



## Album of the Day: Exotic Sin, “Customer’s Copy”

August 2020

by Andy Beta

It’s difficult to talk about Exotic Sin, the duo of Naima Karlsson and Kenichi Iwasa, without discussing Karlsson’s prestigious musical bloodline. Her father, Bruce Smith, drummed for The Pop Group, the Slits, and Public Image Ltd; her mother is Swedish singer Neneh Cherry. The spare and spontaneous music on their debut album, *Customer’s Copy*, on the other hand, draws upon the legacy of her grandparents, Don and Moki Cherry. Don Cherry first made his name in jazz circles alongside Ornette Coleman, but he soon struck out for a rapturous mixture well outside of the tradition. Combining free improvisation, folk, traditional music, and drone, Cherry and his wife pulled from all corners of the globe to make and live their art. That the duo first performed together at a performance celebrating the Cherrys’ unique amalgam of art and music is fitting.

The three pieces here continue in that tradition, at times even deploying Cherry’s old instruments. Open-ended yet highly attuned, the 22-minute “Dot 2 Dot” undergoes a rapid shift from hushed to boisterous, its methodical piano chordings giving way to outbursts of percussion, the sound of toddlers attempting transcendental meditation. Elsewhere, the duo draws on the narrow but profound legacy of jazz and electronics (think Anthony Braxton’s exploratory collaborations with Joseph Jarman on *Together Alone*, Andrew Cyrille’s work with Richard Teitelbaum, or even Don’s duo with Jon Appleton). The ruminative “Charlie Vincent” grounds its improvisations in slow-moving organ tones as woodwinds and thumb piano wander atop it. “Canis Minor” moves even slower, mixing chimes and scraped metal into something alien and beautiful, not so much looking back on that heritage as pushing playfully into the future.

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