

# Guitarist

A Publication of the Minnesota Guitar Society • P.O. Box 14986 • Minneapolis, MN 55414

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2007

VOL. 23 NO. 1

## *New Year! Great Concerts!*



**William Kanengiser**

**Saturday,  
January 27th, 8 pm**

**Duo Erato**

**Saturday,  
February 24th, 8 pm**



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Interview with Dakota Dave Hull, Local Artists concerts by James Flegel and Adam Granger, Society News and Notes

# Minnesota Guitar Society

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## Minnesota Guitar Society Mission Statement

To promote the guitar, in all its stylistic and cultural diversity, through our newsletter and through our sponsorship of public forums, concerts, and workshops.

To commission new music and to aid in its promotion, publication, and recording. To serve as an educational and social link between amateur and professional guitarists and the community.

To promote and help create opportunities for Minnesota guitarists and players of related instruments.

*As a member of the Minnesota Guitar Society, you receive ticket discounts on all MGS-sponsored events, a year's subscription to the Guitarist and the opportunity to place free classifieds in each issue.*

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# Concert Spotlight: Bill Kanengiser

For the first Minnesota Guitar Society concert of 2007, and the fifth concert of our 2006–2007 Sundin Hall season, we are proud and excited to present William Kanengiser, a world-renowned member of the the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet and solo artist, in his first Twin Cities solo concert, on Saturday, January 27th at 8 pm.

Born in Orange, New Jersey, William Kanengiser studied at the University of Southern California, being named Outstanding Graduate of the School of Music upon the completion of both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees. His principal teachers were Malcolm Hamilton, Pepe Romero, and James F. Smith.

Kanengiser won First Prize in the 1987 Concert Artists Guild Competition as well as major international competitions in Toronto (1981) and Paris (1983). The recipient of two Solo Recitalist Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, he was also chosen as one of Musical America's Outstanding Young Artists. A member of the guitar faculty at the USC Thornton School of Music in Los Angeles since 1983, he has given masterclasses at conservatories and guitar festivals around the world.

Recognized as one of America's most brilliant guitarists, Kanengiser has developed a unique repertoire for his instrument, ranging from dazzling arrangements of Mozart, Handel, and Bartók to his innovative excursions into the music of Eastern Europe and the Caribbean. Praised by the *Los Angeles Times* for his "dizzying execution" and "exceeding vitality and warmth," Kanengiser has performed in recital and as guest soloist with orchestras in virtually every major American city,

ranging from New York City's Carnegie Hall to San Francisco's Herbst Theater, as well as throughout Canada, Europe, and Asia.

Through unusual commissions and a creative approach to transcription, Kanengiser has won recognition for expanding the repertoire beyond the staples of guitar literature. He has performed and recorded works written for him by composers as diverse as Dusan Bogdanovich, Ian Krouse, and Brian Head, and has won consistent praise for his own transcriptions of scores from the traditional repertoire. Many of these arrangements have been published by GSP, Gendai Guitar, and Doberman Editions.

Kanengiser's solo recordings are heard exclusively on the GSP label. His first recording, *Ronda Alla Turka*, won an "INDIE" award for Best Classical Recording. His second solo CD, *Echoes from the Old World*, features music of the folk traditions of Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The third, *Caribbean Souvenirs*, contains music from the Caribbean and Mexico. His most recent recording is *Classical Cool*, a 2003 GSP release, that includes jazz-inspired compositions and arrangements for classical guitar. Kanengiser's first live studio concert DVD, *Classical Guitar and Beyond*, was released in October 2006 by Mel Bay Publications; the album also includes his now-infamous comedy imitation show from the 2005 Guitar Foundation of America Festival. He has

also produced two popular Hot Licks instructional videos, recently reissued on DVD, *Effortless Classical Guitar* and *Classical Guitar Mastery*. Kanengiser also hosted his own weekly radio show for two years on KKKGO-FM in Los Angeles.

As a founding member of the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, Kanengiser tours extensively throughout North America, Asia, and Europe, and has recorded for the GHA, Delos, and

Kanengiser, *continued on p. 5*



Cover photo by Bruce Summers; above photo by Richard Anderson. Photos from <[www.besenarts.com/kanengiser](http://www.besenarts.com/kanengiser)>.

## Directions to Sundin Hall on the Hamline U. Campus

From I-94, head north on Snelling Avenue in St. Paul, past University Avenue to Hewitt Avenue. Turn right, Sundin Hall is on your left, a half-block east of Snelling.

Free parking is available one block past the hall, in lots off Hewitt (on your right) or off Pascal (1 block north).

## Wm. Kanengiser Masterclass

MacPhail Center for Music

Saturday, January 27th

12:30–2:30 pm

For info contact

Matthew Prediger at MacPhail

612-767-5310

# Concert Spotlight: Duo Erato

On Saturday, February 24th, our Sundin Hall concert will mark the Twin Cities debut of Duo Erato, featuring guitarists Martha Masters and Risa Carlson, in a varied and exciting program of classical guitar favorites.

## Duo Erato

In duo, Masters and Carlson seamlessly blend their evocative styles into one. Named for the muse of lyric poetry and music, Duo Erato has impressed audiences and critics alike since they won first prize in the 1994 National Guitar Summer Workshop Competition for chamber ensembles and



Martha Masters and Risa Carlson.

enjoyed success both as soloists and as partners in Duo Erato. Today, the duo's extensive repertoire embraces works from all periods of the genre's history, as well as new works and transcriptions. Duo Erato's self-titled debut disc was released in 2004 (see review by Dan Sturm, below).

## Martha Masters

Martha Masters is one of the most sought-after guitarists of her generation. In October of 2000 she won first prize in the Guitar Foundation of America (GFA) International Solo Competition, which included a recording contract with Naxos, a concert video with Mel Bay, and an extensive North American concert tour. In November of 2000, she also won the Andrés Segovia International Guitar Competition in Linares, Spain and was a finalist in the Alexandre Tansman International Competition of Musical Personalities in Lodz, Poland. Prior to 2000, Masters was a prizewinner or finalist in numerous other international competitions, including the 1999 International Guitar Competition "Paco Santiago Marín" in Granada, Spain, the 1998 Tokyo International Guitar Competition, and the 1997 GFA International Solo Competition. She has released two solo recordings on the GSP label; the most recent, *Viaggio in Italia*, last year.

Masters received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Peabody Conservatory, where she studied with Manuel Barrueco, and completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Southern California as a student of Scott Tennant. Currently, she is on the guitar faculty at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and serves as the Executive Vice President of the Guitar Foundation of America.

## Risa Carlson

Since beginning her study of the guitar at age six, Risa Carlson has climbed into the top ranks of guitarists from her generation. A featured performer and lecturer at festivals such as the Manuel Barrueco Masterclass, Alexandria Guitar Festival, and the UTB Guitar Ensemble Festival, Carlson also maintains an active concert schedule, appearing in concert as a soloist and in chamber ensemble across the United States. Recent highlights include the John E. Marlow Guitar Series, the Library of Congress, and the Phillips Collection Concert Series in the District of Columbia; Merrick Hall in Maryland; Columbia Artist Management Hall of New York City; for the Fort Worth, Dallas, and Houston Guitar Societies in Texas; for the St. Louis Guitar Society in Missouri; for the Miami Classical Guitar Society in Florida; for the Philadelphia Guitar Society in Pennsylvania; and for the Omaha Classical Guitar Guild in Nebraska.

Carlson has premiered several new works, including Michael Daugherty's "I Loved Lucy" and Paul Mathews' "devil gits sat on," both for flute and guitar, and "Serenata for solo guitar" by Bruno Amato.

Carlson was a top prizewinner at the 18th annual Guitar Foundation of America International Competition in San Antonio, Texas. Other competition successes include top prizes at the 1997 Baltimore Chamber Music Award and the 1995 National Guitar Summer Workshop Competition.

Carlson is chair of the guitar department at the Levine School of Music in Washington D.C., and has recently been appointed Program Manager and Adjunct Professor for Georgetown University's new Artist Diploma Programs. Carlson received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees as well as a Graduate Performance Diploma from the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland under the tutelage of world-renowned concert artist Manuel Barrueco.

## CD Review

by Daniel Sturm

### Duo Erato: Musings

Risa Carlson and Martha Masters, guitars

GSP 1029CD

Total running time: 64:39

This recording is nothing less than stunning. It is a recital of singular presentation achieved through gifted ensemble skills that are present through every moment of its run time. One's money and time are well spent here.

I was struck by the subtitle, *Musings*, not knowing what to expect, but as the program began I became hooked—lulled, coaxed, soothed, and enticed into a musing state, quite happily.

The disc opens with Toccata et Tarentelle pour deux Guitares, by Pierre Petit (1922–2000). Straight off, Carlson and Masters show us their unwavering skill, for here they find the compositional slyness and cunning of the piece, more

Duo Erato, *continued on p. 5*

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Duo Erato, *continued from p. 4*

than ably showing us every nuance therein contained, as if they were the composer themselves. A pedestrian walk-through of this work would quite possibly yield a confusing and bombastic composition. Not so in this case, rather, the Gershwinisms, Tedescoisms, and even Shostakovichisms come off in virtuosic candor. Any composer would be more than delighted by such a performance as this.

Next comes Prélude, Fugue and Variation, op. 18, by César Franck (1822–1890). This work is a most welcome addition to the repertoire, masterfully transcribed by Matanya Ophée. The mastery continues, as this time the ensemble finds this work's unique personality. By now one might begin to wonder if this is not one guitarist playing, obviously it is not, yet the matching of tone color, articulation, and dynamics make it seem entirely possible to be so.

Concert Variations on the *Carnival of Venice* by Johann Padowetz (1800–1873) follows next, and, quite frankly, I have never been keen on the subject matter here. However, it is the discovery once again of compositional slyness and cunning that makes the performance of this work none but the lovely delight.

The heart, the very core, of this recital lies in the performance of "Evocación," from *Iberia* by Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909). For the pianist this work is no feat. On the other hand, simple as the notes appear on the page, this piece is formidable when it is to be performed by two people at once. The elasticity of tempi, dynamics, and tone color changes found in it, are simply very difficult for two people to do together. Again, while certainly obvious this is not so, I would have sworn it is one player. At this point in the recital I found the timelessness that attends a very enjoyable time or happiness. The program continues with "El Puerto," from *Iberia* also.

The remainder of the recital consists of *L'Encouragement*, op. 34, by Fernando Sor (1778–1839), Sonatina Tropical by Ernesto Cordero (1946–), and Sonata in A Minor by Bernardo Pasquini (1637–1710). Carlson and Masters elevate the Sor to a new level of virtuosity that makes the most seasoned guitarist desirous to hear it many more times. As the Cordero enters I began to wonder if I had been charged too little for the disc. The Pasquini left me sated, smilingly happy to know, that but once again, there is a guitar duet album that will be savored for years and years to come. Brava. Brava.

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Kanengiser, *continued from p. 3*

Sony Classical labels. LAGQ currently records exclusively for Telarc. Their 2001 Telarc release, *LAGQ: Latin*, was nominated for a Grammy, and their follow-up recording *LAGQ's Guitar Heroes* won a Grammy for Best Classical Crossover Album of 2004. The latest release, *Spin*, features an original composition by Kanengiser for four guitars, "Turn to the Sea." LAGQ recently released a live concert DVD for Mel Bay Publications, *LAGQ LIVE!*, and will record a CD of Brazilian music with jazz singer Luciana Souza in 2007.

Beyond his work with LAGQ, Mr. Kanengiser has performed chamber music at festivals and concerts with a wide range of noted artists and ensembles, including the Miami String Quartet, the Vermeer Quartet, flutist Marina Piccinini,

pianist Mia Chung, violinist Maria Bachmann, and recorder artist Aldo Abreu.

For his Sundin Hall concert on Saturday, January 27th, Kanengiser will feature selections from his upcoming recording, *Groovetune*, which will explore the rhythmic drive and quiet lyricism of American Finger-style pieces, including works by Ralph Towner, Pat Metheny, Ozzie Kotami, and many others. The recital program will open with masterworks from the Classical Period, including Mozart (the

"Rondo Alla Turca" from the Piano Sonata in A Major, which he prepared for the Columbia Pictures release, *Crossroads*, in which he was Ralph Macchio's guitar double and coach), Paganini (who was also an extraordinary guitar virtuoso), and Fernando Sor (known as "the Chopin of the guitar").

In addition to his concert, William Kanengiser will give a classical guitar masterclass at MacPhail Center for Music on Saturday, January 27 from 12:30 to 2:30 pm.

For more information about that, contact Matthew Prediger at MacPhail, by phone (612-767-5310) or email <prediger.matthew@macphail.org>

**For Concert  
and Ticket  
Information,  
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**M**ade possible in part by a grant from The  
D'Addario Foundation for the Performing Arts  
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# Local Artists Series Concerts

In February, our Local Artists Series continues with two very special events. On Saturday, February 10th, master of the flatpick guitar Adam Granger performs for residents and family members at St. Andrew's Village in Mahtomedi. The next day, Sunday February 11th, classical guitarist James Flegel presents a faculty recital at Lloyd Ultan Recital Hall, in Ferguson Hall at the University of Minnesota. Both concerts are begin at 2 pm and are free.

## Adam Granger

Guitarist Adam Granger was a member of *A Prairie Home Companion's* original Powdermill Biscuit Band from 1976–79. His album *Mr. and Mrs. Jones* was released in 2003, its title tune recorded on *A Prairie Home Companion*. Granger has written about, taught, and played fiddle tunes in the flatpick style for over 25 years. He has recorded six albums. He makes his home in St. Paul, but travels each summer, teaching at music camps in the U.S. and Canada. He emcees and judges fiddle and guitar contests, and performs at folk and bluegrass festivals. In addition, Granger has long been active in documenting and publishing music. As the website for his company describes it: "To say that we're small is an understatement. Our company consists of two corporations. The first, Granger Publications, has a total personnel force of two: Paul Christianson and Adam Granger (our wives help out in various and sundry ways also). The second corporation is Granger Music Publications, and consists of the two of us and Brian Wicklund. This corporation is focused on Brian's great series, *The American Fiddle Method*. Volumes One and Two of this book/CD series are currently available. Our facilities amount to three offices-in-home and a storage unit. We have an 800 number, a fax machine, and three computers. Modesty is our middle name, but it doesn't fit on the masthead." Visit <[www.granger-music.com](http://www.granger-music.com)> for more information.



No false modesty is needed in describing Granger's talents as a performer. A master of the flatpick style of playing, he's sure to delight the audience at St. Andrew's Village on February 10th. St. Andrew's Village in Mahtomedi is a senior living complex that has partnered with our Society for 5 years to sponsor annual Local Artists concerts.

## James Flegel

Classical guitarist James Flegel received his DMA in Guitar Performance from the University of Minnesota and joined the School of Music faculty in 2004. He previously earned a master's degree in music theory and composition, and a master's in guitar performance, at the university. His principal guitar teachers were Jeffrey Van and Robert Guthrie. Before joining the U of MN faculty, Flegel taught extensively in community education programs, private studios, and community colleges. He currently also teaches guitar at

Carleton College in Northfield and Macalester College in St. Paul.

In addition to many solo recitals and performances as an accompanist, he has performed as soloist with orchestras in Joaquin Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* and Vivaldi's Concerto in D. He has also worked with his wife, pianist Emilia Flegel, to arrange and perform concerti by Rodrigo, Giuliani, Vivaldi, and Ponce, as well as chamber works by Bach, Falla, and Ponce. A long-time member of MGS, Flegel has often appeared in our annual Classical Guitarathon concerts and other events. His performances are always marked by meticulous musicianship and great feeling, and the concert on Sunday February 11th should be no exception. Plan to join us!



## Location of Lloyd Ultan Hall

Lloyd Ultan Recital Hall is inside Ferguson Hall at 2106 4th St. So., Minneapolis. Find a map at <[onestop.umn.edu/Maps/FergH/index.html](http://onestop.umn.edu/Maps/FergH/index.html)>

## Directions to Lloyd Ultan Hall

**From Eastbound I-94:** Take the Riverside exit. Turn left on 25th Ave., then left again on Riverside Ave.. Take Riverside to 21st Ave. So., turn right, and then left into the parking ramp. **From Westbound I-94:** Take the Riverside exit. Turn right on Riverside Ave. Take Riverside to 21st Avenue So., turn right, and then left into the 21st Ave. Parking Ramp. **From Northbound I-35:** Take the U of M West Bank/Washington Ave. exit. Turn right on Washington Ave., which veers to the right into Cedar Ave. From Cedar, turn left on Riverside Ave., and left again onto 21st Ave. So.. Turn left into parking ramp. **From Southbound I-35:** Take the U of M West Bank exit. Turn left on Washington Ave., which veers to the right into Cedar Ave. From Cedar turn left on Riverside Ave., and left again to 21st Ave. So. Turn left into the parking ramp. **Parking:** Available at the U.'s 19th and 21st Ave. ramps. You must pay to park there. More info at <[www1.umn.edu/pts/publicparking.htm](http://www1.umn.edu/pts/publicparking.htm)>.

## Future Local Artists Concerts

### Matthew Dorn - Classical Guitar

Sunday, March 25, 1:00 pm  
Univ. of MN Ferguson Hall, Lloyd Ultan Recital Hall  
2105 4th St. So., Minneapolis

### Brent Weaver - Classical Guitar, music from Latin America

Co-sponsored by City of Woodbury Parks and  
Recreation Dept.  
Sunday, April 15, 2:00 pm  
Central Park Amphitheater  
8595 Central Park Dr., Woodbury

## Classic American Fingerstyle Guitar: An Interview with Dakota Dave Hull

by Gloria Goodwin Raheja

Since his arrival in the Twin Cities in 1969, Dakota Dave Hull has performed and recorded with some of Minnesota's finest acoustic musicians, including Kari Larson, Peter Ostroushko, Butch Thompson, Cam Waters, Eric Peltoniemi and Bill Hinkley. Over the last several years he's also been performing with Phil Heywood, Peter Lang, Dean Magraw and Tim Sparks as one of the Minnesota Guitar Wizards. During the last four or five years, he's moved from mostly flatpicking to mostly fingerstyle guitar and he's become primarily a solo performer of instrumental music. His 2002 CD, *Sheridan Square Rag* (with contributions on two tunes from Kari Larson on guitar and tenor guitar) and his entirely solo 2004 recording, *Loyalty Waltz*, are journeys through the landscape of 1920s, 1930s and 1940s Americana, punctuated by fascinating detours through Dave's own compositions. The landscape he traverses is a varied one, ranging from spirituals and gospel songs to ragtime, 1920s pop tunes, fiddle tunes, string band music and more. No respecter of genre boundaries, Dave listens to and absorbs music from all these sources and plays elegant and satisfying arrangements of the tunes he finds, and original music inspired by those songs. Dave wrote on the liner notes to *The Loyalty Waltz* that it never ceases to amaze him "that blues, jazz, country music, old-time, bluegrass, soul music, ragtime, [and] popular music....sprang from the same primordial mud. You hear it in the early recordings, before everything got compartmented....People played together too, with ideas and sounds crossing back and forth across ethnic, racial and generational lines." In his two most recent albums, as in so much of his earlier music, that common history, that fertile soil of American music, is conjured up as one listens to the narrative flow of the records, and yet each song is stamped with Dave's own distinctive approach to the guitar, his own musical sensibility and unwavering good taste, and his mastery of guitar tone. And in every collection of tunes he plays, there is a unique blend of lyricism and narrative power, solemnity and playful humor, delicacy and digging in with the right hand for a big and powerful sound; no one who's ever heard Dave play would mistake him for another

guitarist. He's also made significant contributions to the Minnesota music scene through his ensemble playing, his work for other musicians in the recording studio, and his Thursday morning KFAI radio show.

I spoke with Dave Hull in his studio in Minneapolis, and a few later emailed follow-up queries and responses have been folded in to this interview.



**GGR:** *In the past you were known mainly as a flatpicker, but you've characterized your most recent work as "classic American fingerstyle guitar." How did that change come about?*

**DH:** Well, it wasn't so much a change as you might think. First, it's all guitar playing, and second, I started out as a fingerpicker back in high school, though I really didn't do a lot of it for many years, except at home. But really, by the mid-1980s I had picked it up again, I was writing rags and recording some fingerstyle stuff, even that early. When Kari Larson and I decided to quit playing together on a regular basis, back at the end of 2001, it seemed for a variety of reasons that it would be worth it to see if I could put together enough fingerstyle material to record and perform on my own. So that's where I put my efforts. Flatpicking is, by nature, more suited to ensemble playing, although not entirely and I still flatpick a few tunes every night. On the other hand, fingerstyle, while it works wonderfully in a group

environment, is perfect for most solo work, too. I started as a fingerstylist and never really gave that up; I'm just doing more of it now.

**GGR:** *As you moved in to specializing more in fingerstyle, did it make a difference that you were here in the Twin Cities, with its remarkable concentration of superb fingerstyle players?*

**DH:** Well, it's always helped. To me, it's really not so much about fingerstyle or plectrum or whatever, but rather just about guitar playing. There's always been a fabulous community of guitar players in this town, it's the biomagnetic center of the universe, and that's why! [Laughter] I don't know why that is, but we're fortunate that there are so many great guitar players in the Twin Cities. From the be-

Dave Hull, *continued on p. 8*

# Special Feature: Dave Hull

Dave Hull, *continued from p. 7*

ginning, when I came here in 1969 and lived on the West Bank and hung out at the Coffeehouse Extempore throughout the '70s, it was great. We were all learning how to play and helped each other out a bunch. People came and people left, but there was a wonderful sense of being in this together. We shared the things we were learning with each other, almost on a daily basis. I find myself wishing that there was a scene like that today. I think it's hard now to be young and trying to break into this business. Now, of course, I've known most of the players around here for quite a while and I feel so fortunate and so grateful to be able to count so many great people among my friends. The short answer to that question would be: it's been a blessing.

**GGR:** *You play a fascinating array of interesting and unusual vintage and new guitars and we're surrounded by them here in your studio. Can you say something about the ones you've used on your last two recordings?*

**DH:** Well, I used five different guitars on *Loyalty Waltz*. My big flattop, a Gibson Jumbo, was made in 1935, I play that on a few of the tunes. They'll have to pry that one from my cold dead fingers.

I've got a Gibson-made smaller body guitar called a Kel Kroydon. It's essentially a 12 fret Gibson L-0 or L-00 from about 1930 and it's a remarkably great sounding instrument that's also incredibly cool to look at. It may look like a toy, but it's a great guitar. A friend of mine owned it for years, and the first time I played it I was blown away by it, it was one of the nicest little guitars I've ever played for my style, and so I told him that if he ever wanted to sell that guitar, I'm your man. And lo and behold, he decided to sell it. It's a KK-1, and as you can see it has twin birds of paradise painted on the top! The KK-2, which I'd love to find one of, has an Hawaiian volcano scene painted on it. I need one of those too, obviously. [Laughter. . . .Folks who know Dave or have seen him at his gigs will know that he seldom goes out of the house without one of his signature Hawaiian-style shirts.] Unfortunately the Kel Kroydon is an extremely delicate guitar, so I can't take it out much. I took it on a tour to California a couple of years ago, and it really didn't like to travel, so it basically lives here in my studio at home, and occasionally I let it out to do a show in Minneapolis, and that's about it. It's mostly a studio instrument.

Then there's my Epiphone Recording E, which is also very cool and has an extremely unusual voice. Almost like it's halfway between a flattop and an archtop. It was also made around 1930.

I have a more recent National steel guitar, a Style 1 from the year 2000. That instrument is so good that I sold my old National Style 1 from 1931 and never looked back, even though that 1931 model was a great guitar.

And finally, on *Loyalty Waltz* I played a 1998 piccolo guitar that Charles Hoffman [the Minneapolis luthier] made for me. Several years ago in New York I heard someone playing a terz guitar, which is a smaller-bodied nylon or gut stringed guitar meant to be tuned up to G or A. They use

them a fair amount in Mexico, and actually I think Tim Sparks has one. I know he used to have one, at any rate, but I digress. I was infatuated with the sound and when, several years later, I found a late '30s three-quarter size Gibson L-00 or L-0 (I still don't really understand the difference between those two models) I decided to try stringing it that way, and it was wonderful, more than I had hoped for. Unfortunately the neck was three-quarter size too, and I was stumbling all over myself, all the time. It was a great guitar, sounded great, but it was next to impossible to play. So I took it to Hoffman's with the idea of getting a new one made. I've been friends with Charlie Hoffman for many years and I have a 1976 custom guitar that he made for me that I traveled with for years. I also used it for a couple of tunes on *Sheridan Square Rag*, so I was well aware of his talent as a luthier. So we looked at that little Gibson and traced it and so forth, and sort of updated the design, and Charlie made a new instrument for me. So why not have a cutaway, why not have some extra frets, if you're updating the design anyway? So there are 24 frets on that instrument, and the neck is 1 and æ inches wide. It occurred to me that I've always liked the sound of mahogany topped instruments too, and that that might increase the sustain on such a small instrument. As of yet there isn't really a spruce topped version to compare it to, but I think I was right. And because it's tuned up a fourth, it has a different sort of tonality, a great different tone that I really like. We talked about how the instrument should look too, from the standpoint of trim and finish. So the design of the piccolo guitar was a collaboration between me and Charlie. And now just recently I've acquired the second Hoffman piccolo guitar, and that guitar is the result of a collaboration too. I'm rapidly falling in love with that instrument, I think it's going to be wonderful. I can dig in more on it, and the tone is already there. I'm rather amazed. I've been playing them both, and I'm going to have a tough choice on my hands. I can only keep one and at this point I think it'll be the new one. I believe Charlie may actually start making these on a more regular basis.

I have one other new guitar, a National M-2 baritone that showed up last fall and it's been changing my life. It's the anti-piccolo. You'll definitely hear it on my next record.

In general though, I love guitars from the '20s and '30s. Old wood, aged wood, wood that's been a guitar for awhile changes somehow. I think maybe it takes awhile for it to figure out that it's not a tree anymore, that it's a guitar. Once that happens it really starts to sound great. It opens up and the tone becomes marvelous. They just keep getting better and better. Apart from the instruments I used on *Loyalty Waltz*, I have a number of other old guitars, including a 1929 National Triolian

The 1920s and '30s were the first golden age of acoustic guitars. I think we're in a second golden age and that some of the stuff being made now will outshine everything once the guitars have aged some. My 30 year old Hoffman guitar is a prime example of that—a wonderful instrument that has

Dave Hull, *continued on p. 9*

# Special Feature: Dave Hull

Dave Hull, *continued from p. 8*

aged well and sounds old now. And it's only going to get better.

I'm always looking for old guitars too. I'd love to find a good Martin OM-18 from the 1920s, but they're out of sight money-wise now so I'd have to get real lucky.

**GGR:** *In the liner notes to *Loyalty Waltz* you wrote about ideas and sounds that crisscross ethnic and racial lines, that come from a common stock of American musical traditions. That's of course a central theme in the history of American music. Did you have this in mind when you chose the tunes you wanted to include on the album?*

**DH:** I don't know that I think about it in those terms before the fact, as I'm deciding what I want to play and record. When I record an album, it's really more about how it goes together, how I'm playing a particular tune. I don't really *think* a lot about where they come from, it's more of an emotional decision. But it's intriguing to look at it after the fact and think, "Oh, it's interesting that, say, "900 Miles" and "Jesus Is A Dying Bed Maker" fit so nicely next to each other on the album, especially considering that the first obviously came out of the white tradition, and the second out of the black tradition. But they're not all that different.

**GGR:** *On that album there's also a lovely tribute to Dave "Snaker" Ray you wrote, called "Snaker's Gone," played on your *National Style 1*. How did you come to write that?*

**DH:** The title kind of came to me in a flash, not long after Dave died in November of 2001; Dave's first solo album was called *Snaker's Here!* I was on the radio, on KFAI, when he died on a Thursday, on Thanksgiving Day, and Tony Glover called in to the show to let me know, and I just went and got a copy of his *Snake Eyes* album, which I think of as his masterpiece, and played it, and people started calling in and asking about Dave, because I was playing so much of his music. I delivered the news to our community that day. It was very sad. When I went to try to write something of a tribute to him, the tune began to take shape and it began to sound like a funeral march in my head. I called Dave Ray a friend. He was supportive of my career from the time I got to the Twin Cities in 1969. He was a good listener and a good talker and a real inspiration as a musician and guitar player.

**GGR:** *Over the years you've played several times with Doc Watson. What was that like, and what kinds of influence did he have on your playing?*

**DH:** As a kid, the first time I heard Doc was really an epiphany. I didn't know it was possible to do those kinds of things with the guitar, and I knew, immediately, that that was what I wanted to do. I think the tune that did it was "Tickling the Strings." Later on I was fortunate enough to meet Doc, play a couple of gigs with him, and have him as a guest on my "Hull's Victory" album. It was quite an honor, but Doc is the kind of guy who can put you right at ease.

One thing I remember about the recording session was



that by simply being there Doc managed to get stellar performances out of all of the musicians. I think the one thing that sticks in my mind the most is Butch Thompson's piano break on "Ragtime Annie." Butch is incredible even on a bad day, but this was something else. The feeling of being there, of being a part of it, was amazing. One of the true highlights of my career.

**GGR:** *You were close friends with Dave Van Ronk. What do you see as his place in the history of American music?*

**DH:** That's a really huge question. If you read Dylan's book, or most any history of the folk revival, Dave looms large. He was one of the first, maybe the first revivalist to play country blues, one of the first guitarists to experiment with ragtime, Jacques Brel, and most anything else that caught his fancy. His pallet was huge. The thing I admire most about Dave's work is that no matter what he was doing you could always tell who it was. Style trumps genre, in my book, and Dave had style in spades.

I learned a ton about the art of arranging music from Dave; he really encouraged that aspect of my music. It's one thing to play a tune or a song but it's something quite different to think about the settings, the pace, and so many other things. Dave was truly a master of this stuff.

Dave was the first to record a Dylan song. The first to

Dave Hull, *continued on p. 10*

# Special Feature: Dave Hull

Dave Hull, *continued from p. 9*

record a Joni Mitchell song. He had a great ear for talent and a real knack of finding a great song. He liked to say that he remained blissfully on the sidelines in the wars between the traditionalists and the modernists, and his book (the list of songs he performed) certainly bears that out. The amazing thing is no matter the source, the finished product always sounded like a Dave Van Ronk arrangement. He could take songs as diverse as “Michigan Water Blues,” “Been on the Job Too Long,” “Urge for Going” and “Mack the Knife” and make them fit together seamlessly in a set or on a record in a way that would make the listener think: “of course! Why hasn’t anyone else ever thought of that?” Style trumps genre.

I could go on and on about Dave but there’s just too much. His autobiography, “The Mayor of MacDougal Street” is a wonderful history of the New York folk revival up through about 1969. When I read it, it was like sitting in Dave’s living room after a great meal (did I mention he was a world-class cook?) sharing stories into the night. It should be required reading for anyone interested in folk music, roots music or the revival. It’s also one of the funniest books I’ve ever read.

I’m truly lucky to have known him.

**GGR:** *How in general do you go about the process of writing and arranging?*

**DH:** I’m a noodler. I sit around and just play the guitar at home a lot. Most times it doesn’t go anywhere, but once in awhile I’ll come up with something entirely new or the beginnings of an arrangement of something that already exists. Often times it’ll be a “mistake” that sets me off on some new track. “Six of One, Half a Dozen of the Other,” on *Loyalty Waltz*, is a good example of that. I grabbed the guitar, didn’t look, thought I was in G and it turned out I was in F#. And I heard that *thing*, and I liked it, so it became a tune. Once you get the *thing* you’re halfway home. All you have to do is surround it with interesting music to complement it and you’re there. At that point you have to learn it, come up with an interesting arrangement for it, and that isn’t really any different than arranging any other tune for guitar. I hope that makes some kind of sense.

**GGR:** *The sound quality on both your recent CDs is superb, and I know you recorded them yourself here in your studio. What kind of recording set-up did you use?*

**DH:** I’m a minimalist. I set up one mic and find the sweet spot. I use one mic because I don’t think that two mics sounds like a guitar. I find that that is the best way to not only make a guitar sound like a guitar, but to make a specific guitar sound like a specific guitar. I want you the listener to be able to tell the difference between the Kel Kroydon, the Epiphone, the Jumbo or whatever else happens to be on the album. So I use a good tube mic, a good tube pre-amp, and mix it with as little processing as possible, put a little reverb on it, and a little bit of limiting, which basically serves to make it sound more natural, to get it back to sounding

like what it sounded like in the room where it was played. That’s what I do. Once I’ve recorded and done some editing I take the stuff over to Steve Wiese at Creation Audio and we mix and master it there. He’s got great ears, we’ve worked together for thirty years, and he has a ton of great gear that’s perfect for what I do.

**GGR:** *What other recordings have you done in your studio recently?*

**DH:** Let’s see, I recorded Phil Heywood’s last CD, *Banks of the River*, and I co-produced a CD for Tim Eriksen called *Every Sound Below* for Appleseed. I did an album for Cam Waters and I’ve done Pop Wagner’s last couple of albums and Lonnie Knight’s, too. We’re just finishing up Lonnie’s new one now. Eric Peltoniemi and I have started working on a project together. We’ve known each other a long time, and 2007 will be the 40th anniversary of the first time we shared a stage together. We’ll probably do a few concerts together, too. I’m doing a small project of Somali storytellers reading traditional Somalian folk stories in both English and Somali, and that’s a lot of fun. I did a couple of projects for National Resophonic, too. Parts of *Artists in Resonance II* was recorded here—I recorded Charlie Parr, The Ditch Lillies, Joe & Vicky Price, Kari Larson, and myself. I recorded some wonderful solo mandolin of Kari’s for the newest version of their audio catalog, as well as my newest toy, the M-2 baritone. I did all that stuff at my Arabica Studio in Minneapolis, but the producing thing really started in earnest in the early 1980s when I produced John Koerner’s *Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Been*. I’ve done a number of things at other studios, too.

**GGR:** *It’s been almost two years since your last album. What new projects are you working on now?*

**DH:** Well, I mentioned that I’m working on a project with Eric. I’m also working on a solo album of gospel music, hymns, spirituals and that sort of thing. I’ve always found that all roads in traditional and roots music eventually lead back to this stuff and I think it’s undeniably the deepest tradition. People have done all manner of art since before history started being recorded trying to make sense of why we’re here, of what it’s all about. I’ve come up with some interesting arrangements of “This Train Is Bound for Glory,” “Wayfaring Stranger,” a medley of the Carter Family’s “Will You Miss Me When I’m Gone” and the southern hymn “The Christians’ Goodnight,” the Martin Luther hymn “A Mighty Fortress” (believe it or not—it sounds incredible on the new National baritone guitar), a couple of tunes from the Sacred Harp tradition and a few other things. The list is by no means complete or final. I might redo a couple of tunes I’ve recorded before, too. I’m really not sure when it’ll be available; that pretty much depends on when I finish the actual recording. I’m not really on a schedule, but I’m hoping to be able to offer it by the spring.

I’m also touring quite a bit more these days. I have the luxury of working with two agents and they’re both won-

Dave Hull, *continued on p. 11*

# Special Feature: Dave Hull

Dave Hull, *continued from p. 10*

derful. I think their combined goal is to keep me out of town permanently. I'm doing a couple of split-night shows with Peter Lang in the near future, one in Illinois and one in Pennsylvania. And Phil Heywood and I are going to do something at Oak Center in early December. And then Kari and I are going to do some Christmas shows this year, so it should be a very interesting few months.

**GGR:** *What have you been listening to lately? Has it had any effect on your playing or choice of tunes?*

**DH:** As you know, I do a weekly radio show on KFAI. A benefit of that is that I'm forced to listen to a ton of music, all the time. I gravitate towards stuff from the 1920s and 1930s mainly, although I've been finding some earlier recordings that are making my socks roll up and down, too. Genre isn't that important to me; in fact the further you go back the closer the various "genres" are. I go nuts when I hear Louis Armstrong on a Jimmie Rodgers recording or a brass band version of "L'il Liza Jane." It just excites me. I'm sure it's had an effect on my playing and my choices, but it's indirect usually, kind of an osmosis sort of thing. Once in awhile I'll hear something that I decide I want to learn and go after it, but usually I just start playing a tune and then I get excited and it evolves into something I can perform.

There are a number of great websites out there these days for people interested in vintage music. I adore [redhotjazz.com](http://redhotjazz.com), which is mostly 1920s jazz, but not entirely. A lot of great information there, too. [cylinders.library.ucsb.edu](http://cylinders.library.ucsb.edu) is a wonderful collection of early cylinder records that have been digitized. It proves that the popular music of 100 years ago could be as bad as the popular music of today, but there's a lot of great stuff there as well. [juneberry78s.com](http://juneberry78s.com) has a great collection of old-time music, a pretty good collection of early country blues also. It's not very well organized or documented, but if you know about this stuff there are some great finds here. [dovesong.com](http://dovesong.com) has a good collection of gospel music, especially the gospel quartets from both the black and white traditions. It also has very little documentation, but it does have a lot of great music.

I think the main thing to me is that it's about the music more than it's about the guitar or any specific instrument. The more stuff I listen to the more stuff filters through into my guitar music, or at least that's my hope.

Dakota Dave Hull has a website  
<<http://www.dakotadavehull.com>>.  
For bookings, contact: David Alderson at  
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Nolan Howard at  
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**Contributor Note:** *Gloria Goodwin Raheja is a professor of anthropology at the University of Minnesota. Beyond her academic work in the anthropology of India, she is interested in contemporary American fingerstyle guitar, pre-war acoustic blues, old-time music and West African guitar music, and she is writing a book on music in the Appalachian coalfields in the 1920s, with a focus on the guitarist Frank Hutchison. She teaches occasional courses on blues and American popular music at the University, and she is a member of the Minnesota Guitar Society.*

*This interview © Gloria Goodwin Raheja and Dakota Dave Hull*

# News and Notes

## OpenStage

OpenStage is a structured but informal way for guitarists of any level to experience the joy of playing for (and listening to) each other. Our next meeting is on Sunday, January 7th at 3 pm. We're returning to Audubon Coffeehouse. Audubon is a small, friendly place at 2852 Johnson St. NE in Northeast Minneapolis. Additional get-togethers are planned at Brady Education Center (lower level, usually Room 7, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul campus) for 3 pm on Sunday, February 4th and Sunday, April 22nd. Mark your calendars, and start polishing your renditions of classical, folk, and jazz favorites. Contact <editor@mnguitar.org> for more information.

## Minnesota Guitar Society Web Site

Information about guitar-related events can be found at the MGS website calendar. Visit <www.mnguitar.org>. At the home page, click on "Calendar." In addition to Society concerts, included are events featuring MGS members and other guitarists of note. To get yours listed, email Al Norton at <apnorton@msn.com>.

## Contributions Welcome

Send us your news—gigs, concerts, CDs, etc.—by January 10th to appear in the March / April issue.

## Volunteer Opportunities

We need help distributing the newsletter, especially in the northeast corner of the metro (White Bear Lake and Stillwater) and the southwest (Savage, Burnsville, Edina, and Bloomington). Time commitment: 1 hour, every other month. Other opportunities with the Society exist, especially in fundraising and membership support. Call Paul Hintz at 651-699-6827 or email <editor@mnguitar.org> for more info.

## Shank/Hagedorn Duo Concert

A concert featuring SPCO member Leslie Shank on violin and MGS Artistic Director (and Mpls Guitar Quartet member) Joe Hagedorn on guitar will be presented at Sundin Hall on Tuesday, February 20th at 8 pm. The concert will feature the music of Dean Magraw (world premiere), David Hahn (world premiere), Giuseppe Tartini, Enrique Granados, and Maria Kalaniemi. Tickets on sale at the door. Call Sundin Hall at 651-523-2459 for more information.

"The Minnesota Guitar Society concert season is co-sponsored by Sundin Music Hall and is made possible with funding from the D'Addario Foundation, and the Minnesota State Arts Board from an appropriation from the Minnesota State Legislature. Matching funds have been provided by General Mills, ADC Telecommunications, AT&T, and American Express. Hotel accommodations for artists in the 2006–2007 season are provided by Hyatt Regency Minneapolis at 1300 Nicollet Mall, home of Oceanaire Seafood and Manny's Steakhouse."

## Next Sundin Concerts

Saturday, March 17th, Earl Klugh  
Saturday, April 21st, Nigel North  
Saturday, May 26th, Classical Guitarathon  
All concerts at 8 pm. Call 612-677-1151 for reservations and more information.

## Earl Klugh Masterclass

In addition to his Sundin Hall concert, Earl Klugh will be giving a masterclass at MacPhail Center for Music in Minneapolis on Sunday, March 18th at 2 pm. Visit the MacPhail website at <www.macphail.org/events\_masterclasses.htm> for more information. Co-sponsored by MGS.

## Reynold Philipsek

Guitarist Reynold Philipsek has a new CD out, *Artifacts and Curiosities*, as well as upcoming gigs and projects with the Twin Cities Hot Club and others. Visit his website at <www.reynold.com> for more information.

## Exquisite Corps

This jazz trio, featuring guitarist David Roos, has released a self-titled CD. Visit their website at <exquisitecorpsjazztrio.com> for more information about that, and the origins of the band's name.

## Duo Erato In-School Visit

The day before their Sundin Hall concert appearance on February 24th, Martha Masters and Risa Carlson will give a workshop for students in the guitar classes at Patrick Henry High School in Minneapolis, as part of the Society's Guitars in the Schools program. We hope to expand this program next year. Watch for details in future issues of the newsletter.

## Youth Acoustic Guitarathon Date Set

On Sunday, June 10, the Minnesota Guitar Society will host the first annual Youth Acoustic Guitarathon. Auditions will be on Sunday, May 6, at MacPhail Center for Music in Minneapolis. For more information, contact coordinator Brent Weaver at <guitweaver@gmail.com>.

## Lute Café

The Lute Café is a series of casual lute concerts sponsored by the Twin Cities Lute Cooperative, co-produced by local lutenists Phil Rukavina and Rick Griffith. The Café is open in the Village View Room at Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1978 Ford Parkway in St. Paul's Highland Park neighborhood, on the last Thursday of each month. The series features lute music in a casual, coffeehouse-type setting where you can listen to great music, have a coffee or a snack, read a book, or just stare out the window and relax.

Information about the Lute Café can be found at the MGS website. A full schedule is also available at each show. There is no set charge for attending, but a \$10 per person donation is suggested to help defray costs. Future concerts are planned through April 2007. Call 612-865-5954 for further information.

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