the opinion of para para enthusiasts from Japan and outside Japan. Therefore, this survey targeted only people who had prior knowledge of what para para is.

I promoted the survey on Twitter and on communities throughout several SNS related to either eurobeat or para para (e.g., Para Para International, on Facebook, and Eurobeat Prime, on Discord). I was also helped by Para Para Jiten (paraparajiten, on Instagram), who promoted my survey in their stories.

The survey was divided into a few parts: first, the background of those who responded (age, place of residence); second, their relation with para para (how did they learn about it, which events they have been in - if they have been to any at all -, if they own DVDs, if they experienced one of the booms, etc.); third, more specific questions regarding para para during the pandemic (if they watched stay home videos related to para para, if they thought the number of people interested in para para increased during the pandemic, if the pandemic period was a period of a para para boom, etc).

104 people filled out the forms, 39 of which live in Japan. All the results will be available in the Appendix.

In the next chapter, I will analyze this data. I will first explain, based on my personal experience, how a para para event works. Next, we will focus on the pandemic period, as it is the main point of this study - what happened to the events in 2020? What alternatives were thought to keep para para alive? This is also the part where we will dissect our data and cross some results to better understand the entire scenario.

Chapter 4. Analysis and findings

This chapter analyzes the current status of the scene based on my personal experience, the interviews, and the survey. It is divided into two main parts.

The first explains how an event works, points out a few specific rituals based on the event or the region, distinguishes official routines and maniac routines, and maps the number of events according to Prefecture.

The second focuses on the pandemic and the changes it brought to the scene since the first confirmed case in Japan, in January 2020. Besides the changes during the pandemic, I will also confirm whether they continued post-pandemic.

4.1. How an event works

The first thing is the frequency of events. The most common types are monthly and bi-monthly events - in the case of the latter, it usually happens every two weeks. Agefarre is held once a year, between late-September and early-October. Very few events, such as B-1 Dynamite!! happen once a week. Some events take place somewhat regularly but not on a monthly basis: Techno Is Back ! , a Tokyo-based event, is held around once every three months (during my stay in Japan between August 2023 and January 2024, they hosted an edition in October/23, then January/24). Bigger events, such as SEF and Eurobeat Stadium travel around Japan on tours. In 2024, SEF celebrated its 30th anniversary with a tour, and created a google forms²⁰ targeting parties interested in either hosting a collaboration event or a SEF event in their cities. A few months later, the tour was announced, covering Osaka, Okinawa, Toyama, Sapporo, Nagoya, Fukuoka, and Tokyo.

The second thing to point out is where in Japan the events are held. Our main reference is the Para Para Calendar²¹, created by Matsumoto “NEON”. The calendar has been tracking events throughout Japan since 2009. I will not be able to analyze every single month individually, therefore, for the time being, I will take the data from the month I went to my

²⁰ <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeAPnaDEV1JcA0s-KbVSHvnJAp8oePOe2HI1JlfSGG3KJ0s4Q/viewform>

²¹ <https://parapara.kanpa-i.com/>

first para para event (September 2023). Figure 36 and Table 1 show which Prefectures hosted events that month, and how many events happened in each Prefecture.

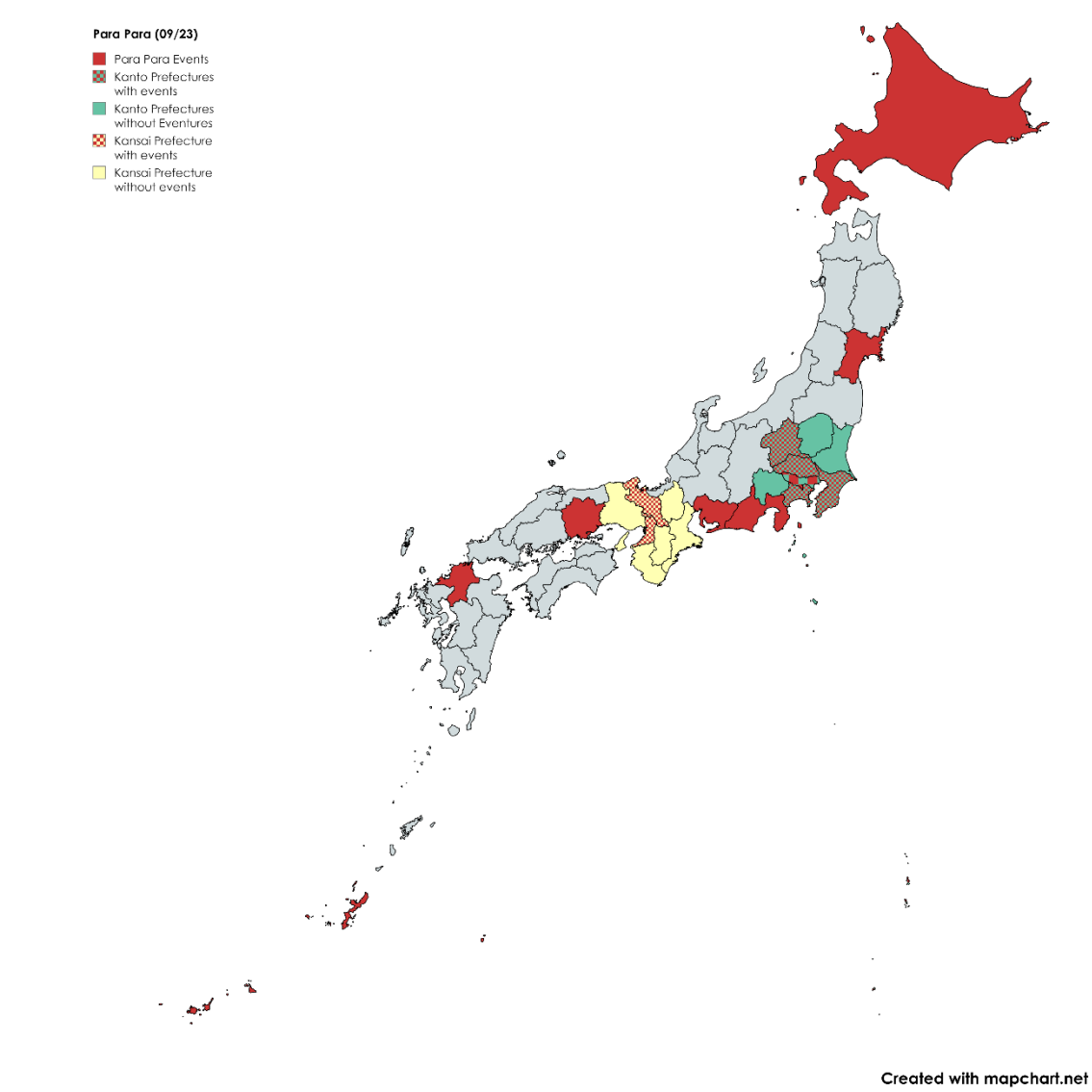


Figure 36. Prefectures with para para events in September 2023.

Prefecture	Number of Events	Name of the Events (JP)
Tokyo	33	ロン毛ハゲーション; 新宿NEON; MAGICAL RAVE HYPER; DRAGON RAY'S; Yu-Land Fire; B-1 (Sept. 6); 金パラ (Sept 8); 浅草; ジュリアナ東

Prefecture	Number of Events	Name of the Events (JP)
		京 Style; EUROBEAT STADIUM; D-GENE; パラ☆ パラ (Sept. 12); B-1 (Sept. 13); EURO TIME; EUROBEAT90～x TECHNO (Sept. 14); 湾岸 midnight; EURO HEAVEN; S E F; ユーロビート SAIKO 計画; B-1 (Sept. 20); KAMEIDO EURO TRAX; ユーロビート酒場; KOIWA TIME; 金パラ (Sept. 22); Beat Magic; ゴタパラ; GO GO FIRE; EMOTIONS; GINZA PARANCE; パラ☆パラ (Sept. 26); B-1 (Sept. 27); EUROBEAT90～x TECHNO (Sept. 28); Heaven Star; STAR FIRE
Osaka	17	S E N; Parapara-ALL MIX (Sept. 2); Euro と酒; SUPER EURO CLASSIC; ZAKBARAN (Sept. 6); ユーロビート専門学校 x たこやき REMIX; FIVE STAR; ミナミのパラパラ; MAHARAJA EURO NIGHT; フリスタ新世界; 芋パラ; DISCO LOVERS; ZAKBARAN (Sept. 20); Parapara-ALL MIX (Sept. 23); S E N サタスペ; MAHARAJA NIGHT HYPER BEAT style; Parapara-ALL MIX (Sept. 30)
Saitama	6	MANIPARA LEGENDS; EURO HEART (Sept. 7); EURO HEART (Sept. 16); 乱舞 GOLD; Pero Pero City Night; GROOVE
Aichi	5	Para Para Max; N D R; B E A T; DANCE CLASSIC LOVERS x SHINJUKU N E O N ナゴヤ DISCO まつり; Re: Para

Prefecture	Number of Events	Name of the Events (JP)
Hokkaido	4	P D S ; X-NRG; P D S D; NRG REVOLUTION
Okayama	2	J-WEST FACTORY; SUNDAY RHYTHM
Kanagawa	2	VACATION; SUNDAY DISCO NIGHT
Fukuoka	2	EURO VENUS; 九州ぱらぱら道場
Gunma	2	水 LUV; PARAPARA TECHPARA NIGHT
Miyagi	1	N e y s
Chiba	1	BEAT PARADISE
Shizuoka	1	静パラ！
Okinawa	1	EUROBEAT STADIUM 沖縄 in よんぱら
Kyoto	1	KYOTO EUROBEAT TRIBE
TOTAL	78	

Table 1. Number of events according to the Prefecture in September 2023.

Neys and the 8th's 金パラ did not take place in September but I included them in the final list because they are both regular events and it would give a more accurate notion of how many events each Prefecture has. SEN's online-only events were not included in the final count.

Out of the 78 events, over half occurred in the Kanto region (in this case, Tokyo + Saitama + Kanagawa + Gunma + Chiba, highlighted green and red), which shows how concentrated these events are. The Kansai region (highlighted yellow) was the second with the most events, but almost all were in Osaka. Nevertheless, nearly every region had, at least, one regular event per month - only the Shikoku region had none.

The calendar also shows that every day of the week - except Monday - has at least one para para event. Sometimes, events are held on Mondays in case it falls on a national holiday - in September, it was the case of Pero Pero City Night, in Saitama. Otherwise, Nagoya's Para Para Max is the only regular event on Mondays. Most events occur on weekends, and sometimes a few clashes so one has to choose between events. When they do not clash, it is common to see people planning to go to more than one on the same day.

Events usually happen at night but rarely go beyond midnight. The usual time for night events is from 19h to 23h, with some small variations. On weekends, some events are held during the daytime, usually from around 13h to 19h, with hourly variations. Out of the bigger events, the only one that happens late at night is Osaka's SEN, which goes until 4h30 (SEN サタスペ goes until 5h but starts a bit later than SEN).

To enter the event, usually one has to pay between 2000 and 3000 yen, sometimes with a drink included. In a few places, women pay less than men (around 500 yen less). Some promotions, conditions, and campaigns can reduce the entrance fee. For example, パラ☆パラ starts at 19h. If one arrives within an hour from its start, the ticket is 1500 yen off. Eurobeat Stadium launched a campaign that those in their 20s would pay 1000 yen (the standard prices are 3500 yen for men and 2500 yen for women). NRG REVOLUTION also did an age-related campaign where those aged 25 and under paid 1000 yen instead of the usual 2000 yen. In a few cases, there is no entrance fee, like in 金パラ. In Parapara-ALL MIX, women do not pay but men do. There are also all-you-can-drink events where one pays the entrance fee but drinks are included.

One of the most pivotal pieces of information one needs about the events is which genres (and which decades) it plays. The main genres are Eurobeat (or "euro") and Techno but some parties focus on one style or exclusively play one genre. The event we mentioned earlier, Techno Is Back ! , is focused on Techno, despite playing some Eurobeat as well. B-1, the weekly event, has distinct themes each week - one being only Euro, another only Techno. There are a few specific events for Fire Step, like "GO GO FIRE". Trance is seldom included in sets, and I could not find any information on whether people still dance to yogore or not, as it is a Kansai-based dance and I have not gone to any events in Kansai.

Some events are restricted to time periods, such as “3rd boom euro”, “Juliana’s songs”, “modern (post-2010) euro”, “1980s euro”, “1990s disco”, and the list goes on. Sometimes, events do not specify a timespan but it is noticeable not all periods are being covered. Let’s take Agefarre as an example. It is a yearly event that casuals usually attend. Because casuals likely do not know recent routines, DJs do not include post-2010 songs in their sets. They would rather focus on nostalgic routines from the 3rd boom or the bubble era as people are more prone to know the choreography and dance along.

There was a distinction between events, which were labeled as either “official” or “maniac”. Official events were some of the major Tokyo-based events that usually had some endorsement from official labels and eurobeat artists. Maniac events were the remaining ones. That also implies that official routines came from original events, and maniac routines - also called manipara (JP: マニパラ) -, from maniac events.

As of 2024, the events that are considered official amongst people from the scene are SEF, Star Fire, B-1, Eurobeat Stadium, and SEN. This distinction, however, does not impede official events from including songs with only maniac routines in their sets. I recall one of the Eurobeat Stadium events where Jacynthe’s *This Is The Night* (1998) played in one of the sets, and I told my friends that I was surprised because I did not know there was a routine for it. One of them pointed out that it was a maniac routine. After searching for it in community-driven para para databases like parapara.dance²² and [para para wiki](https://www.paraparawiki.com/wiki/This_Is_the_Night_(Jacynthe))²³, there is indeed no official routine for it, only a maniac one available on the third edition of the Nagoya-based Hakai series (JP: 破壊 第三章). Still, several songs with both official and maniac routines are played. In such cases, it seems that it is all a matter of preference from who dances it.

The line between official and maniac events has become blurred as many of the dancers of official clubs come from originally maniac circles (e.g. Hi-Cross, one of the main techpara circles, has members involved in all official events, except Eurobeat Stadium). That being said, regular events dedicated exclusively to maniac routines still occur, such as MANIPARA LEGENDS and FUN MANIAC.

²² <https://parapara.dance/songs/4158>

²³ [https://www.paraparawiki.com/wiki/This_Is_the_Night_\(Jacynthe\)](https://www.paraparawiki.com/wiki/This_Is_the_Night_(Jacynthe))

In multi-genre events, DJ sets vary between genres. Some DJs specialize in a single genre, some play multiple genres. The genre order is usually Eurobeat - Techno - Eurobeat - Techno until the end, with Fire (when it applies) replacing one of the Eurobeat sets. The last set is usually Eurobeat. Each DJ plays for approximately half an hour, and each song is played for around 1:30 minute, until around the end of the first chorus or the intro after the chorus.

Eurobeat Stadium is the biggest exception because it occurs in two clubs, so one DJ plays a Eurobeat set in club 1, and another DJ simultaneously plays a techno set in Club 2. Figure 37 shows the schedule of December '23's Eurobeat Stadium.

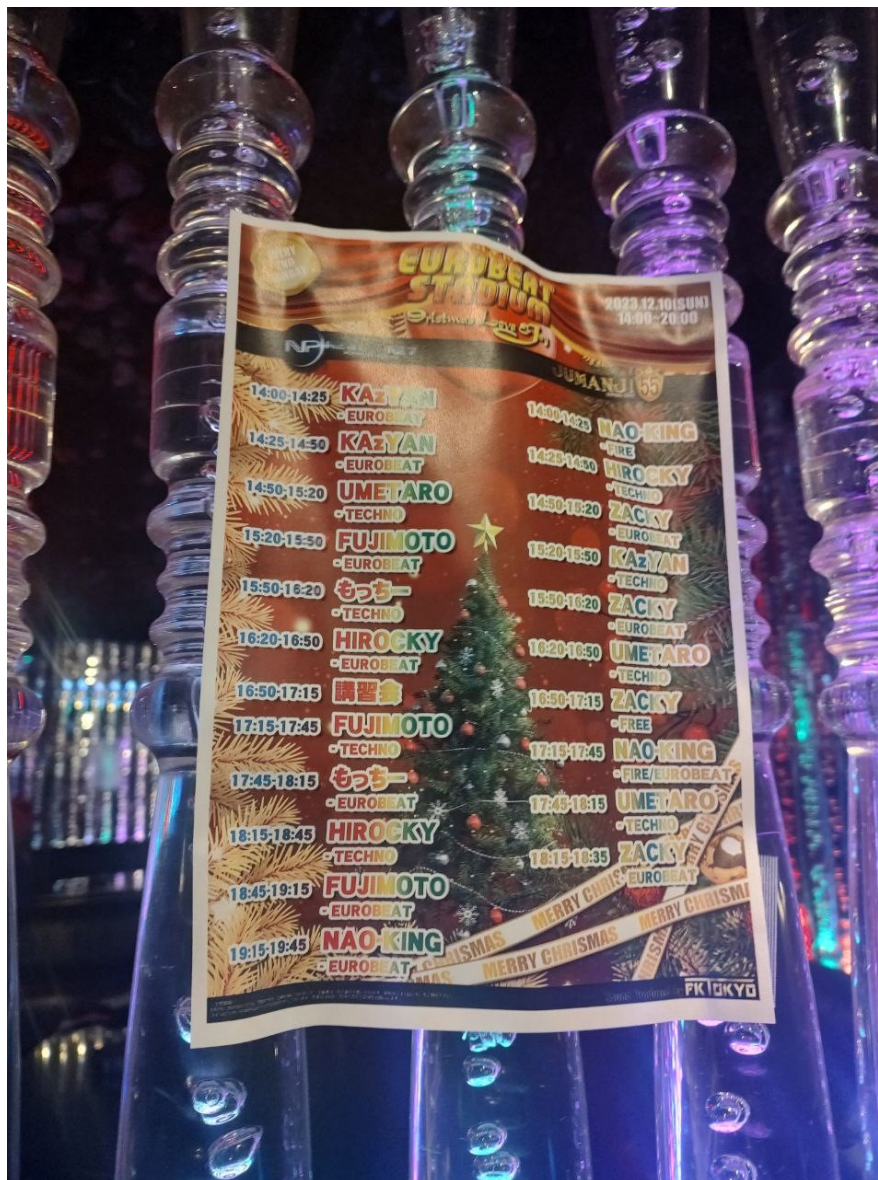


Figure 37. Eurobeat Stadium DJ schedule (December/23).

The “free” set at the same time as “講習会” (we will explain what it means in a few paragraphs) ends up being an attempt to make customers go to the other club to see the “講習会” , usually playing unrelated music that does not suit the party theme (e.g. Enka).

People always dance in a circle in both para para and techpara, unless the routine itself has an alternative setting (e.g., *F.A.Y.* is a techpara routine where people stand in a line instead of in a circle). Fire routines tend to shift from this configuration; I believe it is because those routines need more space as one mainly uses legs.

Some events have some particular rituals when dancing para para. It is possible to be geographically related as well, as I remember seeing those rituals in Sendai but not in Tokyo. For example, people in Sendai would put one foot on a small stool and dance on it, or they would feature some posters often describing songs that are currently being played (Figure 38).



Figure 38. Posters in Neys (December 2023)²⁴.

Aru also mentioned a detail that was also part of the Sendai scene yet he did not see it anywhere else:

In Sendai, on the chorus of *Super Euro Flash*, we shout “Onigiri Baby!”, and that does not happen in Tokyo. I only realized it because I was the only one who shouted it [at an event in Tokyo] and nobody understood why. (A. Siqueira, personal communication, 2024)

A few rituals managed to cross the Prefecture borders. In one of the techno sets in September’s Eurobeat Stadium, I witnessed the Pako Pako Dance (JP: パコパコダンス). It is a style of dance originated in Nagoya, where women would emulated sex on the *otachidai* to the sound of *Utter (K-B Nagoya Mix)*, by King Dale. パコパコ “pako pako” is also a onomatopoeia for having sex. People could dance Pako Pako at the club CAFE ABIME (1995-2008) (yagib11, 2008).

It is important to note that nearly no one dances to the two main genres: they either pick Eurobeat and sit down in techno sets or vice-versa. It always seemed to be this way, and there are very few people who dance both genres (perhaps those people are more likely to be foreigners who have the opportunity to attend an event on a trip to Japan). From my experience, the number of people dancing para para in Eurobeat sets is higher than people dancing techpara in techno sets. In the case of Eurobeat Stadium, one just needs to go upstairs and downstairs. For example, if one wants to dance to Techno, they can go to New Planet at 14h50 to see Umetaro’s set. When it is over, at 15h20, they can go upstairs to JUMANJI55 to see KAZYAN’ set, and at 15h50, go downstairs to Mocchii’s set.

The other place one can dance is on *otachidai* (like the one in Figure 39). Although it is not restricted to women anymore as it was mentioned in chapter 2, there are a few unwritten rules about dancing there. Those on the *otachidai* are people who either have been part of the scene for a long time or know several choreographies, as they will be in the spotlight and serve as a reference for those who do not know a routine, as they will mimic people on the *otachidai*. The act of trying to dance by mimicking other dancers is called *manepara* (JP: 真似パラ, with 真似 [*mane*] meaning mimic). Those who know its background might feel the pressure due to the importance of the *otachidai*. In Bubbly Disco,

²⁴ のび太 (Nobita) and しずちゃん (Shizu-chan) are characters from the anime *Doraemon*.

one of my friends, who has been dancing for over 10 years, was invited to dance on the *otachidai* by other people on the *otachidai*, and when she got off, she said she did “not feel ready” to dance on an *otachidai* yet, despite being quite experienced.



Figure 39. The inside of Tokyo’s Maharaja Roppongi, including its *Otachidai*²⁵.

Some DJs also include VDJ mixes in their sets, that is, they play the routine videos together with the songs on screens around the club. For those who do not know the choreographies, watching the videos while dancing might be helpful. However, not every DJ provides video materials, and, based on my experience, they are more common in techno sets. DJ Boss said, in response to my interview (A. Yokota, personal communication, 2024), that he believed that the presence or absence of VDJ mixes did not interfere much with the audience’s enjoyment (to the point of not going to an event because there are no VDJ mixes), and it might be more of a matter of the DJ’s satisfaction.

In the middle of some events, there is a moment people from the community call lesson (JP: 講習会), where the dancers present new routines, usually a para para one and a techpara

²⁵ Photo from Maharaja Roppongi. <https://maharaja-r.jp/>

one. Para para routines are still danced to Eurobeat as there is still a constant release of new Eurobeat songs and an immense repertoire of older Eurobeat songs without official routines. Sometimes, DJs create Eurobeat remixes of J-pop songs and anime songs for the routine. However, when it comes to techpara, there is a lack of recent Hyper Techno releases in the music industry - the few releases come from Hyper Techno arrangements of Touhou Project music, from Argentinian Hyper Techno producer and remixer Francisco Gaitán and from Italian label Dima Music. Some people might stumble upon a music genre called “Hypertechno” around SNS, especially TikTok, but despite the similar name, it is a genre unrelated to techpara’s “Hyper Techno”. The songs turned into techpara routines are usually techpara remixes of other songs, and Eurodance songs, which, like Eurobeat, is a genre of gigantic repertoire, and, with the trend of sampling Eurodance classics into new songs, the possibilities increase.

In some events, they show the choreography once, then teach it in small, slow steps, then perform it again. In other cases, they just perform it once and do not show the tutorial-ish steps. Performances are always done live so there is no previous recording of it and mistakes can happen, making the lesson time last longer sometimes. People in the event can record the lessons but there is an unwritten rule about not posting it on SNS before the events do it (all the official events upload the routines on Youtube, usually within a month).

This is also the part when label endorsement plays a role. They send the yet-unreleased songs or albums to the event staff so that the dancers create a routine for it even before the songs and albums are officially released. This was what happened on November’s SEF. As mentioned in chapter 2, SEF is endorsed by Avex, which is responsible for the Super Eurobeat series. On November 23rd, 2023, the *The Best of Super Eurobeat 2023* album was released. On November 19th, 2023, the monthly edition of SEF occurred, and the dancers presented the routines of two songs on that album (*Wonderful Love* by Sophie, and *Fire Trails* by Dejo). By the time the routines were uploaded on Youtube, the album had already been released, but those who were in SEF that day could listen to two unreleased songs.

It is during the lesson period when people start birthday celebrations. In the case of monthly events, they commemorate the birthdays of staff members and regular customers who were born on that month. There is a drinking moment (and sometimes even eating moment) with them while *Love & Joy* (2000), by Yuki Kimura, is playing in the background.

In a few cases, there are live performances of Eurobeat or Hyper Techno on events, and they are also done within the reserved time for lessons.

Some events provide livestreams for those who are not able to attend them. The livestream is usually done on one of the two platforms: Youtube and TwitCasting. The streams always focus on the DJs, therefore people can experience their sets but will not see other people dancing - Star Fire being the exception, as they film the *otachidai* as well. One may also discover which songs will get new routines but they will not be able to watch the unseen choreographies through the livestream.

Moreover, Osaka-based event producer Rising High (responsible for SEN, among other events) also hosts exclusively live videos on Youtube every week. It is shorter than the average para para event, usually lasting around two hours. Some videos only contain the DJs but others include dancers (Figure 40), and viewers can follow the steps of a routine. The streamings including dancers are SEN and 若様とお嬢 (in English, Young Master and Young Lady).



Figure 40. SEN's Youtube livestream, September 24.²⁶

Events do not gather thousands of people like the golden Juliana's days - the current venues do not have enough capacity for that, either. Nowadays, gathering over 100 people

²⁶ https://www.youtube.com/live/z36bGbDuzTI?si=h7vZt6J51PBa_srV

in an event is already a huge success. In September 2023, Shinjuku NEON hosted a collab event with Nagoya's DCL. Neon created an entry in the calendar to thank who attended the event²⁷, and affirmed the event was full-house with 130 people.

Based on my experience, over 100 customers are rather an exception than a rule. I do not have the exact number of customers, but some events I attended seemed to have less than 50 people. I also noticed that most of the regulars in events were usually the same people, with not so many fresh faces. The most distinct clientele was from Go Go Fire, likely due to being a Fire-focused event, and not as many people dance Fire as they dance para para or techpara.

One positive aspect of it is that this loyal para para audience is willing to attend other events outside the prefecture they live in. In December 2023, Neys was held in Sendai on the 2nd, and Euro Blast in Koriyama on the 3rd. I could only attend Neys but I could see several people from the Tokyo scene attending a Sendai event, and they were also planning to attend Koriyama's the following day.

Most people who attended the event are Japanese, although a few foreign nationals are also part of the event scene - most of them are either from another Asian country or of Asian descent. Out of the foreign nationals I spoke to, nearly all of them already knew para para before moving to Japan. When it comes to age, event hosts highlighted that the audience mainly consisted of people in their 40s and 50s – these people might have experienced, at least, the third boom in person, given some people would be around their 20s when para para peaked in the late 1990s.

What surprised me the most during the four months I attended events was that the number of *gyaru* who went to those events was much lower than I imagined. I do not know the reason for that but I could think of a few possibilities as to why it was this way:

1. The *gyaru* are not aware of these events. Para para events are not heavily promoted on social media like Instagram or TikTok (Eurobeat Stadium being an exception). There are groups on Facebook and communities on Mixi to promote events but the casuals and newcomers might not be aware of that. If one is not in these groups and

²⁷ <https://parapara.kanpa-i.com/nk-20230919.html>

do not know the para para calendar, finding an event might become a challenging task. When I went to Go Go Fire, one of the people asked me how I found out about the event. When I mentioned the calendar, they replied along the lines of “Ah, so you are part of the scene!”, which made me think the calendar is not that well-known to casuals;

2. The *gyaru* go to other types of events. They might still dance para para in some places but perhaps in distinct spots. The former Ganguro Cafe could have been one of these places, for example. During my research, I discovered that Rumi (alias: Rumiringo), a former model at Egg magazine and also one of the dancers of the 俄然パラパラ!! and the 9LoveJ Story series, started a Para Para School in 2023, which is still running as of September 2024 (Rumi 先生のパラパラ学校スタート！？, 2023). Rumi posts videos of her and her students dancing to some routines on her TikTok (@rumiringo, n.d.), and even children are taking part in her classes. Therefore, there is a chance the *gyaru* attend events of people more related to the *gyaru* circles than to the para para circles;
3. The *gyaru* only perform para para online. They might be more focused on the fashion part of the subculture and turn para para into a simple detail by dancing it on Instagram or TikTok, for example. The latter, in particular, is very known for dance videos, so it is the perfect SNS to spread para para to world, but what if it also stays too restricted to it?;
4. Those who go to events are former *gyaru* and *gyaru-o*. Kawamura (2012) pointed out that at a certain age *gyaru* and *gyaru-o* retire from the circles. Although not specifying which age, the people in the middle of job-hunting and people in their 30s were used as examples of retired *gyaru*. They might not cut all ties with the group and its members but they would not belong to it anymore, and some of the retired members start to conform to Japan’s societal norms (dying their hair black again, stopping tanning, not over-accessorizing, etc.) because they need to find a stable job to pursue a stable life (pp. 63-64).

The event I witnessed *gyaru* the most was Agefarre, perhaps because it is a bigger event with live performances from electronic artists, more marketed than most para para events, mixed with trance, and has a sort of legendary status (AgeHa was one of Japan’s biggest clubs, after all) may be some of the reasons for that.

What about people who are not able to attend events? How to learn para para? New routines might be uploaded on Youtube nowadays, but what about the routines from the 90s? The DVDs and VHS might be a solution. Each volume often has between 10 and 15 routines, and the length of each routine varies from series to series. Some routines are recorded until the end of the intro after the first chorus (which is also the usual length songs are played in events) but some go until the end of the second chorus, or even do the routine of the full song. A few series also add a mirrored version so that it is easier to follow the steps.

However, one might still struggle to buy them, especially living overseas. I managed to buy two DVDs during my stay in Japan: We Love TechPara -Mission Style-, at Amazon Japan, and Star Fire X, at Star Fire's October event. A person living overseas will not be able to attend a Star Fire event in Japan to buy a DVD, and not every Amazon purchase can be shipped overseas.

In the survey (Figure 41), I asked if people thought it was difficult to find routines online and if having less trouble to find them would motivate them to dance. 57 people still struggle with finding routines, and 60 people would be more motivated if routines were found more easily.

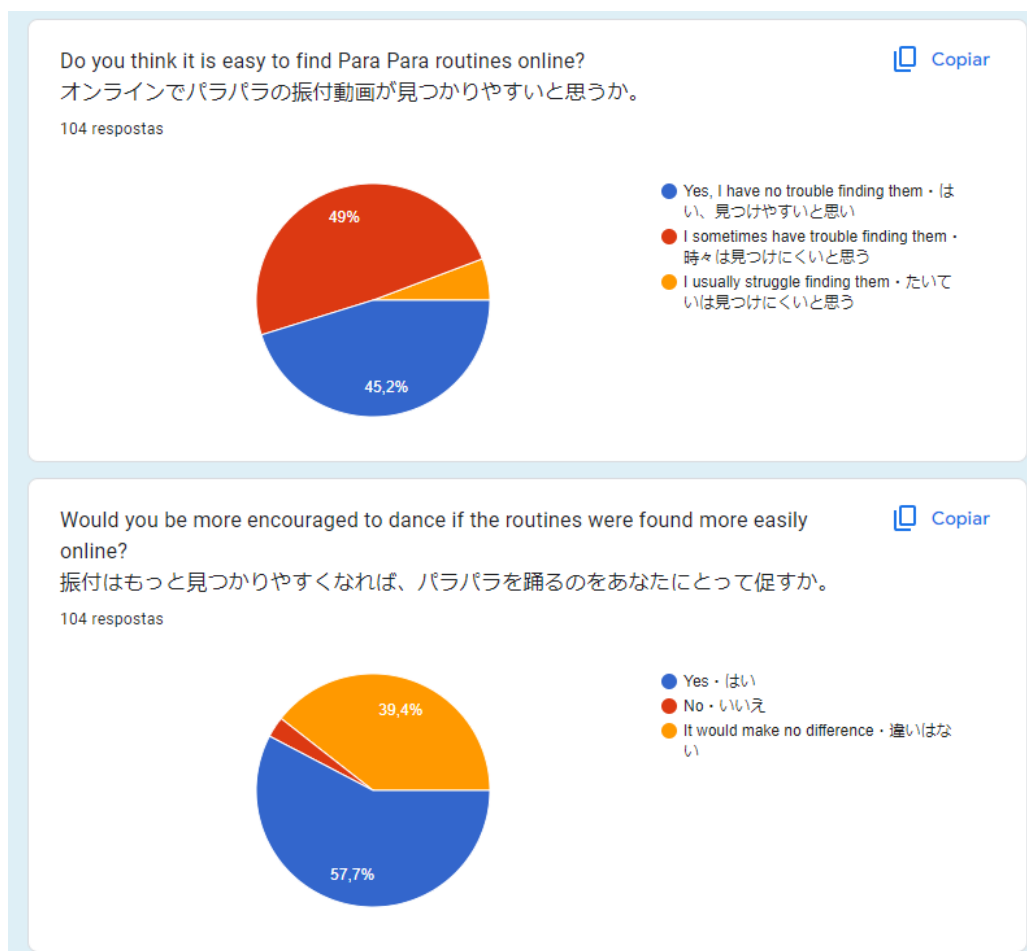


Figure 41. Survey data - finding routines.

One of the comments on the survey also highlighted that it is harder to find techpara and trapara routines in comparison with some para para routines - especially those related to Avex or Initial D.

Some who own those VHS and DVD tried to upload them on Youtube but they would be taken down due to copyright infringements, especially Avex videos. The loophole many found for that was the refilm. People who knew the routines would record themselves and upload the videos online, usually on Youtube, so it would be harder to take them down. Many routines can only be found on Youtube because of the refilms, therefore they have become a pivotal part of the para para scene, especially for fans overseas. For the Japanese people, refilms and uploads of VHS/DVD series was not as acceptable. During the interview, Caio told me a case:

Back then, it was a taboo to post the entire video online because of copyrights - now it is a bit different. Going back to refilms made in Japan, people would wear masks/sunglasses to hide their identities so that other people wouldn't find out they were refilming videos. And in some cases, they would even hide their identity from people at work out of fear they were found out as para para dancers.

Avex would even threaten people through e-mail in case they were reposting their content. There was one person from the international community [whose identity I will be preserving] who was kicked out of SEF in Velfarre in 2006 because they posted everything on Youtube. After that, she even stopped posting anything. (personal communications, 2024)

The pandemic era will bring some changes to the availability of online routines, and we will start approaching it in the next section.

4.2. The pandemic and the para para scene: what changed?

The 2010s is known, among people within the scene, as the “Ice Age Era” because of the lack of booms. Some positive news has been brought to the scene, for example, the successful revival of Maharaja in Tokyo after the opening of Maharaja Roppongi, in 2010. They also opened clubs in Osaka, Kyoto, Nagoya, and Sendai, following Roppongi. Nagoya's and Sendai's closed down in 2019 and 2020, respectively, but Osaka's (today's Maharaja Minami) and Kyoto (Maharaja Gion) are still in business, and Maharaja Roppongi opened a new annex (Maharaja Annex) in 2024.

Juliana's also attempted a revival by opening a club in Osaka, where Maharaja Osaka was located before it moved to its current place. However, Juliana's was not nearly as successful as Maharaja and only lasted from October 2018 to May 2020. I could not find out whether the pandemic was the cause for its early closure or not.

It was around 2018 that the talks of a new para para boom was taking placed started to spread out on the media. An article from Model Press stated that signs of a new boom started to appear after 17 years because a song by FxxkingRabbits called *イイ波のってんね*, which featured para para, was trending on SNS (「イイ波のってんね」が大流行！17年ぶりパラパラブーム復活 発信源のファッキングラビッツを直撃くモデルプレスインタビュー—モデルプレス., 2018). Another Model Press article pointed out that one could see teenagers dancing para para on the street after models from egg magazine started releasing songs with para para choreography (青山テルマ、新曲で“パラパラ”に挑戦し

た理由 ギャル 50 人と渋谷 109 など踊りまくる—モデルプレス, 2018). The portal Fashion Snap also highlighted the new songs from Egg models, and contacted Avex to question a possible boom, as the new egg songs were their production, and the 250th volume of the *Super Eurobeat* Series would be released that year. The Avex representative responded that they hoped that this collaboration between them and Egg magazine would result in a para para revival (FASHIONSAP, 2018).

The 250th Super Eurobeat volume was also a turning point in the para para scene. There was a rumour that the long-lasting series would stop releasing new volumes after the milestone, and that worried many people in the scene. Suzuki affirmed that it was one of the triggers for the creation of Eurobeat Stadium:

A few years ago, we had to face the fact that the current Eurobeat and para para scenes were not thriving. During the 2010s, several events closed, and I thought that the scene would continue like this. Moreover, with the SEB series coming to an end, I contacted Domino, SCP Music, and Dave Rodgers about future developments [of the scenes]. I felt that the market was in a critical situation of shrinking even more if nothing was done, so I thought we, on the contrary, should expand the market. That's the root [of Eurosta]. (J. Suzuki, personal communications, 2024)

DJ Boss stated, in an interview for Avex, that they had no plans of ceasing the production of the series but periodicity had to change. Instead of releasing once CD per month (which was not affordable anymore), they decided to turn SEB into a yearly release starting in 2019 (Current as the origin. SUPER EUROBEAT challenges 250th album in its 30th year, 2019). In my interview, he reinforced that:

We had no plans to stop at SEB 250. For us Japanese, Eurobeat is an indispensable genre, essential music, plus the culture and the by-products created by the genre are immeasurable. In Japan, its importance is so huge that it helps the economy: para para, *gyaru*, and even DISCOTHEQUES originated from Eurobeat. (A. Yokota, personal communications, 2024)

The fact that the alleged end of the SEB was one of the triggers for the start of Eurobeat Stadium is proof of Eurobeat's impact on the scene. At the same time, having viral para para-related music on SNS does not equal increasing the number of customers at para para events, based on Suzuki's description of the scene.

Then, on January 16th, 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Japan, although it took over one month for the number of cases to increase. The first wave, which

lasted from the first infection until May 2020 is the period changes are more noticeable. The government's main focus was to impede the numbers from rising, especially as Japan has many people in the risk group due to its aging population. Some of the measures included closing schools, closing borders to prevent infected people from arriving in Japan, and encouraging Japanese people to work remotely, wear masks, and refrain from hosting events. Those measures were implemented in January and February of 2020. (Karako et al., 2021, pp. 1-2)

Analyzing the calendar during these two months (Figures 42 and 43), the start of the COVID-19 did not seem to have affected the events. The usual clientele might not have attended the events as usual but it is impossible to affirm it through the calendar alone. Still, in the end, whether the number of customers decreased or not, people hosted events. It is from March (Figure 44) that the impact is more noticeable. The number of events decreased compared to the previous two months, especially Monday events. 12 events were marked as cancelled (JP: 中止) and one event was postponed (JP: 延期).

2020年01月 < >

昨日：616 今日：362 合計：1,444,682

日	月	火	水	木	金	土
			1 あけましてお めでございます。 ■	2 ■Parapara-A LL MIX■S E N	3 ■EURO HEAVEN	4 ■P D S ■N e y s ■夜のりゅ うカフェ■Parapa ra-ALL MIX
5 ■TECHNO & EURO NIGHT■P GM □N E O N	6 ■Para Para Max	7 ■SUPER EURO C LASSIC	8 ■B - 1 ■BE AT!!	9 ■BEAT EMOTIO N ■S E N	10 ■Disco Queen Ni ght■FIVE STAR	11 ●●●浅草&N EON パラ新年会 ■LEGACY■EUR OBEAT素人名人会 ■Parapara-ALL MIX
12 ■BeatMagic ■BEAT PARADIS E■VACATION■ N D R ■DANCE S HINE □TECHNO & EURO NIGHT■ RumPara	13 ■EUROBEAT STADIUM■ゆる い新年会 (仮)	14 ■パラ☆パラ ■TH EURO NIGH T	15 ■パラパラ*パ B - 1	16 ■EUROxTECHN O ■S E N	17	18 ■フリスタ新世界 □Dark In The Ni ght(お休み)
19 ■P D S D ■R anBoo■S E F ■ D C L ■TECHNO & EURO NIGHT■ 手振補充計画	20 ■MEGA麗舞	21 ■Dance Disc o Revolution■Co olaBah PARAPAR A	22 ■B - 1 ■【お休 み】BEAT!!	23 ■V D M ■EU ROxTECHNO ■S E N	24	25 ■ユーロピー トを派手に解禁 ■ FIRE NIGHT NEO ■Parapara-ALL MIX
26 ■新宿 N E O N ■Fantasy ■STAR FIRE ■乱 舞Night■D drago n ■TECHNO & E URO NIGHT ■SU NDAY EMOTION ■EURO VENUS	27	28 ■パラ☆パラ■M AHARAJA NIGHT -HYPER BEAT sty le■トキメキユ ーロビートナイト	29 ■B - 1 ■10 0%ミーハーナイ ト	30 ■EUROxTECHN O ■S E N	31 ■EURO 0+ ■DIS CO PARTY 80S 9 0S	

2020年02月 < >

昨日: 616 今日: 365 合計: 1,444,685

日	月	火	水	木	金	土
						1  ■ N e y s ■ 8 0s 90s ZERO DIS CO ■ パラパラ再興 計画 ■ PARAGLID ER ファイナル ■ Parapara-ALL MI X
2 ■ P R I D E ■ M AGICAL RAVE HY PER ■ ETERNITY ■ TECHNO & EU RO NIGHT □ 新 宿 N E O N	3 ■ Para Para Max	4 ■ SUPER EURO C LASSIC	5  ■ 【お休み】 B - 1	6 ■ EUROxTECHN O ■ S E N	7 ■ EURO HEAVEN	8 ■ P D S ■ 浅草 ■ Parapara-ALL MI X
9  ■ BeatMagic ■ EUROBEAT ST ADIUM ■ BEAT P ARADISE ■ VACA TION ■ N D R ■ D ANCE SHINE ■ TE CHNO & EURO N IGH T	10  ■ やれるの か！おい！	11  ■ D-GENE ■ パラ☆パラ	12  ■ B - 1 ■ BE AT!!	13 ■ BEAT EMOTIO N ■ S E N	14  ■ Disco Quee n Night ■ FIVE ST AR	15 ■ Dark In The Ni ght ■ フリスタ新 世界
16 ■ P D S D ■ Ran Boo ■ S E F ■ 静 パラ ■ D C L ■ TE CHNO & EURO N IGH T	17	18 ■ Dance Disco R evolution	19  ■ B - 1 ■ パラ パラ☆パラ 100% ミーハーナイト ■ トキメキ☆ユーロ ビートナイト	20 ■ EUROxTECHN O ■ S E N	21	22  ■ FIRE NIGH T NEO ■ 嘩(HAN A)Night ■ EURO B EAT 素人名人会 ■ P arapara-ALL MIX
23 ■ Fantasy ■ 乱舞 Night ■ STAR FIR E ■ SUNDAY DIS CO NIGHT ■ NEO じゃん☆パラ □ TECHNO & EURO NIGHT ■ EURO VENUS	24  ■ ライジング ナイト(パラパラリ ン)	25  ★パラ☆パラ ■ MAHARAJA NI GHT-HYPER BEA T style	26  ■ B - 1 ■ ME GA産舞 ■ BEAT!!	27  ■ V D M ■ EU ROxTECHNO ■ S E N	28  ■ EURO 0+	29  ■ S S S ■ RY U CAFE ■ Parapar a-ALL MIX

2020年03月 < >							昨日：616 今日：365 合計：1,444,685	
日	月	火	水	木	金	土		
1 ■ ■ ■ 【満員御礼 追記】新宿N E O N ■ MAGICAL RAVE HYPER ■ 岐阜パラパラサミット ■ ふるパラ	2 ■ Para Para Max	3 ■ SUPER EURO CLASSIC	4 ■ B - 1	5 ☐ 【中止】 EUROx TECHNO ■ S E N	6 ■ EURO HEAVEN	7 ■ N e y s ■ Para para-ALL MIX		
8 ☐ 【中止】 Beat Magic ■ EUROBEAT STADIUM ■ BEAT PARADISE ☐ 【中止】 VACATION ■ N D R ■ Rum Para ■ DANCE SHINE ■ ふるパラ	9	10 ■ パラ☆パラ	11 ■ B - 1 ■ BEAT!!	12 ■ BEAT EMOTION ■ S E N	13 ☐ 【中止】 Disco Queen Night ■ FIVE STAR	14 ☐ 【中止】 P D S ■ 浅草 ■ EUROBEAT素人名人会 ■ Parapara-ALL MIX ■ BUBBLE Shock!		
15 ■ RanBoo ■ RYU CAFE ■ S E F ☐ 【中止】 DISCO FIRE ■ 静パラ ■ D C L ■ P P R ■ ふるパラ ■ 手振補完計画〜Sanuki Beat〜	16	17 ☐ 【中止】 DANCE PARADISE	18 ■ B - 1 ■ パラパラ	19 ■ EUROxTECHNO ■ S E N	20 ■ SUPER FRIDAY	21 ■ Dark In The Night ■ フリスタ新世界		
22 ☐ 【中止】 Fantasy ■ 乱舞Night ■ ONE PARA ■ ふるパラ ■ SUNDAY EMOTION ■ EURO VENUS	23	24 ■ パラ☆パラ ☐ 【中止】 MAHARAJA NIGHT-HYPER BEAT style	25 ■ B - 1 ■ BEAT!!	26 ☐ 【中止】 EUROx TECHNO ■ S E N	27	28 ☐ 【中止】 FIRE NIGHT NEO ■ Parapara-ALL MIX		
29 ☐ 【延期】 北海道ユーテックフェスタ ■ STAR FIRE ■ ふるパラ ■ ユーロビートだよ！ 全員集合	30	31 ☐ 【中止】 トキメキ☆ユーロビートナイト						

Figures 42, 43, and 44. Para para events (01/2020, 02/2020 and 03/2020).

Despite the implemented measures by the Japanese government, the number of cases kept increasing until it surpassed 100 daily cases in early April. In response to the rising numbers, Japan declared a state of emergency on April 7th, 2020, which lasted until May 25th, 2020. (Karako et al., 2021, pp. 1-2). Figures 45 and 46 show the situation of the events in these months.

2020年04月 < >

昨日：616 今日：374 合計：1,444,694

日	月	火	水	木	金	土
			1 ■ B-1	2 □【中止】EUROx TECHNO □【中 止】SEN	3 □【中止】EURO HEAVEN	4 □【中止】Ne y s □【中止、配 信あり】Parapara -ALL MIX
5 □【中止】新宿 NEON □ 【中止】MAGICA L RAVE HYPER □【中止】Rakue n ■ふるパラ □【延期】EUROB EAT STADIUM	6 □【中止】Para P ara Max	7 □【中止】SUPER EURO CLASSIC	8 □【中止】B-1 □【中止】BEAT!!	9 □【中止】SEN	10 □【中止】Disco Queen Night	11 □【中止】浅 草 □【中止】EU ROBEAT素人名人 会 □【中止】Pa rapara-ALL MIX □【中止】FIVE S TAR
12 □【中止】EU ROBEAT STADIU M □【中止】BE AT PARADISE □【中止】NDR □【中止】DANCE SHINE □【中 止】ふるパラ	13	14 □【中止】パ ラ☆パラ □【中 止】TH EURO NI GHT	15 □【中止】パラパラ ジパロ ■ B-1	16 □【中止】SEN	17	18 □【中止】Dar k In The Night □【中止】DCL 前夜祭 □【中 止】フリスタ新世 界
19 □【中止】S EF □【中止】 静パラ □【中 止】DCL □ 【中止】ETERNIT Y □【中止】ふ るパラ	20 □【中止】MEGA 麗舞	21 □【中止】DANCE PARADISE	22 ■ B-1 □【中 止】BEAT!!	23 □【中止】SEN	24	25 □【中止】FIRE N IGHT NEO □ 【中止】Parapara -ALL MIX
26 □【中止】BE AT EMOTION □ 【中止】Fantasy □【中止】乱舞Ni ght □【配信の み】STAR FIRE □【中止】NEOじ ゃん☆パラ □ 【中止】ふるパラ □【中止】U.N.O Disco Style □ 【中止】EURO VE NUS	27	28	29 □【中止】B-1	30 □【中止】SEN		

2020年05月 < >							昨日：616 今日：374 合計：1,444,694						
日	月	火	水	木	金	土							
					1	2 □【中止】N e y s							
3 □【中止】新宿NEON □【中止】MAGICAL RAVE HYPER □【中止】姫パラ □【中止】岐阜パラパラサミット	4	5	6 ■【配信のみ】B-1	7	8 □【中止】WGN	9 ■【検討中】PDS □【中止】浅草 ■【配信】Parapara-ALL MIX □【中止】FIVE STAR							
10 ■【配信】EUROBEAT STADIUM □【中止】BeatMagic □【中止】NDR	11	12 □【中止】パラ☆パラ ■SUPER EURO CLASSIC □【中止】TH EURO NIGHT	13 ■【配信のみ】B-1	14 ■【ラジオ】音楽で日本をアゲる！文化放送	15	16 ■【配信】PARADISE on line □【中止】Dark In The Night							
17 □【中止】RanBoo ■【配信】SEF □【中止】DCL □【中止】手振補完計画～Sanuki Beat～	18	19	20 ■【配信】B-1	21	22 ■【配信】亀有ゼロ	23 ■【配信】EUROBEAT・HYPERTECHNO FESTIVAL ■【配信】Parapara-ALL MIX							
24 ■【配信】EUROBEAT・HYPERTECHNO FESTIVAL □【中止】BEAT EMOTION □【中止】Fantasy □【中止】乱舞Night	25	26 □【中止】パラ☆パラ	27 ■【配信】B-1	28	29	30 ■【配信】Parapara-ALL MIX ■【配信】BUBBLE SHOCK							
31 ■【配信】STAR FIRE ■【配信】EURO VENUS													

Figures 45 and 46. Para para events (04/2020 and 05/2020).

As one may notice, the number of cancelled events skyrocketed from 12 in March to 50 in April. One event was also postponed. The only ones who took place in venues were B-1 (and the 2nd and 5th weeks were cancelled) and ふるパラ. However, a solution STAR FIRE found for the lockdown was the online streaming (JP: 配信). The event is tagged as “配信のみ” on the calendar, which means “streaming only”. The streaming lasted two hours,

shorter than the usual event, which lasts five hours. I talked to Banchou about the decision of hosting a livestream instead of cancelling the event:

When the pandemic started and we couldn't let customers in, we started live streaming so that people could at least enjoy STAR FIRE online. The views during the pandemic increased significantly. (personal communications, 2024)

He also stated that he hosts events online on two platforms: Youtube, for STAR FIRE, and TwitCasting, for B-1. He, then, explained the advantages and disadvantages of each one:

We chose Youtube (for STAR FIRE) because many people can watch the streaming without having to register an account. However, one will not be able to watch the stream after the event because of the songs' copyright issues [livestreams are set to private once it ends]. As for TwitCasting, copyright issues are not a problem so streams can be archived [and people can watch it whenever they want to] but one needs to register on the platform to watch the videos, which is a bit of a hurdle. (personal communications, 2024)

From May, other events started being livestreamed too (17, in total), and, compared to April, the number of cancellations decreased (from 50 to 20). The pattern continued from June until the end of the year, when the cancelled events did not sum up to 10 in any month. However, after the state of emergency was lifted, some events did not continue with their livestreams and remained on-site only - a few resumed livestreams in 2021 during the third wave of the pandemic. Others kept livestreaming (and still do to this day) but now they stream the on-site events rather than keep events online-only. Therefore, they became hybrid events.

Moreover, I also asked on my survey whether people watched the livestreams. The results (Figure 47) are as follows:

Do you watch livestreams of the events? パラパライベントの配信を見るか。
104 respostas

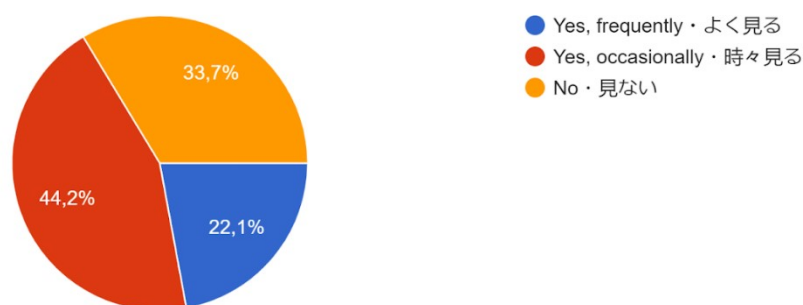


Figure 47. Watching livestreams – results.

The majority (69 people) stated that they watched the livestreams to some extent, even though the number of people who do not watch it is higher than the number of those who frequently watch it. Out of those who frequently watch it (23), 14 are from Japan, whereas the number of those who watch occasionally is almost equally divided between Japan (12), Europe (13), and North America (10).

As for the lockdowns in Japan, an article from the University of Tokyo pointed out that some people were already refraining from leaving home. Graphics show that the percentage of people not leaving for socializing and entertainment was around 30% in February. The number started to gradually increase until it surpassed 80% by the time the government declared a state of emergency. The number was constantly in this percentage - almost reaching 90% at some points - until early June, when it fell to around 75% (Hiroi, 2021). A study aimed to identify what groups were staying home during the pandemic. Results pointed out that people started to refrain from leaving home in February, and the number of people going out only started to increase after mid-May. The study also pointed out that women, people who do not work, people in their 20s, and people from metropolitan areas were the most likely groups to stay home (Hanibuchi et al., 2021, pp. 2-3).

During the lockdown period, many companies, services, and subcultures invested on the internet and the digital world as a whole to overcome the struggles the pandemic caused. Kiso (2023) pointed out an increase in streaming services (e.g., Netflix) in Japan during the pandemic, and the anime available on streaming serves turned into a handy alternative for cinemas, realities, *doramas*, etc, who were paused because of safety concerns (p. 7). The anime event Anime Expo 2020 took place online on streaming platforms like Youtube and Twitch and it was a huge success (p. 9). Even traditional performing arts such as *Kabuki* (one of the main genres of Japanese theater) had its first ever online performance in June 2020, when the popular story *Chūshingura* (JP: 忠臣蔵) aired nationwide in what was labeled “Zoom Kabuki” (p. 10).

The para para scene also gained traction thanks to similar investments in the digital world. While people were being encouraged to stay home during the state of emergency, Avex decided to start a stay home campaign with para para videos. They labeled it STAY

HOME & PARAPARA (JP: おうちでパラパラ) and published the first video on April 22, 2020. Besides “おうちでパラパラ”, they also included “親子でパラパラ” (Para Para as parent and child). The first video surpassed 3 million views and contained a medley of several para para hits, like *My Sweet Banana*, *Ganguro*, *Velfarre 2000*, etc. In the description, they included what series the videos come from (in this case, Gazen Para Para Juku - 俄然パラパラ塾) and where one could buy or stream the songs presented.

Avex uploaded 160 videos under STAY HOME & PARAPARA between two accounts (Avex and HI-BPM STUDIO, Avex’s channel focused on Eurobeat). Most of the videos came from the Gazen Para Para series or the Para Para Paradise series. Some had several songs together in a medley (like the first video), and others had a single song. A few videos are longer than others because they show the dance and a complete tutorial for it. The three videos that surpassed a million views were the first one, the one containing *Mickey Mouse March*, and the one containing *Velfarre 2000*.

During the lockdown period, some para para channels also started their own stay home and para para series. The ones people from my survey consumed the most besides the official Avex ones were ParaParaChile’s STAY HOME & DANCE, DJ Konamix’s STAY HOME AND DANCE, BeardedEnough’s TRIBUTE SERIES (this one started in 2021), and Victor Xenolosophy’s ParaPara Against Covid-19. Some also mentioned other content creators who did not necessarily started a “Stay Home” series but uploaded para para videos during the pandemic, e.g., LoVinToNite, densetsu13, ParaPara Classroom, several TikTok accounts, etc. Some of the alternative Stay Home campaigns lasted much longer than Avex’s STAY HOME & PARAPARA - ParaParaChile’s STAY HOME & DANCE’s final video was in September 2022.

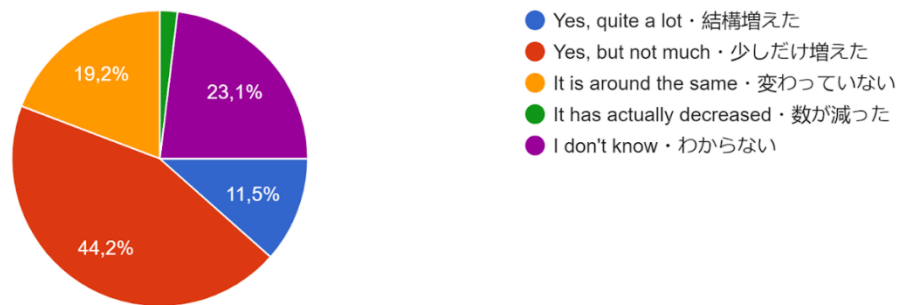
Avex’s STAY HOME & PARAPARA series, despite having more visibility than the alternative series due to it being posted in channels with more subscribers, has a serious issue: all of the videos from the campaign were from euro routines - no techpara videos were included, even though Avex is the producer of the We Love Techpara series.

This might be a case of cause and consequence: they did not upload techpara videos because techpara is not as popular as para para but the lack of techpara videos likely widened the gap between both styles. When interviewing Aru, he mentioned that, from his perspective,

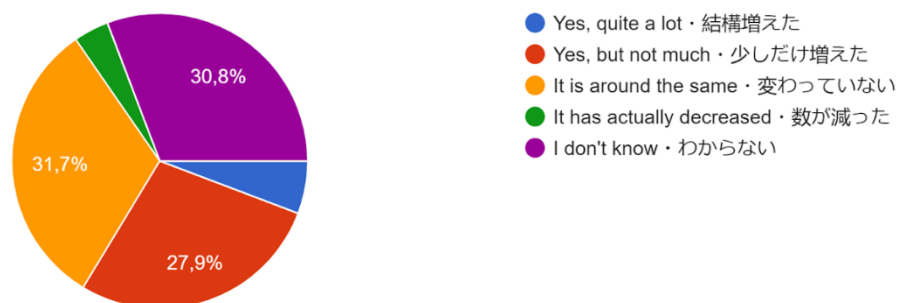
the pandemic boosted para para as people were dancing at home around that period but he did not notice an increase in people interested in techpara, and, as a techpara content creator, he claimed that he saw no difference on the views of his techpara videos (A. Siqueira, personal communications, 2024).

Other people also share a similar opinion. In the survey, I asked if they thought the interest in para para, techpara, and other para para-related dances had increased since the stay home campaigns. The results (Figures 48, 49, and 50) are as follows:

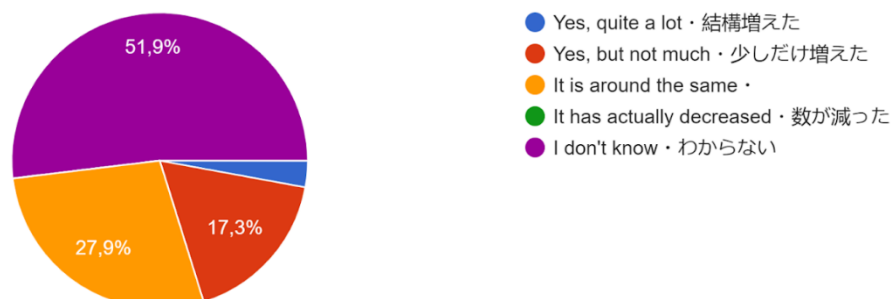
Do you think the number of people interested in para para increased after the stay home campaigns? 「お家で」パラパラキャンペーンの後で、パラパラに興味がある人が増えたと思うか。
104 respostas



Do you think the number of people interested in techpara increased after the stay home campaigns? 「お家で」パラパラキャンペーンの後で、テクパラに興味がある人が増えたと思うか。
104 respostas



Do you think the number of people interested in related dances (trapara, fire step, yogore, etc) increased after the stay home campa...、Fire Step、ヨゴレなど）に興味がある人が増えたと思うか。
104 respostas



Figures 48, 49, and 50. Interest after stay home campaigns – results.

The increased interest options was only majority in para para (58), while a minority in both techpara (35) and related dances (21). Even excluding the number of “I don’t know” answers, the scenario would be the same (58 of 80 for para para, 35 of 72 for techpara, and 21 out of 50 for related dances).

That leads us to the next question: para para benefited over other styles? Figure 51 shows the results:

Do you think para para benefited over techpara, trapara, and other dances, visibility-wise? 他のダンスと比べてパラパラの視認性の程度は大きかったか。
104 respostas

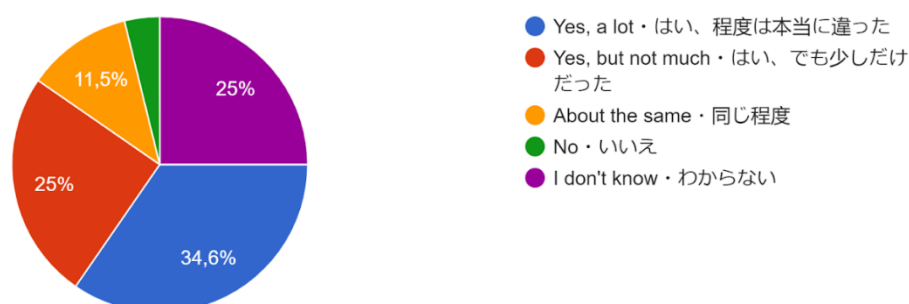


Figure 51. Para para benefited – results.

62 people think it did, and over one-third of the responses believe it is a glaring difference. Then again, if we look at the examples of topic 2.7 from this dissertation, nearly all of them are para para choreographies as opposed to techpara (which is usually limited to Juliana's tributes). Even the example of a techpara routine (Parallel Paradises's video) was described as "Rin and Mai are two dancers of parapara". (Saiz, 2010)

The most curious fact about this "privilege" is that one of the most popular songs on the para para TikTok community, also highlighted by Aru and Caio, is Cascada's *Bad Boy* (2006), which is actually a trapara routine. However, some users dancing to *Bad Boy* did not include the word trapara on the videos, so it is possible that para para casuals might not even be aware it is a trapara dance.

As for the increased online interest, did it somehow influence the events? Opinions seem a bit mixed. First, Figures 52 and 53 show the result of the survey:

Compared to pre-pandemic numbers, do you think the number of people interested in para para dance increased? パンデミック前と比べると、パラパラに興味がある人々が増えたか。

104 respostas



Compared to pre-pandemic numbers, do you think the number of people going to para para events increased? パンデミック以前と比べると、パラパライベントに行く人々が増えたか。

104 respostas



Figures 52 and 53. Para para post-pandemic – results.

Most voters in both cases (62 and 32 - of 59, if excluding those who do not know) agree it increased at a certain point but there is not a consensus whether the rise is still constant or it was momentaneous.

One of the comments from the survey stated that after the pandemic, the number had decreased, especially in the Kyushu region. Another one believes that many newcomers started going to events but many regulars pre-pandemic stopped coming, so they believe it was rather a change than an increase. A third person affirmed that, despite being a Eurobeat fan for years, they only started attending events after the pandemic. Then, the following comment brought some insight from the Tokyo scene:

During the pandemic, DISCOTHEQUES where people danced para para were closed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, as the restrictions were gradually lifted, only holiday daytime DISCOTHEQUE events were reopened. As night events were still not happening, those who wanted to go to a DISCOTHEQUE went to those holiday daytime events. Compared to nighttime events, daytime events on holidays were easier to attend, so many people who didn't know about para para came [to those events]. As a result, I think the number of people dancing para para has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. (personal communications, 2024)

In Sendai, Yukine talked about how Neys was affected:

There have never been any online streamings for Neys. We celebrated the event's 20th anniversary during the pandemic. We took precautions against the infection and hosted the event. Required masks!!! Disinfecting guests when

entering the venue!!! Ventilation every once an hour!!! Everyone disinfected with ventilation!!! Birthday cake individually wrapped!!! There were a lot of difficulties during the pandemic.

I feel that the number of people has increased post-pandemic. Those who have been attending for years are still coming, and there are more newcomers, with a rise of young people. Neys has always had a wide range of customers. In the past, it was people in their 20s to 40s. Now, it is people in their 20s to 50s. (personal communications, 2024)

Matsumoto also gave his perspective based on NEON:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of customers decreased. We weren't in the red, so it was okay. We only cancelled NEON from April to June 2020, because the number of infections has been increasing. We didn't hold it online, as I thought I could host [the event on-site again] soon after COVID-19 settled down. The number of customers has increased since the pandemic. The audience has not changed, and there aren't many foreigners who come to NEON - perhaps around five a year. (personal communications, 2024)

As he is also the creator of the calendar, I asked him his views on the number of events:

Some events ended because of COVID, but I think the number of new events is bigger. I believe there are many cases where there are no events that satisfy the DJs and the para para dancers, so they start organizing their own events. I think there are more events after the pandemic, perhaps because the venue fees have become cheaper. I believe [the number of events] has increased all over Japan, but it is more noticeable in Tokyo because of its large population. After the pandemic, everyone has the freedom to go out, and it has become easier for the organizers to start events. (personal communications, 2024)

Banchou also mentioned the increase of new events, but not necessarily in a positive light:

Right now para para is not popular, and the "population of para para" is small. However, other than events like ours that have been in the running for a long time, new events are constantly increasing and being held on the same day. New events are not thinking about enlivening the scene, they are only caring about themselves, and I think the situation is not good for the scene, with people competing for customers. There are also a lot of choreographies, and I hear customers say they don't know which ones to memorize. (personal communications, 2024)

Sometimes, there are cases of parties doing lessons of the same song, resulting in different choreographies for it. This has been a complaint in the past as well (see 2.5.5). As for the impact of the pandemic, Banchou mentioned that during the pandemic the number of customers decreased to the point that they could not even pay the venue fee, and that customers with families could not come to the venue. Post-pandemic, he did not think the number of customers increased that much, and that most of the regulars are older people.

Suzuki has a more positive view of the scene and Eurobeat Stadium:

There's no doubt that the para para scene is enlivening, and the number of people coming to events is increasing. In Eurosta, the average number of attendees during the pandemic was about 50 people. After COVID-19 settled down, the number increased to 80 people, and now we surpass 100 people several times a year. In February 2024, the number of customers was 186. Thanks to you, we believe this is the number one para para event in terms of number of clients. (personal communications, 2024)

He also discusses his strategy to bring the online people interested in para para to on-site events:

It is true that, nowadays, some people are satisfied with [enjoying para para on] social media, with no need to go to events. Since we run events, we would like as many people as possible to attend them. That's why we thought about a discount campaign for people in their 20s. At this price, we are in the red, but we hope that this will bring more young people, so we would like to continue this project. We just started the campaign, so the results are not that great yet, but we will continue to explore possibilities, including investing in the future. (personal communications, 2024)

This is an important point as interviews indicated that many customers in several events are already in their 40s and 50s, which leaves some uncertainty about the scene. Both Yukine and Matsumoto, who have recently celebrated 20 years of hosting events, are not sure whether the events would last enough for a 30th-anniversary celebration due to the aging clientele (Yukine is a bit more positive on this matter and stated that she will continue hosting Neys as long as she can).

Banchou is also aware of the aging issue on the scene and, as a way of bringing younger people to the scene, he became the producer of a group called Chase x Chase:

The para para scene is aging, so I started it hoping that young people will be aware that para para is fun. Find aspiring idols interested in 90s dance/euro music was hard. They are from a generation that doesn't know para para, so we explained to them that we would hold auditions and work hard to make para para popular. (personal communications, 2024)

Finally, DJ Boss also gives his perspective on the scene:

During this time, which lasted three years, many para para and Eurobeat fans went to daytime events and enjoyed streamings. I, as a DJ and as a member of Yokota Shokai [a company that focuses on producing music, DJing, and hosting events], started a channel, DJed, and held daytime events. The number of customers has increased. As people refrained from going out, there were more opportunities to watch videos and streaming services, and more people have

become interested in Eurobeat and para para. There are also more people who used to dance and had stopped who started to come back to the events as their lives had settled down and they had more free time. Also, some people saw a livestream, became interested, and came to enjoy [the events on-site]! After the end of the pandemic, the number of foreigners has increased. The number of people has not increased. However, about one-third of the customers have changed. Those are new customers. (personal communications, 2024)

As the number of people interested in Eurobeat has increased, we also asked SCP Music about their perspective. Somenzi first stated a difference between the Eurobeat fandom in Japan and outside Japan:

The pandemic was a time of uncertainty, depression and isolation for the whole human world, both physically and psychologically. We, in Italy, felt it very strongly from the start because we were among the first nations to be dramatically hit, and we were even shy to warn our fans about it. I can remember reading a comment by a Japanese fan on our Facebook page: "you, in Italy, may go in lockdown but in Japan, here we have to work!"; that goes to show just how desperate and confused we all were in the first few months.

You may think that could have sounded like the death toll for a musical genre based on the fun-fun world of the Nineties but it all went differently. And yes: all this showed how much the actual audience of Eurobeat had widened and varied from the original, strictly-Japanese one.

(...) Before talking about EBK2020, I would like to point out a peculiarity about Eurobeat non-Japanese fandom, stressing a shared condition of "unreality" that we, Eurobeat producers, also suffer from. Outside Japan, loving Eurobeat means you feel different from the rest, a bit of an outstanding freak, there are no EB concerts so no real identification and recognisability to share with a social community. Your family, your friends just cannot understand your strange passion (and loud volume), you cannot bring your beloved EB music to dance parties in the neighborhood. It was only the advent of Internet and social media that made a world community out of individuals or small groups: suddenly, belonging and sharing, having an identity had become possible - the EB community grew to become a welcoming, LGBTQ+ tolerant and variegated community that in the Covid-19 years just helped each member to fight isolation and depression, inactivity and sickness. It could be files-exchanging, remixing, through para-competitions - you name it, it was a moment of creativity.

The new SCP project grew just in this context. (personal communications, 2024)

EBK2020 stands for *Eurobeat Kudos 2020*. Eurobeat Kudos is SCP's main eurobeat series, and they started a Kickstarter to fund the project. The goal was met within a month and backed by 582 people, and the country that supported the most was the US (203), followed by Japan (79).

Somenzi continues reporting the experience of releasing new music during pandemic times:

New songs: at this exceptional time of crisis, we felt the EB community could not feed on the old, usual songs. They needed a fresh motivation, fresh enthusiasm to feel stronger and resist hardships. Eurobeat Kudos 2020 was the only and unique experiment worldwide, I think, in crowdfunding new Eurobeat to stand up against Covid-19: fans directly financing new songs to be recorded and produced for the occasion. Paraphrasing the title of a song I wrote the lyrics to, "Dreaming crazy is no crime"...

The new songs were connected to this intense time of pandemic: indirectly they convey a message of strength, resilience, trust in the healing and empowering capacities of music, in the wild unpredictability of life we still are facing day by day - so normalising danger and downsizing fear. The fans superbly backed this project and we could totally count on them. For us, it was also a lockdown family project: our daughter Anna, our sons Lorenzo and Alessandro were involved professionally (social communication & marketing,; sleeve artist and "kudos" character designer; music production consultant and additional sound-engineer).

As is usual with crowdfunding projects, celebrative merchandise was created, threads of social communications funded or kept alive. Para para competitions for new choreographies launched through our socials. Financially, it all ended with a break even, but the year 2020 and part of 2021 passed with a new sense of identity and purpose, and the sense of "*dai, che ce la facciamo!*" (= "come on, we're gonna make it!"). ... And that was exactly the message we were yearning to give back to Eurobeat fans: stay strong, we're all in it together! This feeling of oneness made the sense of community more solid and humane. When I compare this experience to the prospect of an AI-made Eurobeat, I can finally feel all the human richness of a musical genre often dismissed as mechanical and superficial. (personal communications, 2024)

Besides EBK, I noticed that more SCP songs had become available on streaming (or geoblocking had been taken down). I do not know the exact date it became available but I remember struggling to find Eurobeat releases on Spotify around 2017. For example, Fastway, an SCP artist, only had an EP (*Techno Shock Ep*) on his Spotify page - and most songs were techno remixes of his Eurobeat hits - now his albums and albums he is featured in are all available. Somenzi also affirmed that making their songs available worldwide helped Eurobeat get more overseas fans. As for the impact of the Stay Home series (which featured SCP music), she said that significant increases in streamings did not come from the Stay Home series, but from anime.

After the pandemic, a few Eurobeat compilations were revived, like Delta's *Eurobeat Masters*, which returned in 2023 after a 12-year hiatus. Like SCP's productions, it is also

available worldwide on streaming. However, the *Super Eurobeat* series is still geoblocked and exclusive to Japan - the exception being the SEB Initial D spin-offs. A few isolated songs are available but that might also be because they are also featured in other recordings that are fully available.

In the end, can these changes be enough to be considered a boom? There is not a consensus but survey answers (Figure 54) lean no.

Would you consider the pandemic period a new para para boom? パンデミックの時期はパラパラブームだったと思うか。
104 repostas

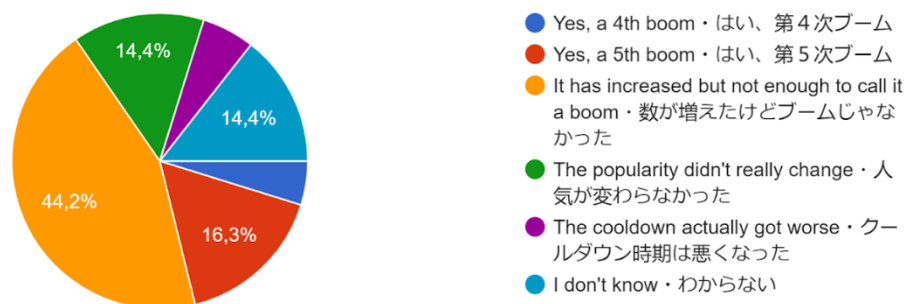


Figure 54. Pandemic boom – results.

46 people believe the increase was not enough to be called a boom. Perhaps the popularity being more evident online rather than in events may influence that decision. Some who believe it, like Aru, highlight the importance of the internet popularity, especially on TikTok. Caio also highlights the impact of TikTok on the scene, and even states that he started his own channel because he saw Japanese people from the para para scene sharing para para TikTok videos on Twitter (personal communications, 2024). One of the comments on the survey also said that para para might have gone beyond the “boom” phase and it is “rooted enough” to be part of the Japanese culture.

Whether it is a boom or not, the TikTok popularity helped making para para routines easier to find. Profiles like @paraparajiten and @paraparaarchive, both created in 2022, and @parapara_techpara, from 2023, post old classics and recent routines, whether they are official or maniac.

I also noticed that, since the pandemic, VDJ mixes have become more common on Youtube and are not being taken down due to copyright. A few channels that create these mixes are ParaPara VDJ Mix, VDJ Popo, VDJ KAZYAN, and Euro Freaks.

Former DVD producers are also adapting to social media and posting new routines on Youtube. Just in 2024, *DEAR 39* (DEAR ユーテク 動画 vol.39., 2024), *俺のパラパラDVD vol.01* (ひなカン PV チャンネル, 2024a), and *TECHNO EVOLUTION Vol.1* (ひなカン PV チャンネル, 2024b) became available online. This has become the new standard on the scene, so future generations will likely struggle less to find dance routines, although it might still be complicated at the beginning when one does not know where to search for it in the first place.

Para para events also crossed borders and not only is Eurobeat/para para being included in events again (e.g., DJ Boss being the guest of an event in Canada, Motsu in Hong Kong, and Dave Rogers in Chile) but regular events overseas have been created. The biggest example is Flashback Disco, a Santiago-based Chilean event that has been taking place since April 2024.

Other than archives, some content creators are also popular on TikTok (especially the *gyaru*), but one content creator who burst the bubble on Instagram was Koshō (@kstsjsx100). He has been known across many social media for decades, has recorded several trapara videos throughout the years but adapted to current social media, and has a great number of followers on both TikTok and Instagram. The public from both SNS seems different, with TikTok having mainly Japanese followers, and Instagram, more followers worldwide - therefore many people who do not know the history of para para scene. In one of his most recent videos²⁸, he re-recorded the trapara video for Groove Coverage's *Poison* (2005). The description caught my attention: "For real, *gyaru-o* and trapara are important cultures that should never end! A revival in 2024! Hoping for a resurgence!!!!" (JP: まじギャル男とかトラパラとか絶対終わらせちゃいけない大切な文化!! □令和6年に復活！再ブーム期待！！！！). He uses SNS to keep trapara alive and to promote it to younger generations, whether coming from Japan or overseas.

²⁸ https://www.instagram.com/p/C_5UBYVP9-f/

Conclusion

Four years ago, the pandemic forced people to stay home. That factor was a catalyst for the consolidation of an online para para scene, which has been on the rise since the late 2010s. TikTok has proven to be a great platform for para para to grow, from content creators dancing para para to accounts creating an archive of older and newer para para routines.

Not only did the pandemic impact the para para scene, but it also impacted Eurobeat. Many people could enjoy their favorite events on livestream, and a few kept live streaming once restrictions were lifted. Furthermore, the overall number of events increased even though a few stopped because of the pandemic. The number of customers increased in most cases, albeit slightly. In the case of Eurobeat, Eurobeat compilations were revived, and official Eurobeat livestreams became more frequent since 2020. Newer music has been produced, even if on a smaller scale than before. Both para para and Eurobeat also crossed borders recently, with events being held outside Japan, and foreign artists releasing songs inspired by Eurobeat.

However, a worrying issue is that the event side of the para para scene has been aging. The number of young people interested in para para increased, but these people consume para para mainly online on SNS like TikTok, and they do not seem necessarily interested in attending an event. This problem leaves a feeling of uncertainty about the future of the scene.

It might also be a sign that para para is in transition to become a mainly online Japanese subculture. As of now, it does not seem that the para para scene will die in the future but the event part of the scene needs to renew its clientele if they want some longevity. A few events are trying to attract people from the online scene but it might still be too early to define whether the attempts were successful or not.

Some who work on the scene share contrasting perspectives about the future of the para para scene. A few interviewees are more positive towards future generations, whereas others fear the events might not continue for so long. The interviews also point out similar complaints from the interviewees, for example, the number of routines for the same song, or event hosts mainly thinking about profits over cultural preservation. Some conflicts might be solved by pursuing better communication between event hosts (e.g. to avoid doing routines for repeated songs).

Furthermore, para para might not be very welcoming to newcomers. Many routines have yet to be available online, and it might take some effort to find the available routines if

one does not have any prior knowledge to the scene because they will likely not know where and how to research routines. Additionally, hosts rarely promote events on social media, which likely leads to people unaware of events. The para para calendar, created in 2009, may compile all monthly events but one has to be somewhat on par with the para para community to be aware of its existence. If such information is more promoted online, the number of people going to events may increase, and part of the scene may be securely preserved for future generations.

The new hybrid para para scene may also serve as a reflection of what a boom is. Many people do not consider the increased interest in para para during the pandemic a boom, and I believe many affirm it due to the number of regulars in events not being so high. However, would not the increased online interest be enough to consider it a boom? Should the event scene and the online scene be weighed equally regarding trends? Is the online scene still undermined nowadays? Those might be some questions worth discussing for some further studies.

Although it is lacking in scholarly studies, para para is an important part of Japanese pop culture and has the potential for more studies in the area. For example, this dissertation is focused on the Tokyo and Sendai areas. Many other Prefectures ought to be analyzed. Osaka is the main example of that, as it is the second biggest para para scene in Japan after Tokyo. Furthermore, Nagoya has a unique techno scene that is worth some highlight. Even in Tokyo or in Sendai, a longer period of fieldwork can also challenge some of my impressions, and some plurality of perspectives will enrichen the field.

These are some of the possible approaches researching para para may bring, which could also help preserve the scene's history. It does not matter if it is thriving on a boom or facing a countdown, the para para scene has already changed Japan's pop culture.

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Annex A

Glossary of para para related terms

Boom – A period of time something is trending.

Circle – A group of people who dance para para. They often create new routines.

Eurobeat – A genre derived from Hi-NRG and Italo Disco. It is mainly produced by Italian labels, but it targets the Japanese market. It is constantly associated with cars and drifting because of the anime *Initial D*. Its usual structure is Intro > A-Melo > B-Melo > Chorus/Sabi > Intro.

Fire Step (JP: ファイヤーステップ) – A style of dance where one does a lot of foot movements. Usually danced to Italo Disco and early-era Eurobeat.

Ganguro (JP: 顔黒) – A subtype of *gyaru* known for its overly tanned skin.

Gyaru (JP: ギャル) – A fashion subculture in Japan of girls challenging the idea of the “ideal Japanese woman”. There are several subtypes of *gyaru*, but the most popular is the *kogyaru* (JP: 子ギャル), often teenage girls who wear school uniforms alongside dyed hair, tanned skin, loose socks, and cute accessories. *Gyaru* is usually associated with para para.

Hyper Techno – A techno subgenre based on Belgian Rave. It was popular in Japan in the 90s. Do not mistake it with “Hypertechno”.

J-euro – J-pop music with Eurobeat influences. Its main name is producer Tetsuya Komuro. It was really popular in the 90s and the early naughties.

Juliana’s – A famous club that existed in Japan from 1991 and 1994. It has become a symbol of the Bubble Period and was known by its women in body-conscious dresses, waving feathered fans (*juli sensu*/ジュリ扇子) on a stage called *otachidai*. It was where techpara originated.

Lesson (JP: 講習会) – New routines of para para and techpara taught in para para events.

Manepara (JP: 真似パラ) – The dance when someone does not know a choreography and try to mimic other dancers on the event.

Maniac – Routines that did not come from clubs that are considered “official”. Many songs only have maniac routines.

Official – Routines taught by clubs considered official. The official clubs are usually bigger events endorsed by Eurobeat labels and artists.

Otachidai (JP: お立ち台) – A raised stage that was once exclusive to women. Those who dance on it are usually people who have been in the community for a long time or people who know several routines.

Pako pako dance (JP: パコパコダンス) – A style of dance from Nagoya where women emulate sex on the *otachidai*.

Para para (JP: パラパラ) – Dance originated in clubs with angular, synchronized hand moves. Usually danced to Eurobeat music.

Refilm – Videos of official routines that were re-recorded by people from the community (therefore not the “original” videos shown at parties). They are posted online instead of official videos to avoid copyright issues. It’s an important part of the international para para community because it was their main access to para para routines.

Techpara (JP: テクパラ) – A style of dance usually danced to Hyper Techno and Eurodance. It is usually more freestyle than para para but they share many movements.

Trapara (JP: トラパラ) – A style of dance danced to Trance. Out of the dances, it is the one that uses arms the most.

VDJ – In the context of the para para scene, it refers to DJs who include videos of the routines in their sets.

Yamamba (JP: 山姥) – A subtype of gyaru known for tanned skin alongside white makeup on the lips, the nose bridge, and surrounding the eyes.

Yogore (JP: ヨゴレ) – A Kansai-based style of dance danced to dance pop music.

Annex B

Full Interviews

B.1. Arthur (Aru)

Did you first start dancing para para in Japan or in Brazil? If in Brazil, how well-known was para para? Which songs were more popular?

I first started dancing in Brazil, around 2006. Because para para was very niched there, not many people knew about it but those who did knew a lot of information. The most popular songs were Night of Fire (Niko), IkeIke (Hinoi Team), and Soran Happies and Neko Hiroshi.

When you came to Japan (around 2013, when para para was facing a cooldown), how was the para para scene? Did many people go to parties?

I didn't know so much because I was focusing on studying. I went to a very big party in 2014 (Kenya Matsuri) and a lot of people came. Before and after that I went to no parties.

Were there any parties that do not exist today? What was the target audience? What kind of songs were played?

As I said before, when I came to Japan, my focus wasn't on researching para para events but I think many events [from the time I arrived in Japan] still exist today. Before that, until the end of 2006 (I think), there were several events that don't exist anymore, especially trapara parties (like CODE Trapara). Another example is Campus Summit (one of the biggest events for the *gyaru*/para para culture).

When did you move to Sendai?

2014.

What kind of difference did you see between the events in Tokyo and the ones in Sendai/Tohoku region?

In Sendai the party environment was very good. In Tokyo I didn't feel welcome.

Are there any songs/rituals exclusive to Tokyo or exclusive to Sendai?

Yes, some dances may vary from club to club and from region from region. For example, in Sendai, on the chorus of Super Euro Flash, we shout “Onigiri Baby!”, and that does not happen in Tokyo. I only realized it because I was the only one who shouted it [at an event in Tokyo] and nobody understood why.

Is the target audience similar in both cases?

Yes, similar.

Which audience do you think is more loyal (Tokyo’s? Sendai’s?)?

Sendai, for sure, because it is the only event in the region. In Tokyo, in a single month, several events compete with one another for audience.

You still frequently go to events today. How much did they change from 10 years ago? Both in Tokyo and in Sendai.

The sound quality is better, and many DJs became V DJs (they add routine videos to their set). Moreover, I see more collaboration with Youtubers, TikTokers, and people from the media.

What was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the para para scene?

In general, the pandemic was a sort of “boost” for para para, because people were bored and started dancing/practicing at home.

You started posting your techpara videos before the COVID-19 pandemic. Did you notice any changes in views, engagement, or audience after the pandemic took place?

I didn’t notice any differences.

As a techpara dancer, do you think the style has become more popular after the pandemic?

I don't think so. It stays the same.

How do you create choreographies for Eurobeat Stadium? Are you also the one who picks the song?

I usually create choreographies using para para's base elements and translating the meaning of the song lyrics. I select songs where I see some potential. This is all group work, from the song selection to the choreography.

Do you think having more foreigners as official dancers (e.g., you and Heather in Eurosta) had some sort of impact on people's interest in the dance? (e.g., are more foreigners interested in learning the dance?)

Definitely. I believe foreigners have a intense passion(情熱) for parapara. And foreigners are good to teach and transmit to other people who like to dance. The Japanese are shy and usually are limited to parties at clubs.

When it comes to para para, what are the differences between the foreign audience and the Japanese audience? Do you think foreigners are more likely to dance both para para and techpara (or trapara, fire, yogore, etc) than the Japanese partygoers?

Foreigners are more open-minded to dance other styles that not just para para (and related). Moreover, foreigners are really interested in anime and games. The Japanese, on the other hand, restrict themselves to para para (and related) and end up not being able to have fun dancing other genres.

Do you think foreigners are more interested in para para now that it is easier to find the official routines online?

Absolutely!

Do you watch the online streams of para para parties you are not able to go? Why (not)?

Sometimes, but I prefer to go to the parties.

Do you consider the changes post-pandemic a type of para para Boom? Why (not)?

Absolutely. With the popularity of TikTok, we had a new boom. It all started with “Bad Boy / Cascada”, and many para para videos started to appear. Consequently, several people were interested [in the dance].

Anything else you want to comment?

Para para (and dancing in general) is part of my story and my life, and I am sure I will keep dancing forever.

B.2. Evelina Somenzi/SCP Music

Can you briefly tell us how SCP started?

SCP started officially in 1996. Before that, we had worked for Time, Flea etc. and very briefly for Vibration and for ABeatC. Originally, it was Stefano Castagna for the musical part (composition, arrangement, production with sound engineering) and Evelina Somenzi for the lyrics, communication etc. Musically, we had no real dance music background, really, but were very much into indie productions, pop-rock, ambient and soundtracks for the theatre or soundscapes for art exhibitions. Eurobeat gave us the possibility to turn pro and we wanted to have a try: it was a foray in a territory that only Stefano had professionally known through Time and Flea productions. As the weeks went by, it dawned on us that Eurobeat was not only fashionable: here was the possibility for something absolutely new, state-of-the-art technologically- maybe people now may forget Eurobeat was always cutting-edge in this respect, back in the day -. Here you could create the entire production of your track, from composition to post production, and, later web development, something that was absolutely new at the time: video, label infos, artists' profiles, interviews etc. This way, Eurobeat

gradually became all-absorbing for us. We gradually built around the original nucleus adding singers, guitarists, collaborators in addition to another composer/arranger/producer that was pivotal for us. It is Christian Codenotti (Ace) who joined SCP in 2000.

How did you innovate in Eurobeat music? How did it change during these last years?

In the beginning there was scarcely any demand for any new Eurobeat label as in 1996 there were already several strong labels that stably dominated the entire flourishing Eurobeat market. We insisted, and our multifaceted background turned out to be a plus: not being tied to any singing style, it was the several pop styles we could come up with; it meant a new vision of Eurobeat as perfect party music for social celebrations (St. Valentine's Day, Hallowe'en, patchinko, sumo, hanami, football etc.) with an eye for its para-parability... not being dance-music-born, we could come up with a fresh pop impulse: who else could include koto sounds, or the sound of a patchinko slot-machine in a Eurobeat song?

this background also helped us do away with that bad dance music habit of making up all sorts of aliases (up to 20 sometimes) for the same singing persona. We tended (but of course just tended) to use 1 alias for 1 singer - Fastway/Dusty being a notable exception. In general, looking back it's clear that we just could not adopt quality standards different to those we used to keep for other music styles, we just could not even if we wanted to, even if the schedule was tight - that meant we built our sound, our style gradually, more or less after 5 years of "alchemy".

A second factor of change was the Internet, the birth and growth of social media and finally the digital market set in; all these factors opened up the Eurobeat market globally, which from 2010 changed increasingly up to 2016/7, when it somehow reached a stability.

Another third major factor of impact was Covid-19 , but I will talk about it later, specifically with EBK2020

In the fanmeeting, you referred to the Japanese fans as “our people”. Can you explain a bit more about this relationship with the Japanese public?

There is nothing more rewarding for music artists than enjoying the support of the audience for whom they do the things they do, it's like requited love. The Japanese fans have been our first audience: the distant, mysterious and fascinating people we had in mind at every step of our productions when we began. Maybe it can be hard to understand by native digital natives, what it was like some 30 years ago, before the sort of global culture we live in was built, but back then everything was a bit more complicated: for ex. I speak for myself as lyric composer, the Eurobeat lyrics sound simplified, for a US native speaker, but they aim at what the Japanese could relate to, that they could sing along to, dance to - so, a bit "European-cool" but also "Japanese-cool". So many non-Asian people find a bit awkward the repetition of certain rhymes in Eurobeat lyrics, like the famous "fire/desire", "passion/fashion" or "danger/stranger", not realising maybe how important they are in Japanese culture... so much so, that it is a widespread notion that Eurobeat used to be made mostly by Italians because of this element of passion connecting them .

On the other hand, in the Nineties, Japanese culture was the epicentre of the pop media revolution and pop culture. We used to read its magazines, listen to its music, watch its movies or anime for fun and to understand. Anime, para-para, videogames, Japanese pop, Japanese cartoons, it's a world that was growing fast!

How strong is the Eurobeat fandom in Italy? What are the differences between Italy and Japan on this matter?

The Eurobeat audience in Italy began with para-para and cosplay, they used to find identity and growth in Comics Festivals like Lucca Comix and Games. - at the beginning it was just the fun and the common passion for all things Japanese. We were in touch with the Para-Beat team with whom we performed in London, we premiered the track "Don't Turn It Off" they coreographed and danced. InitialD and MF Ghost were also big propellers. Worldwide, the para para scene flourished in the 2000s, when the Japanese anime, videogames etc blew like a wind of change in the pop revolution; now, young Italians dream of going to Tokyo at least once in their lives. ...and the general growth of communities through social media did the rest.

Did any new artist come recently to your studio because they were interested in Eurobeat?

Covid-19 was a unique opportunity for us to own our own story as a Eurobeat label, so we have focussed more on the Eurobeat talents we have seen grow track after track as SCP singers. A new talent to discover would be fantastic, it would mean new musical opportunities, a brand new adventure.

Did you notice any changes in the Eurobeat scene during the COVID-19 pandemic? Do you feel that Eurobeat music became more popular overseas during that period?

The pandemic was a time of uncertainty, depression and isolation for the whole human world, both physically and psychologically. We, in Italy, felt it very strongly from the start because we were among the first nations to be dramatically hit, and we were even shy to warn our fans about it. I can remember reading a comment by a Japanese fan on our Facebook page: "you, in Italy, may go in lockdown but in Japan, here we have to work!"; that goes to show just how desperate and confused we all were in the first few months.

You may think that could have sounded like the death toll for a musical genre based on the fun-fun world of the Nineties but it all went differently. And yes: all this showed how much the actual audience of Eurobeat had widened and varied from the original, strictly-Japanese one.

Our pivotal idea belonged to Japanese wisdom: making a critical time of crisis into a magic opportunity. Making a crack a wonderful golden peculiarity in the cup of life, to drink from it again and again: kintsukuroi. I personally feel so grateful for this. That never-ending faith in the energy you can find in yourself: after all, Eurobeat was called "hi-energy" music in the 80ies.

A wonderful resilience and humble enthusiasm could be learnt from Japanese culture.

We felt it was time for us to give back all the wonderful gifts, all the wonderful energy we had received over the years.

We wanted to give back to the Eurobeat community all the wonderful feelings they have been giving us in all those years - originally in the 90ies we had no idea, but now we could find that with Eurobeat we had learnt how to build, to communicate and express stamina, making a music that could make you spring up from your sofa and dance!

In recent years, moreover, para competitions were spreading like mushrooms thanks to the possibilities the social media allowed. this created an international community worldwide, not only the US or Europe, but Asia and South America in particular, with para-para fandom being particularly active in para para competitions or even remixes, thus embracing younger generations of fans of all things Japanese.

Before talking about EBK2020, I would like to point out a peculiarity about Eurobeat non-Japanese fandom, stressing a shared condition of "unreality" that we, Eurobeat producers, also suffer from. Outside Japan, loving Eurobeat means you feel different from the rest, a bit of an outstanding freak, there are no EB concerts so no real identification and recognisability to share with a social community. Your family, your friends just cannot understand your strange passion (and loud volume), you cannot bring your beloved EB music to dance parties in the neighborhood. It was only the advent of Internet and social media that made a world community out of individuals or small groups: suddenly, belonging and sharing, having an identity had become possible - the EB community grew to become a welcoming, LGBTQ+ tolerant and variegated community that in the Covid-19 years just helped each member to fight isolation and depression, inactivity and sickness. It could be files-exchanging, remixing, through para-competitions - you name it, it was a moment of creativity.

The new SCP project grew just in this context.

EBK2020 - EUROBEAT KUDOS 2020 - THE KICKSTARTER PROJECT

The basic idea was presented under the slogan "Interaction for production", launched May 20th 2020 through the platform Kickstarter. you can find all the material online at www.kickstarter.com.

A crowdfunding project, it had a 40-days deadline. In less than a week, it reached 60% of the goal, and it got fully funded in 21 days (June 3rd). It closed in June 22nd 2020.

The recordings took place during the summer of 2020.

The album "EBKudos 2020" was out on December 15th and shipped with the merchandise in the next months.

We reached 582 backers with 12 new songs plus a remix by a young wonderkid, Turbo, a young EB remixer from Finland.

New songs: at this exceptional time of crisis, we felt the EB community could not feed on the old, usual songs. They needed a fresh motivation, fresh enthusiasm to feel stronger and resist hardships. Eurobeat Kudos 2020 was the only and unique experiment worldwide, I think, in crowdfunding new Eurobeat to stand up against Covid-19: fans directly financing new songs to be recorded and produced for the occasion. Paraphrasing the title of a song I wrote the lyrics to, "Dreaming crazy is no crime"...

The new songs were connected to this intense time of pandemic: indirectly they convey a message of strength, resilience, trust in the healing and empowering capacities of music, in the wild unpredictability of life we still are facing day-by-day - so normalising danger and downsizing fear. The fans superbly backed this project and we could totally count on them. For us, it was also a lockdown family project: our daughter Anna, our sons Lorenzo and Alessandro were involved professionally (social communication & marketing,; sleeve artist and "kudos" character designer; music production consultant and additional sound-engineer).

As is usual with crowdfunding projects, celebrative merchandise was created, threads of social communications funded or kept alive. Para para competitions for new coreographies launched through our socials. Financially, it all ended with a break even, but the year 2020 and part of 2021 passed with a new sense of identity and purpose, and the sense of "*dai, che ce la facciamo!*" (= "come on, we're gonna make it!")... And that was exactly the message we were yearning to give back to Eurobeat fans: stay strong, we're all in it together! This feeling of oneness made the sense of community more solid and humane.

When I compare this experience to the prospect of an AI-made Eurobeat, I can finally feel all the human richness of a musical genre often dismissed as mechanical and superficial.

Do you think making SCP music available worldwide on streaming platforms helped gain more overseas fans?

Definitely yes!

Did you notice any kind of increase in streamings for songs whose para para routines were published by Avex during the stay home and parapara campaign (e.g., Fastway's Shock Out)?

To be honest, significant changes in streamings have come so far only from anime.

Did you notice any changes in public after coming to the fanmeeting in Tokyo?

I am not sure I understand your question properly. The people we met in Tokyo were a fantastic blend of die-hard Eurobeat fans and fresh energies. We've been all overwhelmed by their respect, devotion, and kindness, and that meeting created a trail of Facebook messages from them.

Personally, I think this mixture of "old" and new, youths that came at this precise moment, gives a faithful portrait of the Eurobeat fandom now.

How do you see the future of Eurobeat music?

Once Eurobeat was thought to be the musical fashion of an 80ies generation... but that this present has passed and we see it's still going strong, maybe it's time to admit it has become a genre in itself. The future of Eurobeat is full of promises and opportunities: para-para, anime, dance clubs, videogames, who knows? The new young generation create Eurobeat differently, autonomously and with a very contained budget; it is not easy when you haven't got any record company functioning as a big contractor, but maybe this will turn out to be a good thing and stimulate new ideas.

B.3. Yukine

Since when you are in charge of the organization of Neys? If since the beginning, how was the process of creating the entire event?

First of all, Sendai's Neys started in 2002.

At the beginning, we started with four sisters:

Yukine (me);

Mikine;

Makine;

Michikone.

We took the *neesan* [姉さん, older sister, in Japanese] to create the name of the event.

After some time, one person left, then two, and finally three, so I was the only one left. I discussed with the DJ about whether continuing hosting Neys or not, and we decided to continue.

Even though I'm the only one left, the name of Neys will continue, and this year the event celebrated its 22th anniversary.

Are you from Sendai? If so, how strong was the Para Para scene in Sendai (then and now)? Were there other events besides Neys?

I am not from Sendai.

Yukine - Akita Prefecture;

Mikine - Miyagi Prefecture;

Makine - Fukushima Prefecture;

Michikone - Yamagata Prefecture.

[All prefectures from the Tohoku region; Sendai is in Miyagi Prefecture]

We were quite well known in Tohoku at the time, so we started Neys.

When we started 20 years ago, there were many customers, but once the boom was over, the number of customers started to gradually decrease.

It was the so-called "para para ice age", lol.

But I was determined to continue, it didn't matter if I only had one or two customers.

So we overcame that "ice age", and now the number of customers is gradually increasing.

Basically, we are holding the same event from 20 years ago.

Neys's motto: absolutely cozy!!!

This is the only thing we have never given up on when holding the event.

Since Neys is the only regular event in Tohoku, do many people from Tohoku prefectures come to the event? If so, from which prefecture they are usually from?

I think Neys was the only event that had regular monthly para para events. I believe there were one-off events, but ours was the only monthly one.

What are the differences between Neys and the events from Tokyo/Osaka?

I don't think there is much of a difference, but the choreography of a song might differ depending on the region (whether it's Tohoku, Kanto, or Kansai).

Regardless of Neys, everyone goes to events in other prefectures. Basically, I'm only the host of Neys, so unless there is a joint para para events [between Neys and another party], I go there as a customer to have fun.

You are also involved in one-off events held in other prefectures around Tohoku e.g., Neys Akita; Euro Blast Koriyama), right? How is the audience for these parties? How do they differ from Neys's?

I'm not involved in EUROBLAST events. I just go there to enjoy myself as a customer.

The only event I (Neys) was involved in was when we held the Tohoku Para Festival, a joint event between Neys and Tokyo's NEON and Eurobeat Stadium.

I also held Neys twice in Akita City, Akita Prefecture.

During these over 20 years, did you have to go through any kind of financial crisis? How did you overcome it?

Sometimes there are a lot of customers, sometimes there are not.

There were many times when things were financially complicated.

Ever since I became the sole organizer for Neys, we have been in the red, in the red, and in the red too many times, lol.

But as I said in the beginning, I will continue even if I only have one or two customers!!! I was determined to do that.

What did Neys do during the COVID-19 pandemic? Did the events continue to take place? Did it go hybrid? How was the audience?

There have never been any online streamings for Neys. We celebrated the event's 20th anniversary during the pandemic.

How was it held?

We took precautions against the infection and hosted the event.

Required masks!!!

Disinfecting guests when entering the venue!!!

Ventilation every once an hour!!!

Everyone disinfected with ventilation!!!

Birthday cake individually wrapped!!!

There were a lot of difficulties during the pandemic.

Do you think the audience or the number of customers changed after the start of the pandemic?

I feel that the number of people has increased post-pandemic. Those who have been attending for years are still coming, and there are more newcomers, with a rise of young people. Neys has always had a wide range of customers. In the past, it was people in their 20s to 40s. Now, it is people in their 20s to 50s.

What are your perspectives for Neys?

I don't know if we can last until a 30th year, but I want to continue as long as I can.

Anything else you want to add?

I'll be working hard without missing Neys's cozy atmosphere!!!!!!

B.4. Banchou

You are an important figure in the Para Para scene. Can you give more details on your contribution as a host/producer/dancer?

I'm the organizer of STAR FIRE and B-1Dynamite!!. I also work as a dancer, choreographer, and DJ. I was originally active in the entertainment industry (cinema and TV) as an actor. At STAR FIRE and B-1Dynamite!!, I hold choreography lessons and appear in choreography videos as a choreographer and dancer. As a producer, I coordinate event dates, create timetable, negotiate with the venues, promote on social media, produce videos, select songs for the lessons, and communicate with labels and event organizers across the country.

Since when have you been organizing Star Fire? If since the beginning, what was creating the event like?

I started STAR FIRE. A friend asked me if I wanted to hold an event at a venue in Yokohama [Kanagawa Prefecture, next to Tokyo].

Are you also involved with the production of the DVD series? How did the dvd idea start? How do you decide which songs to include?

I'm the producer and person in charge of it. We sometimes included skits so that people could remember the song and choreography, plus have fun between songs. We plan to include lessons taught in both events, plus a few new songs.

Right now, there are no plans to release new volumes, because:

1. Youtube is at its peak and there is no longer a demand for DVDs;
2. Many people don't have DVD players at home;
3. It would be complicated to pay royalties for the songs.

As Star Fire has existed for over 20 years now, it passed through para para booms and cooldowns, right? How were these times?

This year marks STAR FIRE's 24th anniversary.

Of course, during the boom, we had many customers, but once the boom ended, the number of customers harshly decreased, and we entered the "ice age".

Star Fire moved venues a few times. How did you choose them? Did the moving affect the costumers?

At one point, STAR FIRE changed venues so many times that people started calling us a "circus group". The reason was that the venues where the event took place had closed down, or the venue fee had become too expensive and difficult to continue [hosting the event there], so we had to move to cheaper venues

Every time we changed venues, it had some impact on the customers, but nothing too concerning.

What is the difference between the usual parties and the New Year's Eve party?

The countdown party is an event to express our gratitude to everyone who attended STAR FIRE and B-1 Dynamite!!. It is also a way to close the year alongside para para lovers and celebrate the New Year.

Because of that, we distribute traditional Japanese sake and *toshikoshi soba* noodles [年越し蕎麦, a traditional Japanese meal on New Year's celebrations] for free.

What did you do to keep Star Fire alive to this day (whereas other classic events ceased to exist)?

We made an effort to hold the event every month without taking breaks. We also hold lessons, and I have drinks and chats with everyone.

At the time of the pandemic, we couldn't hold events with customers for several months. Even though we soon resumed holding events [with customers] as usual, the number of attendees was low, and we couldn't even pay the venue fee. But we continued to hold events without any breaks.

How did the pandemic affect Star Fire? How did you overcome it?

When the pandemic started and we couldn't let customers in, we started live streaming so that people could at least enjoy STAR FIRE online. The views during the pandemic increased significantly.

There are online streams of Star Fire every month. When did it start? During the pandemic? How effective were these streams during the pandemic? How did you choose the platform for them?

Nowadays, STAR FIRE is streamed on Youtube, and B-1Dynamite!! on TwitCasting.

We chose Youtube (for STAR FIRE) because many people can watch the streaming without having to register an account. However, one will not be able to watch the stream after the event because of the songs' copyright issues [livestreams are set to private once it ends]. As for TwitCasting, copyright issues are not a problem so streams can be archived [and people can watch it whenever they want to] but one needs to register on the platform to watch the videos, which is a bit of a hurdle.

Do you have an idea how many foreign viewers the streams have? Do you believe making the party hybrid increased the interest of foreigners who can't join the parties in Tokyo for geographic reasons?

I think a lot of foreigners are watching it on Youtube. The other day, someone from a Eurobeat label watched it from Italy and left a comment.

I think so. It's given more opportunities for people who can't attend on-site to experience it.

How do you think the COVID pandemic affected the Para Para scene? Did the audience change? Have more people become interested in it?

The number of customers has decreased. Customers with families could no longer come to the venue. The audience has become mainly older people. The number of interested people didn't increase very much.

About B-1, how does it differ from STAR FIRE? Which themed week is more popular?

We have about the same number of customers every week. STAR FIRE is monthly, while B-1 Dynamite!! is weekly. Because of that, we can play more songs that we can't play on STAR FIRE and we can try all kinds of things.

You are also involved with Chase x Chase? How did it all start? Was it hard to find aspiring idols interested in 90s dance/euro music?

I'm the producer of Chase x Chase.

The para para scene is aging, so I started it hoping that young people will be aware that para para is fun.

Yes, it was hard. They are from a generation that doesn't know para para, so we explained to them that we would hold auditions and work hard to make para para popular.

What are your plans for Star Fire? How do you see the Para Para scene in the future?

We will be celebrating our 25th anniversary next February. Because it is a milestone, we want to turn it into a big success. We also hope to hold events all over Japan, and overseas as well.

Right now para para is not popular, and the "population of para para" is small. However, other than events like ours that have been in the running for a long time, new events are constantly increasing and being held on the same day. New events are not thinking about enlivening the scene, they are only caring about themselves, and I think the situation is not good for the scene, with people competing for customers.

There are also a lot of choreographies, and I hear customers say they don't know which ones to memorize.

Anything else you want to add?

I'm holding STAR FIRE and B-1Dynamite!! and fight to establish Eurobeat and para para as a general genre, a traditional form of Japanese art, instead of a niche genre. I also would like to make the members, creators, customers, and everyone involved happy.

Chase x Chase sings and dances to Eurobeat. We also produce and sell CDs. We also performed at JAPAN EXPO, in Thailand and Malaysia, and I'd be happy if we could become more and more well-known and receive more offers worldwide.

I would appreciate it if you agreed with this idea and supported us from all over Japan/the world.

B.5. DJ Boss

You have been a part of the Eurobeat and Para Para scene for a while. How did it start for you?

Originally, I was hanging out in discotheques, and when I started to get interested in DJing, I became an apprentice of a senior to become a professional DJ.

At that time, Japan was in the middle of the Bubble Economy, and some popular songs were "That's Eurobeat" and "Bubble Gum Eurobeat", so I had to learn these songs to be competitive [in the market], and I ended up working as a DJ at Maharaja.

You used to play in Velfarre. How were the events there? How did they differ from today's event? How did it come to a close?

Velfarre was completely different from other discos in various aspects: size, quality, content, performers, production, scale, etc.

It was such an influential venue that gave social recognition to all genres of music, from Eurobeat, Techno, and Trance to R&B, Hip-Hop, and Dance Classics. It was an icon of the nightlife scene for us DJs, people from the music industry, and customers. It should have continued but it closed on December 31, 2006 due to contractual issues.

Maharaja also closed doors for a while. How was the time when both clubs did not exist? What happened to the fans of para para/Eurobeat? Where did they go? Where did you DJ?

Neither Maharaja nor Velfarre could resist the flow of the times, and I think entertainment is the culture that is most affected by trends. However, rather than lamenting their disappearance, I think it is a necessary process for new things to be born. Even without both clubs, there are many discos and clubs all over Japan, and if one wants to hold an event, one can do it anywhere. What's important is not the club, but human passion.

When Maharaja returned, which differences from the old Maharaja did you spot? Was the public the same one? Did new people start going? Did regulars stop going?

It was like a reset. Not only did the generation changed, but also many former customers stopped coming, and only a small of regulars returned. It felt like we were starting from scratch.

How do you decide what songs to include in your sets? How are the sets from more “niche” parties (e.g., Para Para or even SEF DX) different from the more “general” parties (e.g., Agefarre, the one event from Omotenashi Beats)? Which songs tend to be more popular among people who are not deeply invested in para para/Eurobeat?

We, professional DJs, usually don't decide on a DJ set beforehand. For para para events, we look at the number of people attending that day, the customer demographic, age group, male/female ratio, and, most importantly, the ratio of beginners/veterans. We try to choose songs that beginners can enjoy and dance to, and we try to balance the selection so as not to be too biased towards beginners.

At festivals like Agefarre, our emphasis is on attracting period, we try to show the background of Eurobeat without sounding like a maniac, so we don't focus solely on para para.

Streaming is also different as we try to DJ while mixing in songs that are not played at para para on-site events. Our objective is to play high-quality Eurobeat that is not influence by para para or the dancefloor.

There are no particular songs that are popular for those who don't know para para or Eurobeat, but, in a broad sense, melancholic Eurobeat is popular with beginners or those listening to the genre for the first time.

In the case of songs of two or more versions, what criteria do you use to decide between them? For example, “Try Me”: do you usually play LOLITA’s version or Namie Amuro’s version?

It depends on the characteristics of the event. For example, if there are many people who don't know para para or Eurobeat, or if there are many first-timers at the event, we tend to pick versions that are more J-pop-oriented.

I have gone to a few parties, and some included videos of the choreographies, while some did not. How is that decided? Do you think not including the videos might affect the overall experience/enjoyment of newcomers?

I don't think that VDJs have much meaning for the audience. It seems more about the DJ's self-satisfaction. Like, "I have this video!". To be honest, I've never seen anyone dancing to a VDJ's video, and I've never met an audience member who said they needed it. I think that there are other things that one should do for Eurobeat and para para events rather than adding VDJ videos so that people would dance to it.

As part of the Super Eurobeat, what changes from the 90s to today in Eurobeat music you can highlight? Is there any kind of new trend in Eurobeat music right now?

Super Eurobeat can be broadly divided into five stages:

Dawn (early to mid-90s);

Development (mid to late 90s);

Maturity (2000s);

Stability (2010s);

Revolution (2020s).

Furthermore, each era has its own characteristics, for example, transition of sounds, independence of artists and labels, and farewells and welcomes [of artists and labels].

Why was it planned to finish SEB on volume 250, and why did that plan change, anyway? Do you know whether there are any chances of the Super Eurobeat becoming available on streaming platforms for listeners outside of Japan?

We had no plans to stop at SEB 250. For us Japanese, Eurobeat is an indispensable genre, essential music, plus the culture and the by-products created by the genre are immeasurable. In Japan, its importance is so huge that it helps the economy: para para, gyaru, and even DISCOTHEQUES originated from Eurobeat.

How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the Eurobeat/para para scene? How did Maharaja overcome it?

During this time, which lasted three years, many para para and Eurobeat fans went to daytime events and enjoyed streamings. I, as a DJ and as a member of Yokota Shokai [a company that focuses on producing music, DJing, and hosting events], started a channel, DJed, and held daytime events.

The number of customers has increased. As people refrained from going out, there were more opportunities to watch videos and streaming services, and more people have become interested in Eurobeat and para para. There are also more people who used to dance and had stopped who started to come back to the events as their lives had settled down and they had more free time. Also, some people saw a livestream, became interested, and came to enjoy [the events on-site]!

Do you think more foreigners started becoming interested in Eurobeat/para para after the COVID-19 pandemic started?

After the end of the pandemic, the number of foreigners has increased.

Compared to the last 5 years before the pandemic (2015-2019), do you think the number and the audience of para para events increased? Did the public change?

The number of people has not increased. However, about one-third of the customers have changed. Those are new customers.

Have you ever been called to DJ an Eurobeat set in an event overseas? If so, which event? How was the public? Which songs did you play? How would the event differ from Japanese events?

We performed via streaming. Since it was a stream targeting overseas audiences, we played songs we provide for Beatmania and Dance Dance Revolution series [popular rhythm game franchises].

Do you only play in events around Tokyo? Have you been called as a guest DJ in other events around Japan (e.g. NRG, SEN, Neys, etc.)?

As a professional DJ, I also play all other genres besides Eurobeat throughout Japan. There are EDM and ALL MIX club events, 80s disco events, Trance and Techno. Of course, I don't think there is someone better than me in Eurobeat. Now I'm the only one who officially invites artists and producers, I've established fan meeting for Euro artists in Japan, and I also organized live-listening events. I'm not invited only as a guest DJ, but as a general guest.

What are your perspectives on the para para scene and the Eurobeat scene?

Rather than holding events and thinking about self-profit, Eurobeat needs to be looked at from a global perspective. One should have the 5W1H (When, Where, Who, What, Why, and How) mindset in mind when creating para para events. Otherwise, it will become a niche, underground subculture.

Especially now, there are only people like that in event-hosting and DJing.

I think it is a very serious situation. We need to improve the quality and raise the level!

Anything else you want to add?

I am putting my life as a DJ on the line for the development of Eurobeat. I am working hard to get people to listen to and enjoy Eurobeat in a new way, especially now, that it is only seen as a casual music genre. I am working as a DJ at discos and clubs, but I am also a radio DJ on a radio show.

Eurobeat is not just a fad, it is a culture that Japan can be proud of! And I will continue to advocate for that!

B.6. Matsumoto “NEON”

About the calendar:

When and why did you start it?

For example, if I knew where events were being held this week, planning my schedule would be easier. So I thought it would be useful to have a calendar like that, and started it in March 2009.

Do you only include events in Japan? Or do you also include events overseas?

Only Japan. I don't include events overseas because I don't understand the language.

Since you created the calendar, many events were created but several stopped. Which is bigger, the number of new events or the number of events that ended?

Some events ended because of COVID, but I think the number of new events is bigger. I believe there are many cases where there are no events that satisfy the DJs and the para para dancers, so they start organizing their own events.

Comparing the initial period, the period before the pandemic (2015-2019), the pandemic period, and the post-pandemic period, which one had the most events?

I think there are more events after the pandemic, perhaps because the venue fees have become cheaper.

Has the number of events increased since the pandemic? If so, was it only in Tokyo? Do you think there is any connection between the number of clients and the pandemic?

I believe [the number of events] has increased all over Japan, but it is more noticeable in Tokyo because of its large population. After the pandemic, everyone has the freedom to go out, and it has become easier for the organizers to start events.

About Shinjuku NEON:

Shinjuku NEON started in 2001, that is around the time the 3rd boom ended. How was this period?

In 2001, there were very few para para events, and Shinjuku NEON was held in a large venue (Shinjuku Pasela), so more than 100 people came every month. After that, there were too many para para songs being released, and people couldn't keep up with the choreography, so the 3rd boom ended. Shinjuku NEON moved to a smaller venue.

Para para became popular again in the mid-noughties. What was the difference from the 3rd boom?

→The 3rd boom was when the famous Japanese idol Takuya Kimura (SMAP) danced on TV programs, there were para para events in Disneyland Japan, and the boom spread all over Japan. It was all planned by the record company Avex.

It is said that there was a boom after that around 2010, but the number of people coming to events is not as big as during the 3rd boom.

After you created the calendar, do you think the number of customers at Shinjuku Neon increased, or its audience changed?

I don't think the number of customers changed after I created it, but I think older customers stopped coming to the event after getting married, and new people started coming instead after looking at the calendar.

Have you had any financial difficulties in the last 20 years? If so, how did you overcome them?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of customers decreased, We weren't in the red, so it was okay.

How was it during the pandemic? Was Shinjuku NEON cancelled? Was it held online? How did you overcome that period in particular?

We only cancelled NEON from April to June 2020, because the number of infections has been increasing. We didn't hold it online, as I thought I could host [the event on-site again] soon after COVID-19 settled down.

After the pandemic, do you think the number of customers at Shinjuku NEON increased? Did the audience change? Did the number of foreigners increase?

The number of customers has increased since the pandemic. The audience has not changed, and there aren't many foreigners who come to NEON - perhaps around five a year.

Please tell me a bit about future perspectives on Shinjuku Neon. Do you have plans for the 25th anniversary?

Most customers who dance para para are in their 40s and 50s, so I am worried that para para culture will continue for just another 10 years or so. We have no plans for the anniversary, only holding the event as usual.

B.7. Jun Suzuki

Can you tell me more about the beginning of Eurosta?

Eurosta started in 2019 but we've been holding events 10 years before that. We will skip this part for now.

A few years ago, we had to face the fact that the current eurobeat and para para scenes were not thriving. During the 2010s, several events closed, and I thought that the scene would continue like this. Moreover, with the SEB series coming to an end, I contacted Domino, SCP Music, and Dave Rodgers about future developments [of the scenes]. I felt that the market was in a critical situation of shrinking even more if nothing was done, so I thought we, on the contrary, should expand the market. That's the root [of Eurosta].

Creating something new takes a lot of energy.

It also takes some time to get those around you to understand.

It takes a lot of courage to keep going, believing the path you envision is the right one, but without expecting anything in return.

But if you keep trying, the results will come. And you will also feel that you are being recognized by those around you.

If you make an effort, you will become more confident.

I always remember to work steadily, little by little, and have fun while at that.

How has the event scene changed since Eurosta started? Has the number of events or customers increased?

When Eurosta started, we hosted it once every two months. Then we held a Dave Rodgers [one of the main Eurobeat artists] live performance and the number of customers increased exponentially.

From 2020, we held monthly events and it became a regular event.

Then, COVID-19 came and we couldn't do business as we had hoped.

The number of customers decreased but we continued steadily, taking proper measures against the infection.

Then the parapara routine for the anisong *Gurenge* [Demon Slayer's anime opening] became a big hit, and we were in the spotlight again.

We also received some offers [of collaboration] from various people, like LOALO MODELS, d girls, and other youtubers. Then we were taking part in several projects.

How do you plan your TV appearances? (e.g., which show, which song...)

In media, Eurosta was featured on the major Japanese TV broadcaster, TBS, in the program ラヴィット. That was in 2022 and 2023.

We are also being featured in TOKYO MX TV's 5時に夢中, with some regularity.

When did you start live streaming Eurosta? Why TwitCasting?

COVID-19 happened and we focused on livestreaming. We are still broadcasting the event.

We chose TwitCasting over Youtube as it is a very popular platform in Japan.

We encourage everyone overseas to watch it.

Compared to other events, Eurosta is quite advertised. Why did you decide on that strategy? Thanks to advertising, have people outside the para para community started coming to the event?

We place great importance on advertising on social media, but we also value our staff visiting other events. This is because we want to increase the number of Eurobeat and Techno customers not only at Eurosta but at other events as well. We are reaching out to people who have never danced para para before. We believe that it is our role to spread the word on SNS to the entire world about how fun para para is.

We do this because, while there are other genres like Hip Hop and EDM, we wish for the prosperity of established genres like Eurobeat and Hyper Techno.

Thanks to you, many people come every month. We hold tours around Japan every year, so even customers who can't come to Tokyo have the chance to go [to the event] in their towns.

Has Eurosta's clientele changed after the pandemic? Has the number of foreigners increased?

There's no doubt that the para para scene is enlivening, and the number of people coming to events is increasing. On Eurosta, the average number of attendees during the pandemic was about 50 people. After COVID-19 settled down, the number increased to 80 people, and now we surpass 100 people several times a year. In February 2024, the number of customers was 186. Thanks to you, we believe this is the number one para para event in terms of number of clients.

I would like to ask about the campaign for people in their 20s. Why did you pick that age group? Have more people in their 20s been coming to Eurosta since the start of the campaign?

It is true that, nowadays, some people are satisfied with [enjoying para para on] social media, with no need to go to events. Since we run events, we would like as many people as possible to attend them. That's why we thought about a discount campaign for people in their 20s. At this price, we are in the red, but we hope that this will bring more young people, so we would like to continue this project. We just started the campaign, so the results are not that great yet, but we will continue to explore possibilities, including investing in the future.

Do you plan to continue the DVD series?

We are no longer in the era of DVDs, so we will be releasing the routines on platforms like Youtube.

What are your thoughts on the future of Eurosta? Do you have any plans for the event's 10th anniversary? How do you see the para para scene in the future?

As we approach our 10th anniversary, we have set new goals and are walking towards them step by step.

Para para still has a lot of potential. It's a good exercise, and I believe it will spread more globally. I'm really looking forward to the future of the para para scene.

B.8. Caio

When and why did you start para para dancing?

I started dancing in 2008, because I really liked Japanese fashion back then and stumbled upon *gyaru* fashion, which was trending at the time. Several internet forums promoted the [*gyaru*] culture and that's why I learned about para para. Also, during that time, animecons always had rooms and moments for para para, so my otaku friends also knew about it. That's how I got interested in it.

When/how/why did you start Euro Freaks?

To be honest, I don't really remember why, but I think I always wanted to own a Eurobeat/Hyper Techno online radio show, around 2010. Adam, a friend from Rio de Janeiro who danced para para, taught me how to do it because back then it was more complicated to hold livestreams. We had to use some software and external website but it all worked out.

I remember that I picked this name because it appeared in SEF videos. "Euro Freaks" are people who like Eurobeat and para para, basically. I think I always liked DJing. Actually, among international para para communities, the DJ and the dancer are connected. Here in São Paulo, pretty much everybody who danced learned to mix at some point. However, I was interested in playing for some people besides the meetings, and that's why I created Euro Freaks.

When did you start your account on TikTok and why did you choose it for content creation?

I found out about TikTok because of para para. It was around 2017, 2018 when I started noticing that all my Japanese friends were sharing TikTok videos on Twitter, and back then I didn't understand how TikTok worked. I didn't create an account back then. It was during this period, Cascada's Bad Boy was going viral in there, and many people who wouldn't record refilms started to do so. While the international community always relied on refilm, the Japanese community was reluctant to do it, but TikTok changed it completely. I created my account in 2019 but didn't really use it until the pandemic, because I didn't take the platform so seriously, to be honest.

Then during the pandemic, TikTok started to thrive, and Brazil has an immense community there. I started posting some refilms as I liked dancing, and around 2022 some of my videos started to go somewhat viral. Because people were asking more information about the dance, I posted videos explaining what the Japanese taught me, and these videos really went viral.

Therefore, I picked TikTok because I believe it is more likely to go viral when talking about a niche subculture on TikTok instead of Youtube, for example. Some people even

contacted me and said they started dancing because of me, that's crazy. I think some people from the scene, especially from older generations, still don't use it to its full potential.

How did you get access to para para videos?

Since I started dancing, I always found it curious how Japanese people “worshipped” videos. I always heard the same stories like “Ah, a DJ sent me the video”, and I always found it strange. Even in Japan it is a delicate matter because it was a collector's item.

How I got them? I literally asked them, using Google Translate and all. In 2014, I started talking to a member of the Okinawa-based techno group Kamikaze Rave. And that was lifechanging. He always asked about how we knew about the dance. I think Japanese people are always surprised [we know about para para] because it's a fading and specific culture. Then I asked for a video from a party, and he sent it to me.

After that I started posting videos [of para para] on Twitter and following people from the para para scene (especially event organizers) on Twitter. Some started to follow me back. Then, they noticed that I knew some really obscure routines, especially stuff from Techno. After some time, I asked one of my mutuals for another video and they sent it to me.

It was basically like that, you know? The Japanese always collected and exchanged videos between one another - some might even buy it, if it is super rare.

Back then, it was a taboo to post the entire video online because of copyrights - now it is a bit different. Going back to refilms made in Japan, people would wear masks/sunglasses to hide their identities so that other people wouldn't find out they were refilming videos. And in some cases, they would even hide their identity from people at work out of fear they were found out as para para dancers.

Avex would even threaten people through e-mail in case they were reposting their content. There was one person from the international community who was kicked out of SEF in Velfarre in 2006 because they posted everything on Youtube. After that, she even stopped posting anything.

Do you think finding para para videos has become easier after the pandemic?

Not really. I think the pandemic impacted the scene in other ways - and it was different for the Japanese community and the international community.

What changed is that, while staying at home, people started dancing as a hobby, and Avex even tried to encourage people into posting refilms and all. I think they tried to capitalize on something that is really common among international fans, as we don't really have parties to attend, you know? Meanwhile in Japan, the event was the main element. With the pandemic, many people stopped going to events, some people died, and the culture became even more niched, but it never ceased. And the events seem to have embraced live streaming. And then around 2016 VDJ Mixes start to get some traction, and DJs used the TV screens at clubs to transmit the video routines, and that completely changed the scene.

Perhaps for a newcomer at the scene, it is way easier to find videos now that Avex posted videos, people posted refilms, and archive accounts posted some routines. However, there is still a lot missing, and I don't think it's that amicable to a beginner.

Do you think the pandemic made para para more popular?

I don't know if the pandemic is the main reason for that. I think it's important, but what may have been truly lifechanging was TikTok. After all, it is even known as the "dancing app", and the algorithm may have helped people stumble upon para para even if they don't know about it.

As you are a para para content creator, which types of videos get more engagement?

Para para? Techpara?

To be honest, neither. The ones that get more engagement are those where I count a bit of the history of para para, or some curiosities, or dancing tips. Many people really want to learn how to dance it, and I've received many messages asking me to teach people how to dance. Those kind of videos get around 40.000 views, and this number for a super specific niche is quite a lot. That being said, keep in mind that TikTok's algorithm works in the region that you are in that moment, so my content will be mostly viewed by other Brazilian people. But then again, there are the girls from Hyper Techno Heaven [a duo of dancers based in

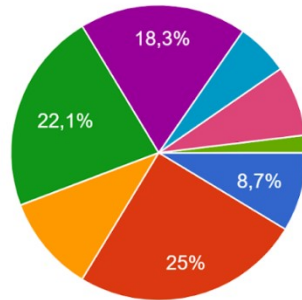
Curitiba, Brazil] whose refilms get a fair number of views on TikTok. A few of mine do as well, it's just something that wavers a lot.

Annex C

Survey's answers

Age ・ 年齢

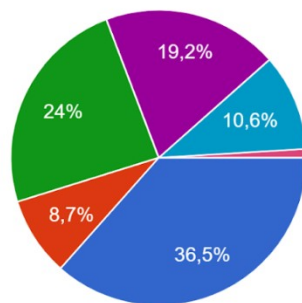
104 respostas



- Under 18 ・ 18 歳未満
- 18-25 ・ 18 歳 ~ 25 歳
- 26-30 ・ 26 歳 ~ 30 歳
- 31-35 ・ 31 歳 ~ 35 歳
- 36-40 ・ 36 歳 ~ 40 歳
- 41-45 ・ 41 歳 ~ 45 歳
- 46-50 ・ 46 歳 ~ 50 歳
- Over 50 ・ 51 歳以上

Place of birth ・ 出身

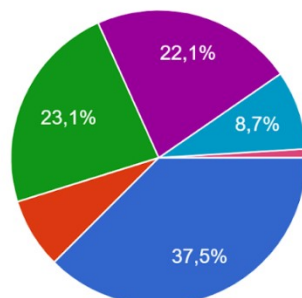
104 respostas



- Asia - Japan ・ アジア：日本
- Asia - Outside Japan ・ アジア：日本以外
- Africa ・ アフリカ
- Europe ・ ヨーロッパ
- North America ・ 北アメリカ
- South America ・ 南アメリカ
- Oceania ・ オセアニア

Place you reside ・ 住んでいる場所

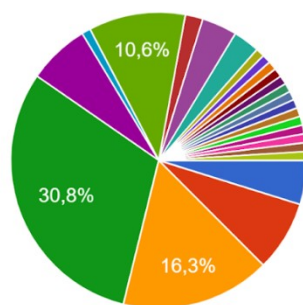
104 respostas



- Asia - Japan ・ アジア：日本
- Asia - Outside Japan ・ アジア：日本以外
- Africa ・ アフリカ
- Europe ・ ヨーロッパ
- North America ・ 北アメリカ
- South America ・ 南アメリカ
- Oceania ・ オセアニア

How did you discover para para? どのようにパラパラを知るようになるか。

104 respostas



- Para Para Events ・パラパライベント
- Anime (including anime events) ・アニメ
- Gyaru culture ・ギャル文化
- Eurobeat ・ユーロビート
- SNS - Youtube
- SNS - Tiktok
- SNS - Other ・SNS - その他
- Friends ・友達

▲ 1/4 ▼

- Family ・家族
- Movies ・映画
- TV Shows ・テレビ番組
- DVDs

Friend showed me Initial D because I liked DDR music. Searched for songs on youtube and Hinoi Team - Ike Ike showed up. Then it spiraled out of control.

- Science fiction event
- bemani games
- Bemani dance games
- Bemani games

Gyaru culture/alternative-geek Friends/movies/etc.(A bit of everything)

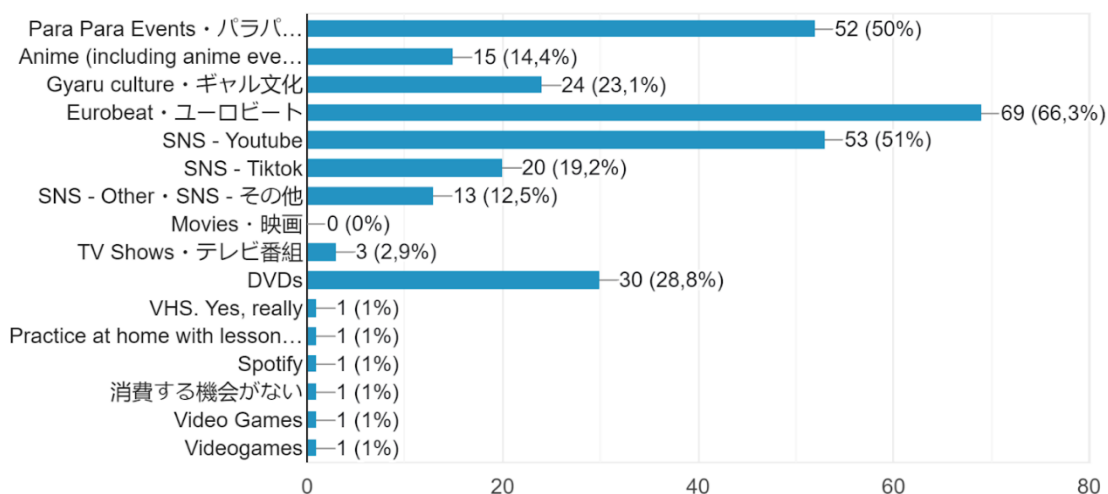
- Video games (DDR and PPP)
- Game arcade
- parapara paradise game

Found an information in anime magazine in 2003-2004

- I did Para para when i was teenager
- Video Games (DDR / BM IIDX / PPP)
- arcade game「PARAPARA PARADISE」
- Videogames

Where do you consume para para? どこでパラパラを消費するか。

104 respostas

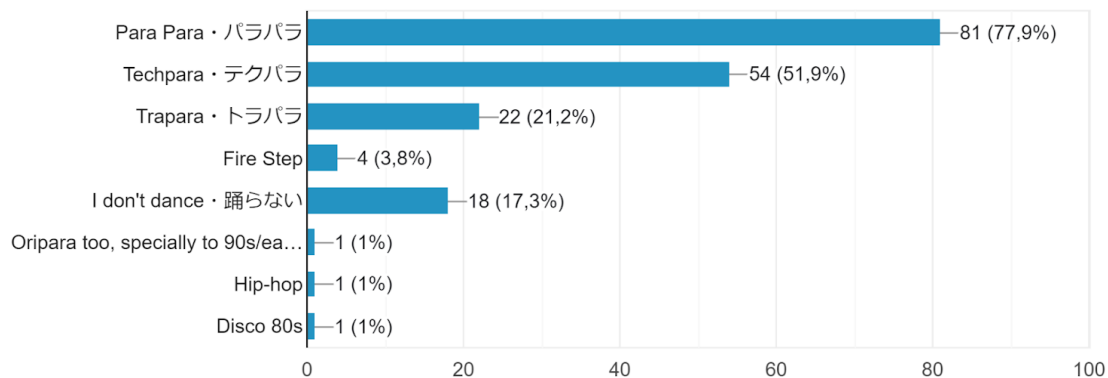


Practice at home with lessons from clubs collected over the years.

“消費する機会がない” : I didn't have any chances to consume it.

What do you dance? どんなダンスをするか。

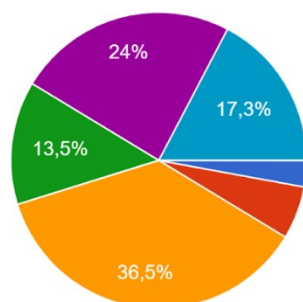
104 respostas



Oripa too, specially to 90s/early 00's Jpop Idol songs (like sexy boy from Morning Musume)

Since when do you dance? ・ いつから踊るか

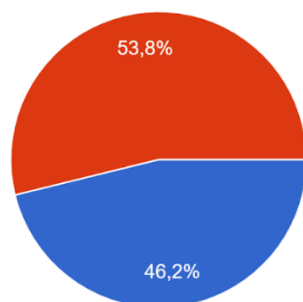
104 respostas



- Since the 80s ・ 9 0年代から
- Since the 90s ・ 9 0年代から
- Since the 2000s ・ 2 0 0 0年代から
- Since the 2010s ・ 2 0 1 0年代から
- Since the 2020s ・ 2 0 2 0年代から
- I don't dance ・ 踊らない

Have you ever been to a Para Para event in Japan? 日本でパラパライベントに行ったことがあるか。

104 respostas



- Yes ・ ある
- No ・ ない

If you answered yes, which event(s) and which year(s) did you attend it?

「ある」と答えたら、どのイベントか。

45 respostas

B1 Dynamite and other small eurobeat events that no longer exist, 2018

Agefarre 2023

Agefarre 2019, Agefarre 2023, Osakafes 2023 (and a lot of smaller events in October 2023)

SEN (Osaka) - April 2018, October 2019, Eurobeat Stadium Oct 2019, Agefarre 2019, SEF Oct 2019.
2023/2024 - anything I can reasonably attend (SEF, Starfire, B1, Eurobeat Stadium, NRG Revo, SEN, Minapara, Neys, Maharaja 90's Night, Hakai.

アゲファール2023

B1

2016 agefarre

SEFDX

Numerous events in Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka; 2009, 2010, 2011, 2018, 2019

Velfarre 2018

2017,2018,2019,2023, Super Euro Night, Super Euro Classic, Agefarre, B-1, SEF, よんぱら,

2005-2013, big events like SEF (including at velfarre), Star Fire, 9LoveJ, agefarre, Eurobeat Stadium, avex rave, and many many others that I can't remember or list. During the boom in 2005-2007 there were almost daily events. I even attended events in other parts of Japan including SEN (Osaka) and ParaPara Max (Nagoya).

2011: Star Fire, SEF Deluxe, 9 Love J. 2012/2013: Star Fire, B1-Dynamite, Star Fire Tour in 三重県, SEF Deluxe, Magical Rave, 5 star/SEN, Para-chan, Disco 90s, Vacation, Mega-Hit, Technician, Drunkers High, Agefarre. 2019: Agefarre, Eurobeat Stadium.

2009, SEF Deluxe, Star Fire, 1-Dynamite!, 9LoveJ, Disco 90s

agefarre and SEN in 2018

15年前の全部
2005-present. Too many to name. Eurobeat stadium, SeF, Starfire, 9Lovej, Neon,
Eurobeat event at Club Cream in Hiroshima 2018
アゲファーレとマハラジャ
SEF, STARFIRE, EUROBEAT STADIUM
Eurobeat stadium SEF 銀座バランス 乱舞gold Eurobeat再興計画
D-1 youth ぶちあげトランス キャンサミ
2006 - SEF Gold, B-1 Dynamite, Neon / 2023 - kinpara, starfire
agefarre
campus summit, D-1,9J
B1 Dynamite, Star Fire, both in 2016
2016, 2018, 2020, 2023... almost every main event.
2016/2018/2019/2023= Starfire, SEN, SEF, Magical Rave Hyper, Neys, ShizuPara, Maharaha Disco, Yokohama Disco, Debupara, Haisupi!, Manipara, Coolabah, Five Stars, Momodani Remix, D Sound, Hime Para, FireNeo, Shinjuku Neon, and many more
EURO VENUS EUROBEAT STADIUM NRG REVOLUTION
EUROBEAT STADIUM, SEF, マニバラ、EURO HEART,
SEF、STARFIRE、ユロスタ、DISCO90's他
日本全国

EUROBEATstadium Ddragon Re:Para
agefarre 2017 in Tokyo 、 Yonpara 2023~ in Okinawa
TOO MANY EVENTS
AREA TWINSTAR MEDUSA AXOS MellowGroove Neon Neys etc..
MAHARAJA ROPPONGI 90's DISCO
SEF
SEF.Starfire.S.E.N.MagicalRave
金パラ in 2024 when I was visiting Japan in Spring
SEF DELUXE, STAR FIRE, B-1 Dynamite!, SEN, agefarre, MAGICAL RAVE HYPER, Disco 90's
2023
Maharaja 90s night 2016
TwinStar-Hyper Star Energy, Starfire
Eurobeat Stadium, Starfire, SEF, Agefarre, Neon, Neys, Kenya-Matsuri, Hakai, Magical Rave, Super Euro Night, Legacy. Started going to events from 2014. Do not remember the specific year I went to each one.

Translation of answers not in English:

“アゲファーレ2023”: Agefarre 2023

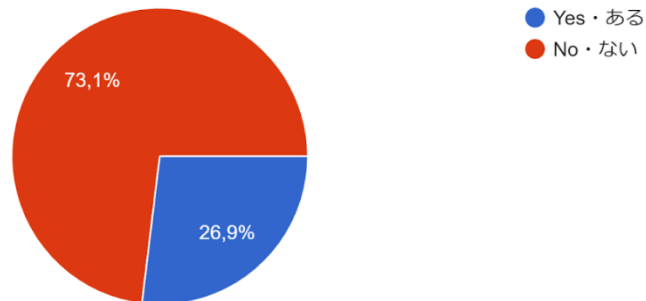
“15年前の全部”: All the events from 15 years ago

“アゲファーレとマハラジャ”: Agefarre and Maharaja

“日本全国”: In all of Japan

Have you ever been to a Para Para event outside Japan? 日本以外でパラパライベントに行ったことがあるか。

104 respostas



If you answered yes, which event(s) and which year(s) did you attend it?
「ある」と答えたら、どのイベントか。

28 respostas

Deshima Sounds (2008-now), Eurofika (2019), Roppongi Street (2009-2010), Gaijin Fest BCN (2012 I think?)

Multiple Deshima Sounds events

Animecons in Netherlands 2008-2023, Deshima Sounds events during that time as well, Helsinki meeting 2023

Gaijin Fest, 2015. I also dance Para Para in anime parties as Atomic Pixel Party when they make eurobeat DJ sets.

2023, 2024

Higher Illusion in 2023

Higher Illusion

Eurofika (Stockholm 2019), One Night in Arabia (Helsinki 2023)

2023 in Helsinki, Finland
Miracle Night 2018
2002-2008, Para Para no Winds, Taiwan
Many anime conventions including those where I was the official backup dancer for guests (like Yoko Ishida).
2009-2012: Salon del Manga around Spain (Malaga, Granada, Jerez, Barcelona), Japan Expo (Paris/Marseille, France). 2014: Gaijin Fest (Barcelona, Spain). 2019: Miracle Night (Los Angeles, USA), 2022-2023: Higher Illusion (Los Angeles, USA).
Alternative local parties in My ex city(2007,i was 15 years old) and also anime/asian music party(Moshi Moshi club)last year here on the south of Chile
2012-2019, Royal Para presents Royal Dance, Higher Illusion, Super Euro Heat
Flashback Disco in Chile, 2024
I don't remember the event names. The last one was almost 20 years ago.
Diamond 7, anime events and private meetings from 2003 to 2008
When it was popular in Korea in the 2000s, several events were held in Korea.
Multiple years at Deshima Sounds & Paradise
Parazone Disco Room
Parazone (Argentina) / MoshiMoshi (Chile)

SEF.STARFIRE.S.E.N.Magicalrave.5☆.B-1.

Hong Kong Para Para Dance Association, LoVin'ToNite, Tainan ParaPara Winds

Moshi Moshi Club and Flashback Disco, 2023 and 2024 both in Chile

events thrown by my friends and I. 2015-2018

Diamond 7 (Rio de Janeiro) e outras festas menores em São Paulo.

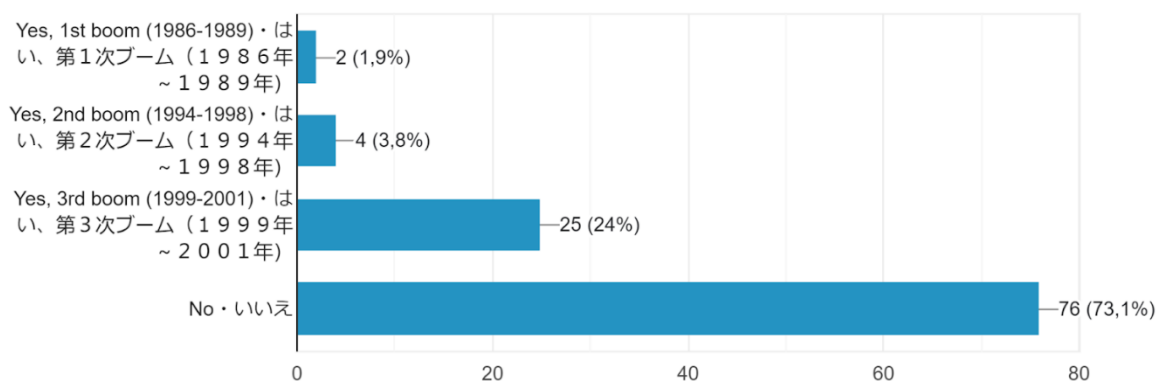
Diamond7 - Rio de Janeiro (2012) / Nameless Party - São Paulo (2010?)

Translation of answers not in English:

“Diamond 7 (Rio de Janeiro) e outras festas menores em São Paulo.”: Diamond 7 (Rio de Janeiro) and other small parties in São Paulo.

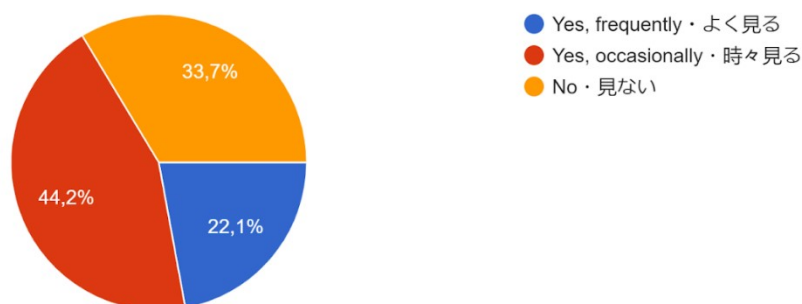
Have you experienced para para during its popular periods? 人気の時期にパラパラを体験したか。

104 respostas



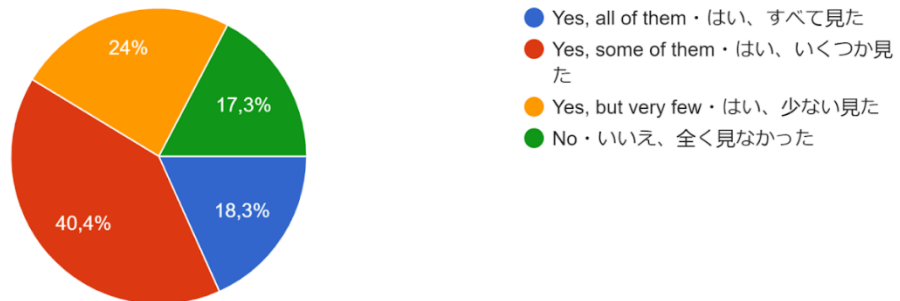
Do you watch livestreams of the events? パラパライベントの配信を見るか。

104 respostas



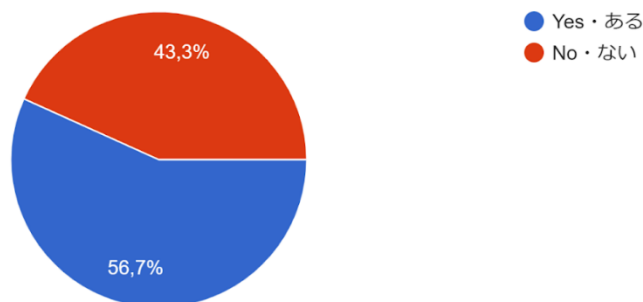
Have you watched any of the videos published by Avex under Stay Home and Para Para campaign? Avexからの「お家でパラパラ」キャンペーンの動画を見たことがあるか。

104 respostas



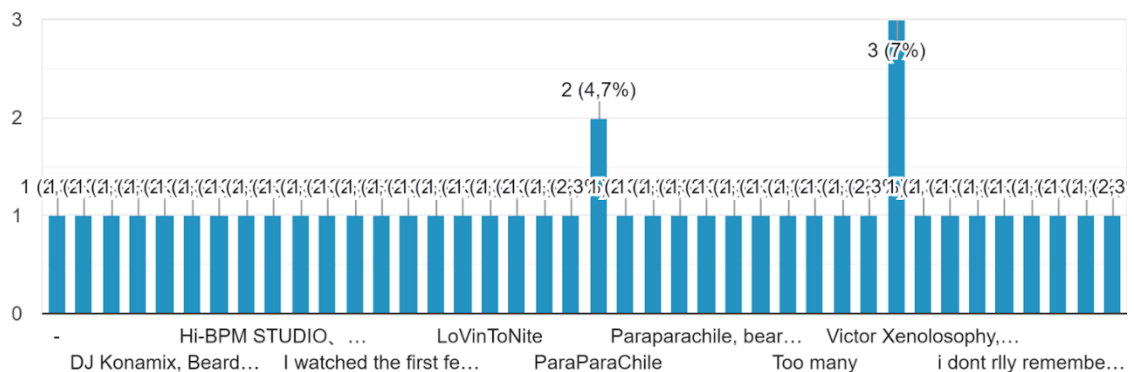
Have you watched any of the stay home para para videos made by fans? ファンからの「お家で」パラパラ動画を見たことがあるか。

104 respostas



If you answered yes, which one(s) have you watched? (you can write the name of the channel) 「ある」と答えたら、どの動画を見たか。(チャンネルの名前も大丈夫です)

43 respostas



Complete answers:

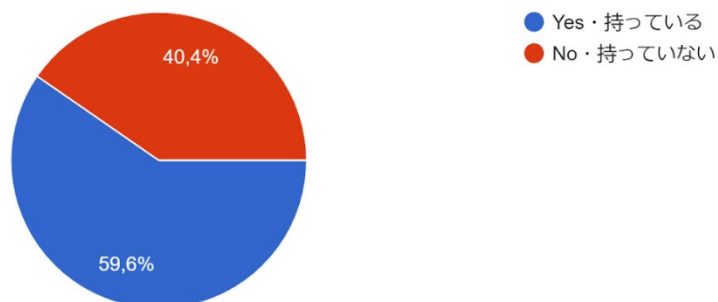
International Parapara thingie (forgot the name), Paradise Online
 Multiple
 I watched the first few volumes of Stay Home & Dance at ParaParaChile
 ParaPara Chile
 Victor Xenolosophy
 Konamix's Stay Home Series (participated in vol 3 onwards), BeardedEnough's
 Tribute Series.
 ParaParaChile, JMLee, Victor Xenolosophy, MayBeUs, LovinTonite
 Hi-BPM STUDIO、Rising High、SEF DELUXE
 ParaParaChile
 Too many to write, but have own channel and often participated in PPChile and
 BeardedEnough compilations as SuperEuroLover
 i watched through already curated list via facebook and vrchat. i don't know the
 origin
 DJ Konamix, BeardedEnough
 Paraparachile, bearded enough
 I participated in the Stay Home series organized by DJ Konamix. I frequently
 listen/dance to VDJ sets.
 Stay Home and Dance series (parapara Chile) , Halloween Haunted House projects
 + TRIBUTE series (BeardedEnough), Invisible Touch (EKS-D Parapara)
 Xenolosophy/bearded enough
 Densetsu13, Parapara hile, BeardedEnough
 bearded enough tribute series
 I don't remember
 Parayuurakuchou
 Mostly tiktoks from Rena Hime during that time.
 Victor Xenolosophy
 Choppy dance, parapara classroom, BeardedEnough
 I can't remember I'm sorry ☹️
 i dont rlly remember soz 😊
 Victor Xenolosophy
 avex
 Aru、aya、パラ魂
 In paraparachile
 Victor Xenolosophy, Peanut-K
 Too many
 BeardedEnough's Tribute Series / DJKonamix STAY HOME AND DANCE Series
 xenolosophy、ワープロ
 LoVinToNite
 TOO MANY VIDEOS
 遊樂町Hong Kong . カイオ . レオマルー . ワープロ
 Paraparachile
 HatoPara
 ParaParaChile
 Tribute Series
 Eu assisti e participei de boa parte dos vídeos feitos pelo canal ParaPara Chile.
 Também participei de um projeto do grupo americano EKS-D. (I watched and took part in

most of the videos from ParaParaChile. I also took part in a project by the American group EKS-D)

Parapara Chile Stay Home and Dance Project

Do you own any Para Para DVDs? パラパラのDVDを持っているか。

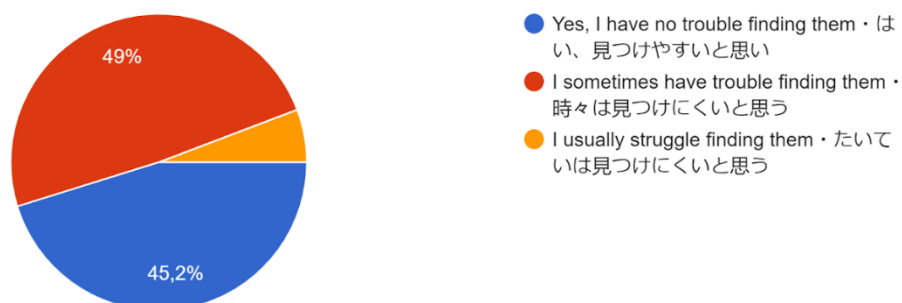
104 respuestas



Do you think it is easy to find Para Para routines

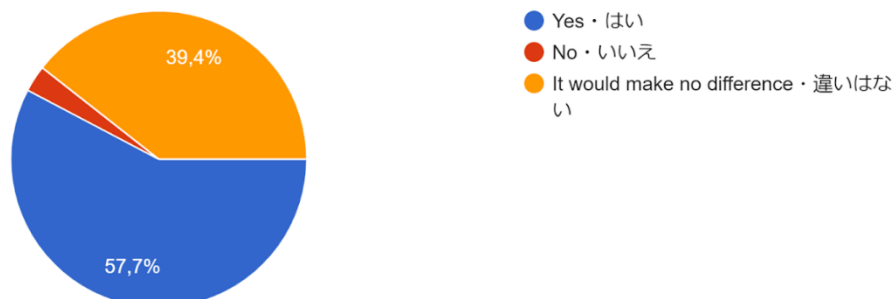
online? オンラインでパラパラの振付動画が見つかりやすいと思うか。

104 respuestas



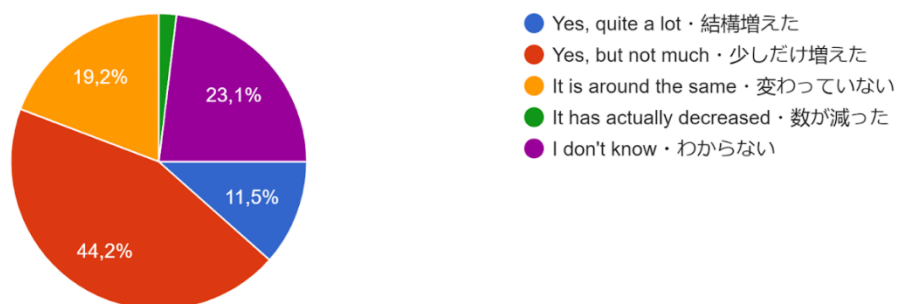
Would you be more encouraged to dance if the routines were found more easily online? 振付はもっと見つかりやすくなれば、パラパラを踊るのをあなたにとって促すか。

104 respostas



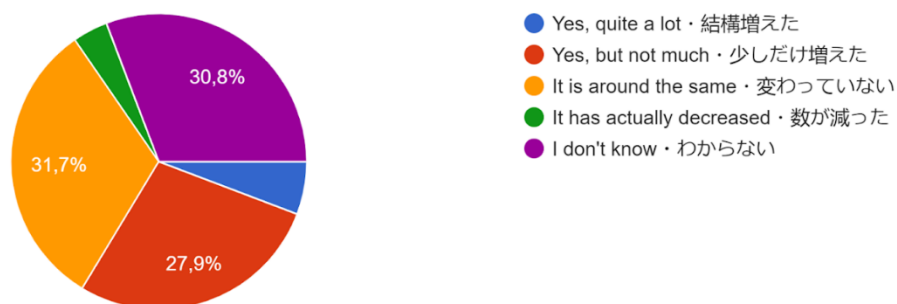
Do you think the number of people interested in para para increased after the stay home campaigns? 「お家で」パラパラキャンペーンの後で、パラパラに興味がある人が増えたと思うか。

104 respostas



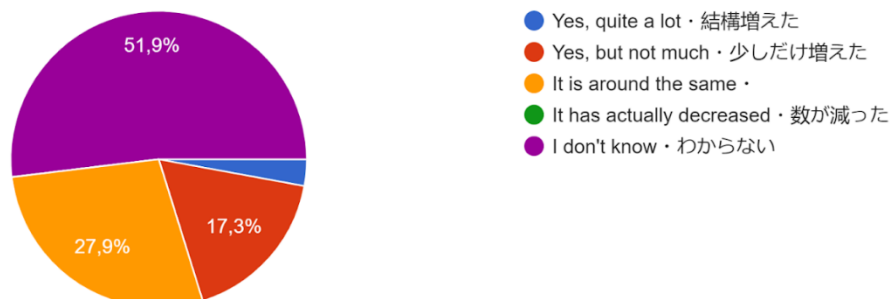
Do you think the number of people interested in techpara increased after the stay home campaigns? 「お家で」パラパラキャンペーンの後で、テクパラに興味がある人が増えたと思うか。

104 respostas



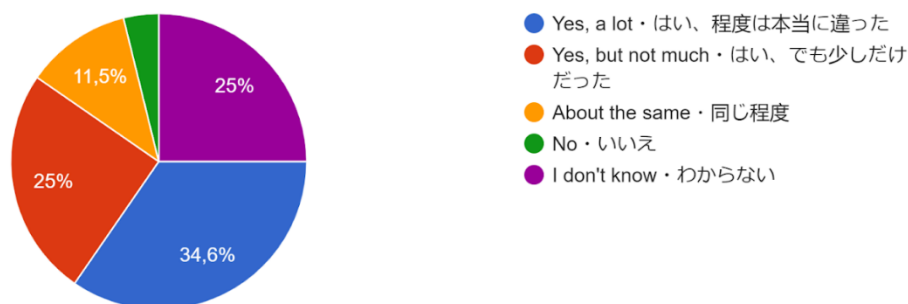
Do you think the number of people interested in related dances (trapara, fire step, yogore, etc) increased after the stay home campa...、Fire Step、ヨゴレなど）に興味がある人が増えたと思うか。

104 respostas



Do you think para para benefited over techpara, trapara, and other dances, visibility-wise? 他のダンスと比べてパラパラの視認性の程度は大きかったか。

104 respostas



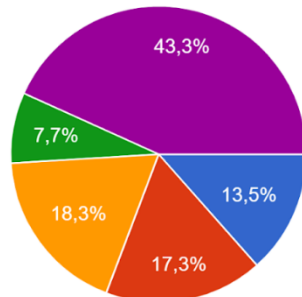
Compared to pre-pandemic numbers, do you think the number of people interested in para para dance increased? パンデミック前と比べると、パラパラに興味がある人々が増えたか。

104 respostas



Compared to pre-pandemic numbers, do you think the number of people going to para para events increased? パンデミック以前と比べると、パラパライベントに行く人々が増えたか。

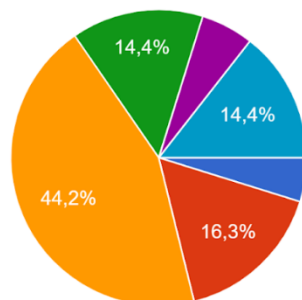
104 respostas



- Yes, and it is still increasing ・ 増えてまだ増えている
- Yes, but is not increasing anymore ・ 増えたけど今増えていない
- It stayed around the same ・ 変わらなかった
- It decreased even after the pandemic ・ パンデミック後でも減った
- I don't know/I haven't been to a para para event ・ わからない・パラパライ...

Would you consider the pandemic period a new para para boom? パンデミックの時期はパラパラブームだったと思うか。

104 respostas



- Yes, a 4th boom ・ はい、第4次ブーム
- Yes, a 5th boom ・ はい、第5次ブーム
- It has increased but not enough to call it a boom ・ 数が増えたけどブームじゃなかった
- The popularity didn't really change ・ 人気が変わらなかった
- The cooldown actually got worse ・ クールダウン時期は悪くなった
- I don't know ・ わからない

Is there anything else you want to add?

その他、何かあれば、教えてください。

32 respostas

Good luck with the project! If you can, please share the results!!

Beside the Stay Home campaign, SNS like TikTok can help a lot. If a song suddenly catches on and it has a routine, people tend to be interested and started learning it (probably also not always aware it's a dance style with a huge history).

Our group teaches parapara during Anime events in the Netherlands and we notice that in general people - more than before - know what parapara is and have danced it once or twice...

Best of luck with your survey.

I'm a DJ and a huge eurobeat fan. I don't dance para para but I definitely enjoy watching it. I mostly consume club and commercial videos from the 2nd boom, as 90's eurobeat is my favorite. The VHS rips can be hit or miss so sometimes I watch the original tapes from my collection. Avex's Kyouten series and the club videos from Maharaja Yokohama are my favorites. I would definitely like to see another para para boom but I think we need more new eurobeat in order for that to happen.

Going to add to the question about finding videos online. It's super easy to find Avex videos, or initial D routines. Good luck finding techpara/Trapara routines. They're still kept in their own circles. If they aren't posted online, or you know someone who can give them to you, you'll never see the video.

Japan is in this weird place, where people know about parapara, but don't go to events. They dance with friends/TikTok. Meanwhile events are the same core group.

North America - Lots of people are learning about para more recently. Dave Rodgers visited a city near me and it sparked interest in the locals to look into para para. Odyessy Eurobeat is now twitch streaming para para every wednesday. Cons are teaching routines again. Still no where near the popularity of Japan, but it's nice to see some love for the dance back home.

**we miss you <3

I learned about para para through VRSNS and started dancing. Now my main activities are filming at VRSNS, posting videos, and planning parapara events.

Not at all.

International collaboration lead to the opening of the parapara hokeikan database to outside of Japan, as the site was previously locked to non-Japanese IPs. There is much collaboration now between ParaMania and Parapara Hokeikan. There was also a great increase of re-uploaded paravids after the great ParaPara Open Source debacle where the user 1stTiger deleted massive amounts of videos from YouTube and began charging for them. This led to many users uploading and sharing copies of videos they downloaded or had otherwise to keep the information available.

there is more and more events in VRChat in various clubs. Different Japanese paralists and DJs do meetings when people just dance Para Para or there are even lessons. The events are not really accessible to non-Japanese speakers but the number of paralists slowly rises. There are more and more vtubers doing ParaPara. It is through the VRC people that I learned clubs are still producing routines and doing events.

Keep dancing para para and have fun :)

I know that it's debated whether there was a 4th boom or not. I definitely believe it because I was around for it. Between 2005-2007. You couldn't escape ParaPara out in public and I traveled across Japan to attend events.

This is my point of view as someone who experienced it in Japan in 2012/2013 mostly and is techpara-centered. I did enjoy the nostalgia factor during the pandemic but I think the numbers after that were even worse than they already were after 2014, from talking to people in Japan and overseas.

Parapara saikou!

Why don't you consider 2005 the 4th boom? Here in Japan we call it the 4th boom

Is it possible to diffuse Parapara in "developed" countries like Italy?

I am disabled so can't dance as much as I would like. I have never seen any para para events in the UK either. There used to be a Para Para Paradise machine in an arcade in London, but it is long gone. I have never seen another machine. I think more people have gotten into para para again now in part due to lockdowns, but also due to tiktok raising in popularity and para para kind of being perfect for tiktok (but I don't use it haha)

viva la gyaru!!!

論文頑張って！日本から応援してます♡

I am from Mexico. I was the only teenage crazy enough to dance at public parks back at the end of the 2000s. I think helping this subculture to spread overseas keeps it alive. Keep on dancing.

Parapara and techpara have become more popular lately on tiktok only especially with newer gyarus but i dont think it could be called a boom, i think some people treat it like a dance trend on tiktok now but hopefully because of all this it does become super popular again with meets and more routines being put on youtube. Also the most frustrating thing is how difficult some routines are to find😞 or the quality on youtube is awful but i guess thats to be expected .. i just wonder where all the old footage is

No.

-

I think that after the pandemic period, the number of venues, DJs, and dancers that can hold parapara events has decreased.

This is especially evident in Kyushu.

日本のパラパラファンです。ユーロビートは昔から好きで聴いていましたが、パラパラのイベントに行くようになったのはパンデミックが終わった後からです。パンデミックの時期は家でYouTubeを見ながらパラパラの練習をしていました。論文の作成頑張ってください。そしてぜひ、研究の結果を公開してください！日本から応援しています！

I'm a DJ for a Parapara event in Okinawa called Yonpara. I want to make Parapara more exciting!!

貴方は日本のパラパラシーンを本当によく研究している、とても素晴らしい、感動しました

ブームというのは一過性の物と考えられます。すでに文化として根付いてる段階ではないかと思います。

パラパラがcovid-19の時期に増えたのは、DISCOTHEQUE でのお昼のイベントが増えたことが影響していると考えます。

【東京都エリアでのケース】

covid-19の期間、パラパラを踊るためのDISCOTHEQUEはcovid-19の感染拡大を防ぐために閉鎖されていました。

しかし、徐々に規制が解除されると、ホリデーのお昼のDISCOTHEQUE イベントのみが再開されるようになりました。

夜の営業は閉鎖を継続していたため、DISCOTHEQUEに行きたい人は全員がホリデーのお昼のイベントに行くようになります。

ホリデーのお昼のイベントは夜の営業と比べて行きやすいため、これまでパラパラを知らなかったひととたくさん訪れました。

その結果、Covid-19の流行からしてパラパラを踊る人が増えたと考えます。

以上

もし、あなたがパラパラシーンについて質問があれば、いつでもコンタクトしてください)
Twitter @u1000b30

EUROBEAT Lover , HIROKI

パンデミック後に増えた人もいれば
パンデミック前に来ていた人が
来なくなった例もあるので
増えたより少し入れ替わった
イメージがあります

Chile has a huge fanbase, you should totally look for the projects made by them

Even during the coronavirus pandemic, the event was held online, so we, the creators of Eurobeat, continued to create new songs to maintain the enthusiasm for Eurobeat and Parapara. Thank you,)

For many people parapara started from DDR and then ParaParaParadise (Arcade) and that happened to me as well.

Translation of answers not in English:
“Parapara saikou!”: Para Para is the best!

“論文頑張って！日本から応援してます♡”: Good luck with your thesis! Cheering for you from Japan ♡

“日本のパラパラファンです。ユーロビートは昔から好きで聴いていましたが、パラパラのイベントに行くようになったのはパンデミックが終わった後からです。パンデミックの時期は家でYouTubeを見ながらパラパラの練習をしていました。論文の作成頑張ってください。そしてぜひ、研究の結果を公開してください！日本から応援しています！”: I'm a Japanese para para fan. I've always loved listening to Eurobeat but I only started going to para para events after the pandemic ended. During the pandemic, I practiced para para through the videos I watched on Youtube. Good luck with your thesis. And please publish the results of your research! I'm cheering for you from Japan!

“貴方は日本のパラパラシーンを本当によく研究している、とても素晴らしい、感動しました”: You are really researching the Japanese para para scene, it's so amazing, I'm very impressed

“ブームというのは一過性の物と考えられます。すでに文化として根付いてる段階ではないかと思います。”: I think "boom" is a thing of the past. I believe it's already on the stage that it's become rooted as part of the culture.

“”パラパラがcovid-19の時期に増えたのは、DISCOTHEQUEでのお昼のイベントが増えたことが影響していると考えます。

【東京都エリアでのケース】

covid-19の期間、パラパラを踊るためのDISCOTHEQUEはcovid-19の感染拡大を防ぐために閉鎖されていました。

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ホリデーのお昼のイベントは夜の営業と比べて行きやすいため、これまでパラパラを知らなかったひととたくさん訪れました。

その結果、Covid-19の流行からしてパラパラを踊る人が増えたと考えます。

以上

もし、あなたがパラパラシーンについて質問があれば、いつでもコンタクトしてください:)

Twitter @u1000b30

EUROBEAT Lover , HIROKI"" : I think that the increase on the number of daytime events during the pandemic influenced the rise of para para.

(Case in the Tokyo area)

During the pandemic, DISCOTHEQUES where people danced para para were closed to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

However, as the restrictions were gradually lifted, only holiday daytime DISCOTHEQUE events were reopened. As night events were still not happening, those who wanted to go to a DISCOTHEQUE went to those holiday daytime events.

Compared to nighttime events, daytime events on holidays were easier to attend, so many people who didn't know about para para came [to those events].

As a result, I think the number of people dancing para para has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. (personal communications, 2024)

That's all.

If you have any questions about the para para scene, please contact me anytime :)

Twitter @u1000b30

EUROBEAT Lover , HIROKI"

“パンデミック後に増えた人もいれば
パンデミック前に来ていた人が

来なくなった例もあるので
増えたより少し入れ替わった
イメージがあります”： The number of people who started coming to events since the pandemic has increased but at the same time there are cases of people who used to come to events and stopped since the pandemic, so it seems more like a change than an increase.