

MIKU EXPO 10th ANNIVERSARY LOOKING BACK ON A JOURNEY THAT BEGAN In JAKARTA



Crypton Future Media, INC. has been producing the world tour series "[HATSUNE MIKU EXPO](#)" (also known as "MIKU EXPO") featuring virtual singer "Hatsune Miku" since 2014. The first "MIKU EXPO" was held exactly ten years ago today, in Jakarta, Indonesia, approximately 6,500 km away from our office here in Sapporo.



The venue for "HATSUNE MIKU EXPO 2014 in Indonesia"

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of "MIKU EXPO," we asked our CEO, Hiroyuki Itoh, as well as two members of staff who have been involved in planning and managing "MIKU EXPO," Guillaume Devigne and Miyu Fuse, to share their reflections on the past decade and their outlook for the future.



From left to right: Hiroyuki Itoh, Miyu Fuse, Guillaume Devigne

Hiroyuki Itoh: After working at the University of Hokkaido, he founded Crypton Future Media, INC. in Sapporo in July 1995. The company focuses on developing services and technologies involving sound, including DTM (Desktop Music) software, music distribution aggregation, and 3D computer graphics technology. He was awarded the Japanese Blue Ribbon Medal of Honor in 2013.

Guillaume Devigne: Joined the company in 2014. After several years in charge of all overseas-related operations, he moved to Crypton's System Development team, a long-held aspiration of his, to put his programming skills to use. He is the developer of "Let's Paint," a web application used in the free "MIKU EXPO" sub-events, which allows users to color in their original 3D models of Hatsune Miku.

Miyu Fuse: Joined the company in 2017. Team manager of the brand new "Global Business Team" formed in 2023. She handles global licensing of characters such as Hatsune Miku, translation of company-developed services, and other overseas related topics in general. Her accomplishments during the first 5 years were evaluated and she became the youngest team manager in the company.

THE FIRST EVENT VENUE WAS SELECTED BY FAN VOTE



- Since it's the 10th anniversary of "MIKU EXPO," let's go back to the beginning. President Itoh, could you tell us why you decided to start "MIKU EXPO"?

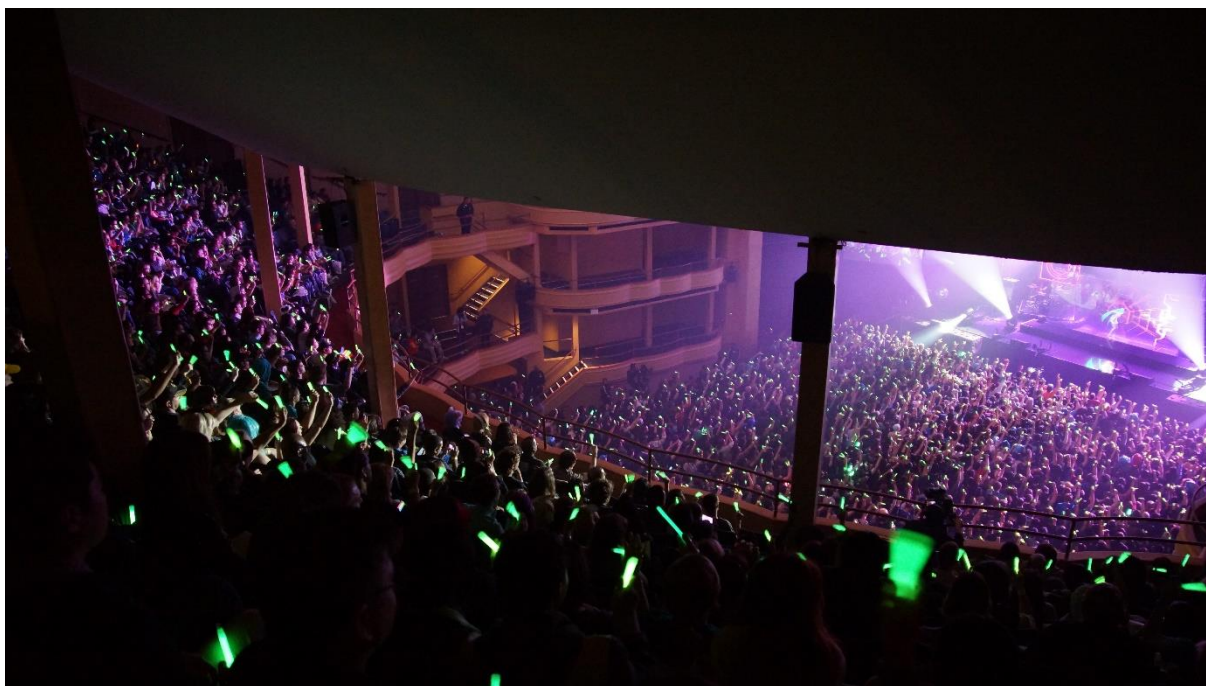
HI: Many "Hatsune Miku" artworks were being posted on the Internet, which is accessible to people all over the world, and as a result "Hatsune Miku" quickly gained recognition overseas. Consequently, we received numerous requests from fans living abroad, asking us to hold "Hatsune Miku" concerts in their hometowns. To respond to these requests, we planned an event called "MIKU EXPO," which combined "Hatsune Miku" concerts with exhibitions related to the creative culture and technology. At that time in Japan, there were very few people with experience in organizing those types of overseas events, so we couldn't rely on anyone else. We had to do everything ourselves, from arranging venues and applying for visas to catering. We faced many challenges and struggled a lot, but it paid off as large crowds of fans gathered in every city we went to. We are now in a position to hire agents, but I'm glad we tackled those challenges back then.

- I believe the first venue was Jakarta, and I understand that it was also decided by vote?

HI: That is correct. We ran a campaign called "Help Us Find You!" on the overseas community website we were operating at the time, and we received feedback from all over the world in the form of votes from fans who wanted "Hatsune Miku" to come to their area. The number of votes exceeded 100,000, and the city with the highest number of votes was Jakarta, Indonesia. We ended up performing 3 shows in front of about 15,000 fans. I was there myself, and I remember that so many fans gathered that the waiting line extended outside the venue's premises. I was happy to see how everyone expressed their feelings, from those who cosplayed as Miku by wearing T-shirts in colors matching Hatsune Miku's blue-green hair, to those who dressed up in Indonesian folk costumes arranged in the style of Hatsune Miku.

MF: When you hear "Overseas fan," you might think of fans from Europe and America, but based on Miku's followers on Facebook, Miku still has many Southeast Asia followers as well. Hatsune Miku related culture is all over the Internet, so you only need internet access to watch or look at her culture for free, which makes Miku popular in emerging countries as well.

GD: By the way, after the May 2014 Jakarta events we used the results of that same survey to determine the next venues for the event. That is how in October of the same year we organized concerts in Los Angeles and New York, gathering a total of over 30,000 people.



The audience at "HATSUNE MIKU EXPO 2014 in NEW YORK"

- After that, the event visited various cities around the world, for a total of 100 performances in 39 cities at this point! You must have many memories, but is there any performance that has left a particularly strong impression on you?

HI: I was surprised too when I saw the numbers, but it is an inspiring coincidence that the number of performances over the past 10 years is exactly 100, with 39 hosting cities! I've been to all the overseas tours so far and have fond memories of each one... Right now, I have a vivid recollection of the performance we gave in Phoenix, Arizona at the HATSUNE MIKU EXPO 2024 North America, which was held just a few weeks ago. Even though this was the first time the show was held in Arizona, the venue was packed, and I was again reminded of the power of the Internet to reach so many people.

GD: What comes to mind is the first Monterrey show in Mexico in 2016, especially the moment we started playing a song that we had specially prepared in Spanish, and a loud and high-pitched cheer rose from the audience. There were more young fans than at other performances, and the energy was incredibly strong and palpable.

MF: My most memorable show is "MIKU EXPO 2017 in Malaysia." Not only because it was my first show after joining the company, but also because of its unique feature of multiple languages. Malaysia has a multilingual culture, so songs in 5 different languages were used in one show, and the show itself was very bright and colorful. Also, we had many comments from our fans written in multiple languages on the Piapro wall (A wall on which fans could write their comments) at the exhibition space as well.



“Piapro wall” set at “HATSUNE MIKU EXPO 2017 in Malaysia”

BALANCING LOCALIZATION AND CREATIVE SUPPORT



- Crypton is the organizer for several other events. Can you tell us about some of the unique innovations that make MIKU EXPO different from the others?

GD: I think that Miku's greetings in the language of the host city is a unique feature of MIKU EXPO as an international tour. Although at this point (May 2024) there only exists a Japanese, English and Chinese version of the Hatsune Miku software, MIKU EXPO relies on the latest voice synthesis technologies so that Miku can deliver speech in the language of each host city.

MF: Also, when we commissioned artworks for the event, we tried our best to use local artists. For example, in “HATSUNE MIKU EXPO 2019 Taiwan & Hong Kong,” we commissioned two sub visuals to local artists from Taiwan and Hong Kong. We didn’t give them any detailed directions, so that it could reflect how local people see local places.



Art by Say HANA



Art by Chiya

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HATSUNE MIKU EXPO 2019 Taiwan & Hong Kong Sub Visual (Left:Taiwan / Right:Hong Kong)

HI: Most recently, at the HATSUNE MIKU EXPO 2024 North America, we tried to use local musicians as band members for the live performance. The performance was so powerful that fans from Japan might have been surprised.

- Is all of this done “for the fans”?

MF: Yes, it is for fans but also for the creators as well. Our company mission is to become creators for creators (we call this meta-creator), so that we can provide creators the chance to be in the spotlight through Hatsune Miku. Therefore, we are doing contests like song contests, and costume contests, then commissioning local creators to draw local sub-visuals for the event. It helps us to do the localization and gives chances to local creators at the same time. However, many Miku fans love Japanese culture as well, so we are trying very hard to find the right balance between the two.

HI: Localization is not just a matter of matching the local language, but it is important to think about what each region is really looking for and finding ways to adapt. I would like to continue to look at the culture and values of each region from a broad perspective, and deliver events that will attract creative people around the world to the creative culture surrounding Hatsune Miku.



HATSUNE MIKU'S LIVE SHOW IS A "CO-CREATION"



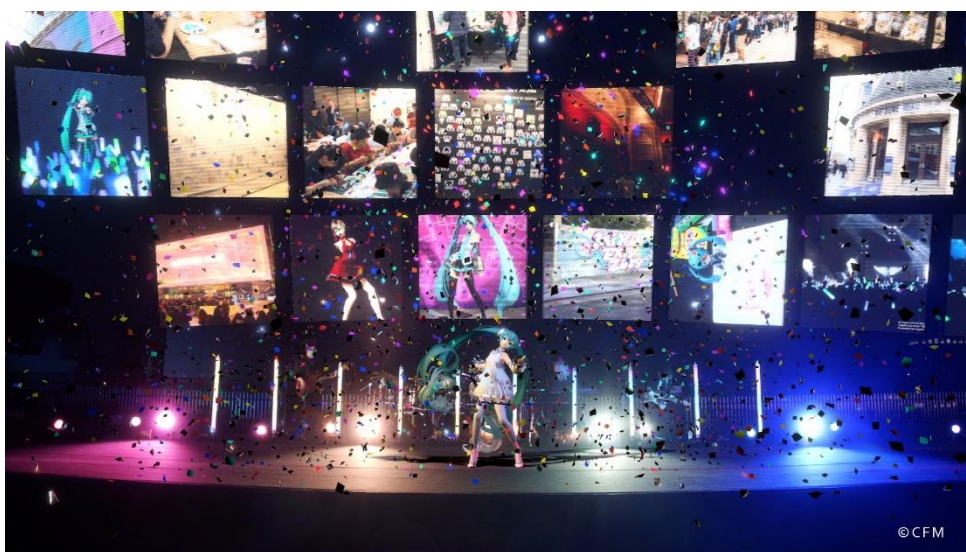
- By the way, live performances include a lot of songs in Japanese, but is there ever a language barrier that leads to negative reception

GD: I have never witnessed any negative reaction caused by the language. Overseas fans who come to "MIKU EXPO" usually listen to Japanese songs on the Internet, so on the contrary they are generally excited to listen to songs in the original Japanese language. Even during the concert, you can hear them cheer in Japanese phrases like "Miku-san, kawaii!"

HI: Hatsune Miku is originally a virtual singer displayed on a screen, so that alone cannot liven up a stage to the extent a human singer can. The best live performance of Hatsune Miku's music, as well as lighting effects that enhance the experience, are essential elements, but the most important thing is the audience's reaction. I believe that Hatsune Miku's live performance is created together with the audience, who enjoy the performance to the fullest and express their enjoyment.

- Speaking of "creating together," you also provided opportunities for fans to get involved in the live production of the online projects during the pandemic, didn't you?

MF: Yes, that was "HATSUNE MIKU EXPO 2021 Online" and "HATSUNE MIKU EXPO 2023 VR." Both online concerts were crowdfunded, and aimed to "make the concert together with our fans." There were many reward menus that would enable our fans to join the concert production, such as setlist song requests, submission of stage objects, etc.



The stage of HATSUNE MIKU EXPO 2021 Online, which included snapshots of past events

GD: For the online concerts, we also staged a performance in which fans' 3D avatars of Hatsune Miku, which they had originally colored, appeared on stage. Since the project's launch in 2014, MIKU EXPO has offered a variety of activities for fans to gather and share creative experiences together. One such activity is the coloring workshop, which has become a regular MIKU EXPO sub-event. It has taken different forms, such as coloring a sheet of paper with Hatsune Miku's silhouette printed on it, or coloring a white vinyl figure of Hatsune Miku, and recently, a web app was made available for original digital coloring of a white 3D avatar of Hatsune Miku. At the 2021 and 2023 online concert, 3D avatars created by fans also appeared on stage, a moving moment that symbolized the fusion of Hatsune Miku with her fans.



Fan-colored 3D avatars on stage at "HATSUNE MIKU EXPO 2023 VR"

HI: The privilege to have Hatsune Miku read out your name in the end roll credits at the end of the concert was also quite popular at the online concert. "MIKU EXPO" returned to real concerts this year, but online concerts have qualities of their own, and I think it would be fun to plan another online concert with the fans someday.

- Finally, please tell us about your outlooks and hopes for the future!

HI: "MIKU EXPO" was started to spread the creative culture carried by Hatsune Miku not only in Japan but also throughout the world. 10 years have passed, and I am very proud that we have been able to hold "MIKU EXPO" in many countries and regions. The world has changed a lot in 10 years. During that time we had the COVID pandemic, and our lifestyles have changed as well. In the next 10 years, I think the world will probably change even more, but I hope that MIKU EXPO will continue to aim for a world where people around the world can express themselves and understand each other through Miku and her friends. There are still many places in the world where MIKU EXPO could go, so I would be happy if people would continue to follow the activities of MIKU EXPO.

GD: I was lucky enough to be involved in the overseas development of Hatsune Miku since the beginning of "MIKU EXPO," and although I have now left the overseas licensing business for the system department two years ago, I still sincerely hope that "MIKU EXPO" continues to bring enjoyable experiences to everyone around the world. I would like to continue to contribute in different ways, such as lending a hand in organizing sub-events in the future.

MF: "MIKU EXPO" is supported by all Hatsune Miku surrounding cultures, which means fans and creators all over the world. Our team will keep working hard to bring "MIKU EXPO" around the world, so that everyone can get together and have fun. We will likely go through many trials and errors to improve, and try to reach those areas that we have never been to, to let "Hatsune Miku continue to sing across an ever-changing world." The 10th anniversary year has just started, so stay tuned for future events!

- Thank you, all!



Crypton Future Media continues to support creative activities in Japan and overseas, and to focus on overseas expansion.