

An Addiction for the Music

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So what if you've watched your anime videos a hundred times, you read all the manga and art books and your room is plastered with posters of Ranma and Sailor Moon? Can you really consider yourself a true anime fan if you can't at least hum a few of those cool theme songs? Of course some of them may take a little getting used to, while others seem so cutesy you want to hit fast forward, but given a little time, you could even find yourself singing to the opening song of Galaxy Fraulein Yuna!

I certainly know what that's like! For me, the excitement of watching a new anime series is not just the chance to see more cute character-designs or get to catch up in more soap-opera plots. The thing I'm wondering about just as much is what the music will be like! And I must not be alone in this, as the vast amount of anime music available on compact disc clearly reveals. The best anime CD's are not only packed with great opening and closing credit theme songs, but can have character image songs sung by voice actors and lots of background music instrumentals. There is a lot to choose from, but here are three of my favorites:

Urusei Yatsura- Lum's Best Selection (Kitty Records; KTCR-1246)

I picked this one up at a Japanese bookstore in New York because I really wanted something with an extended CD version of "Lum no Love Song" on it. I was happy to discover it has all the opening and ending themes to the first few years of the Urusei Yatsura TV series on it. That means it includes the songs heard on the first 19 volumes of the TV series so far released by Animego and more. "Uchu wa Taihenda", "I, I, You and Ai" and "Pajama Jyamada" are particularly good selections. Snatches of songs not included on this disc can be heard on the medley "Stars On". One warning must be made though: between every song track are brief talk tracks featuring Urusei Yatsura characters. These could get annoying to anyone who doesn't know Japanese, but the joy of CD's is that you can just skip over them fairly easily and get on with the songs.

Fushigi Yuugi-Original Soundtrack (APCM-5064)

After seeing a few episodes of this series, I just had to get the CD! The background music varies in quality (the sounds of a saxophone can burst in at the oddest times), but the opening and ending songs (and two others!) make it worth the price (right?). Anyone who has seen enough of this show learns to associate the start of the closing credit song with some all too exciting cliffhangers! Now you can relive this fundamental Fushigi Yuugi experience anytime you want! And with two versions (extended and TV-size) for both the opening and closing songs, this album instantly becomes one of my favorites.

The Vision of Escaflowne-Lovers Only (VICL 841)

Like the CD's described above, this one has some nice songs, but it can also boast some great orchestral music from the series by Yoko Kanno. I liked the work she did for Macross Plus, but this may be even better. "Lovers Only" is like a best of collection, as it has much material already found on the previous three Escaflowne soundtrack CD's. That makes it a good sampler for anyone who doesn't want to invest in the previous three. (Of course, you could always get all four!)

These are just a few of the many compact discs I could rave about, so when you're ordering all your videos and manga, don't forget to put some money aside for some of the best music out there!