

Kuro crest story Limited Edition - Interview

English translation by Maruchan Translations (@utaiteesp)

You've been in charge of the musical compositions of this album. Tell us about your ideas and thoughts regarding those compositions.

Mafumafu: This time's album is not a solo album, but the first collaborative project with my partner Soraru-san. That's why I thought of making music that we both could enjoy, composing songs that'd made Soraru's voice come to life, and carefully making the songs arrangements. I played the guitar myself, also the bass and the piano, and I've made 14 signing compositions and 2 instrumental ones, so there's a total of 16 songs. As a result, I think it's become a good album. I feel like I was able to show my own capabilities and to express what I wanted to say and what I was thinking about. Music for me is expressing what I cannot explain in words. For someone like me, music and lyrics are the best way to convey my feelings. This way, I can turn the thoughts inside my head into shape, and it also makes me happy the thought of it reaching other people.

Inside of the album there is also a song for which a live action PV was made. Please, tell us the story of "I sleep well".

Mafumafu: Well, this is the first time Soraru-san and I made a live action PV. I was allowed to write "I sleep well" based on a single chord, or a single word, or a single tone, and I thought of writing about what was on my head that way. When I think about the piano of the interlude and the way I've been progressing at writing music, I am usually able to write a song in 2 or 3 days. This song was hard to write. It took me around 20 days. I think I was able to put all the strength I had into this song. That's why it was so hard. It's a song that I treasure a lot. The reamp is already done, but I have this song called "Saezuri". Well, by the time you are watching this video the song will be already up in the album, and I will probably upload a YouTube video, so maybe you've already listened to it, but that song is about a bird that I had. The bird...What? Why are you taking a selfie?! We are in the middle of an interview! (Soraru laughs in the background) Yes, Soraru is taking a selfie. This... this is unforgivable. For real. I'm going to appear later too [when it's his turn]... I won't forgive him (joking).

Well, "Saezuri" is about a bird that I had and that used to sing in the morning. "It's morning, it's morning". It would sing before I've opened my eyes, and when I'd take off the sheet covering the birdcage it would sing to me "chun chun chun". Still, that day it was me who opened his eyes first. I thought "it is not singing". It's a song about a farewell. While I was writing this song, I was remembering that moment and my tears started overflowing. It turned out in a song full of feelings.

You've made the mixing of all the tracks of this album and you also have an engineer side to you, but...

Soraru: After Quest was released two years ago, and last year the album Prerhythm Arch was also released. I was in charge of the mixing and mastering of all the songs, so, I've decided to follow that line and do it myself this time again. Since Mafumafu puts a lot of dedication into the song making and makes amazing songs, it gives me a lot of motivation to work on them. Also, there were songs that had up to 150 tracks. Well, sometimes the computer stops working, but it shows how much effort he puts into them. He has a clear image of what he wants the song to turn into. And I also have my own way of seeing the song. The work of colliding both points of you into one same song it's sort of different to when I'm mixing other songs, but I think that it is a job that is really worth it.

For example, the first song we uploaded, Ouka tsukiyo to sode shigure, had up to 150 tracks in total, and 40 were only vocals. In the end, balance is important. Thinking about which parts of the song we wanted to be louder and which parts we wanted to highlight, I made the mix leaving space for each element. When there's too many tracks, that kind of situation often happen. Instead, inside of this album there are songs with more simple sounds, close to a band one. Today I was working on the reamp, which is about recording again the guitar through the amplifier. Thanks to that, the song felt wider and started to come into life. It was the first time that I did that and I think it was really effective. Although I don't know how it will be transmitted to you all, I feel like it got into a really good result.

It seems like you were also in charge of the mastering too, but, at the time of doing it, what are the points you focus on and the points you think are the most important?

Soraru: When it comes to the mastering, I really think it is the last part of the process where there are no possible excuses. When I'm mixing, I think of doing it at our hearts content, the most important is being satisfied, but what I do in the final step will turn into a CD, it is made to reach everyone's hands, right? That is the reason why if I give up at this point, it will be shown directly in the work. Instead, if I can adjust it to the limit, the quality of the work changes a lot. To summarize, it is what determines where the album is going. Having that work on my hands is a big pressure, but it's also something that I believe is worth it.

You've been working the whole day today, then, what kind of job did you do?

Mafumafu: Well... the guitar, what it's called "reamp"... How should I say it? I record again the guitar that I've recorded in my house through an amplifier so it has a better sound, that's the job. (Soraru laughs) While adjusting the amplifier configuration.

Soraru: The job is about making the guitar sound good.

Mafumafu: Yes, it's about making the guitar sound good.

What was the feeling like?

Soraru: Well... (Mafumafu pushes Soraru) Eh? What, what, what? Did you say something?

Mafumafu: No. I just suddenly pushed you.

Soraru: Eh, how scary. No, well (Mafumafu laughs). Mafumafu's guitar usually has a really controlled and clean sound, but now

Mafumafu: It was heavier than I thought...

Soraru: No, no, no, it's ok. It hasn't changed. He has a good guitar sound, but now he's gained more freedom in a good sense. The range of the song got much wider, and since it has a kind of a band sound I feel like the quality upgraded a lot.

I haven't checked it at my house yet, but I have a good feeling

To the ones who do not know a lot about you two, please explain the origin of After the Rain.

Mafumafu: The name of "After the Rain", in terms of its literal meaning isn't it "clear weather after the rain" (雨上がりの)? "The moment after the rain" (雨の後). After the rain it is possible for the sky be still cloudy, or it can get clear and a rainbow can appear. I think it's a moment where you don't know what is going to happen, but, to us, it is not as if we had a life with a full nice weather like a cloudless sky. To be fair, we are still walking a path where we don't know what is going to happen. Actually, we... (Soraru starts laughing) What are you laughing about? What is this?

Soraru: Is it ok? It's ok~

Mafumafu: What do you mean?

Mafumafu: I mean...

(Silence)

Soraru: Eh?

(Laughs)

Soraru: Because it is not as if we've been living a life with a full clear sky

Mafumafu: Yes... I don't know what I was going to say.

Soraru: Why?

Mafumafu: Ah, right. I wasn't going to say that, but... We are going to experience sad things and many other things from now on. If we compare that to the rain, we expect to walk in the world of after the rain from now on. The fact that our songs have many sad things is because they are picturing that "rain". That is why they are a little gloomy. They are gloomy, eh? We have many dark songs.

Soraru: We have a lot of dark songs.

Mafumafu: Sorry.

Soraru: Even I ended up making a dark song this time.

Mafumafu: I'm sorry.

Soraru: I'm sorry!

Mafumafu: I'm sorry... but we are dark.

Soraru: That's right, we are a dark duo.

Mafumafu: Yes.

Soraru: There's nothing we can do about it, right?

Mafumafu: Right.

Please tell us about the image and general concept of the album.

Soraru: Well, the first album doujin version was “After quest”, and the album “Prerhythm Arch” came out after that. It rains and then a rainbow appears after it, I believe you can imagine that sort of story. This time we've started our activities under the name of “After the rain”, and so this is the first album of After the Rain. But we also wanted to make it possible for the people who've been listening to us up until now to enjoy this album even more. That's why we wanted it to have that sort of concept. In the first place, titles such as “After Quest” and “Prerhythm” are game sounding-like. In this occasion, “Kuro Crest Story” also follows that same line so that a fantasy world is able to be imagined. We'd like it if we were able to convey that. Still, of course, that's not all.

Mafumafu: We do not only express reality the way it actually is. There's freedom inside of our songs, right? Music can express anything, so, based on that and since we came from the “2.5D” world (a world between the 2D and the 3D) and the world of Nico Nico Douga, and since we also love the manga culture and so videogames and anime too, we wanted each song to have a little bit of that [feeling]. There's actually a hiding meaning behind each song. I think it's difficult to notice, but for example in “Berserk”.

Soraru: It holds a lot of memories

Mafumafu: It does. There was this “berserker” word... What language was it? Cursed language? “Berserker” in cursed language, right?

Soraru: Yes.

Mafumafu: The title of “Berserk” comes from there. “Berserk” means going out of control, not being able to control oneself, basically. It's something like the experience of another “me” who cannot be controlled by myself, and that is why the lyrics ended up talking about someone who has a second personality... something like that... What's wrong?

Soraru: It is not a direct expression, but, for example, words such as “berserker” or the metaphor of a thief or a warrior are thought to be able to create these kinds of images. That sort of ideas became the concept and the album is a compilation of all of them.

Please tell us about your future activities as After the Rain.

Soraru: After the Rain activities from now on

Mafumafu: Yes

Soraru: We still haven't made any announcement, but there's going to be a big one. Well, people watching this video will surely think: “Ah, there's going to be a Live”, right? In July.

Mafumafu: Yes.

Soraru: And the album comes with a participation ticket for the ones who've bought it. I think there's people who've already got it. Eh... it's at the Ryougoku Kokugikan.

Mafumafu: Amazing!

Soraru: Also...

Mafumafu: That place...

Soraru: Yes, it also a place were sumo is done, so we'll make a sumo party at the Ryougoku Kokugikan.

Mafumafu: Sumo party After the Rain.

Soraru: Yes, we'll do that. After doing a tour together, I've realized that Lives are really exciting, and I also felt a great satisfaction. We are not really used to go out or move a lot, so if we could keep accumulating experiences and keep making Lives this way, it'd make me truly happy if we can keep conveying emotions to people and making them think "so interesting".

Mafumafu is scared of playing Lives, so I'm going to do my best to take him out to the stage, and it'd be good if we can keep making more Lives everytime even in bigger places too. Ah, and there's also a novel too.

Mafumafu: That's right. This time, to make this album, as I was saying before, it was like a game, or an anime, or that kind of... like a secondary creation... no, it's not a secondary creation. Eh... How should I say it? It was a different medium, a medium for that world's vision.

Soraru: (Laughs) What's up with that poor explanation?

Mafumafu: Well, we talked about the album having another vision of this world and we are in the process of making a novel regarding that. The deadline to send the plot is...

Soraru: Tomorrow.

Mafumafu: No. It was for the 12th. Today is 14 and I didn't do it! Ah, eh, I was told "what happened with the plot?"

Soraru: Along with the contents, we are making the story ourselves.

Mafumafu: Yes.

Soraru: Then, is that directly related to the album? Well, it indirectly is.

Mafumafu: Yes.

Soraru: It has a kind of a multifaceted development. We release the album and the people who listen to it can enjoy it even more. It's that kind of story... that can be heard. (Mafumafu looks aside and Soraru starts laughing) Hey, listen to what I'm saying.

Mafumafu: (laughs) Ah, I thought that it was taking you too long.

Soraru: We think that it'd be so cool if we could actually release this and so everyone would be able to see what's inside our heads in different ways. Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Mafumafu: You've already talked about it, so make sure to make it right.

Soraru: It's ok.

Mafumafu: Nothing like (mimicking Soraru) "I can't do it after all", or "I'm sleepy".

Soraru: No, no, I'm doing it, so it's ok.

Mafumafu: I wonder if that's true. Well, but, you know, I think you are good at making stories.

Soraru: That's not true.

Mafumafu: I don't know about composing, but making stories...

Soraru: Stop it, stop it.

Mafumafu: For real, you are good at making stories.

Soraru: Is that true? Ok