

ji-ent world groove

A JI-ENT MUSIC REVIEW

You've waited and misono is back and this time with her first full-length album "never+land".

This album shows that she's more than just the younger sister of Koda Kumi and that she can do different types of music as opposed to the music many of us have enjoyed her singing as vocalist of day after tomorrow.

Coming out on Feb. 28th, "never+land" which contains a total of twelve tracks with seven of the tracks from previous CD singles released in 2006.

Since her debut, misono has incorporated more rock-based music into her sound while yet retaining the bubblyness and cuteness that she had as a member of day after tomorrow.

The first track on the album "powder" is a short drum and bass track which is pretty good and very different but unfortunately it's only 1:44 long and the only track to incorporate this type of sound.

The second all rock track "Lovely Cats Eye ~Neko wa kotatsu de Harukunaru~ (AVCD-31087/B (with DVD), AVCD-31088) is misono's fourth CD single that was released in November 2006.

The third track "Speed Live"(AVCD-31006/B (with DVD), AVCD-31007) is misono's third CD single that was released in July 2006 and the theme song for the teen film "LOVE*CON" or "LOVELY COMPLEX".

The fourth track "A.____~answer~" is from her fifth CD single "Hot Time" (which is absent on this album).

The CD single is an inspiring theme song used on misono's MTV "Girls meet Beauty" campaign in which the singer was put on a gruelling, diet and three month weight loss campaign.

I really enjoyed her debut CD single "VS" (AVCD-30913/B (DVD), AVCD-30914 (normal), released on March 29, 2006) and the song gave me positive hopes that misono can make it through for her solo career.

Interesting is that many of the coupling songs from her CD singles are on this album ("Garasu no Kutsu" coupling song for "VS", "pinkies" which is an awesome coupling song for her second single "Kojin Jugyo" (AVCD-30966/B (DVD), AVCD-30966 (normal), released on May 10, 2006) and "Ari to kirigirisu" coupling song for third CD single "SPEED LIVE".

Although "Kojin Jugyo" was not included as a full song, track 10 is a "Finger 5 Medley" featuring misono singing several songs by the popular 70's pop group.

There are several ballads on this album but the final track "Re: (Yomi: Repeat)" which is a piano-based song is beautiful.

The album definitely shows that misono can sing different types of music but not all songs in my opinion have been as strong as her debut CD single "VS".

Also, I wonder if misono want to be taken seriously as a rock singer in the same vein of a Tomiko Van (lead singer of Do As Infinity) or an Aikawa Nanase? Or possibly dabble with different music styles like her older sister has

JAPAN

never+land
misono

Avex Trax



done.

If one thing has been evident in the past few CD +DVD singles, we have seen a cutesy, bubbly misono such as behaving and dressing like a cat for "Lovely Cat's Eye" and then the very emotional music video for "HOT TIME" that shows that there is a serious, emotional side of the artist.

As for music videos, the DVD version of "never+land" will contain the music videos for "Suna no Shiro no Mermaid ~Riku to umi no sekai~", "A.____~answer~" and "Hot Time Mud 1 Take Ver." and "The Making" featuring several making of clips of her music videos.

All in all, it's a good album, average at best for me. But give it a chance, you may enjoy it.

— DENNIS A. AMITH

Note: The version of never+land is a pre-release of never+land we received directly from the label and is not the final press of the album. The tracks are of the final release but we are unable to review the other contents such as DVD, photobook or lyric booklet.

never+land misono TRACK LISTING

Catalog #: AVCD-23202 (CD+Photo Book), AVCD-23203/B (CD+DVD), AVCD-23204 (CD only) | Dur. 52:19. Release date: February 28, 2007

1. Powder
2. Lovely Cat's Eye ~Neko wa kotatsu de marukunaru~
3. Speed Drive
4. A.____~answer~
5. Ari to kigirisu
6. Suna no Shiro no Mermaid ~Riku to umi no Sekai~
7. Kodomo no Jijou>Otona no Shijou 2
8. Glass no Kutsu
9. VS
10. Finger 5 Medley
11. pinkies
12. Re: (yomi:repeat)

* NOTE: Preview album reviewed