

Jan Akkerman – Jan Akkerman (1977)

Written by bluesever

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01. Crackers - 4:17 [play](#) 02. Angel Watch - 9:48 03. Pavane - 5:28 04. Streetwalker - 6:57 05. Skydancer - 5:11 06. Floatin' - 5:10 07. Gate To Europe - 3:00
[play](#)

Personnel: - Jan Akkerman - guitars, arranger - Joachim Kühn - keyboards - Cees van der Laarse - bass - Bruno Castelucci - drums - Pierre van der Linden - drums (06) - Neppie Noya - percussion - Michael Gibbs - arranger (strings & flutes) - Roger Webb - conductor (strings) - Richard DeBois – producer

After his sudden departure from Focus in 1976 on the eve of a sellout tour Jan Akkerman played as a sideman with a variety of Dutch artists as well as on a couple of albums by jazz tenor saxophonist Tony Scott. In 1977 he recorded his fourth solo album which was simply entitled "Jan Akkerman" which sounded nothing like Focus`neo-classical stylings. This album was much more sophisticated and refined than his previous work. A hollow body electric replacing his Gibson Les Paul Special gave his playing a definite cleaner sound becoming much more melodic, incorporating lush chords and crisp guitar lines.

The tracks fluctuate between upbeat soft fusion and straight jazz sometimes with a funky approach featuring techno-like percussion, a good example being the track Crackers which was a piece originally written for Focus. A string section provides a moody background to most of the tracks and gives the album somewhat of an ethereal feeling to it as heard on the delicate Pavane. Modal keyboard phrasings by Joachim Kuhn also give the album further depth. The final composition on the album, the brooding acoustic Gate To Europe, is the only track which echoes his years with Focus sounding similar to the haunting Le Clochard from 1972`s Moving Waves.

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Comfortable in any guitar format and a self taught lute player (the lute is very different from the guitar) this 1977 musical departure with a more jazzy style shows why Jan Akkerman is one of the most versatile of guitar players on the planet. It was also a foreshadow of the many more experiments were to occur in this guitar god`s esoteric career both as a composer and player. --- Vibrationbaby, progarchives.com

A collection of tightly arranged jazz-rock with as much of an emphasis on the Joachim Kuhn's keyboards as on the ostensive title attraction. "Floatin'" uses the backdrop of Pierre van der Linden's proto-techno drumming to showcase Kuhn's talents on the electric piano, and the lengthy "Angel Watch" gives Kuhn even more room to stretch out, though the latter is made rather tiresome by its incessant hi-hat disco beat. Akkerman's guitar is more subdued here than in his work with Focus; "Crackers" alternates between brittle, reverbed plucking and lush strumming, and only the gentle acoustic guitar and strings of brief closing track "Gate to Europe" give much of a nod to his progressive fans. --- Paul Collins, allmusic.com

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