

Jazz Guitarist Dean Granros

by Steve Haskin

Dean Granros plays the guitar like no one else. His playing combines a harmonic and rhythmic freedom with a basic sound that is decidedly un-guitaristic. Dean avoids the scales typical of most guitar solos, choosing instead wide melodic leaps with a preference for the more dissonant intervals. Dean's harmonic language transcends the four voiced chords used by most jazz guitarists. He avoids fuller chords sometimes harmonizing with only two voices or comping with a single line. Dean's sense of time allows for long periods of silence followed by frenzies of activity and his basic sound is closer to a reed instrument, like the sax, than the round tones most often associated with the jazz guitar. Watching Dean play further enhances his originality. Many jazz guitarists "sing" while soloing, silently expressing an inner melody with movements of their lips. But, while others sing, Dean Granros screams, grimacing and wincing to express his inner voice. Brazilian guitarist Nilton Machado said it best, "Dean Granros is totally original. He creates music independent of the guitar. The guitar is there only by accident." Dean Granros has developed a unique way of playing the guitar and we can only wonder how his style developed.

Like many other guitarists, Dean Granros first picked up the guitar after being inspired by popular music and rock n' roll. But while his friends were content playing "Last Train to Clarksville", Dean followed rock to its roots and became interested in the blues. First, he listened carefully to Mike Bloomfield of the Butterfield Blues Band, admiring his clear, piercing tone. Then, he searched back through the history of the blues encountering: B.B. King, Buddy Guy and Lightnin' Hopkins. The foundation of Dean's playing, especially his tone, began as he listened to these blues guitarists.

While searching through a friend's col-



lection of blues records, Dean made a discovery that would lead to his preference for dissonance and atonality; Ornette Coleman. Coleman had developed a completely new way of playing jazz. His music was divorced from the conventional concept of improvisation, based on chord patterns. After hearing Coleman, Dean also began to play "outside" the chord changes. He searched for other jazz innovators and discovered: Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus and Charles Lloyd. Dean became interested in contemporary music and how it was composed.

This interest led to the University of Minnesota where he hoped to major in composition. Dean was unprepared, however, for the university's attitude toward the guitar and jazz. First, he was informed that composition majors must play piano as their principle instrument. Because Dean didn't play the piano, he couldn't major in composition. Dean played jazz but the U didn't have a jazz program. Dean's interests were in contemporary music, but Theory I began with Bach. On the positive side, he discovered the university's music library. Here he found the music of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern and he became fascinated by twelve-tone or serial music. While his classmates analyzed Bach chorals, Dean wrote tone rows.

After two years at the U, Dean quit to devote himself to earning a living as a musician and to continue his development as a guitarist and improviser. He, by now, had developed the framework of his style: a sound influenced by blues guitarists and horn players and an approach to rhythm and note choice inspired by free jazz and serial music.

Dean Granros formed his first band in high school; "The Langston Hughes Memorial Eclectic Improvisational Jazz Exposition." They performed at the Scholar and The Broken Drum on the West Bank in the early 1970's playing long improvisations which gave Dean the opportunity to take extended solos. His next important group was The Whole Earth Rainbow Band, formed with percussionist Steve Kimmel. This group recorded an album that received good reviews in Down Beat and other jazz publications. "Lapis", featuring Jay Epstein on drums, Dick Paske on bass and Pat Moriarty on alto sax, was Dean's next band. Lapis played at the Rainbow Gallery, The Walker and the Whole Coffee House. Most recently, Dean joined sax and flute player, Chuck Armstrong on Sunday nights at the Triangle Jazz Club.

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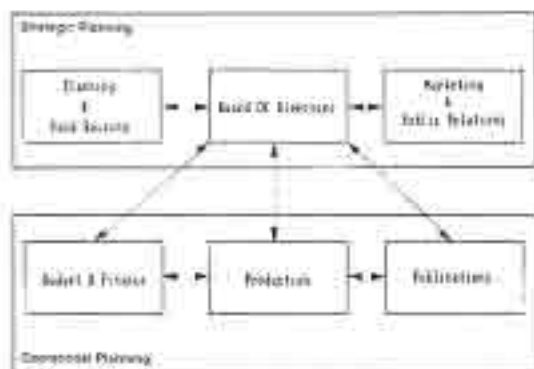
Society News

Composer's Guitarathon

by Michael Ziegahn

On March 29th, 1987, the board of directors of the Minnesota Guitar Society met and drew up the following mission statement for the 1987-1988 season: "Our mission is: 1) to promote the guitar, in all its stylistic and cultural diversity, through our newsletter and through our sponsorship of public forums, concerts and workshops. 2) to commission new music and to aid in its promotion, publication and recording. 3) to serve as an educational and social link between amateur and professional guitarists and the community. 4) to promote and help create opportunities for Minnesota guitarists and players of related instruments."

The board also adopted a new organizational structure (see diagram). Members who would like to serve on a committee are urged to contact Steve Haskin at 333-0169. Your support is necessary to insure the continued success of the M.G.S. Planning and Fundraising.



CALL FOR PROPOSALS 1987-1988

The M.G.S. is now accepting proposals for next season. Proposals should be sent to Minnesota Guitar Society/P.O. Box 14986 Mpls., MN 55414, before July 15, 1987. Projects which may receive sponsorship and/or funding from the M.G.S. should stay within the guidelines of our mission statement. Projects which may help generate capital for the M.G.S. and/or enhance the prestige of the organization will be given high priority. Proposals should be as complete as possible, including: project description, resumes of involved persons, examples of type of music (i.e. audio cassette) and any other information pertinent to the project including proposed dates etc. Applicants whose proposals are accepted for sponsorship will be notified after the board has reviewed them.

The evening of February 28th saw yet another example of the diversity of musical styles and talents the midwest has to offer devotees of our favorite instrument.

The third in the M.G.S.'s format of sampler concerts, known as "Guitarathons", featured several area performers offering their original compositions and arrangements to an enthusiastic audience at Brady Auditorium.

Styles presented ranged from different exponents of "New Age" music, modern purveyors of the classical school, music rooted in the folk and jazz traditions and a little straight ahead flamenco thrown in for good measure.

Thanks are due to composer/performers: O. Nicholas Rath, Will King, Steve Haskin, James McGuire, Kevin Daley, Peter Lingen, Daniel K. Sturm and John Roth. Special thanks should

go to Peter Lang for gracing our event after a long hiatus from the public eye (it's good to have you back!) and Greg Wolfe for rushing over from a performance at Orchestra Hall and bringing most of Zorongo Flamenco troupe with him for a little added jaleo! Also assisting the principal artists were Christopher Kachian and Bill McMahon-guitarists, Nanette Scott-violin, Bill White-tenor and Maria Jette-soprano.

Finally, credit must go to Tim Sparks for his excellent job of stage managing and Steve and Liz Kakos for their overall organizational effort (however unexpected for them) that resulted in another enjoyable event for all concerned.

Stay tuned for more information about our second Jazz Guitarathon coming this summer, tentatively, to the Dakota Bar & Restaurant.



Greg Wolfe and friends at the Composer's Guitarathon.

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Chris Kachian Classical Guitarist

by Cathy Nixon

Christopher Kachian will soon be leaving the Twin Cities for a short time. This June, he'll begin a year-long tour with the Heidelberger Kammerorchester (Heidelberg Chamber Orchestra), performing 250 concerts in North and South America, Australia and Europe. This well-known orchestra consists of eight members: six strings, a cello, and harpsichordist Klaus Preis, who is also its founder and conductor. The group's repertoire will include chamber music by Telemann, Bach, and Chris's own transcriptions of works by Handel and Vivaldi. Chris's odyssey actually begins in the spring, when he'll meet the chamber orchestra in New York to produce an album to be promoted on the tour.

Chris described the developments leading up to the tour as a "lucky stroke". In August of 1985, he was playing the West Coast premiere of the Malcolm Arnold Guitar Concerto with the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra. The "advance people" for the Heidelberg Chamber Orchestra heard him play. Chris was invited to play with the orchestra in Berkeley and San Francisco in October of 1985. He got along really well with the orchestra members, and, as a result, received the invitation to join the orchestra for its present tour.

Chris emphasizes that he will be return-

ing to the Cities in 1988. At present, his goal is not to travel and perform indefinitely. Instead, Chris has real hopes for returning to a full-time position as a guitar professor at the College of St. Thomas, where he currently teaches part-time. St. Thomas will be finishing up its application process for a newly-created full-time position early this year. The creation of this position is important for local guitarists, further establishing the instrument in academia. According to Chris, there are not many more than half a dozen full-time guitar-teaching positions in the whole country, and this would be the first in the Twin Cities. Through his part-time teaching position, Chris has been able to contribute substantially to the strong student base that makes the full-time position necessary.

Chris moved to the Cities from Milwaukee, to study as a freshman at the University of Minnesota under Jeffrey Van. He now has a master's degree in music with an emphasis in South American music. Latin-American music is Chris's hobby, however, he describes orchestra work as being the "funnest fun". Chris will be appearing May 30th with Rob Struzinsky at Brady Auditorium. Congratulations, Chris, on your up-coming tour, and best wishes in your pursuit of professorship!

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Café con cumbia, the music of Vera Cruz

by Tim Sparks

Renowned for its diversity of music, as well as being Mexico's main gulf port, Vera Cruz is a city of economic, historical and cultural importance. Its million or so inhabitants strive to thrive in a decaying urban fresco that appears to have seen hard times recently. Although often passed over in favor of more serene tropical getaways or Mayan splendors, Vera Cruz offers a wealth of musical delights.

If you follow the signs to downtown, you'll soon find yourself mired in traffic that rivals midtown Manhattan. Better to take the coastal road which passes the naval base and large, busy harbor, the round-the-clock baseball game on the beach, an old Spanish fort nearly obscured by high-rises, several extraordinary, massive sculptures, and a memorial to heroes of the revolution.

No matter which route you choose, you will eventually see the wisdom of abandoning your car in favor of walking through the open-air markets, across the town square, (known as the Zocalo throughout Mexico), populated by shoe shines and old men. Now, you've made your way to the heart of Vera Cruz, the Café de la Parroquia.

Here, life begins at noon as white-coated waiters bustle about serving "café con leche" from huge, hand-held kettles which contain steaming milk, and thick, rich espresso. A few clinks of your spoon on the tall glass in which this delightful concoction is served will suffice to summon your waiter for a refill, but take care. This stuff is rocket fuel.

Like most of Vera Cruz, the ambience is lively, with a noisy crowd largely consisting of groups of men playing cards, chess — or simply engaging in loud, animated conversations to the incessant accompaniment of tapping spoons. The morning we arrived, we scarfed a sidewalk table where already a guitarist was singing. An accomplice kept time on a guero, (a percussion instrument made from an oblong gourd scored on the outside), with a hole on one end where he collected tips. Like most of the musicians I know, he did not look exactly thrilled to be there at that time of day.

The duet passed on, and there soon

followed a marimba ensemble. The marimba is a large, wooden xylophone from Africa. Each of three to four players covers an octave, and together create rich orchestral textures. The bass register notes buzzed with a calliope-like sound. The marimbists were accompanied by a saxophonist and a stand-up trap set, and when not performing requests like "Guantanamera" they preferred a melancholy tango, which seemed to epitomize this city where so much struggle was evident. As the streets and sidewalks continued to fill with vendors, pedestrians, large industrial vehicles, and toxic emissions, the morning headlines screamed, "Taxis are the cancer of Vera Cruz."

Back on the Coastal Highway at the Copacabana Villa Del Mar, a large, airy, thatched-roof dance hall where salsa bands take to stage every day at 2:00 for a Mexican version of "happy hour", the afternoon was well spent sipping rum coolers and nibbling shrimp in hot chipotle sauce, spicy crab salad, fresh pineapple and strawberries. With a soft breeze blowing in from the gulf, it wasn't long before the room filled with dancers in a general state of boozy tranquility.

The first band we heard was "Los Tropicicos", consisting of congas, a lead singer-percussionist, clarinet, trumpet, bass, lead and rhythm guitar. All three string instruments were of the Hofner "Beatbass" variety. An awkward youth grappled with the rhythm chords — while, next to him, an aged veteran in sunglasses sketched beautiful melodic lines with gnarled fingers, deftly weaving them in and out of the rhythmic tapestry while projecting an air of total indifference. The youth and the ancient formed an image of the beginning and the end of guitar playing. Clearly the happy hours were taking their toll, and it was time to retire and rest up for the evening.

The Zocalo was a pleasant refuge from the general havoc of the city. Bounded by a large, colonial cathedral, a busy street, and a long stretch of sidewalk restaurants and bars, the square was planted with palms and shade trees filled with the sound of hundreds of

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tropical songbirds constantly trilling. Below, small children chased legions of pigeons among flower beds blooming even in February, while a large, round, utterly flat fountain bubbled water a few inches into the air, to ripple gently outward in mesmerizing, concentric circles.

At nightfall the bars and cafes of the Zocolo filled with sailors, tourists, farmers, the ubiquitous vendors, strolling families, Indians of many different regions, and the occasional transvestite hooker. Immersed in a visual and aural pastiche that embodied every strata of society, (except the wealthy class), we strolled the square and saw an astonishing variety of string instruments: requintos, biguellas, haranas, guitarrones, bajo sextos, and numerous variations of your basic six string.

The requinto is a three-quarter size guitar usually built with a cutaway. It's tuned up a 5th, hence the name requinto which means "D on the 5th string". Like many Mexican guitars, the body is much deeper, front-to-back, and kicks out a sweet, bright sound that is best suited for fills and lead lines. The most common performance style employs fingers for fast downward motion, and a thumbpick for upward lines, chord solos, thirds, etc.

About three fourths the size of a requinto, the five string biguella has a rounded back, and five or six frets. We heard it used as a chordal, rhythm instrument reminiscent of a ukelele or tiple, (a distant Phillipino cousin). Even more tiple-esque is the tiny harana, a Vera Cruzano variant of those South American charangos made from armadillo shells. The harana has 8 strings, the lowest and the highest being single, while the middle three are doubled.

The entire zocalo was teeming with musicians, whose band affiliations were often distinguished by uniforms. Whether part of the normal scheme of things, or due to the upcoming Carnival celebration, I don't know, but everywhere one turned there was another band tuning up, and eyeballing musicians from rival bands as they vied for spots outside the various cafes. Although I never did figure out what the "starting gun" consisted of, suddenly the air was filled with music.

At one corner of the square, a Mariachi

band in the traditional, wide-sombroed regalia launched into a "pasodoble"; a fast, cut-time that featured a trio of fiddles. Meanwhile a trumpet player crossed the street and readied himself. Then the band broke the time down by half as he played a long, high note over the stream of cancerous taxis, eventually trading fours with a trumpeter on the other side.

Besides fiddles, trumpets, biguellas and guitars, this group was rounded out by a huge, fat guitar bass called a guitar-rone, and the bajo-sexto, a large 12 string. Most of these instruments had elaborate inlays of wood and mother of pearl, often in a large, star-shaped pattern around the sound hole. One bajo-sexto was lavishly embellished in silver, and another artisan had adorned his guitars with tiny, tiny seashells, starfish, black coral and amber.

A few meters down, the marimba ensemble that had been languid at Café La Parroquia that morning was tearin' it up. Nearby, sat an old Indian lady selling cigarettes to young women who stopped to chat her up, and scope out prospects.

The supple syncopation of the Marimba's sambas contrasted with a Norteño band in leopard skin cowboy hats. If you're familiar with Norteño, a style heavily influenced by polkas and waltzes brought by German and French immigrants in the 19th century, it's probably through recordings of Flaco Jimenez, the Tex-Mex accordionist celebrated by Ry Cooder and film-maker Les Blank. The Leopards played upright bass, mandolin, bajo-sexto and accordion.

In this manner the musicians stretched down the length of the square. Another marimba, a table of Cuban sailors singing to a bouncy "cumbia" with guitars and conga drums, a trio singing vocal harmonies, a duo with a small oblong guitar and a large harp. There were also a dozen self-accompanied singers moving from table to table, as well as random string players who ambled about joining the different groups.

Finally, at the end of the square, a thirty piece drum corps played "batucada" style warm-ups for the forthcoming Carnival, alledged to be the biggest blow-out in all of Mexico. As we listened from the middle of the square, the sounds of the Zocalo blended into a boisterous human mimicry of the tree-top bird gatherings, both exhilarating and disarming.

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Rock Guitarist Steve Vai

by Tim Alexander

Tim Alexander is a local rock guitarist, formerly with the band "Invisible College." We welcome your responses to his opinions as expressed. Send them to: Minnesota Guitar Society, P.O. Box 14986, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

Sometimes, when I think of rock music, I think I would rather hear silence. Silence rather than the gun metal shards of white noise that are characteristic of modern music.

I think that most bands operate on the level of shock value, blather for blather's sake.

The real problem for me is that I have a sincere love for rock music which prompted me to spend the last fourteen years learning to play. It's so hard to wade through the crap that is around to find anything worth listening to, because what is popular now is mostly hair and shoes. One album that managed to turn my warped crank, is last year's release by the ex-Van Halen singer David Lee Roth. It's called "Eat 'Em and Smile" (WB4-25470).

Roth had a break up with the Van Halen brothers in '85 and parted company with his 11 year and 5 gold album companions who have now formed with another rocker, Sammy Hagar. Eddie Van Halen is probably one of the most influential rock guitar players of the decade and it was wondered how David could do any better but, he has.

Steve Vai, schooled at Berkley and seven year veteran of Frank Zappa's band (and also played Sam Butler in the Saturday matinee version of the Robert Johnson story, is) without a doubt, *The* most dexterous and original rock guitar player to come down the pike in a long time.

Vai got his job with Frank Zappa by transcribing solos from the albums by ear and then mailing them to the musical despot, securing a position with the madman for 7 years. At 24, he is now out seeing the world.

From the opening laughing guitar solo of "Yankee Rose" to the adrenaline-

tinged 32nd notes of "Shy Boy" he proves himself every bit the educated fine toned player; just one listen by the most trained player would change their views of rock guitar players as cross-dressing hormone disasters.

It's is a light-hearted funny album of very good music, from the cover version of "Tobacco Road" to the cover of Sinatra's "That's Life" — good blues and good music and a couple of belly laughs. It's worth one listen.

Billy McLaughlin's Solo Debut

Close your eyes and you won't believe what you are hearing is an acoustic guitar. Open your eyes and you can't imagine how he does it or that it works. No guitarist from the local scene can boast so much sound from one guitar. **Michael Hedges** and **Stanley Jordan** are the only possible comparisons to local guitarist, **Billy McLaughlin's** "hand-over-hand" style of non-traditional tunings and "tapping" techniques. This is Billy's local solo debut after graduating with honors from the University of Southern Cal's prestigious guitar department, Los Angeles' **Andrew York** from **Windham Hill's** upcoming guitar sampler will open. Minneapolis native and special guest vocalist, **Karen Pedersen** will also be in from the West Coast.

Evans Music presents **Billy McLaughlin**, Tuesday, May 5, 7:30 p.m., at **O'Shaughnessy Auditorium**, College of St. Catherine. Reserved seating \$5 in advance, \$6 at the door, available through O'Shaughnessy, 690-6700, and Evans Music, 429-0236.

Tony Hauser and Friends

On May 9, at 8:00 p.m., **Tony Hauser** will present a varied program of chamber music for flute, guitar, harpsichord and strings. The performance will be held in the "Art Room" of Hennepin Ave. United Methodist Church which is located at the intersection of Lyndale and Groveland. Joining Tony will be: **Betty Braunstein** on flute, **Randy Orsak** on violin and viola, **Anna Vazquez** on cello and **Merilee Klemp**, who will play Harpsichord, piano and English horn.

The program will include the renaissance consort music of John Dowland, a quartet by Schubert, a baroque lute concerto by Kohaut, "Hausmusic" by Ernst Krenek, works by Calstelnuovo-Tedesco and Gerhard Maasz, and the premiere of music by composer Steve Kimmel titled "Darling Dance", as well as a flute-guitar duo by Tony Hauser. A special feature of the concert will be several popular "Klezmer" tune.

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MGS Calendar

May

May 1, **Kevin Daley** at St. Mary's College 8:00 p.m.

May 1-10, **Tony Hauser** at Edinborough Park in Edina.

May 3, **Jeffrey Van** with Bakken Chamber Players at Bakken Library 4:00 p.m.

May 4, **Jeffrey Van** with Bakken Chamber Players at James J. Hill House - 240 Summit Ave., St. Paul 7:30 p.m.

May 7, **Scott Davies** Flamenco Guitar at Carleton College in Northfield.

May 8, 9, **Kevin Daley** with Michelle Moline at Sweeney's 8:00 p.m.

May 8, 9, **Tim Sparks** at Zelda's with Prudence Johnson.

May 9, **Tony Hauser** - Chamber Music with Guitar - at the Art Room at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church 8:00 p.m.

May 10, **Scott Davies** with David Harris, Baritone and Mick LaBriola, Percussion, "Voices of Sepharad" at the Temple of Aaron - 6165 Mississippi River Blvd., St. Paul 8:00 p.m.

May 10, **Pat Donohue** at the Ex-tempore.

May 14, **Michael Ziegahn** at the New Riverside Cafe 7:00 p.m.

May 14, **Dean Magraw** with Organ Grinder Review at Viking Bar.

May 20, 27 **Tim Sparks** with Bopertors at Macready's.

May 22, **Dean Magraw** with Latin Jazz Combo at Town Square Park 11:30 a.m.

May 22, 23, **Tim Sparks** with Rio Nido at Dakota Bar.

May 22, **Kevin Daley** with Shelly Moline at Sweeney's 9:00 p.m.

May 22, **Jim Ouska** at Riverside Cafe with Air Mail Special 8:30 p.m.

May 29, **Tim Sparks** with Prudence Johnson at Sweeney's.

June

June 3, 5, 6, 7, **Tony Hauser** at Edinborough Park in Edina.

June 7, **Dean Magraw** with Latin Jazz Combo at Nicollet Island.

June 11, **Dean Magraw** with Organ Grinder Review at Viking Bar.

June 18 **Kim Bloom** at Bakken Library with First in a series "Guitar and Friends".

June 24, **Jim Ouska** at Riverside Cafe with Air Mail Special 8:30 p.m.

Saturdays/ **Dave Ray** — Blues Guitar — at St. Anthony East Bar.

Fri/Sat, **Tony Titus** at Criterion.

Dean Granros continued from page 1

It was at the Triangle that I first heard Dean perform, and it was a perfect opportunity to hear the different aspects of Dean's playing. I noticed that Dean had no trouble playing "inside" the chord changes. On a standard, like "Girl from Ipanema", his comping sounded almost like the conservative, Jim Hall and his solo carefully followed the changes. On his own tunes, however, he cut loose. He seemed to exhaust the possibilities of the guitar: arpeggios, scales, repeated notes, unison notes, intervals and chords, all free of a chord progression yet linked together with uncanny logic.

Now that The Triangle has closed there is nowhere for jazz musicians like Dean Granros to play. So, for the public, Dean's guitar has been silenced. But all is not lost; Dean is planning to release an album of original music with Ron Evinvik on bass and Jay Epstein on drums. He will also release a cassette of solo guitar playing. Hopefully, these recordings will cause Dean to perform again, then we can all appreciate the guitarist who plays like no one else.

(Editor's Note: The following was received too late to revise for this article. We include it for further insight into Dean's style.)

Steve, the following are some suggestions I have for your article based on what you read to me over the phone:

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As far as composers go, Webern YES, but Schoenberg and Berg NO.

If mentioning "classical" composers I was influenced by, mention Webern, Messiaen, Stockhausen, Verese, Stephan Wolpe, Cage, and Charles Ives.

Also, please don't single out Bach as an example of a music I was 'at odds' with at the U of M. I like Bach and I think there's some implication in your statement that "while his classmates studied the music of Bach, Dean was off doing such and such" etc. that I belittle music of the past — I don't. I think it's beautiful, it's just that I'm living in the present. At any rate, I think it would be better if you generalized with something like 'traditional classical studies' etc. rather than singling out Bach — it's bound to offend somebody and I don't want to appear disrespectful.

I really think the point of the whole thing is that I grew up in sort of an 'expanding music culture' i.e. the whole 1960's thing. Everybody was searching for something 'new and meaningful' both musical and non-musical. It was a time of uncritical openness and naivete.

Like many others, I listened to everything I could — and certain things moved me and caught my ear.

As far as my style (or anyone's) goes, I think a good analogy might be found in cooking stew. You start with a base — a broth. For me, the base the other ingredients went into turned out to be the 'jazz guitar' tradition. Anyway, you put in all kinds of ingredients, things you have around, and it cooks in the pot (Me). After a short while you taste the ingredient's flavor . . . but, if you simmer it long enough, say 15 or 20 years longer, things start to blend together and permeate each other and you end up with maybe a separate entity.

I've never tried to push myself to simply sound different but I have allowed myself to develop in what's seemed to me a natural course. What I'm trying to say is, sounding different from someone else is not the important thing, it's expressing oneself honestly and sincerely that is important, and following where things naturally lead is what makes music exciting for me. I just naturally like to explore.

Dean Granros

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