

Raymond's excursions into East Asian pop music, episode 4: Yuki

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Raymond Chen

When my story left off, a colleague of mine had dedicated himself to finding some *good* Japanese pop music, and what he found was this music video of the song JOY by Japanese pop star Yuki Isoya, who performs under the stage name YUKI. The video was mesmerizing. The Flash Gordon extras. The dance steps. The blinking. The hyperventilating. (Though I don't think the blue dress suits her; she's not a teenager any more.) But the best part is the retransition from the middle section. After the wiggling fingers, she just leans into the big note and swings her arms in, well, joy. I have no idea what she's saying, but somehow that doesn't matter. My colleague became obsessed with his own discovery, buying all of Yuki's solo albums. Apparently, he's in good company; she seems to be quite popular. The JOY video won the Japanese Space Shower Music Video Awards prize for Best Video of 2006. During my tourist day in San Francisco earlier this year, I stopped by Japantown and bought two CDs. One was the album JOY. Would the other songs on the album be as infectious as its title track? Fortunately, I was not disappointed. They're all great.

The other album I bought was Katamari Fortissimo Damacy (塊フォルテッシモ魂), the soundtrack to the video game Katamari Damacy, thereby bringing the story full circle.

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