The Silent Ballet

Home   Reviews   Articles   Tours & Bios   Compilations   Contacts   Links   Forums   Search

Tuesday, January 13, 2009

..:: **Reviews** » **2008** » **December**::..

Register   Login

Article Details

Erik Mongrain - Equilibrium

Website
Music
Prophase Music
Buy

Score: 5/10

Erik Mongrain has amassed over four million hits on youtube, aided by his visually appealing "lap-tapping" technique on acoustic guitar. This looks pretty much how you would expect - the guitar is laid flat down on the lap while tapped, bumped and slapped, along with every other word found under "thump" in a thesaurus. Similar to **Kaki King**, Mongrain's style is heavily influenced by the late **Michael Hedges**. As of two years ago, he has abandoned the lap part of the technique, but his style still relies heavily on tapping.

Equilibrium is Mongrain's second full length release, a follow up to his 2007 debut *Fate*. It opens with the very catchy "A Ripple Effect", my favorite track on the release as well as shortest, lasting only two minutes while the other eight all stretch over four minutes in length. This song is made up of rapidly-picked arpeggios interspersed with runs of string bends and slapped bass lines on the low E string. There is a percussive part banged out on the body of the guitar, simultaneous with the melodic sections, which guides the track. The best example of Mongrain's percussive beats is "Pandora's Box". He uses a technique on this track as well as on "Equilibrium" which is like when someone rolls their fingers along a desk impatiently. All of this sounds very fluid and one would never assume it was only a single guitar player if not already aware.

Besides "Pandora's Box" and "A Ripple Effect", the rest of the album is not very fluid in terms of songwriting and composition. The songs tend to drag on, going nowhere without ever reaching a climax. I always found myself tuning out after the first several tracks, which I believe was mainly due to two things. The first is the fact that other than the two previously mentioned tracks, the songs are very slow and laid back. Mongrain's technical style seems to work much better with upbeat songs. The other reason is that other than on "Alone in the Mist" and "Maelstrom," where Mongrain is accompanied by **Michael Manring**, on fretless bass and **Bill Plumber** on synthesizer, the only instrument you hear on the album is the acoustic guitar. Although Mongrain has a great tone and interesting style, his singular sound gets awfully monotonous on the ears very quickly.

If you are a big fan of acoustic guitar albums, or of the Michael Hedges sound I recommend you check out this album. If not, I think a couple youtube views of Erik Mongrain will do.

-Brenton Dwyer

Written By: jordan
Date Posted: 12/10/2008
Number of Views: 462

Comments
You must be logged in to submit a comment.

Return