

Hitomi Shimatani – Shinku/Ai no Uta (CD/DVD)
Released 2007-09-05 (26th Single)



1. Shinku (original version) (4:33)
2. Ai no Uta (6:06)
3. Shinku (A.C.E. 3 version) (2:45)
4. Shinku (instrumental version) (4:33)
5. Ai no Uta (instrumental version) (6:04)

DVD – 1. Shinku (Music Clip)
2. Shinku Music Clip Making movie

On the cover:

Hitomi Shimatani dressed in white with what I'm guessing is kind of a "mad woman" hairstyle with a bit of white in her hair. The background is a contrasting blue and red. The top blue half also features what looks like an industrial town on the banks of a body of water. The bottom red half is actually a sofa (as seen on the inside panel of the cover.) hitomi shimantani – Shinku is in the bottom right corner in white.

The back cover:

Shimatani in the same white dress and mad woman hair with her hands against a cracked mirror wall, head turned back facing the camera. Above her left hand “hitomi shimatani” is in black lower case font with “Ai no Uta” underneath in red. In the bottom right corner is the track listing in black.

The insert:

A 2 panel insert featuring the cover photo on the front and a close-up of Shimatani’s hands against the cracked mirror wall on the back. The inside is white with a hint of the cracked mirror wall in red bordering each edge of the page. Lyrics are on the left, credits are on the right.

The music:

You can clearly see what Shimatani and co. were trying to do with “Shinku”. Make it Epic. Did they succeed? Well.... Not quite.

The intro reminds me of a marching band the way the cymbals go off. The quick beats in between sound like they were lifted of Shimatani’s “Angelus” single. The intro does do a good job of announcing the song, and building up suspense. What follows is an upbeat but slightly generic J-Pop tune. There is a constant beat pretty much throughout the song. String instruments accentuate the chorus. At around 3:25 the song slows after an instrumental break and Shimatani sings filtered immediately followed by Shimatani singing normally to get things back up to speed. While the beat of the song is constant what does stand out are the vocals of Hitomi Shimatani. She sounds very comfortable, very sure of herself in this song.

“Ai no Uta” is a complete contrast to “Shinku”. Slow, simplistic, relaxing. The piano instrumental sounds like it should be playing in the background of a fancy restaurant. Shimatani’s vocals sound like she’s going back to her enka roots, and the result is a nice, relaxing, melodic “get a cup of tea and listen” kind of song. It’s also got a motherly kind of feel to it, reminiscent of a lullaby.

The next track is the Another’s Century Episode 3 version of “Shinku”. This track is shorter and features a more dramatic orchestral and choral opening before launching into the main song. Again the Epic factor rears its head here, the dramatic intro adds to the illusion of epic, perhaps the video game visuals would add to that illusion even more.

Tracks 4 & 5 are instrumental versions of “Shinku” and “Ai no Uta” respectively. “Shinku’s” instrumental sounds like a workout song while the “Ai no Uta” instrumental is something I would use to get myself ready for bed in the evening.



The DVD:

The Music video again adds to the illusion of Epic, with Shimatani voicing an ominous sounding introduction set to the background of gunfire, and burned out buildings. The imagery seems to be that of an “Angel at the end of the world” theme, with Shimatani in the same white dress and hairstyle worn on the CD cover singing in the middle of a forest, a church, and an abandoned building. The director of the music video loves his superimpose effect, which he uses numerous times. While in the beginning of the music video it adds to the story, in the end it just becomes repetitive. Aside from a few doves, Shimatani is the only living breathing thing in the video. (Unless you count the forest, of course). The end of the video is marked again by Shimatani voicing the extro, ending with “Aishiteru”.

The Making of clip provides some insight into the music video itself. It seems like they went to an abandoned building in the middle of a forest on a cold, windy, foggy day. Shimatani also wears knee-high silver leather leggings that in the video look like boots but in the making of she’s actually wearing sneakers on her feet with the leggings. The video also shows the usual “talk to the director”, “sit and watch what you just did”, and “lunch with the crew scenes”. At the end of the video both Shimatani and the director thank the people who worked on the video and also thank everyone who bought the CD/DVD for their support.

www.avexnet.or.jp/shimatani



By Sean Cruz