

eric johnson ah via musicom

Eric Johnson Ah Via Musicom is a seminal album that showcases the incredible talent and artistry of guitarist Eric Johnson. Released in 1990, this album not only solidified Johnson's place in the world of guitar virtuosity but also became a cornerstone in the genres of rock, blues, and instrumental music. With its combination of intricate melodies, technical prowess, and emotive compositions, "Ah Via Musicom" has remained influential and beloved among musicians and fans alike. This article delves into the album's background, musical composition, critical reception, and lasting impact on the music industry.

Background of Eric Johnson

Eric Johnson was born on August 17, 1954, in Austin, Texas. He began playing guitar at the age of 11 and quickly developed a unique style that blended rock, blues, and jazz influences. Johnson's early exposure to music came from a diverse array of genres, including classical guitar and folk music, which contributed to his distinctive sound.

Before the release of "Ah Via Musicom," Johnson had already gained recognition for his guitar work, particularly on his debut album, "Tones," released in 1986. However, it was "Ah Via Musicom" that catapulted him into the national spotlight, showcasing his technical skill and compositional abilities.

Album Overview

Released on March 21, 1990, "Ah Via Musicom" is often hailed as Eric Johnson's magnum opus. The album features a blend of instrumental tracks and songs with vocals, showcasing Johnson's versatility as a musician. Notably, the album's title is a play on the phrase "Ave Maria," reflecting Johnson's belief in the power of music to transcend language.

Track Listing

"Ah Via Musicom" consists of 10 tracks that highlight Johnson's guitar skills and songwriting abilities:

1. "Cliffs of Dover" - An instrumental track that became one of Johnson's signature songs.
2. "Desert Rose" - A melodic piece that features both guitar and vocal elements.
3. "Trademark" - A showcase of Johnson's technical guitar work.
4. "Fortune Teller" - A cover of the Rolling Stones song, reimagined with Johnson's unique touch.
5. "East Wes" - A jazz-influenced instrumental track.
6. "Manhattan" - A lyrical composition that combines rock and blues elements.
7. "High Landrons" - A complex instrumental piece that highlights Johnson's virtuosity.

8. "Song for George" - A tribute to George Harrison, showcasing Johnson's emotional depth.
9. "The Boogie King" - A lively track that features a mix of rock and blues.
10. "Last House on the Block" - A reflective song that closes the album on a poignant note.

Musical Composition and Style

"Ah Via Musicom" is characterized by its intricate guitar work, innovative melodies, and diverse musical influences. Johnson's use of extended guitar techniques, such as harmonics, tapping, and intricate fingerpicking, sets him apart from other guitarists of his era.

Guitar Techniques

Eric Johnson is known for several distinctive guitar techniques that are prominently featured on "Ah Via Musicom":

- Harmonics: Johnson expertly employs natural and artificial harmonics to create airy, ethereal sounds, particularly in tracks like "Cliffs of Dover."
- Tapping: His use of two-handed tapping adds a unique texture to his solos, allowing for fast, fluid phrases that are both melodic and technical.
- Bending and Vibrato: Johnson's expressive bending and vibrato techniques imbue his playing with emotion, making even simple melodies resonate deeply with listeners.
- Chord Voicings: He often uses extended chord voicings that incorporate jazz elements, adding richness and complexity to his compositions.

Influences

Eric Johnson draws inspiration from a myriad of musical genres, which is evident in "Ah Via Musicom." Some of the notable influences include:

1. Blues: Johnson's roots in blues music can be heard in his phrasing and emotional delivery.
2. Rock: The album contains a strong rock foundation, with powerful riffs and solos that appeal to rock enthusiasts.
3. Jazz: His incorporation of jazz elements, especially in tracks like "East Wes," showcases his versatility and depth as a musician.
4. Classical: Johnson's background in classical guitar influences his melodic approach, allowing him to create intricate and engaging compositions.

Critical Reception

Upon its release, "Ah Via Musicom" received widespread acclaim from critics and audiences alike. The album was praised for its high production values, innovative guitar work, and

memorable melodies.

Commercial Success

"Ah Via Musicom" achieved significant commercial success, reaching No. 21 on the Billboard 200 chart. The single "Cliffs of Dover" was particularly well-received, earning Johnson a Grammy Award for Best Rock Instrumental Performance in 1991. The album's success helped solidify Johnson's status as one of the premier guitarists of his generation.

Influence on Guitarists

The impact of "Ah Via Musicom" extends beyond its commercial success. Many aspiring guitarists cite the album as a major influence on their own playing. The technical skill and emotional depth present in Johnson's work have inspired countless musicians to explore new techniques and styles. Notable guitarists, such as Joe Satriani and Steve Vai, have acknowledged Johnson's contributions to the guitar community.

Legacy and Impact

Over the years, "Ah Via Musicom" has endured as a timeless classic, continuing to influence new generations of musicians. The album has been reissued and remastered, ensuring that Johnson's artistry remains accessible to both longtime fans and newcomers.

Continued Relevance

In the decades following its release, "Ah Via Musicom" has been celebrated in various forums, including guitar magazines, instructional videos, and tribute albums. Its tracks are frequently covered by guitarists and featured in guitar competitions, solidifying its place in the pantheon of essential guitar works.

Eric Johnson's Continued Career

Eric Johnson has continued to create music and tour extensively since the release of "Ah Via Musicom." His subsequent albums, such as "Venus Isle" and "Bloom," further explore his musical range and maintain the high standards set by "Ah Via Musicom." Johnson's dedication to his craft and his ability to innovate within the genre ensures that he remains a respected figure in the music world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Eric Johnson's *Ah Via Musicom* is more than just an album; it is a landmark achievement in the world of guitar music. Its blend of technical prowess, emotional depth, and diverse influences has left an indelible mark on the music industry. As both a commercial success and a critical darling, "*Ah Via Musicom*" continues to inspire musicians and captivate audiences around the world. Eric Johnson's commitment to pushing the boundaries of guitar playing ensures that his legacy will endure for generations to come. Whether you are a seasoned guitarist or a casual listener, "*Ah Via Musicom*" is an album that deserves a place in your music collection.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the significance of Eric Johnson's album 'Ah Via Musicom'?

'Ah Via Musicom' is widely regarded as Eric Johnson's breakthrough album, showcasing his virtuoso guitar skills and blending various genres such as rock, blues, and jazz.

Which track from 'Ah Via Musicom' is considered the most popular?

The track 'Cliffs of Dover' is the most popular song from 'Ah Via Musicom', and it won a Grammy Award in 1991 for Best Rock Instrumental Performance.

How did 'Ah Via Musicom' influence the guitar community?

The album set a new standard for guitar playing in the early '90s, influencing countless guitarists with its intricate melodies, technical proficiency, and innovative use of effects.

What themes can be found in the songs of 'Ah Via Musicom'?

The album features themes of introspection, personal growth, and emotional depth, often conveyed through instrumental compositions that evoke a wide range of feelings.

What guitar techniques are prominently featured in 'Ah Via Musicom'?

Eric Johnson employs techniques such as legato, alternate picking, and harmonics in 'Ah Via Musicom', demonstrating his exceptional skill and unique style.

How was 'Ah Via Musicom' received by critics upon its release?

Upon its release in 1990, 'Ah Via Musicom' received critical acclaim for its musicianship and production quality, cementing Eric Johnson's status as a leading guitarist of his time.

What impact did 'Ah Via Musicom' have on Eric Johnson's career?

'Ah Via Musicom' propelled Eric Johnson into the spotlight, leading to increased recognition, a loyal fan base, and opportunities to collaborate with other prominent musicians.

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