

Sonoran Odyssey

By

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Written by

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It certainly has been a while since I have heard from **Paul Speer**, in fact I checked and I have very fond memories of *Ax Inferno* back in 2013, so after a very interesting seven years Speer is with us once again, and this time with a smooth and textured offering entitled **Sonoran Odyssey**.

The layers here are fantastic, a tranquil, but fluent beginning can be found on the opening piece entitled **Sunrise**. This is a glorious offering to start with, a composition full of hope and the excitement of a new day.

The album has some very interesting options and edits for you to enjoy as well, one of my personal favourites would be the storm laden and powerful **Monsoon (Thunder)**. This mixture of EM and guitar is sublime, then to add a layered but empowered percussion was and is nothing short of genius, thus creating a truly addictive composition.

We can now also go on a journey with 5 different styled arrangements; the first passage takes on a mystical voyage and entitled **Moonrise (Full Mix)**. This arrangement is film score standard with ease, and a track that conjures up a mixture of alien landscapes within the mind's eye with ease.

Moonrise (Demo Feat Neptune) soon follows; the electronic nature of this piece reminds me in part of the UK's EM rock outfit *Code Indigo*. The hovering intent here is both dramatic and addictive; one will literally be on the end of their seat to see what happens next; the oceanic sounds add a further dimension to the proceedings.

Monsoon (No Thunder) is now upon us. There is another level of intensity within this mix that is truly enticing and is a far rockier arrangement as well. That can be emphasised further when we listen to the following offering **Moonrise (Guitar Mix)**, a wonderfully smooth and stylish arrangement that offers a pulsating rhythmic essence to the proceedings.

Our final mix comes courtesy of this next composition entitled **Moonrise (Ambient Mix)**. The more space styled ethic here is evident, Speer in manifesting this particular arrangement, has created a vast musical landscape for us to all wonder within and enjoy.

One of my personal favourites came as I clicked upon track 8, **Behind the Waterfall (2020)**. There was a true lightness of spirit in the performance within this piece of both guitar and keyboards, the compositional structure is enhanced further with a perfect percussive beat, and we're then left listening to an arrangement that could easily be the theme music to a TV show.

The penultimate offering off the release is the absolutely stunning creation entitled **Venus Rising** ft. *Sherry Finzer*. Finzer is at the top of her musical game and her inclusion on this powerful offering is a sublime moment of clarity. The flute partners an addictive tribal beat to bring us something incredibly special and wonderfully attractive, then listen to Speers almost ZZ Top guitar break at the two and a half minute marker, marking this for me as a true stand out track off the album

Jupiter via NASA is our last port of call and as you would imagine from the title there is a vast space styled feel to the arrangement, one where the keyboards and synths hover with a sense of anticipation. There is such a range of influences here, but a little Vangelis energy seems to be powering this latest rocket ship, but regardless, what a dramatic and utterly cinematic way to end a captivating album.

Sonoran Odyssey is an album that is packed to the rafters with stylish performances, quality productions, smooth yet powerful guitar, and sonic backdrops of textured sounds, keyboards and synths, which manifest for us something quite special to enjoy. Speer has indeed taken the whole genre to a new level entirely with this latest offering, and is one that gets a huge thumbs up from me for doing so.