

Review: 'SIENNA'

'ESSENCE'

- Label: 'Abon Records'
- Genre: 'Dance' - Release Date: '5th April 2010'- Catalogue No: 'ABN0009'

Our Rating: ★★★★★★☆☆

The essence of 'Essence' is accurately described by the artist's press team as "a fusion of moody electronica and alternative- nujazz with an oriental twist".

Sienna is a composer, keyboardist and singer who originates from Kyoto, Japan but who, since 1995, has been based in Norway where she moved to complete her studies.

She was classically trained but became drawn to more modern sounds, notably those of the electronica genre.

She released her debut EP - Ambience - in 2005, followed three years later by her first full length LP, A Pure Land.

This sophomore album showcases an artist who is at ease with a mix of genres and textures. Synthesised sounds dominate but there's also the human touch in the form of 'real' instruments comes from a Norwegian backing band who add guitar, bass and trumpet to the tunes.

Drawing upon her cross-cultural background, the ten tracks glide along smoothly ranging from dance grooves to jazzy rhythms to new-age chill. Her easy blend of influences combine mainstream sounds with experimental studio trickery; elements that explain the diversity of comparisons with to the likes of Yoko Ono, Yellow Magic Orchestra, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Goldfrapp and The Future Sound of London.

The album is book-ended by a couple of dance orientated tunes, opening with Precious, a fairly conventional club mix of funky bass line, disco-girl vocals and cheesy piano breaks and closing with the vocal-less beats of Dance of the White Rhythms. A version of the latter also featured on her previous album.

However, it is the track Zen which nails the East-West balance most successfully with its layers the bass grooves, drum beats, lush synths and dreamy voice samples.

The not unpleasant effect overall is that of a kind of sonic Situationism drifting along without any obvious direction in mind.

[Sienna website](#)

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