

## Hamasaki Ayumi

### A BEST 2 - BLACK -

Avex Trax

AVCD-23263/B~C (CD+DVD), AVCD-23264 (CD)

DURATION: 1:15:25

RELEASE DATE: Feb. 28, 2007

OFFICIAL WEBSITE: <http://avexnet.or.jp/ayu/>

Click here for Hamasaki Ayumi songs on iTunes

01. Dearest
02. CAROLS
03. No way to say
04. HANABI
05. walking proud
06. Free & Easy
07. Endless sorrow
08. Because of You
09. About You
10. GAME
11. is this LOVE?
12. HANABI ~episode II~
13. NEVER EVER
14. HEAVEN
15. part of Me (+ extra unlisted track)

#### DVD 1 (BEST CLIPS BLACK):

65 minutes, 4:3, Region 2

1. Dearest
2. CAROLS
3. No way to say
4. walking proud
5. Free & Easy
6. Endless sorrow
7. Because of You
8. About You
9. GAME
10. is this LOVE?
11. HANABI -episode II-
12. NEVER EVER (promotional clip)
13. HEAVEN
14. part of Me
15. H (TV-CM)

#### DVD 2 (Documentary Film of COUNTDOWN LIVE 2006-2007):

90 min., 16:9 LB, Region 2

It has been six years since Hamasaki Ayumi has released a best hits album. The last being the very popular "A BEST" (AVCD-11950, Rel. March 28, 2001).

On February 28, 2007 two best albums were released.

"A BEST 2 - BLACK-" (AVCD-23263/B~C, 23264) would feature her hit ballads such as "Dearest" (AVCD-30294, rel. Sept. 27, 2001) to "HEAVEN" (AVCD-30842, rel. Sept. 14 2005).

"A BEST 2 - WHITE -" which would feature her faster songs from her hit single releases "evolution" (AVCD-30203, rel. Jan. 31, 2001) to "fairyland" (AVCD-30808, Aug. 3, 2005) and also include album featured tracks.

Although "A BEST" would be hard to beat because of the sheer multi-hits on that album, "A BEST 2" is just so full of content that it's hard for any Ayu fan's to even ignore it because not



### < The Softness, the Sadness and the Bitterness of "-BLACK-"

Featuring a collection of her hits, music videos and concert documentary all in one release!

only are you getting a collection of hits from 2001-2005, you are also getting the music videos for the songs featured on the best album.

Also, to make things even more tempting is the addition of Hamasaki Ayumi's "Documentary Film of COUNTDOWN LIVE 2006-2007" concert.

The "-BLACK-" version contains the documentary of the concert, while "-WHITE-" contains the actual concert.

Each of the album could have been released separately but surprisingly, you get it all by purchasing each best album and for Hamasaki Ayumi fans, with the number of releases from Avex for Hamasaki Ayumi, with all that comes with "A BEST 2", just for the price of an album, you're definitely getting a great deal.

As for the album, "-BLACK-", there is a little misnomer on the Internet that this album is all slow ballads but that is not necessarily true.

The album contains songs that feature lyrics that are about sadness or bitterness and does include its fair share of ballads but you also get fast up-tempo songs such as "Because of You", "About You" and "is this LOVE?".

Also, included after the final song "part of Me" is an unlisted, unnamed bonus track.

Both "A BEST 2" albums come with a DVD of the music videos for the songs featured on

the album.

As for the second DVD, my review of "-WHITE" raved about the concert. The second DVD that comes with "-BLACK-" features a 90-minute documentary of the making of "COUNTDOWN LIVE 2006-2007".

I enjoy watching behind-the-scenes footage of concerts and with Ayu concerts being one of the most elaborate music concerts in Japan, it's always interesting to see how things work to make such a big-budget concert.

Also, because her last concert held for "A Stage (miss)understood" just happened several months prior, so to see them come up with new choreography, costumes and stage production for a New Year's Eve show was very cool to watch.

Personally, I highly recommend owning both best albums. You get your money's worth for both releases and for me, having one without the other would be incomplete.

If you are a Hamasaki Ayumi fan or a new fan that wants to get into her music, "A BEST 2 -WHITE-" and "-BLACK-" are highly recommended.

The majority of her top hits from 2001-2005, the music videos and a concert/documentary for the price of an album, you can't beat that!

- DENNIS A. AMITH