Jan Akkerman - C.U. (2004)

1. See You (7:59) 2. In Between the Sheets (6:18) 3. I'm in the Mood (5:43) 4. Dance the Blues Away (7:56) 5. Cottonbay (10:07) 6. Kloenk (5:57) 7. Blowing (4:50) 8. Slow Man (6:30) 9. Urbanstring (4:54) - Jan Akkerman - Guitars - Wilbrand Meiske - Bass guitar - Michel van Schie - Programming, drums - Ronald Molendijk - Drum programming, additional keyboards - Jeroen Rietbergen - Keyboards, additional programming

On his first outing since 2000, Amsterdam's best-known guitarist, Jan Akkerman, issues a smooth electric jazz date full of twists and turns with material that ranges from a slinky funk cover of the Isley Brothers' "In Between the Sheets" to the full-on house music of "Urbanstring." It's an unfocused batch of tunes to be sure, but the thing that holds them together is Akkerman's trademark spare, single-string style that never gets in the way of the groove. It's hard to point out what might have compelled him to make this record, but fans will delight in it nonetheless. ---Thom Jurek, AllMusic Review

When former Focus guitarist Jan Akkerman came to the UK for a tour a few years ago, he brought with him a clutch of new compositions that had the making of a superb fusion album. Needless to say, the tunes never really surfaced again but their lineage can be detected on this new CD. Aided by his keyboard player Jeroen Rietbergen and bassist Willy Meischke, (who get writing credits on several tracks) 'CU' nods a head to contemporary dance beats whilst Akkerman's trademark guitar licks remain intact.

Produced with and featuring Rietbergen's popular Dutch band 'Soulvation' this approach melds

Akkerman's always percussive rhythm guitar and fluid solo lines with fat synth programming, jazzy keyboard fills, and drum beats. The die-hard Akkerman fans will hopefully relish this new style because it is always grounded in the guitarist's consummate good taste and ear for a pretty melody and there are plenty of familiar motifs to provide an anchor if one were needed.

More important, this CD may pull in new listeners who will be drawn to the very relevant and contemporary feel, and once hooked will almost certainly want to know more about this fantastic guitar player. There are not many guitarists around today of Akkerman's versatility and fewer of his stature would take such risks as this. But, then, Akkerman was never an easy guitarist to pigeon-hole and the overall feeling is that here is a player having fun and enjoying himself. After hearing tracks like 'See You', 'I'm In The Mood' and the exquisite 'Cotton Bay', others will do too. ---David Randall, getreadytorock.com

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