



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Aniplex of America to Stream
New Slice of Life Comedy, *Slow Start*,
on Crunchyroll in January 2018**



SLOW START
スロウスタート

© Yuiko Tokumi, HOUBUNSHA/Slow Start Production Committee

A new school, new town, and new friends. Happiness sometimes has a slow start.

SANTA MONICA, CA (December 12, 2017) – Aniplex of America announced today that they will begin streaming the brand new anime series, *Slow Start*, on Crunchyroll beginning January 6, 2018 at 9 am PST. Animated by A-1 Pictures (*Sword Art Online*, *Blue Exorcist*) and directed by Hiroyuki Hashimoto (*Magical Girl Raising Project*, *Is the Order a Rabbit?*), the series is based on a popular 4-panel manga by Yuiko Tokumi in *Manga Time Kirara*, a seinen manga magazine from renowned publisher Houbunsha. In addition to being the first ever in Japan to put out a 4-panel manga magazine, Houbunsha is the publisher for another popular 4-panel manga series, *BLEND-S*, which served the basis for the smash hit anime by the same name in fall of 2017. Masato Anno (*Eromanga Sensei*, *Saekano: How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend*) is in charge of character design with music by Yoshiaki Fujisawa (*Love Live! School idol project*, *No Game, No Life Zero*).

“When I was first approached by the team at *Kirara* regarding a new series, I really wanted to create a cute and charming story that didn’t take itself too seriously,” says Series Creator, Yuiko Tokumi. “But when my editor suggested to make the series about ‘reaching for a goal like trying to win a tournament,’ I began incorporating that notion into the story.”

The series addresses an interesting stigma relatively unique to the Japanese culture known as being a *ronin*. The term, which is often associated in the U.S. as a term for vagabond samurai, refers to a person who has failed to get in to a school or company and must wait a year to try again. While the concept of a “gap year” is not foreign to the U.S., the Japanese education and hiring system, which only accepts new students or new employees during a limited time once a year, results in many young people being forced into an involuntary gap year. The main character is no stranger to this dilemma, as she finds herself a year late starting high school. Unable to bear the shame of being a year behind her classmates, she moves away to start a new life at a new school.

“*Slow Start* isn’t just a cute and fun story, it’s about the importance of emotional connections,” says Director Hashimoto in an interview about the series.

Thanks to her new friends and new acquaintances, the series explores many different forms of “slow starts.” The title, *Slow Start*, refers to not only the main character’s delayed start to high school but a larger theme of taking one’s time to grow up.

HANA ICHINOSE

VA: Reina Kondo

*"I-I'm Hana Ichinose!
Nice to meet you...!"*



- Birthday: April 6th
- Height: 154cm
- Weight: 45kg
- Blood Type: A

A kind-hearted girl, sensitive to others' needs, but somewhat of a crybaby. For reasons yet unknown, she lives on her own in Temari Heights, which is an apartment building managed by her cousin, Shion. She is very gullible.

TAMATE MOMOCHI

VA: Ayasa Ito

*"I'm Tamate Momochi!
Feel free to call me Tama-chan!"*



- Birthday: May 23rd
- Height 153cm
- Weight: 47kg
- Blood Type: B

Always energetic, and she does everything at her own pace. Friendly to everyone. She is an otaku, being an avid *bishoujo* gamer and even attending the events as well. Also, talented in cooking! Her comments are oftentimes arbitrary.

EIKO TOKURA

VA: Tomomi Mineuchi

*"Hey, it might be a little out of the way
but do you want to walk to the station with me?"*



- Birthday: June 20th
- Height: 163cm
- Weight: 48kg
- Blood Type: B

With excellent communication skills, she seems very mature. Being popular among her female classmates, her schedule may rather be jam-packed? She has met Kamuri once before, back in elementary school. Tends to say arbitrary things from time to time.

KAMURI SENGOKU

VA: Maria Naganawa

"My development is slower than others
because I'm a late-bloomer, that's all."



- Birthday: October 30th
- Height: 136cm
- Weight: 30kg
- Blood Type: AB

She may be small in stature, but she loves to eat. Shy by nature, and is unable to speak articulately around strangers. Loves Eiko, and is extremely attached to her. Surprisingly, tends to say arbitrary things.

About *Slow Start*:

Hana Ichinose is a very shy and introverted girl about to start high school in the spring. After moving away from her parent's house in the city due to unforeseen circumstances, she decides to live at an apartment managed by her cousin, Shion, called *Temari Heights*.

A new school, new life, and wonderful new friendships.

As Hana gradually opens her heart to the people around her, her life begins to unfold with exciting and cheerful moments.

From playing around like children to feeling anxious like an adult...

This is an adorable and heart-warming tale about growing up ... slowly.

Information on *Slow Start* is available at: <http://slowstart-usa.com> or follow the official *Slow Start* USA Facebook page at <facebook.com/SlowStartUSA>.

STAFF

Original Story: Yuiko Tokumi
Director: Hiroyuki Hashimoto
Series Composition: Mio Inoue
Character Design/Chief Animation Director: Masato Anno
Prop Design: Masako Itou
Main Animator: Kosuke Yoshida
Art Director: Katsufumi Hariu
Color Setting: Kanako Hokari
CG Director: Shinji Nasu
Director of Photography: Satoru Kuroiwa
Editor: Ayumu Takahashi
Sound Director: Jin Aketagawa
Sound Effects: Toshiya Wada
Music: Yoshiaki Fujisawa
Music Production: Aniplex
Animation Production: A-1 Pictures

CAST:

Hana Ichinose: Reina Kondo
Tamate Momochi: Ayasa Ito
Eiko Tokura: Tomomi Mineuchi
Kamuri Sengoku: Maria Naganawa
Shion Kyojuka: M • A • O
Hiroe Hannen: Maaya Uchida
Kiyose Enami: Manami Numakura

About Aniplex of America Inc.

Aniplex of America Inc. (Santa Monica, California) is a subsidiary of Aniplex Inc. (headquartered in Tokyo, Japan), a group of Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) Inc. and a leading provider of anime content and music production and distribution in Japan. Aniplex of America has launched fan-favorite Blu-ray and DVD releases including *Fate/stay night [Unlimited Blade Works]*, *Fate/Zero*, the *Sword Art Online* series, *Your lie in April*, *KILL la KILL*, *Bakemonogatari*, *Puella Magi Madoka Magica*, *Blue Exorcist*, *NISEKOI*, the *OREIMO* series, *DURARARA!!×2*, *Magi* series, *Expelled From Paradise*, *The irregular at magic high school*, and *ALDNOAH.ZERO*. The company's ever-growing line-up of shows include: *March comes in like a lion*, *Blue Exorcist: Kyoto Saga*, *ERASED*, *The Asterisk War*, *OWARIMONOGATARI*, *KIZUMONOGATARI*, *Charlotte*, *Occultic;Nine*, *WWW.WAGNARIA!!*, *GRANBLUE FANTASY*, *Eromanga Sensei*, *Katsugeki TOUKEN RANBU*, and *BLEND-S*. In June 2017, the company launched the English version of mobile game, *Fate/Grand Order*, which

quickly exceeded one million downloads. Based on the popular *Fate* series, *Fate/Grand Order* is currently available on iOS and Android.

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