

Missouri-based Céran is the product of a rich ethnic heritage stemming from African-American, Creole, Cherokee, German, and French lineages. *The Art Of Céran* celebrates a specific and introspective set of songs covering soul, pop, jazz, and ballad genres with a classic nod to R&B elements from the 1950s and 60s, but a more modern element exists in some of the tunes. The eleven-track release showcases Céran's latest musical creations with a powerful voice, danceable beats, and a soulful, yet humble, swagger.

"The Occident" opens with pulsating drum beats and a quirky keyboard set of sounds with spacious synths and punchy pad shrieks. Céran's vocals begin and the combination of the dance melody and arrangements resemble a Michael Jackson track from the 1980s or early 90s. At any rate, the keyboard sounds carry the weight of the song throughout. There are a few sparkling keyboard notes and funky embellishments with back-up vocals that float along with the aural synth washes. The slight static sounds of the instrumentation and vocals stem from the relatively poor recording quality.

"Love You For Who You Are" opens with a groovy, classic, dance beat not out of line from a 1950s or 60s pop song. The rattling percussion and aural washes of synth sound fill in the melody with Céran's classy vocals. There is an element of classical and R&B ambiances with back-up doo-wop-type vocalizations. The piano sounds accompany the steady beat that is not too diverse, but it is still catchy.

"Axiom" begins with melodic dance beats and swishy percussion with echoing vocals and a robotic, keyboard melody. Symphonic synth washes fill in the dance beat. There are metallic elements and horn-driven keyboard sounds that keep the rhythm upbeat and cinematic. Céran's vocals demonstrate a more reduced presence overall, but the recording quality is probably to blame. This is the most dance-driven song on the album with equal amounts of synth washes, pulsating dance beats, and reverberating vocals.

"You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You" is a cover of Dean Martin's classic song, but Céran hits all the right notes on this one. A few piano notes and Céran's swooning vocals begin the musical adventure with a few keyboard washes and light percussion with trumpet and horn sounds. The classy song contains a rousing band section and pop standard element that becomes more involved near the end of the song, as Céran's vocals steal the show. In any case, Céran's homage to Dean Martin is a successful one without any negative side effects.

"Nothing But A Memory" opens with fluid-like keyboard sounds with an R&B beat and Céran's smooth vocals. The percussion is steady and it accompanies the down-tempo melody. After a few choruses, the instrumental display of crystalline keys and blurby, keyboard sounds indicative of a soul or funk display take over and the vocals commence again with scintillating aural washes in the background. The outro is relatively uneventful, but the smooth vocals and steady percussion make the song a winner.

Céran's new album is a classic romp from America's pop standard era through the sounds of the 1950s and 60s and the early 90s. The recording quality is not top-notch throughout, as some of the vocals and instruments retain a lot of static noise. Moreover, the mix of catchy melodies and beats is relatively sparse. On a positive note, Céran succeeds with creating a moving set of

eleven songs that traverse the worlds of R&B, soul, dance, and pop. Still, Céran makes a valiant effort with *The Art Of Céran*.

Artist: Céran

Album: *The Art Of Céran*

Review by Matthew Forss

Rating: 3.5 Stars (out of 5)