

OSAKA MONAURAIL's biography: "Japan's Premire Funk Combo Never Stops Rollin'!"



After 20 years, the wheels are very much still turning on the Funkiest orchestra that Japan has to offer. Forged from a college Jazz combo into the tightest Soul juggernaut whose reputation now circles the globe. The aim of the group still remains the same; that is to bring "superheavy funk" to the people.

Dressed immaculately in the sharpest of suits, they move in unison step while the horn section provide a dazzling display of twirling trumpets and trombone ducking – quite the spectacle. Up front, Nakata holds a commanding presence: he will break out into the splits, move across to play some funky piano, or whip the crowd into a frenzy with a soulful scream. The band watch Nakata closely, turning on a dime and dropping his hand will signal a change to the next movement. It's a that keeps the band working closely together and as much on their toes as the audience.

Formed in 1992 when Nakata was a university student, the group was named after the 1975 Funk classic, It's The J.B.'s Monaurail by the J.B.'s. (misspelling intentional.) OM originally held more than 20 people including many horn players from the same Jazz club at the university, but soon the band shaped itself up into a 13 piece group. After a couple of school concerts, they started to play local bars & nightclubs in Osaka circa 1994-1995.

Among a number of albums and more than a dozen of 45rpm singles, one of the notable works is the collaboration with the legendary American Soul-Funk singer, Marva Whitney from the James Brown revue (1967-1970). *I AM WHAT I AM* (2006) was the first-after-37-years album from the Original Funky Diva produced by Osaka Monaurail.

Having toured top venues and nightclubs in Europe (since 2006) and Japan for many years, OM are celebrating its two decade anniversary this year (2012.) Still, a lot of more to come in the year: North American debut tour appearing a couple of popular Jazz festivals in Quebec, Canada in July; European Jazz/Rock festival circuit in June/July. The European tour in April (24 shows in 8 countries) was already a big success launching the latest album "State of the World" on Unique Records.

In Tokyo bi-monthly, OM promote probably the biggest Soul-and-Funk club party series called *IN BUSINESS* at Club Asia, Shibuya, Tokyo along with the best Funk DJ colleagues: Daisuke Kuroda, Muro, Dev Large, Dj Jin and some others.

The current lineup is Ryo Nakata (vocal/keyboards/percussions), Kentaro Yamagata & Yohchi Masago (trumpets), Shimon Mukai (tenor saxophone), Katsutoshi Hiraishi (trombone), Dan Hayami & Yuichi Ikeda (guitars), Dai Nakamura (bass) and Soki Kimura (drums).