

A J!-ENT SPECIAL FEATURE ARTICLE

Kanon Wakeshima

分島花音

BY DENNIS A. AMITH

SAN FRANCISCO PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANGELO DELOS REYES (J!-ENT)
LOS ANGELES PHOTOGRAPHY BY SONY MUSIC ARTISTS

In 2008, a Japanese vocalist and cellist Kanon Wakeshima was unveiled to the world. Kanon is the first female artist produced by world renown producer and musician Mana (leader of Malice Mizer and Moi dix Mois), who is inspirational for the Gothic Lolita fashion movement in Japan.

Kanon is signed under Sony's DefSTAR Records and released her first CD single "Still Doll" (DFCL-1467, May 2008) which was used on the anime series "Vampire Knight".

In November 2008, Wakeshima released her second single "Suna no Oshiro" (DFCL-1514) which was also used for the second season of "Vampire Knight".

In Feb. 2009, her album "Shinshoku Dolce" was released in Japan and in Europe. With the announcement of her performance in Baltimore, San Francisco and Los Angeles, her album was made available in July digitally on US iTunes and a CD release via Maru Music.

J!-ENT recently had the opportunity to interview Kanon Wakeshima after her US performance.

J!-ENT: Before we get into discussions about your album, let's get to know a little about you. I read that you got involved with music at a young age thanks to your parents. What kind of music did you grow up listening to?

KANON: I grew up listening to classical music, so it was shocking to hear Japanese pop music for the first time during the time I was in middle school.

J!-ENT: I was wondering how the cello became a big part of your life. Was it an instrument recommended to you by your parents?

KANON: Yes, it was my parents. They decided that I should play the cello even before I was born, so it just naturally became a part of my life.

J!-ENT: You learned to play the cello at a young age, when you



Kanon Wakeshima performing in Los Angeles. Photo courtesy of Sony Music Artists.

look back at all the lessons that you had to go through, what memories do you have?

KANON: Looking back in the past, I actually thought about quitting the cello many times, but I had such a great teacher and she not only taught me about the cello, but about life in general. There were times when I've fought with music and almost hated music, but it was my music teacher that made me continue playing to this day.

J!-ENT: One thing that catches the attention of people is your fashion style. Are there any designers or clothing brands that inspire your fashion sense?

KANON: Mana-sama is producing my costumes as well, so everything I wear on stage and for my album covers are designed by Mana-sama.

J!-ENT: You have visited various cities around the United States

recently but I was wondering if there was any kind of American food that you have wanted to try while here in the US?

KANON: California Roll. I was actually able to try it in San Francisco, and it was very good.

J!-ENT: While performing at these locations, were you aware that you had many American fans and how do you feel about your fans all over the world who are passionate about your music?

KANON: I didn't think that there are so many fans here in America. I'm very happy that everybody came to see the show.

J!-ENT: Curious, if we had the opportunity to hang out with Kanon for the day in Japan, what place would you recommend for us to visit?

KANON: Perhaps you would like Harajuku? (laughing)

J!-ENT: Now If I was to look into your MP3/CD player right now,



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with music and almost hated music,
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me continue playing to this day.”*

– Kanon Wakeshima



Kanon Wakeshima performing in San Francisco. Photo by Angelo Delos Reyes (JI-ENT)

which artists or song would you be listening to at this time?

KANON: I actually record many radio shows, so I won't even know which artists or songs would come up if you were to take a look now.

JI-ENT: Who were your musical inspirations while growing up?

KANON: For a Japanese artist, it would be Mayumi Kojima (a Jazz singer). I also like Emily Simon (from France) and Lady GaGa.

JI-ENT: I've read that in high school, you were already busy with songwriting and creating your own music. With the music that you created back then, by any chance has those songs made it on your album "Shinshoku Dolce"?

KANON: "Shinshoku Dolce" is entirely composed and produced by Mana-sama. I hope to feature some of my own compositions on my next album in the near future.

JI-ENT: Let's talk about your album "SHINSHOKU DOLCE". How long did it take to create this album?

KANON: It took about a year to finish "Shinshoku Dolce".

JI-ENT: Of all the songs on "SHINSHOKU DOLCE" which track is your favorite and why?

KANON: It's very difficult to choose one since I have special feelings for all the songs, but I like all of them.

JI-ENT: When it comes to songwriting, are you the type who can crank out songs quickly or are you the type who toils around with lyrics for a long period of time and in a sense, a perfectionist?

KANON: It depends on each song. Some songs, I'd get inspirations for the lyrics right away, but some songs took 2 - 3 months.

JI-ENT: Your single "Still Doll"

was used for the anime series "Vampire Knight" and you also had the opportunity to even do a little voice acting for the series, how was that experience?

KANON: I feel very honored to be involved with such a wonderful series. Voice acting was very difficult, but the other voice actors were kindly helping me out.

JI-ENT: You were the first female artist that MANA has produced a song for. How was it like to work with him?

KANON: Mana-sama is very professional towards music. He is always trying to create something better, and I'm learning so much from him.

JI-ENT: You performed at Otakon, a huge anime convention in Baltimore. What was it like performing in that type of setting? And was it surreal performing for such a large group of people in costume (cosplaying)?

KANON: In Japan, many people

WHY SOME PEOPLE THINK VIRGINIA WOOLF IS THE STATE'S OFFICIAL ANIMAL.

KIDS DON'T GET ENOUGH ART THESE DAYS. Sort of explains why some might think Britain's most influential novelist is an East Coast predator. For the record, Virginia Woolf is not a fierce carnivorous mammal. Nor is she from Virginia.

Adeline Virginia Woolf was born in London in 1882. While her brothers attended

school, she was educated at home. Only when the boys brought friends home from Cambridge University was the famed Bloomsbury Group formed with Virginia as the cornerstone. Here she escaped the conventions of society to freely explore philosophy, religion and art. With this freedom, Virginia went on to create the modern novel.

During the Post-Impressionist movement, Virginia was influenced to reject linear writing. Her most well-



One of the world's most influential writers, Virginia Woolf. Novelis writeris, not Canis lupus.

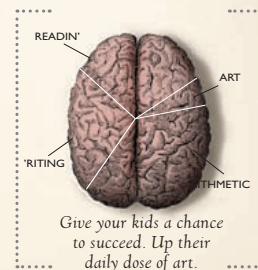
known novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, is a masterpiece in her "stream-of-consciousness" style. And still, more than three-quarters of a century after her death, she continues to inspire readers and writers around the world. Other than William Shakespeare, she is perhaps studied by more college students than any other author.

Art like Virginia Woolf's can transform lives. It pays off

in more ways than you can imagine. In fact, the more art kids get, the more knowledgeable they become in subjects like math and science. The end result is that your well-rounded kid will become a well-rounded adult. For the *Ten Simple Ways* you can help instill more art in kids' lives, please visit AmericansForTheArts.org.



Virginia Woolf wrote legendary novels with opposable thumbs.



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“My songs aren’t originally the type of music to make people dance, so the Japanese audiences are more quietly focused towards the music, but in France or in America, I was surprised to see that everybody was very enthusiastic during the show. I felt like we were creating the concert together.”

– Kanon Wakeshima





Kanon Wakeshima performing in Los Angeles. Photo by Sony Music Artists.

come to my concert with their Lolita fashion and I enjoy seeing their fashion. It was a similar feeling at Otakon and I had a lot of fun watching all the creative cos-players, and was able to enjoy the show together with them.

J!-ENT: You have many fans in America. How was the experience for you in meeting your fans?

KANON: It was great to see all these fans in America and I am very thankful.

J!-ENT: You performed at JAPAN EXPO in France. How was that experience?

KANON: Just like in America, the audiences were very enthusiastic and we were enjoying the music together and I think that's the difference when comparing with Japan. It was very fun.

J!-ENT: Having performed in the US and Europe, what other countries would you love to perform at?

KANON: I'd like to go to Vietnam and also Hong Kong.

J!-ENT: Have you noticed a difference between your Japanese fans versus your International fans? If so, what are the differences?

KANON: My songs aren't originally the type of music to make people dance, so the Japanese audiences are more quietly focused towards the music, but in France or in America, I was surprised to see that everybody was very enthusiastic during the show. I felt like we were creating the concert together.

J!-ENT: Outside of music, what kind of hobbies do you enjoy doing?

KANON: That would be drawing.

J!-ENT: If there is one word to describe yourself, what word would that be and why?

KANON: Hikkimori (which means Introverted). I like to just relax at home. (laughing)

J!-ENT: In every J!-ENT Interview, we do a wordplay where I give you five words and you give us your definition of those

words:

KANON:

a. LOVE: Peace

b. SUCCESS: The result of effort

c. PAIN: Proof of being alive

d. SHINSHOKU DOLCE: The mixed world of the dark side & fancy

e. STILL DOLL: Emptiness. Nihility.

J!-ENT: What final words would you like to say to your fans?

KANON: Performing in the US was really fun! If I ever get a chance to perform overseas again, I would love to go anywhere, so I hope to see you then! ■

Kanon Wakeshima's debut album "SHINSHOKU DOLCE" is currently available on iTunes USA. For more information on Kanon Wakeshima, please visit her official Website at:

www.kanonweb.jp
www.myspace.com/kanonwakeshima

Kanon's CD can be purchased at:
www.marumusic.com



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J!-ENT

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