

The Simplicity of a Hit: Earth, Wind & Fire Discuss "September"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73lfWgfly_s

Al Roker: What is it about "September"? Why? I mean, it's still, there are a handful of songs that you know that if you put them on, you know everybody's going to get up and sing every word to the song.

Philip Bailey: Let's break it down, though. I think that Al McKay, that riff is just so infectious that it just rocks by itself, you know, and Maurice wrote such a great hook and melody, and simple enough for anybody to sing, you know, so I think it had all the ingredients of a hit record. However, I didn't feel that convinced about that song when we first heard it.

Al Roker: Really?

Philip Bailey: No. You know, at the listening party that we used to have after every record, I said, "Mmm," just because all the other songs that we had, they had so many changes and all that kind of stuff, and so that one was so simple, and then not only was it simple, but the hook was simple too. It didn't really have no meaning, you know.

Verdine White: "Ba-dee-ya," right?

Ralph Johnson: It was just a sound thing. "Ba-dee-ya, say that you remember," you know.

Philip Bailey: But I sang it.

Ralph Johnson: Yes, you did, and still today we do it in the show. We actually, I tell people, "If you walk in on our show and you hear 'September,' you're late," because it's the last song we do in the set, you know.

Philip Bailey: You could very well do that now on this tour because we only do 60 minutes.

Ralph Johnson: With Lionel.

Philip Bailey: Right, so it's like if you hear "September," it's like, "You're late."

Verdine White: That's it.

Earth, Wind & Fire Reflects on Clive Davis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfzu1pjFYhU>

Ralph Johnson: Clive Davis came into the picture in the early '70s. We did a live audition for Clive Davis at Sunset Sound Studios and you have to understand that it was very rare for a record company president to come out and see a group. That's why they have the A&R people. They send those guys out. They say, "Hey, look, they're playing at such and such club tonight. Go see them. Come back and tell me what you think." How did he affect the group? Well, first there were two albums on Warner Brothers by Earth, Wind & Fire. Warner Brothers didn't really know how to market Black music and that's what Clive Davis brought to the game: how to market Black music, and you know, man. What do I reflect on most after his passing? His greatness. Clive Davis was a song man all day long. He supported us all the time. He was president of CBS and, man, it was just such a great relationship. He will be missed.

Verdine White: And there'll never be another like him. One of a kind.

Earth, Wind & Fire: Maurice White's Vision and Legacy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wajAdo_Q8vY

Philip Bailey: Maurice's vision for Earth, Wind & Fire was to render a service to humanity and I thought, and always have thought, that that was a lofty ideal because who comes up with a band and says, "I want this band, for its purpose, to be bigger than myself?" And for that reason, you know, we chose to write songs with a certain bent of positivity and speak about certain things that would bring people together more than divide them, so we keep that ideal present today, and it is it's become part of our DNA and we can see that it's something that makes people feel a lot better when they leave than when they came when they come to Earth, Wind & Fire shows.