

= Overdrive (Shonen Knife album) =

Overdrive is the 19th studio album by pop punk trio Shonen Knife . It was released on April 14 , 2014 in Europe , and on April 16 , 2014 in Japan . According to band leader Naoko Yamano , because their album Free Time (2010) was heavily influenced by punk rock , and Pop Tune (2012) had explored a more pop @-@ oriented sound , Overdrive was a chance for the band to explore a more hard rock sound . The album 's lyrics cover a wide array of topics , from green tea , fortune cookies , and cats .

The CD album artwork was created by Masahiko Ohno ; three different color variations were released , with each corresponding to either Japan , North America , or Europe . The album received moderately positive reviews from critics , with many applauding the band 's dabbling in more harder rock , whereas others were critical of its musical and lyrical simplicity .

= = Production = =

While Shonen Knife 's usual sound is Ramones @-@ inspired pop punk , the band branched out musically and listened to harder rock bands for Overdrive , such as such as Black Sabbath , Thin Lizzy , Bad Company , Deep Purple , Judas Priest , Boston , ZZ Top , and The Doobie Brothers ? for inspiration . IAmTunedUp.com described the album 's sound as a combination of " edgy guitar riffs with psychedelic 70s @-@ esque enchanting nostalgia " . Naoko Yamano reasoned that because Free Time (2010) was heavily influenced by punk rock , and Pop Tune (2012) explored a more pop @-@ oriented sound , Overdrive represented an opportunity for the band to explore harder rock . Because of the band 's exploration , the album 's name references the overdrive pedal , which , in Yamano 's mind , conjured up images of 1970s rock music .

In an interview with 100PercentRock.com , Yamano explained that her process for writing and recording has not changed substantially from the band 's early days : " I ? m lazy and I don ? t start writing songs until we book recording studio [sic] , but once we booked the studio , I can write songs quickly with concentration . Then I send my demo to our members and we rehearse . At the recording studio , we start to record from basic tracks then overdub . " On this album , every member of the band also sings a unique song about a food item ; Yamano sings " Fortune Cookie " , the band 's bassist Ritsuko Taneda lends her vocals to " Ramen Rock " , and drummer Emi Morimoto can be heard on " Green Tea " . The first song was inspired by Yamano fondness for eating a fortune cookie after a meal of Chinese food in America ; after learning that the cookies were actually invented in Japan , Yamano decided to pen the song . " Ramen Rock " was inspired by Taneda 's habit of eating ramen after every show . Finally , Yamano asked Morimoto to sing " Green Tea " because she is from Kyoto , which is known for its green tea .

Other lyrical themes include on the album include tennis in " Jet Shot " , and cats in " Like a Cat " . Regarding the former , Yamano expressed in an interview that she had always wanted to write a song about tennis , but felt that , being a sport , it did not fit well with the style of the band 's music ; however , while watching a tennis match featuring Kei Nishikori on television , the announced called a move he had made a " great jet shot " . Yamano was struck by the term , and used it as inspiration for a song about wanting to be a more aggressive tennis player . " Like a Cat " joins the long canon of Shonen Knife songs about cats . Yamano explained , " I just like cats . Dogs are sometimes too earnest , but cats are so free . " The band released a music video for the song , featuring cat videos submitted by their fans the world over . For the non @-@ Japan releases of the album , all songs were recorded with English lyrics . However , for the domestic release of the album , " Dance to the Rock " , " Shopping " , and " Like a Cat " were recorded with Japanese lyrics .

= = Critical reception = =

Overdrive received moderately positive reviews from critics ; Metacritic , a review aggregator website , gave the album an average score of 67 out of 100 from 17 reviews , which indicates " generally favourable reviews " . NME awarded the album 7 out of 10 stars , with reviewer Stuart

Huggett arguing that the album contained " personal and political lyrics far smarter than Shonen Knife 's cartoon image suggests . " Zachary Houle of Pop Matters awarded the album six out of ten stars , and mused that Shonen Knife 's fusing of punk and classic rock on the album " somehow work [s] " . Houle , however , was critical of the band 's penchant for bordering closely on copying other artists ' music ; he argued that " Bad Luck Song " and " Black Crow " are strikingly similar to Thin Lizzy 's " The Boys Are Back in Town " and Kiss 's " Black Diamond " , respectively , but felt that " the album gets better as it goes along " .

Mark Deming of AllMusic awarded the album three out of five stars , commenting on the band 's musical shift ; he wrote , " By Shonen Knife 's standards , Overdrive does sound like some sort of hard rock album , and the attempts to make like Kiss , Thin Lizzy , or Deep Purple come off better than one might expect , though Yamano 's guitar skills are less impressive than those of the average metal axe slinger . " Deming complimented the charm of the album , but criticized Yamano 's lyrics as " run @-@ of @-@ the @-@ mill " , ill @-@ fitting the change in musical direction . The site selected " Black Crow " , " Ramen Rock " , and " Green Tea " as album highlights . Joe Goggins of Drowned in Sound awarded the album 6 out of 10 stars , and complimented the band for successfully managing to release nineteen studio albums . However , he was slightly critical of the " derivative " nature of the band 's sound , as well as their " one @-@ dimensional guitar playing and unrelentingly trivial lyrics " .

= = Track listing = =