

# ji-ent world groove

A JI-ENT MUSIC REVIEW

JAPAN

Black Cherry  
Koda Kumi

rhythm zone

"The 2006 best selling music artist in Japan" (Oricon). An amazing achievement for sexy music diva, Koda Kumi.

Having won many awards including the highly coveted "Grand Prix" Award (Artist of the Year) for Japan's 2005 Nihon Record Taishou Awards (Japan's equivalent to America's Grammy Award show) and dominating the headlines for the past few years with her bold music style and uber-sexiness, needless to say that she has earned it.

As for her music, in the past, I may have been a bit critical of her earlier work but for her fifth original album, "Black Cherry", I am actually enjoying it a lot and have listened to the album from beginning to end many times.

I feel that the production value of her current music is so much better on "Black Cherry" compared to her previous albums and it's cool to see the singer being utilized on tracks that are rock, pop and R&B-based.

Listening to her earlier works and listening to her now, such a major improvement.

Some may compare her to a Japanese Christina Aguilera because of the image but Koda Kumi is not just about showing off the body, she has the music talent to go with it.

I should note that as a songwriter, Koda won an award for that at the 2006 Nihon Record Taishou Music Awards and the majority of the tracks on this album were written by her.

And on this album, Koda goes into another territory for the track "Milk Tea" which she wrote and composed the music for.

The version I'm reviewing is the CD + 2 DVD first press version which includes three bonus tracks. Also, her music video DVD and another DVD which includes her "Cherry Girl" drama.

This album contains 10 songs released in as CD singles in 2006. Some may wonder how is that possible but to explain it quickly, she releases a CD single every month (Note: Koda once released a CD single once a week) but with two best hit releases, this is her first original album since "Secret" released back in April 2005.

But as much as the releases are enjoyable, even the unreleased songs are highly enjoyable. From the club-like head bopping song "Get Up & Move!" to the rock-based "Ningyohime" (Mermaid Princess) are very cool!

As for the first DVD included, 9 of her music videos are included. For those who can find a first pressing, the 10th track is the making of each music video.

As for the second DVD, it features her one shot drama "Cherry Girl" which was created by the group behind the drama "Busu no Hitomi no Koishiteru" which Koda's "Koi no Tsubomi" was the theme song to.

To describe "Cherry Girl", I guess you can call it an action film within the same type of style as "Charlie's Angels". Koda Kumi is the main



character who takes on cases which involve spywork and fighting.

Joining Kumi are actresses Ito Yuko and MEGUMI. As for equivalent to Charlie, it's played by SMAP member Inagaki Goro. And also a baddie played by sax musician and actor, Takeda Shinji.

What I found interesting is to see how Koda Kumi was an actress. She actually does very well in this film and doesn't surprise me if this film became the springboard for her career.

Now granted, I'm not saying "Cherry Girl" is an awesome film but considering that I have seen so many dreadful Japanese films starring a music artist, "Cherry Girl" was quite entertaining and the character of playing a sexy spygirl and a club hostess fits Koda's sexy diva persona.

Suffice to say that "Black Cherry" is indeed a significant release for Koda Kumi fans is an understatement. This is her best album thus far!

There are really no negatives that I can find with this album. You either like her music or you don't.

"Black Cherry" is a well-produced album that really showcases her talent as a singer, writer and a composer.

I hope you are able to get the 2-DVD version if you can find it.

A must buy for Koda Kumi fans!  
—DENNIS A. AMITH

## Black Cherry Koda Kumi TRACK LISTING

Catalog #: RZCD-45506/B-C (CD + 2 DVD),  
RZCD-45507 (CD+DVD), RZCD-45508 (CD)  
Release date: January 1, 2007, Dur: 1:11:11

### DISC 1:

1. INTRODUCTION
2. Get Up&Move!!
3. Ningyohime
4. Yume no Uta
5. Tsuki to Taiyo
6. Puppy
7. Koi no Tsubomi
8. WON'T BE LONG
- Black Cherry Version
9. JUICY
10. Candle Light
11. Cherry Girl
12. I'll be there
13. Unmei
14. With your smile
15. Milk tea

### Bonus Tracks:

16. Twinkle - English Version-
17. GO WAY!!
18. WON'T BE LONG!  
- Red Cherry Version-

### DVD:

- Region 2, 4:3, 51 minutes
1. Koi no Tsubomi
  2. JUICY
  3. With your smile
  4. I'll be there
  5. Ningyohime
  6. Yume no uta
  7. Cherry Girl
  8. Unmei
  9. Twinkle feat. SHOW
  10. Premium Making
- DVD 2:  
Region 2, 16:9, 52 minutes

1. Cherry Girl movie

Note: The EXILE + Koda Kumi version of "WON'T BE LONG" is not on this album, although her version of the song ala -red cherry version- is included on the album and the -black cherry version- is included on the CD + 2 DVD version.