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**Monday, November 03, 2008**

## [Review: Erik Mongrain - Equilibrium](#)

Posted by Jon in • [Reviews](#)



If you have never heard of Erik Mongrain where have you been? Erik has become a bit of a [YouTube](#) sensation and I mean that with all due respect, Erik is not famous because of YouTube he is famous because he is an incredible musician and virtuosic guitarist. I have never heard Erik's first album "[Fates](#)" but having seen videos of this Canadian sensation I knew what to expect and "[Equilibrium](#)" doesn't disappoint.

The opening track "**A Ripple Effect**" in fact is exactly what I was expecting, virtuosic solo acoustic guitar playing with Erik's tapping style, cascading arpeggiated chords and harmonics against a rhythmic tapped pulse. After many many listens to this track over the past few days I would say that this is my favourite track on the album it has so much energy and I really like the progressions Erik uses, it's a shame this track is only just over 2 minutes long! The second track "**Alone In The Mist**" was a taste of what I wasn't expecting, Erik's soulful melodies and percussive knocks, taps and harmonics against the backing of a Fretless Bass courtesy of Michael Manning which sounds amazingly full and complete. I would love to see the 2 of them perform together, it sounds like a group of people playing.

The title track of the album "**Equilibrium**" shows off not only Erik's technique, control and compositional skills but also shows off his percussion and timing. His guitar is transformed into what sounds like a number of percussion instruments as he flicks, taps, scrapes and hits the body of the guitar in different places to create everything from a brushed snare sound to a bongo or even conga, there is enough reverb to give the harder hits a nice echo that with headphones on make you feel you are sitting in a concert hall right in front of him. All the time he is playing percussion he is still playing chords, droning notes and strumming to give the track a very complex syncopated texture without sounding technical. For all his flashy techniques it always sounds tasteful and musical rather the kind of virtuosic guitar music that non-guitarists find hard to appreciate.


I was imagining how beat up his guitars must get until I checked out his Equilibrium YouTube channel (<http://au.youtube.com/user/EquilibriumEx>) where I found that he was playing a [Rainsong](#) (so I'm told) carbon fibre guitar (<http://www.rainsong.com/>). It sounds fantastic and is further proof that carbon fibre guitars are every bit as good at creating a great tone as quality tone woods.

I won't review every single track because they are all good for different reasons but I do particularly like the more percussive tracks so I really liked "**Pandora's Box**" especially with those little tapped harmonics and the way Erik adds vibrato to certain notes in chords to accentuate the melody lines within them. I also really liked the track "**Raindigger**" for the same reasons. It makes me want to tune my Takamine down and learn some of his music! By the way Erik is also an instructor over at [iVideoSongs.com](#) and for \$10 you can actually have a [40 minute video lesson](#) from Erik on how to play "Equilibrium" among other tracks such as his famous "Air Tap".

The best thing about this album is that you can listen in awe then check out Erik's YouTube channel and see him playing these songs at home and check out just how he does it!

There is a great quote from Tai Irwin of the Boston Herald, "It's like Van Halen meets James Taylor; furious but soothing". Perfect description.

[ErikMongrain.com](http://ErikMongrain.com)  
[Erik's YouTube Channel](#)



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[Emon](#) on 11/04 at 07:23 AM

Cool that you mentioned Mongrain. I'd reworked an old post from my personal blog into the guitar blog just today about guitar players who don't play the instrument the traditional way. Surprised that the US is not in his tour schedule.

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