

# J!-ENT worldgroove

A JI-ENT MUSIC REVIEW

## ZARD

### ZARD BLEND ~SUN & STONE~

B-Gram Records

JBCJ-1013

Duration: 58:35

RELEASE DATE: April 23, 1997

1. Kimi ni Aitakunattara (20th CD single)
2. Yureru Omoi (8th CD single)
3. Kimi ga Inai (7th CD single)
4. Kokoro o Hiraite (18th CD single)
5. Good-bye My Loneliness (1st CD single)
6. ON MY ARMS TONIGHT (5th CD single)
7. Ano Hohoemi wo Wasurenaide (from 3rd album - "HOLD ME")
8. Oh my Love (from 5th album - "Oh my love")
9. Rainen no Natsu mo (from 5th album - Oh my love")
10. High heel nugisutete (from 6th album - forever love)
11. Don't you see (19th CD single)
12. Nemurenai Yoru o Daite (4th CD single)
13. Konna ni Aishitemo ~Hold Me~ (from 3rd album - "HOLD ME")

With the sad and depressing news of the death of Sakai Izumi, lead singer of the popular band ZARD, I pulled this album out and just listened to it over and over.

With the October 2006 release of "Golden Best ~15th Anniversary~" being an ultimate album for ZARD fans wanting to catch up on ZARD music from 1991-2006, their first collection of hits "ZARD BLEND ~SUN & STONE~" still remains close to my heart.

When this album came out, it was the first best collection of songs in an album personally selected by Sakai Izumi.

I always found it interesting that of the 20 CD singles that she released from 1991-1997, her favorites were eight CD singles and five of which were selected from three previous albums.

I love ZARD's music and most of all Sakai Izumi's song writing.

Whereas Sakurai Kazutoshi is the guy known for Mr. Children with his song writing, Sakai Izumi is among the very few female artist known for her song writing skills.

The songs are written from the heart and the lyrics paint a picture of an image that she wants to get across to the listener.

Songs such as "kimi ni Aitaku Nattara" about being in a relationship but wanting some space and clearly writes about when she's ready to see the person, she'll let them know.

In "High Heel Nugisutete", she writes about wanting to go to the ocean and kick off her high heels and writes about how all her friends have changed and moved on except one person.

For "Rainen no natsu mo", Sakai writes about celebrating the one year anniversary with a new love and wanting to make sure for next summer, they are together.

Sakai's lyrics are well-written, words that are carefully chosen and one of the main reasons why her work is adored.

ZARD/Sakai Izumi never had to rely on being on television or have nationwide tours to promote themselves.

The quality of Sakai's music speaks for itself.

— DENNIS A. AMITH

## ZARD BLEND

~SUN & STONE~



## < A MUSICAL BLEND OF ZARD

ZARD's Sakai Izumi personally selects 13 songs for ZARD's first best CD collection.

### A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR ZARD LIVE

## ZARD

Cruising & Live - LIVE AT THE PACIFIC VENUS

B-Gram Records

JBCJ-1026, Rel. January 26, 2000

Duration: 1:02:27

ZARD has always been a mysterious group. Well, for one, ZARD is the band name but with all band members leaving the group early in the band's tenure, Sakai Izumi continued to use the name as a solo artist.

Too add to the mystery behind ZARD, Sakai Izumi rarely performed on television.

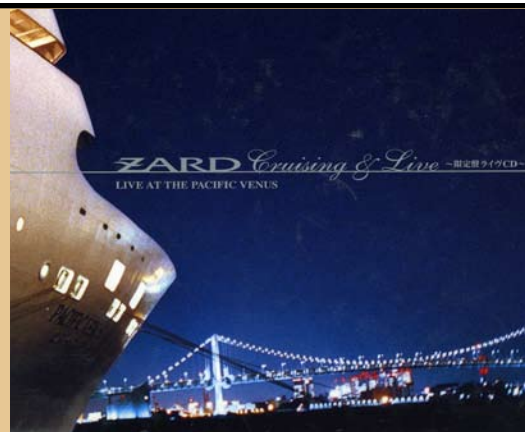
Where it is important for a band and artist to promote themselves, ZARD never had to. The music spoke for itself.

In 1999, this changed as she gave a special performance to 600 members of her fan club (600 out of 2 million requests).

In January 2000, a special album was released with a 14 track album, the second CD containing a video game and a VHS tape of the behind-the-scenes footage of putting the concert together.

Because the performance was recorded in a small cruise line room, the audio quality is not the best but you do feel the energy from the fans and you get a glimpse of Sakai Izumi's character and that she may be a very shy person.

Fortunately, in 2004, ZARD went on a live nationwide tour and a DVD was released.



But back in 2000, this was the first glimpse of ZARD and also the first time fans got to hear her and the fans interact live.

As for the video game portion, it's a mind numbing game of trying to find a single pass to access videos from the concert.

Unfortunately, the pass is hidden among three levels, with each level consisting of 20 rooms on the cruise line.

With 30 minutes to find it and enemy helicopters and gunshots impeding your chances, the game is frustrating and the rooms change with each play. So, accessing the videos is not at all easy.

The VHS is a short look behind-the-scenes and a booklet is included in the box set which holds the CD's.

Despite the frustrating video game, "Cruising & Live" was the best opportunity at the time to finally hear ZARD perform live. - DENNIS A. AMITH