

= Hikari (Utada Hikaru song) =

" Hikari " (Japanese : ヒカリ , " light ") is a song recorded by Japanese ? American recording artist Utada Hikaru for her fourth studio and third Japanese language album , Deep River (2002) . It premiered on March 20 , 2002 as the third single from the album in Japan . It was written and composed by Utada , whilst production and arrangement was handled by Utada , her father Teruzane Utada , and long @-@ time collaborator Miyake Akira . The single , and a remix by Russell McNamara (under the alias PlanitB) , was used as the official Japanese theme song 's for the 2002 action role @-@ playing video game Kingdom Hearts , and appeared on its original soundtrack respectively . Musically , " Hikari " is pop folk song . Lyrically , it is about mysteries in life and human activities .

Upon its release , the track garnered positive reviews from music critics . Many critics highlighted the track as one of Utada 's best singles , and commended her vocal abilities and songwriting . It was also successful in Japan , peaking at number one both on the Oricon Singles Chart and Tokyo Broadcasting System 's (TBS) Count Down TV singles chart . It was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of Japan (RIAJ) for physical shipments of 500 @,@ 000 units . An accompanying music video was shot by her then @-@ husband , Kazuaki Kiriya ; it features Utada washing dishes and drinking water . It was performed on some of her concert tours , including the Utada United and Wild Life tour .

To promote the international formats of Kingdom Hearts , Utada re @-@ recorded an English language version entitled " Simple & Clean " . Both the original edit and remix version by PlanitB served as international theme songs . It did not appear on Utada 's English studio Exodus (2004) , but the original version was included on her 2009 English studio album This Is the One . It was later released as an A @-@ side 12 @-@ inch single with Utada 's single " Colors " in 2003 , and received positive reviews from most music critics .

= = Background and release = =

In February 2000 , Japanese video game artist Tetsuya Nomura announced the development of an action role @-@ playing video game named Kingdom Hearts . According to Nomura , he only had Utada in mind to create the theme song for the video game , so he had contacted her to collaborate ; as a result , she accepted his offer . In a brief interview with IGN.com , Nomura further stated ; " Her music has moved millions of fans , and I was absolutely thrilled when she agreed to contribute to this project . I see her as an icon for young artists and she also proves that music transcends national and language barriers . "

" Hikari " was written and composed by Utada , whilst production was handled by Utada , her father Teruzane Utada , and long @-@ time collaborator Miyake Akira . The song 's instrumentation consists of keyboards and programming handled by Kawano Kei , synthesizers from Tsunemi Kazuhide , and an acoustic guitar from Akiyama Hironori . The song was recorded by Ugajin Masaaki and mixed by Goh Hotoda in 2001 at Bunkamura Studio , Shibuya , Tokyo . It was released as the third single from her fourth studio and third Japanese language album , Deep River (2002) . Since then , the song has been remastered and re @-@ released twice ; the first on April 1 , 2004 , and the second time on December 9 , 2014 for Utada 's first greatest hits album Utada Hikaru Single Collection Vol . 1 (2003) .

It was available on a CD single , released in Japan and Taiwan . Both formats included the original track , a remix each by Russell McNamara (under the alias PlanitB) and Alex Richbough (under the alias Godson) , plus the instrumental version . The artwork for the CD single 's were photographed by Takimoto Mikiya . It has a long @-@ distance shot of Utada in a greyish living room . A promotional 12 " vinyl was released by EastWorld Records in 2002 , and included both the remixed tracks .

= = Composition = =

Musically , " Hikari " is a pop folk song , as described by staff members from Japanese music magazine CD Journal . Similarly , rock musician and music journalist David Bertrand Wilson had reviewed the parent album Deep River , and described the sound and its appeal as " so commercial " . Square Enix Music 's Neo Locke described the song 's composition and melody in an extended review : " The acoustic guitar combined with the synth in the background creates a pleasant and gentle harmony that helps bring out Utada 's voice . " A reviewer from OngakuDB.com noted the acoustic guitar as one of the composition 's key elements , and described its sound as " melancholy " and a big " impact " . Similarly , Yeah ! J @-@ Pop ! editor Hiromi Yonemoto noted that the acoustic instrumentation was an " unusual " change in Utada 's normal pop musical style . Shinko Music 's Hiroshi Shinito described " Hikari " as a mid @-@ tempo ballad .

According to Kano , the editor in chief of Rockin 'On Japan , he stated that the lyrical content discusses themes of mystery and daily life actions ; he furthered believed that the song 's lyrics is an open interpretation , due to its lack of major characteristics and identified philosophy and religion as examples . In an interview that promoted her fifth Japanese studio album Ultra Blue (2005) and her single " Passion " , which is the follow to " Hikari " , Utada felt the writing process was difficult . She believed that the plot to Kingdom Hearts was soulless , and was unable to become inspired by it to write the song . She further explained ; " when I was making the song ' Hikari ' , the whole outlook for the game and its entry onto the world was so crucial that I got a lot more info on the characters (so that ' Hikari ' would mirror the image that they wanted) . "

= = Critical response = =

" Hikari " received positive reviews from most music critics . Neo Locke from Square Enix Music was positive in his review , saying " ' Hikari ' has always impressed me for having a very recognizable and easy to manipulate melody despite the fact that the vocals are the only melodic line in the piece ? partially due once again to Utada Hikaru 's strong and versatile voice . " He awarded the single seven out of ten points . In another positive , staff members from CD Journal complimented Utada 's " simple " and " distinctive " vocals , and her songwriting . Similarly , a reviewer from OngakuDB.com praised Utada 's vocals and expressed happiness for the song 's nostalgic vibe . Yeah ! J @-@ Pop ! editor Hiromi Yonemoto believed that " Hikari " demonstrated some of Utada 's best vocals to date , and labeled them and the song 's melody as " synergistic " . In a similar review , Shinko Music 's Hiroshi Shinito praised the songwriting and the chorus . Although describing the song in a positive manner , Sharon G. from KpopBreaks.com compared the song to many other of Utada 's music , and felt " Hikari " didn 't come close to her " true sound " . Despite Daniel Kalabakov from Soundtrack Central disliking pop songs , he complimented Utada 's singing and the track 's instrumentation .

= = Commercial performance = =

Commercially , " Hikari " was a success in Japan . It became her seventh single to debut at number one on the Oricon Singles Chart , with sales of 270 @,@ 370 units . It stayed at number one for a sole week , and spent a total of 20 weeks on that chart . By the end of 2002 , the single was ranked at number 10 on Oricon 's Annual 2002 chart with sales of 598 @,@ 130 units . This made " Hikari " her third single to reach inside the top ten of the yearly Oricon chart ; the other two singles being " Sakura Drops " at number six , and " Traveling " at number two . The single was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of Japan (RIAJ) for physical shipments of 500 @,@ 000 units . The single debuted at number one on Tokyo Broadcasting System 's (TBS) Count Down TV chart during the chart week of March 30 , 2002 , her eighth non @-@ consecutive single to do so . It stayed at the top spot for three consecutive weeks . The single stayed in the chart for 13 weeks , and was ranked at number eight on their 2002 Annual Chart . Despite it not charting on any digital record charts in Japan , it was certified gold by the RIAJ for 100 @,@ 000 full @-@ length cell phone downloads . According to the Oricon Style database , it is Utada 's 11th highest selling single .

= = Music video = =

An accompanying music video was filmed by her then @-@ husband , Kazuaki Kiriya . Utada intended to have " Hikari " directed by Kiriya , but the original idea was more complex and intricate . However , he was unable to submit her ideas and portray them into the video due to scheduling and work conflicts . Then , in a blog post , Utada revealed that the music video would feature her washing dishes because she found it enjoyable . She further explained ; " Actually we were to shoot the music video of ' Hikari ' with him (Kazuaki Kiriya) but it didn 't come true due to his scheduling conflicts at the last moment and that 's why we requested Kiriya urgently to shoot that dish @-@ washing video . " The entire four minute and 22 second video has Utada washing dishes in her kitchen ; during some portions of the video , Utada drinks water , stops washing her dishes , and walks away from the camera . According to Utada , no further editing was needed , and was completed in one take .

The music video received positive reviews from critics . According to Naomi Gingfold , writing for The Global Post , she commended the departure of Utada 's general " beautiful and intricate music videos " , stating " The camera did not move once . Occasionally she lip @-@ synced along ; occasionally she just washed dishes . " Daniel Montesinos @-@ Donaghy from Noisey Vice noted and complimented Utada 's abilities in adapting to different roles through her music videos , specifically highlighting the " mundane " activity of washing dishes . A reviewer from OngakuDB.com noted a contrast between the song and the video , stating that the video had shown her " lonely " and the song more " gracious " .

= = Live performances and promotion = =

The song has been performed on some of Utada 's concert tours . Despite Utada 's plans to promote the song between 2002 and 2003 , she halted all promotional activities due to her diagnosis of a benign ovarian tumor , which was surgically removed that same year . Its first performance was in 2004 , during her Bokuhan concert tour ; it was included as the first song performed . It appeared on the live DVD , which was released on July 28 , 2004 . It was included on Utada 's debut English concert tour named Utada United . Featured as the closing number , it was later included on the live DVD , released on December 20 , 2006 . " Hikari " was performed during Utada 's two date concert series Wild Life in December 2010 . Since the track 's release , it has appeared on three compilation releases : Utada Hikaru Single Collection Vol . 1 (2003) , it 's 2014 remastered version , and a special bundle of the compilation and the vol . 2 collection on a USB . In 2014 , Love Psychedelico recorded the song for Utada Hikaru no Uta , a tribute album celebrating 15 years since Utada 's debut .

= = Simple & Clean = =

To promote the international formats of Kingdom Hearts , Utada recorded an English version of " Hikari " , named " Simple & Clean " . Both the original edit and remix version by PlanitB served as the international theme songs . It did not appear on Utada 's English studio Exodus (2004) , but the original version was included on her 2009 English studio album This Is the One . It was released as an A @-@ side 12 @-@ inch single with Utada 's single " Colors " in 2003 , and received positive reviews from most music critics . It has been performed on two of Utada 's concerts , these being Utada United in 2006 and In The Flesh 2010 .

= = = Background and composition = = =

Much of the song 's production is similar to the Japanese version ; it was written and composed by Utada , whilst production was handled by Utada , her father Teruzane Utada , and Miyake Akira . The song included live instrumentation by Kawano Kei (keyboards and programming) , Tsunemi

Kazuhide (synthesizers) , and Akiyama Hironori (acoustic guitar) , whilst it was arranged by Utada and Kawano Kei . The song was recorded by Ugajin Masaaki and mixed by Goh Hotoda in 2001 at Bunkamura Studio , Shibuya , Tokyo . The song was also remixed by Russell McNamara (under the alias PlanitB) . Like the Japanese version , Utada felt the writing process was difficult . Musically , " Simple & Clean " is a pop folk song , as described by staff members from Japanese music magazine CD Journal . Utada explained the song process in a detailed interview with Jetanny Magazine ;

" ... that was so hard , it 's just , and it felt strained , and as a result , I 'm happy that I worked hard to do those , because those English versions are really good and " Simple and Clean , " I think , is a really good song , and people- most of the people that know me here , they know me for that- but it 's not ideal for me as a writer , to- because , actually , I changed the melodies for " Simple and Clean " and " Hikari , " because when you change the language you 're singing in , the same melodies don 't work- and as a writer , it 's just very frustrating to have , like- I wrote these melodies for Japanese words , and to have to write in English for that , it 's just not right . And then , so , for this , uh , this contract with Island Def Jam , in the beginning I separated it to this English language album , and I don 't do Japanese translations . I just , my integrity as an artist just would not take that , could not take that . "

According to the sheet music published at Musicnotes.com , the song is written in the key of B ? major and is set in time signature of common time with a tempo of 84 beats per minute . Utada 's vocal range spans between the notes G3 to G5 , specifically between the chorus lyrics ; " When you walk away / You don 't hear me say / Please oh baby don 't go / Simple and clean is the way that you 're making me feel tonight / It 's hard to let it go " .

= = = Release and reception = = =

The original edit and PlanitB remix of " Simple & Clean " first appeared on Utada 's single " Colors " as a B @-@ side , which was released on January 29 , 2003 . It was also available on the Taiwanese versions of " Colors " , released in mid @-@ 2003 . Near the end of 2003 , " Simple & Clean " was released as an A @-@ side 12 @-@ inch single with " Colors " in Japan ; it included the original and PlanitB remix . The original version was included on her 2009 English studio album This Is the One .

Upon its release , " Simple & Clean " received positive reviews from most music critics . Benjamin Turner from GameSpy was impressed by the translation of " Hikari " into English , and felt Utada 's vocals were a good addition to the opening and ending segments of the game . Michael Pascua from BlogCritics.org was generally positive , stating in a detail review ; " Utada made a smart decision with the physical release of the CD : she included the songs ? Simple and Clean ? and ? Sanctuary ? from the Kingdom Hearts series . Both songs showcase a strong musical style that isn ? t necessarily in the R & B flare that This is the One provides . They also help connect any video game player who hasn ? t necessarily listened to any of her Japanese albums or even knew that she had another English album . " He also labelled the song and " Sanctuary " " happy additions " to This Is The One .

= = = Live performances and promotions = = =

The song has been performed on some of Utada 's concert tours . Its first performance was at a special event that celebrated Utada 's 20th birthday in Japan on January 19 , 2003 ; she sung " Simple & Clean " as the encore track . Throughout the song , she performed the acoustic guitar . When Kingdom Hearts was released in North America , Utada performed the song ; this was one of Utada 's first performances outside on Japan . Despite Utada 's plans to promote the song between 2002 and 2003 , she halted all promotional activities due to her diagnosis of a benign ovarian tumor , which was surgically removed that same year . Its most recent performance was in 2010 , which was included on her Utada : In the Flesh 2010 concert tour in North America and the United Kingdom .

= = Legacy = =

When the single was released and promoted through Kingdom Hearts , " Hikari " and " Simple & Clean " were widely considered a " hot topic " around the world of music , as described by a staff member at OngakuDB.com. Their inclusion in the video game 's respective international versions was successful , as Kingdom Hearts sold over 4 @.@ 78 million units worldwide , subsequently earning the rank of being the tenth best selling PlayStation 2 video game . Both songs were then included on the spin @-@ off titles : Kingdom Hearts : Chain of Memories (2004) , Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep (2010) , and the remix versions Kingdom Hearts HD 1 @.@ 5 Remix (2013) and Kingdom Hearts HD 2 @.@ 5 Remix (2014) . The first two games , alongside the original release , sold over 5 @.@ 9 million units worldwide together . Both the original and remix versions of the two songs (alongside an orchestral instrumental by Kingdom Hearts composer Yoko Shimomura) were included on the first soundtrack , and the HD 1 @.@ 5 Remix soundtrack . Due to the success of the songs , Utada was invited to record another track for the original video game 's sequel , Kingdom Hearts II (2007) . This track was the Japanese written " Passion " , which was re @-@ written to " Sanctuary " as part of the international releases . Jeff Chuang from Japanator.com believed that " Simple & Clean " is what Utada is " best known for " by her fans outside of Japan . Similarly , Emily Goodman from Axs.com believed that " Simple & Clean " was her most successful work outside of Japan .

" Hikari " and " Simple & Clean " are often cited as " one of the best video game songs in recent history " , as described by Dannii C. from Celebmix.com. Alex Hanavan from The Young Folks listed the orchestral version of " Hikari " , which also appeared during the credits section of Kingdom Hearts , at number two on their " Top Ten Video Game Theme Songs " . He stated his reason through his extended review ; " Kingdom Hearts has several ' theme songs ' but the orchestrated version of ' Hikari ' takes the cake with all the makings of a grand adventure . It resonates with the many themes of the games : friendship , teamwork , and adventure . ' Hikari ' undoubtedly brings back wealth of memories for any fan of the franchise . " GameFaqs 's editor Pierce Sparrow listed both " Simple & Clean " and " Sanctuary " at number two on their " Top Ten Lyrical Songs for a Video Game " . Sparrow stated : " It was a little too difficult for me to choose just one of the songs , seeing as they have very similar qualities ... I doubt that anyone will disagree that these are two of the greatest theme songs ever produced . "

" Hikari " brought Utada a number of accolades and award nominations . In 2008 , the Guinness World Records listed the track as the best @-@ selling video game single in Japan , and was included on the 2008 Gamer 's Edition book ; this is Utada 's first , and current , induction into this . At the 17th Japan Gold Disc Awards in 2003 , Utada won the Song of the Year award ; she had also won two awards with the same name that year for her single 's " Sakura Drops " and " Colors " . Similarly , she also received the Silver Award for Foreign Production recognition at the 2003 Japanese Society for Rights of Authors , Composers and Publishers Awards (JASRAC) . In December 2015 , in honor of Utada 's comeback into the music business , Japanese website Goo.ne.jp hosted a poll for fans to rank their favourite songs by Utada out of 25 positions ; the poll was held in only twenty @-@ four hours , and thousands submitted their votes . As a result , " Hikari " was ranked at number three with 97 votes in total .

= = = Accolades = = =

= = Track listings and formats = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Credits and personnel adapted by the CD liner notes of " Hikari " and " Colors " .

= = Chart and certifications = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =