

Céran has been making waves with a host of albums over the last few years around his own blend of pop, R&B, gospel, funk, reggae, and jazz music on his latest compilation, *The Ultimate: The Essential Anthology of Céran*. This is an eighteen-track album with Céran as lead singer and a few guests, notably Samara and T Fitz, which add a unique blend to the music overall. Céran even ventures into Latin and French styles.

“All That You Want Me To Be” opens with a steady piano melody with Céran’s emotive vocals leading the song. The song does not incorporate other instruments or vocals, which adds to its ballad-esque delivery. Céran’s vocals are relatively strong throughout the song. The melodic arrangements are very catchy. Fans of piano ballads, pop standards, love songs, and vocal songs will love it.

“Break Free” opens with a swishy percussion dance beat with keyboard effects and Céran’s characteristic voice. The dance beat is somewhat muffled by the recording acoustics, but that is fairly pervasive throughout the album. Still, the song is catchy and incorporates some backup vocals for a gospel-esque format. However, the music is primarily dance-oriented with all those familiar electronic thuds, tinny percussion, and driving sounds. Importantly, the music is not too steeped in the dance world with techno or dub styles.

“Encore Une Fois” begins with an atmospheric wash, which heads right into a flowing, European-like piano melody. Céran sings in French on this song. The soft, vocal ballad is quite melancholic, but diverse. Céran’s French background shines on this track. A variety of symphonic washes, swishy percussion, and string-like accompaniment solidifies the track as a Francophone masterpiece. There are even accordion-like sounds over the latter half of the song, which sets the tone as a romantic melody.

“Open Road” begins with a piano melody and brief, cinematic, atmospheric wash. Céran’s emotive vocals take charge early on, but they are not too showy or forced. The atmospheric washes add a degree of dreaminess to the vocals—especially during the latter half of the song. At any rate, it is a good ballad with great melodies, instrumental accompaniment, and a solid rhythm.

“Love Is Found” opens with an upbeat, dance melody with piano accompaniment and guest vocals by Samara. Céran and Samara are a good duo amidst the danceable sounds and keyboard effects. The vocals are all very clear throughout. Some of the dance accompaniment resembles horn sounds. Overall, Samara’s contributions to the track are very beneficial and not overbearing.

Céran’s new anthology of eighteen original tracks represents a variety of musical styles and vocal calisthenics for the Missouri-based artist. Céran finds fluidity and happiness in a variety of genres, which include jazz, lounge, dance, R&B, pop, gospel, reggae, and neo-classical. There are a few culturally-enriched songs, which feature one Spanish and one French vocal song. The piano is a focal instrument on the album, but it is played in inventive ways, alongside the more traditional ones, as well. The music is not wholly classical, rock, or folk. Instead, Céran’s influences of Alicia Keys and John Legend appear to be channeled here. Over the years, Céran’s vocal strengths and songwriting abilities have improved, and that is certainly the case with *The*

*Ultimate...* However, the same issue that has plagued earlier releases is present here. The only issue in question regards the recording quality, which is not quite up to par from a polished perspective. Notably, the music quality and creativity is paramount, which does not disappoint. Congratulations on this incredible achievement.

Artist: Céran

Album: *The Ultimate: The Essential Anthology of Céran*

Review by Matthew Forss

Rating: 4.5 Stars (out of 5)