

= Ashita , Haru ga Kitara =

" Ashita , Haru ga Kitara " ( アシタ、ハルガキタラ , " Tomorrow , If Spring Comes " ) is a song by Japanese entertainer Takako Matsu from her debut album , Sora no Kagami ( 1997 ) . It was released on March 21 , 1997 , through BMG Japan as her debut single . The song was written by Y?ji Sakamoto and Daisuke Hinata , while Hinata produced the song . Following the wrap @-@ up of the drama Long Vacation , she decided to give singing a try upon the suggestion of one of its directors .

The track was recorded in Santa Monica , California , and is a mid @-@ tempo J @-@ pop song composed in the key of B minor . Its lyrics recite a young girl 's memories of her love for a boy in her high school days . It has been praised by critics and associated with the onset of spring in Japan , having re @-@ entered the airplay charts in Japan around that time , even years after its initial release . It has also been covered by many other artists like Namie Amuro , Masaharu Fukuyama , and Ayumi Shibata . The single peaked at number 8 on the Oricon singles chart and spent 20 weeks in the top 20 of the chart . It was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of Japan ( RIAJ ) for shipments exceeding 400 @,@ 000 copies .

Ten years after its initial release , Matsu released a new version of the song titled " Ashita , Haru ga Kitara 97 ? 07 " in March 2007 . The re @-@ release contains updated lyrics reflecting changes in the artist 's mind . By intermixing her vocals with her vocals from 10 years before , new version contrasts the two . The new version was featured on her album Cherish You ( 2007 ) and also on her compilation album Footsteps : 10th Anniversary Complete Best ( 2008 ) . As of 2014 , Matsu has performed the song on all of her concert tours as well as other events , including NHK 's K?haku Uta Gassen in 1997 .

= = Background and release = =

Growing up , Takako Matsu practiced piano and took vocal training as a child . Prior to releasing music , she acted in various television drama and plays . In 1996 , she acted in the drama Long Vacation , which became very popular in Japan . At the wrap up party of the drama , the director of the series at that time heard her perform karaoke and suggested that she try singing . Although taken aback and hesitant at first , she later agreed , as she felt it was not a chance that everyone received and because she liked singing ; she felt it might work out somehow .

" Ashita , Haru ga Kitara " was written by Y?ji Sakamoto and Daisuke Hinata , both of whom had worked with Matsu . Sakamoto had been Tokyo Love Story 's screenwriter and Hinata had been in charge of the music of Long Vacation . Hinata provided the music and arrangement to " Ashita , Haru ga Kitara " . The track was recorded at the Hyper Image Studio in Santa Monica , California , in January 1997 . Hinata himself mixed the audio while Steve Hall mastered it . Cagnet provided instrumentation to the song . The record was produced by Kozo Nagayama , who had also produced Long Vacation . Initially , another song was selected to be released as Matsu 's debut single . However , it was scrapped for unknown reasons and " Ashita , Haru ga Kitara " was selected instead . Matsu debuted the song on radio on February 14 , 1997 , and the single was physically released on March 21 , 1997 through BMG Japan as an 8 cm CD single .

= = Composition = =

" Ashita , Haru ga Kitara " is a mid @-@ tempo J @-@ pop track with a " gentle melody " , that lasts for 4 minutes and 13 seconds . According to the original score published by Doremi Music Publishing , it is composed in the key of B minor and in the common verse @-@ chorus song structure with a tempo of 110 beats per minute . The track opens with an instrumental introduction with a chord progression of Gmaj7 ? F ? m7 ? Bm . As it reaches the chorus , the progression shifts to G ? A ? F ? m ? Bm7 . The same pattern is repeated throughout the song .

The lyrics of the song , written from the perspective of a girl , sees her recollect the memories of her love with a member of her high school baseball team and how she hopes to meet him again " tomorrow , if spring comes " . Upon the album 's release , Yoshitake Maeda , writing for BMG Japan

, commented that Sakamoto probably reminisced on his teenage years through the song .

The b-side of the single " Zutto ... Iy? yo " was written by Matsu and produced by Hinata . Matsu decided to give it the theme of three girls going out for a drive . However , she commented that no matter how others looked at it , it seemed as if the song is about two girls . The song opens with an " electro " introduction and utilizes a warped guitar throughout . In addition to the two songs , the single also featured the original karaoke track to " Ashita , Haru ga Kitara " . An LP titled Remix Hyper Bug containing remixes of " Ashita , Haru ga Kitara " by DJ Craig William ? " Ashita , Haru ga Kitara " ( Hyper Bug Mix ) and " Ashita , Haru ga Kitara " ( Techno Dub Mix ) was released on August 21 , 1997 through BMG Victor . It also features a remix of the album track " Love Sick " , titled " Love Sick ( Deep Sick Mix ) " .

#### = = Reception = =

A reviewer for CD Journal commended " Ashita , Haru ga Kitara " for being " pure " and noted that Matsu 's " unobtrusive [ and ] naked voice " is like " sitting in a sunny spot on early spring day " . Similarly , Rolling Stone Japan wrote that the song has a " heartwarming " production , which they noted has become synonymous with Takako Matsu . Another reviewer for CD Journal said that the b-side , " Zutto ... Iy? yo " ' s arrangement makes it an " impressive pop song " . Since its release , " Ashita , Haru ga Kitara " has often been associated with the onset of spring in Japan . The song also entered the top requests list of many FM radio stations around the same time . Since the introduction of Billboard Japan in 2010 , the song has spiked on its airplay charts during the time of spring . It was also included on the compilation True Love : Spring Memorial Songs in 2003 . In a web poll conducted in 2013 by MyNavi news asking people about their favorite spring song , " Ashita , Haru ga Kitara " was ranked at number 10 .

The single debuted at number 15 on the Oricon singles chart during the week following its release in March 1997 , selling 35 000 640 copies . A few weeks later , it moved to number 8 , moving 46 000 400 copies , which became its peak position . The single spent nine weeks in the top 20 , including two in the top 10 , and finished at number 75 on the yearly chart , due to sales of 428 000 170 copies . As of May 2014 , it has sold 431 000 540 copies in Japan and has been certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of Japan for shipments of over 400 000 copies .

#### = = Live performances and covers = =

In 1997 , Matsu performed the song at the 48th K?haku Uta Gassen in 1997 , representing the " Red " team in the event . The previous year , before her debut as a singer , she had hosted the " Red " team . This made Matsu , who was 19 at that time , the youngest person to reach that position in the event . In June of the same year , she appeared on the show Love Love Aishiteru , her first music talk show appearance , and performed the song along with a cover of Seiko Matsuda 's " Hitomi wa Diamond " ( 1983 ) . She has performed the song on all of her concert tours ? from the Piece of Life ( 2001 ) through Time for Music ( 2010 ) . On the Cherish You ( 2007 ) and Time for Music concert tours , she performed the 97 ? 07 version of the song . A footage of performance from the Piece of Life tour was used to promote the DVD release of the concert .

Apart from the tours , she has also performed the song on various televised appearances . In 2003 , she appeared on the talk show hosted by Japanese singer Ayumi Hamasaki and performed the song and " Ashita ni Kuchizuke o " ( 2003 ) alongside Hamasaki . Three years later , Matsu sang the song on Music Fair , alongside Sukima Switch . In 2009 , Matsu performed the song on the FM802 sponsored event Radio Magic , with Yoshiyuki Sahashi directing the backing band to a crowd of about 12 000 people . A writer for Barks wrote that Matsu 's vocals sounded " transparent " and the whole performance had a " refreshing feeling " . Oricon magazine commented that Matsu sang " cheerfully " while " running around the stage " . The same year , she performed it on the Christmas no Yakusoku 2009 ( 2009 ) show organized by TBS . In 2014 , she performed the song again for NHK , at the J @-@ Pop Heisei Music Graffiti ( J @-@ POP ??????? ?

??????? ) event .

The song was covered by Hiromi Hirata as Makoto Kikuchi of The Idolmaster series as a " Special Request " song . It was later included in the album , The Idolmaster Special Spring ( 2010 ) , released through Nippon Columbia . The album peaked at number 18 on the Oricon Albums Chart . It was also covered for the spring compilation Cafe de Nagareru Sweet Jazz 20 the Best Sakura Songs , which peaked at number 39 on the Oricon albums chart . The song has also been covered by many mainstream pop artists like Namie Amuro in 1997 , for the show The Yoru mo Hippare ( THE?????? , " The Night of Hit Parade " ) , in 1998 by Masaharu Fukuyama for All Night Nippon , and in 2008 by Ayumi Shibata for Uta Doki ! Pop Classics ( ???? ! ? ?????????? ? ) .

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

Adapted from Sora no Kagami liner notes .

Takako Matsu ? vocals

Daisuke Hinata ? keyboards , programming , mixing

Bud Rizzo ? guitars , bass , programming

Shinnosuke Soramachi ? acoustic guitar

Steve Hall ? mastering

= = Re @-@ release = =

A re @-@ recorded version of the song was released as a single to commemorate Matsu 's tenth anniversary in music industry , to digital outlets like iTunes , mora , and also in Chaku @-@ Uta format , both as ringtone and the full song on March 21 , 2007 . The new version titled , " Ashita , Haru ga Kitara 97 ? 07 " ( ?? ? ????? 97 ? 07 ) was recorded at the Mouri Art Works Studio in Tokyo . Its modified lyrics penned by Y?ji Sakamoto , the writer of the original song , are meant to convey the emotions of the singer ten years into her debut . In addition , Matsu 's vocals from the original version are intermixed with the new vocals to contrast the difference between the current Matsu and the Matsu of ten years ago . While talking to NHK at the time of the single 's release , Matsu commented that the new lyrics not only reflect the changes she had made over the past 10 years , but also of Y?ji Sakamoto .

The new version , running 4 minutes and 54 seconds , was arranged by musician and future husband Yoshiyuki Sahashi . The song was included in her eighth studio album , Cherish You ( 2007 ) . and also on Matsu 's compilation album , Footsteps : 10th Anniversary Complete Best ( 2008 ) . A TV commercial for the new track was also directed by Hiroyuki Itaya . The song was used as the ending theme to the Fuji TV drama , Matsumoto Kisabur? Ikka Monogatari : Ojisan no Daidokoro ( ?????????? ? ?????????? ? , " The Story of Matsumoto Kisaburo 's Family : Grandfather 's Kitchen " ) .

= = = Reception = = =

While reviewing Cherish You , Takayuki Saito of HotExpress magazine noted that the track has a " novel " arrangement and Matsu 's current voice " calls out " to her " innocent " self of ten years ago . He further commented that Matsu 's voice , " full of strength " , helps the listeners realize how much she has grown over the years . CD Journal 's reviewer wrote that the lyrics of the new version are more " positive " than the original version . They further noted that the song " overflows with adventurous spirit " woven with " nostalgia and freshness " .

= = = Track listing = = =

= = Charts and certifications = =