

# Guitarist

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

MARCH / APRIL 1999

VOL. 15 NO. 2



MGS Sundin Hall Series presents Peppino D'Agostino

see page 2

## Peppino D'Agostino

Fingerstyle guitarist Peppino D'Agostino will perform a solo concert at Sundin Hall on Saturday, April 17. The *Chicago Tribune* says about his work: "D'Agostino plays steel string guitar with virtuosity and complexity ... Influences are as far-flung as the flamenco work of Paco de Lucia and the pop sensibility of the Beatles, evident in the songs he's written, which brim with memorable melodies."

D'Agostino, who claims to have been "obsessed" with music since his childhood, is still exploring and expanding. Few can match Peppino's combined technical prowess and lyrical artistry on the steel string, and not many are as eager to challenge the limits of their instrument-using unconventional tunings, playing the notes on the fretboard only with left hand while simultaneously creating percussive effects with the right hand and inventing a mini orchestra of sounds that, on first listen, seem almost impossible for one lone guitar. D'Agostino has released four critically acclaimed albums in the U.S. and two in Europe. He has shared the stage with Leo Kottke, Doc Watson, Chet Atkins, Laurindo Almeida, Michael Hedges, and Egberto Gismonti.

Sundin Hall is located on the campus of Hamline University on Hewitt Avenue, 1/2 block east of Snelling Avenue North in St. Paul. The performance will begin at 8:00 p.m. with general admission tickets at \$10 and MGS members, students and seniors at \$8. Tickets will be sold at the door but may also be reserved by calling 612-418-6219.

## Franco Platino

On Friday, March 12, Italian classical guitarist Franco Platino will play a program which includes Bach's Partita No. 2 (with the Ciaccona), Rodrigo's "Un tiempo fue Itálica famosa," and works by De Falla and Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Platino was the winner of the Naxos recording prize at the 1997 GFA International Competition where he also won the overall second prize. He is substituting for the first prize winner Judicael Perroy, who has canceled the last part of his 60 concert winner's tour.

The good news is that Franco Platino is a magnificent performer and left more than a few competition spectators disappointed for not being granted first prize. Mr. Platino was born in 1973 in Sardegna, Italy. He began to play the guitar at the age of ten and six years later made his debut on Italian television in a series of live broadcasts which reached an audience of more than eight million people.

Platino is currently part of the distinguished "Artist Diploma" program at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, MD, under the guidance of Manuel Barrueco.

Sundin Hall is located on the campus of Hamline University on Hewitt Avenue, 1/2 block east of Snelling Avenue North in St. Paul. The performance will begin at 8:00 p.m. with general admission tickets at \$10 and MGS members, students and seniors at \$8. Tickets will be sold at the door but may also be reserved by calling 612-418-6219.

## Two Local Artists Series Concerts — Kevin Ebert & Brian Lockett

Classical guitarists Kevin Ebert and Brian Lockett will both perform solo recitals at the SE Christian Church in Minneapolis as part of the Local Artist Series.

Kevin's concert is on Sunday, March 21 at 3:00 p.m. His will undoubtedly be a very interesting program of classical repertoire, but no details are available at press time.

Brian's concert is on Sunday, April 18 at 3:00 p.m. and his program contains many rarely heard works including "The Elves" by Nikita Koshkin, "Partita" by Einojuhani Rautavaara and Trois Morceaux by Johann Kaspar Mertz.

Both of these concerts are informal and free admission. The church is located at 960 15th Ave SE, just a few blocks north of Dinkytown.

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## Guitarist

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The opinions expressed in *Guitarist* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the Minnesota Guitar Society.

**DEADLINE:** calendar info, classifieds, articles, etc. for the MAY/JUNE issue is MAR. 25, '99. Please send your submissions to: MGS, PO Box 14986, Mpls. 55414. FFI: 612-374-4681.

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### Minnesota Guitar Society

#### MISSION STATEMENT

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.



Gary  
Joyner

## GUITAR IN THE REAL WORLD

Jerry Lewis, or better yet Jerry Reed, should sponsor a telethon for guitarists — we're suffering from a plague. We are so focused on technique and technical skills that we often become blind to spirit. After gratifying concerts we talk about the speed, the stretches, the complexity of the picking patterns that we witnessed. We don't often say, "I was deeply moved by that," "the Truth in that performance was stunning," or "it brought tears to my eyes."

Why are we stuck at this surface level? Is it because guitar playing is a male dominated area? Are we drowning in testosterone? We have become a sub-culture of guitar players playing for other guitar players, striving to impress each other. The rest of the world doesn't care all that much about how hard it is to play a song, how expensive our guitar is or what tuning it's in. They care about being moved to think in a new way, to experience something fresh, to be emotionally affected, to find a cathartic release, or be motivated to dance. They are hungry to have something communicated to

## Pierre Bensusan - Clinic

Fingerstyle master Pierre Bensusan will present a guitar clinic at 7 p.m., Monday, May 3 at The Podium (425-14th Ave., Minneapolis). Zebra Records released a 20-year retrospect CD of Bensusan's work in February. This summer they will release a new and highly anticipated CD of solo studio recordings. Bensusan has produced two instructional videos through Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop and published two well received books detailing his unique approach to guitar and to music. An in-person Bensusan clinic is a rare treat. He suggests that students bring their guitars and their curiosity to the clinic. Admission is \$15, and this clinic is co-sponsored by The Podium and the MGS. Phone 612-331-8893 for further information.—Gary Joyner



them. Music is about touching people with our humanity. It's about connection with "creative flow." These are the deep drives of the human spirit. They can be, and often are, triggered by actions of honest simplicity.

We can continue following the urge to learn skills, to grow technically. For better or worse, we have to spend a great deal of time alone and self-centered to develop those skills. It's important to remember that the ultimate goal is to use the tools we cultivate as a way to communicate something to the outside world. This requires turning the focus from ourselves and back out toward our audience — which might be one

person, a living room of people, a coffeehouse, or an auditorium. If we get out of our own way, amazing magic can happen. Then we can hope to take the listeners flying with us. Otherwise we're just a mindless wind blowing on an empty mountain.

We don't need a soapbox for our favorite cause in order to have something to say. Art is diminished by sloganeering. When we find a way to use our skills to reach out with the desire to give, to serve, then rich content will take care of itself.

Perhaps it's time to stop and ask: Why do I play music on the guitar? Guitar is a frustrating, confusing, and painful instrument to tackle. Especially acoustic guitar. It hurts your fingertips. Muscles that you've never used before begin to ache. Nonetheless, people who have played guitar for years often fantasize about regaining the passion of their early playing days. They didn't have to force themselves to practice. They could hardly stop playing the guitar. There was an excitement that nothing else could touch. Do you remember something similar, something that drove you to the instrument day after day, and occupied your thoughts when you couldn't actually hold your guitar? All too often this initial fever gets lost.

One villain responsible for the interruption is the discouraging little voice that loves to sit in our head and tell us about all the wrong things

JOYNER, to page 4

### Interested in MGS membership?

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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**JOYNER, from page 3**

we're doing. "You've been working this long and you still can't hold a bar chord or play faster than that?" "So-and-so can do that much better than you can!" Many joyful music-making sessions have been destroyed by that voice. It likes to show up right before a performance. "Who are you kidding, thinking people want to see you play?" Sound familiar? It can actually help to stop and talk to the voice. Tell it to go into the closet and stay there until you're done. Tell it that it can come out later if it wants, but you're not going to listen to it then, either.

A performance consultant pointed out to me the importance of being entirely present in the situation when we perform. He suggested mentally tracing the feeling of your feet as they touch the floor, grounding you. It works, especially if you tend to feel lightheaded and like you're floating above your body when you go before an audience.

Violinist Isaac Stern is quoted having said that he envisions flashes of lightning shooting out from his instrument when he plays. It's a great visualization to borrow — lightning bolts blazing from your guitar and electrifying people. When everything comes together they'll be impressed by what you've done for them rather than what you've done to your guitar.

**A PRACTICING IDEA:**

Here's a simple technique for practic-

ing, arranging, or improvising that yields surprisingly effective and creative results. It's aimed at fingerstyle players, but other applications will be obvious. It works because it makes you stop, think, and search:

Play a melodic pattern at a different position on the fretboard than were you usually play it. You'll need to search for the same pitches on different strings. This will change the tone color of the notes, alter the context of neighboring pitch possibilities, and offer the potential for using open strings in a different way. Can you maintain your original bass line at this new position? How are the chord shapes affected? Is the emotional impact changed? Is it easier to play or harder? Are you freed to think about how the sound is coming across? Chet Atkins has said that he always goes for the easiest way because there's no need to impress anybody.

As a variation, try raising or lowering the melody an octave while leaving the bass line in the original register. Or try playing the melody in an altered tuning. These simple ideas can be just enough to give you a jog, a whack on the side of the head, that will help you slide into a new area.

**CD's**

*Unconscious in Brazil*, Dusan Bogdanovic (GSP Recordings)

Dusan Bogdanovic is a Yugoslavian-born guitarist and composer who

now lives in San Francisco. It's safe to assert that no one plays guitar like him. Bogdanovic's polyrhythmic/polymetric compositions boggle the mind. His twelfth CD continues in the direction of *Mysterious Habitats*, also released by GSP. His off-kilter and occasionally frantic rhythm structures add up to music with remarkable serenity. Therein lies the magic of Bogdanovic. It's a cliché to describe virtuosic solo guitar work as sounding like two guitars. In this case, it would take two accomplished players to pull off some of what he does by himself. But the important part is that the music is uncommonly appealing. Disparate lines move, sometimes together and sometimes against each other, to a common purpose. Many of the tracks on this album have been published prior to the album release. The "Polymetric Studies" are in a folio published by Berben. "Three African Sketches," "Little Café Suite," and others in the set are available individually from Guitar Solo Publications. If rhythmic invention and creativity interest you, this is "must hear" music.

*Electricity*, Scott Fraser

Twin Cities jazz guitarist Scott Fraser has released a new CD with the help of his performing partner, Gene Swanson. Fraser's command of the instrument and inventive improvisational melodic ideas combine with Swanson's rock solid plectrum and fingerstyle rhythm accompaniment to create a very enjoyable listening experience. All the tracks on the album were recorded acoustically with very little reverb. The resulting sound is quite dry with a tone quality reminiscent of Django Reinhardt. *Electricity's* mix of standards, Latin, blues, and upbeat arrangements has a nice feel and is fun to listen to.

**BOOKS**

*Fingerstyle Guitar Essentials* (String Letter Publishing/Hal Leonard)

I took my first serious look at *Fingerstyle Guitar Essentials* when a student brought it to his weekly session. He wanted to work on the lesson entitled "Melodies and Bass Lines" written by David Hamburger.

**JOYNER, to page 5**

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## JOYNER, from page 4

The extensive lesson began with some easy exercises placing a moving bass line in the key of E under a simple repeated open string pattern in the treble voice. It went on to cover a number of cool sounding melodic riffs and fills played over that bass line. The material was lots of fun to work with and the music was usable in the real world. As I paged through the book I found lessons on alternate tunings, arranging for fingerstyle guitar, accompaniment patterns, banjo techniques, and a lot more. Each lesson was written by an expert guitar educator and has appeared in *Acoustic Guitar* magazine. They are presented here in a large and easy to read format. Best of all the book includes a CD with over 80 tracks that contain each exercise played by the teacher. The book is a compendium of essential fingerstyle elements, providing exposure to a variety of styles. If I was a "star" kind of guy I'd give this one five of them.

*Contemporary Chord Concepts*, Steve Khan (Warner Brothers Publications)

First of all I have to confess that I'm not a fan of guitar chord books. I'd go so far as to say that most of them are a waste of "tree flesh," as it were. Books that show fingerings for thousands of chords show the same shapes over and over again, for the simple reason that there really aren't that many shapes to work with in standard tuning.

On the other hand, books that explain the musicality of chords, how to build and use them, are another matter entirely. This book starts with two-note "guide tones" and proceeds to complex chord instruction.

Guitarist Steve Khan's recording history includes work with Miles Davis, Steely Dan, James Brown, Quincy Jones, and more. His book addresses a variety of music styles. If you're an acoustic player who's feeling stuck in a rut Khan's jazzy-funky influence might be just the offbeat shot in the arm that will pull you out. The progressions he teaches would most often be played on an electric guitar, so they will put some demands on the muscles of an acoustic player. But even "folkies" are making use of jazz-inflected chords these days. The book will definitely stimulate creative ideas. The material is deep and covers topics such as chord superimposition and chromaticism. Chapters such as "Choosing a Style," "McCoy Tyner Left-Handed Style Piano Voicings," and "Chordal Study Derived from a Linear Exercise" will encourage you to think while it works your fingers. The two CDs that are included with the package contain examples, play-alongs, and five Khan performances that appear nowhere else.

*Gary Joyner is a singer/guitarist, writer, and teacher living in St. Paul, MN.*

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**MGS Member Performance Calendar**

Compiled / edited by Joanne Backer and Pavel Jany

**MARCH****FRIDAY  
5**

TONY HAUSER & Clea Galhano, recorder in a CD release concert. 8 pm, Nancy Hauser Theater, 1940 Hennepin Ave., Mpls. Tix \$12. FFI: 612-870-9529.

JAMES ALLEN, with J. Mojo Blues Band, 8-10 pm, Snoodles.

PAVEL JANY, Borders Bookstore, Univ. Ave., 8-10 pm.

**SATURDAY  
6**

TONY HAUSER, see March 5.

PAUL HINTZ, solo guitar at Jerabek's Bakery Afternoon Tea, Winifred & Stryker, St. Paul. 1-4 pm.

PAUL HINTZ & Carole Selin, DuoTonic. 8 pm, Anodyne Coffee, 43rd & Nicollet, Mpls.

JAMES ALLEN, see March 5.

STEVE HOWARD, The Rodgers Municipal Lodge, Rodgers, 8:30-12:30 p.m.

PAVEL JANY, Caribou Coffee, Brooklyn Park, 8-10 pm.

**SUNDAY  
7**

PAVEL JANY, Dunn Bros. Coffee, Grand Ave., St. Paul. 9-11 am.

**MONDAY  
8**

JEFFREY VAN, w/the Hill House Chamber Players, 7:30 pm. J Hill House, 240 Summit Ave., St. Paul. Tix \$12. FFI: 292-3268.

**TUESDAY  
9**

PAUL HINTZ, solo guitar at Dunn Bros. on Grand Ave., St. Paul. 8:30-10:30 pm.

**FRIDAY  
12**

MICHAEL HAUSER, flamenco guitar and freinds present a CD release concert for their *Flamenco 2000* CD. This is the 2nd of the 1999 Hauser Salon Seies recitals to be given this month. See Mar. 5 & 6 for tickets, location.

PAVEL JANY, Black Bear Crossings, Como Ave., St. Paul, 8-10 pm

**SATURDAY  
13**

MICHAEL HAUSER, see March 12.

DUOTONIC returns to Cahoots Coffee on Selby & Snelling, St. Paul, 8 pm.

**SUNDAY  
14**

PAVEL JANY, Dunn Bros. Coffee, Grand Ave., St. Paul. 9-11 am.

**MONDAY  
15**

JEFFREY VAN is back at the Hill House. See March 8.

**WEDNESDAY  
17**

Celebrate St. Pat's evening with JIM OUSKA & the Slim Hippos at Mr. Patom's Saloon on W 7th St. in St. Paul, 7-11 pm.

**FRIDAY  
19**

JIM OUSKA & the Hippos rock on at In Cahoots in Hamel, MN at 9 pm.

DUOTONIC at The Roastery, 7-10 pm, Cleveland & Ford Pkwy., St. Paul.

Another HAUSER Artist CD release concert (*Ecos del Alma*) featuring Juan Batista Ruiz, 8 pm. See March 6 for ticket, location information.

PAVEL JANY, Borders Bookstore, Woodbury, 7-9 pm.

**SATURDAY  
20**

KATY TESSMAN, singer-songwriter, Maggies Caffe Espresso, 8 pm, Town Center Dr. & Lexington, Eagan. FFI: 651-681-8522.

HAUSER Artist CD release concert, see March 19.

JIM OUSKA, see March 19.

DUOTONIC, at Border's Books, Richfield, 8-10 pm.

**SUNDAY  
21**

STEVE HOWARD, Barnes & Noble, Blaine (Hwy 10), 2-4 pm.

**THURSDAY  
25**

STEVE HOWARD, Black & White Coffee-house, Little Falls, 7-9:30 pm.

**FRIDAY  
26**

KATY TESSMAN, singer-songwriter, Ginkgo Coffeehouse, 8 pm, Snelling & Minnehaha, St. Paul. FFI: 651-645-2647.

HAUSER ARTIST SALON SERIES featuring Anthony Hauser, guitar. CD release concert for *The Gentlemen Gypsies*. See March 6 FFI.

Calendar, to page 7

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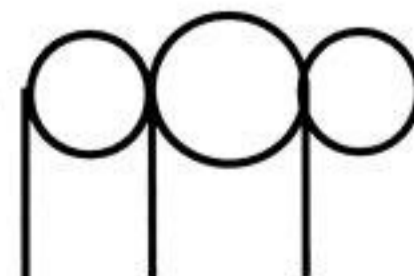
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## CALENDAR, from page 6

SATURDAY  
27

HAUSER Artist Salon Series, see March 26.  
DUOTONIC is at Aroma's Coffee in  
Zumbrota, 8 pm.

TUESDAY  
30

JAMES ALLEN, 8:30-10:30 pm, Dunn Bros.  
Coffee on Grand Ave., St. Paul.

## APRIL

FRIDAY  
2

DUOTONIC at Midway Border's Books, in the  
Midway Marketplace, St. Paul, 8 pm.  
JAMES ALLEN w/J. Mojo Blues Band, 8-10 pm,  
Snoodles.

GLEN HELGESON, w/Axis Mundi, 9 pm,  
Dakota Bar & Grill.

SATURDAY  
3

JAMES ALLEN, see April 2.  
GLEN HELGESON, see April 2.

FRIDAY  
9

STEVE HOWARD, Aroma Coffeehouse,  
Zumbrota, 8-10 pm.

SATURDAY  
10

TONY HAUSER & Clea Galhano, guitar and  
recorder CD release party, 8 pm. 2nd Story Art  
Gallery, Lyndale at 28th St., Minneapolis. FFI:  
612-331-7788.

DUOTONIC, see March 13.

FRIDAY  
16

PAUL HINTZ, solo guitar at Maggie's Town  
Center Eagan, 8-10 pm.

SATURDAY  
17

PAVEL JANY, Caribou Coffee, Brooklyn Park,  
8-10 pm.

SUNDAY  
18

PAVEL JANY, Dunn Bros., Grand Ave., St. Paul.  
9-11 am

FRIDAY  
23

PAVEL JANY, Black Bear Crossings, Como  
Ave., St. Paul. 8-10 pm

SATURDAY  
24

DUOTONIC will appear at the Lake St. Dunn  
Bros., Mpls. 7:30 pm.

SUNDAY  
25

PAVEL JANY, Dunn Bros., Grand Ave., St. Paul.  
9-11 am.

TUESDAY  
27

PAUL HINTZ, solo guitar, see March 9.

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