

Guitarist

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

MAY / JUNE 1999

VOL. 15 NO. 3



PHOTO: Will Agar

MGS presents the annual Classical Guitarathon

see page 2

Classical Guitarathon, May 14

The Minnesota Guitar Society's Classical Guitarathon is always a unique opportunity to hear some of the area's finest classical guitarists. Each year we bring together a wide variety of ensembles and styles to show off the amazing high quality and diversity of the local guitar scene. But this May, on Friday the 14th, we may have outdone ourselves with what can only be called a stellar lineup.

Opening the show will be **Tony Hauser**, **Clea Galhano** on recorder, and **Joan Griffith** on mandolin, performing the music of Brazil and featuring performances captured on Tony and Clea's CD *Distribution of Flowers*.

Following this great ensemble will be our area's most esteemed classical guitarist, **Jeffrey Van**. Jeff is the head of the University of Minnesota's guitar department and the teacher of almost all the guitarists performing in this concert.

Then, **Paul Berget**, who studied with Diana Poulet at the Royal College of Music in London, will perform Renaissance music on the arch-lute.

Anthony Titus, student of the Romero Brothers at the University of California, will follow Paul. Solo performers **Brian Lockett**, **Michael Huff** and **Jeff Lampert**, all students of Jeff Van, will hold the stage after Anthony. Bringing the evening to a close: **Michael Hauser** performing music from his recent CD *Flamenco 2000*. He'll be joined by **Dan Elsen** on guitar and **Jerry Fjerkensted** on cajon.

So join us at Hamline University's Sundin Hall, May 14, 8:00 p.m. for the Minnesota Guitar Society's Classical Guitarathon.

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Without technique, there can be no spirit

by JOE HAGEDORN

With regard to his recent article "Guitar in the Real World" (*Guitarist* Mar/Apr '99) and his not so subtle criticism about the Assad duo's musicality, I fear that Gary Joyner is chasing a red herring created by a common misunderstanding about what it means to perform classical music. Classical musicians, for the most part, perform music composed by others. If a composer intends for a piece to be played at a particular tempo, then it is the performer's obligation to do so. To choose one example, Astor Piazzolla's "Tango Suite," composed for the Assad duo, is very carefully notated with dynamics, articulations and even exact tempo markings. It is quite obvious to me, looking at the score, that it would be impossible for any duo to perform this piece as the composer intended without possessing an extraordinary technical facility. In other words, the spirit of this piece would be entirely lost if it were performed in a way that made it less technically demanding.

Another good example would be Tchaikovsky's violin concerto. I doubt that any modern listener could hear this work and not agree that it is full of passion and emotion, but only the most highly skilled and technically proficient violinists could ever hope to play it with the appropriate spirit. A violinist choosing to per-

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Guitarist

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DEADLINE: calendar info, classifieds, articles, etc. for the JULY/AUGUST issue is MAY 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.

The Guitarist is pleased to welcome new columnist Paul Hintz to our newsletter's list of contributors. Paul is well known in the Twin Cities as a solo guitarist and as half of the jazz/spoken word duo, "Duo Tonic." He begins, in this issue, a series on fingerstyle jazz guitar. — JB

Paul Hintz: Fingerstyle Jazz Guitar

Musicians often resist labeling the kind of music they play. They'll say it's "just music" rather than "jazz" or "folk" or whatever. At the same time, on some level, we all are constantly labeling, and sorting, our experience. Our experiences of sound as much as anything else. And even to say "just music" is often a powerful label. In a way, it's a Big Issue. How do you label your experience enough to understand it, without becoming so attached to the label that you can't have (hear) anything new? Examples are easily found, from the reactions at the first performances of Stravinsky's ballet music to the editorials written in the 1920s about "jazz," that suggest the labels "music" and "noise" can be a matter of cultural or social/racial/economic politics.

I run fingers-first into this Big Issue whenever someone asks me what kind of music I play. My simplest answer is fingerstyle guitar instrumentals. This answer has the virtue of brevity. Unfortunately, it's also a little on the vague side. Sometimes it helps if I add names of famous guitarists I've been inspired by — Joe Pass, Leo Kottke, Elizabeth Cotton. Sometimes it helps if I add "ragtime" and "jazz" as labels. The heart of what I play lies at the intersection of "fingerstyle" and "jazz." Since both of those labels have some implications for what I also hear in contemporary classical guitar playing, I'm happy to have this opportunity to discuss with readers of the newsletter some aspects of the strange and challenging place called "fingerstyle jazz guitar." (An aside on those implications for classical guitar playing: I'm thinking of composers like Leo Brouwer and Roland Dyens, and the advanced harmonic palette and improvisatory flavor they bring to their work. I'm thinking of players like Walter Abt of Germany. I'm thinking of popular compositions like Andrew York's "Sunburst," recorded by John Williams, and recorded by the composer in both steelstring and classical guitar versions.) It may make clearer the discussion in future articles of particular players and recordings if we sketch out working definitions of "fingerstyle" and "jazz."

"Fingerstyle" means a style of playing relying on the use of the right hand fingers to individually strike the strings, and thereby is distinguished from plectrum (flatpick) styles of playing. Further, it carries the suggestion of a style of playing rooted in folk/popular traditions. Just as ragtime, as a style

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Gary Joyner

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In the following material we're going to touch on just a few of the many ways to explore a musical idea, to root out new thoughts and sounds, to be led to places we wouldn't have found otherwise. We'll take some tricks from the grab-bag of development methods used by composers, arrangers, and designers — inversion (turning intervals upside down), retrograde (play it backwards), augmentation (doubling note values), diminution (halving notes values), and repetition, as well as altered tunings. You can use your discoveries to create original technical exercises, compose, write songs, or simply to learn more about how your guitar works. Bits of rhythm or melody fragments will pop up that can be used as motives or grooves. You might surprise yourself with a new way of looking at string choices or an unexpected insight in improvisation.

We'll start with a pre-existing idea and twist it in various ways to find some of its hidden secrets. You can use anything as a source: your own composition, a pop melody, a classical piece, a folk song, anything

JOYNER, to page 5

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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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HAGEDORN, from page 2

form this work is not somehow eschewing emotional and spiritual goals to show off his or her technique, but simply trying to meet the very tall demands made by the composer. Furthermore, every concert violinist is arguably required to know the Tchaikovsky violin concerto because it is so popular with today's audiences.

Another interesting observation from my years of teaching experience is that some beginning adult students with well-trained ears will recognize that even when they perform a very simple piece nearly perfectly, it does not match the performance that I could give the same piece. I then try to explain all of the things I might be doing differently, such as controlling the articulation more carefully, using a wider dynamic range, and producing a more even tone color. Controlling all of these aspects of a performance is possible only with more technical skill. In short, it is impossible to separate technical and interpretive skills completely and there is no such thing as "too much technique" because technique is only a tool used to achieve artistic goals. One reason classical musicians might seem to a lay person overly concerned about technique, is that there are many great pieces of music that we want to play that given our present technical ability are too difficult. I am always amused when I hear a listener say about a classical guitarist that he or she plays "too

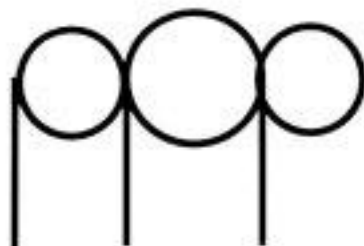
fast," because I want to ask "exactly when do you mean?". What the listener can only really mean is that the performer played a particular piece faster than it was intended to be played or that because of the tempo, other elements of the performance came up short, such as phrasing, articulation and tone production. The expression "too fast" is in fact then describing a lack of musical taste and understanding. When a performed piece sounds difficult and too technical to a listener, it probably means that the player has too little technique skill rather than too much.

With regard to Gary Joyner's feelings about the Assad's concert, everyone has a right to an opinion, but when virtually every person on the planet disagrees (I think I exaggerate only a little), then the opinion might be worth at least more consideration. Many experienced classical listeners and performers (not all guitarists) at the Assad's concert praised them more than anything else for their exceptional musicality. I suspect that the real issue here is that Gary Joyner is unfamiliar with the repertoire (both generally and specifically) played by the Assad's. I hope to not sound patronizing or elitist, but it is just not fair for a listener to assume that he or she can always enjoy complete comprehension of a new work of music on first hearing. The history books are full of famous quotations by experienced music critics who had not learned these

lessons: Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony* was labeled by one critic such a failure that it would never be performed again. Obviously, that particular critic did not sense any emotion or spirit in that performance, because he did not yet understand the piece. If I were to hear a performance of classical Chinese opera for the first time, I would most likely not comprehend very much in the way of emotion or spirit. Does this mean the performance was spiritless? Of course not. Not many years ago, I thought that all flamenco sounded the same and I felt little emotional connection to this music. What has changed my attitude is more repeated listening and therefore a growing understanding. All we have to do is remember what music was dear to our hearts when we were ten years old, fifteen years old, twenty years old, etc. to see a perfectly clear illustration of how our musical tastes change. And when you think about it, what is changing taste but learning to connect emotionally to new kinds of music?

Q.

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JOYNER, from page 3

that you find interesting. Something simple will work best. I once wrote music for a film about a coffeeshop by using a coffee commercial jingle as my source material. The original was transformed and the resulting pieces varied widely, but they held together on a subconscious level because of the common source. Some music will offer more ideas than others. That's part of the adventure. You will find different things than I or anyone else. Follow the ideas where they want to lead you. Remember that the idea here is not to rearrange the source music, but to generate new ideas.

I decided to use a portion of Purcell's "Trumpet Tune" in my examples below. It's easy to play. It's got a simple melody and harmony structure. I've always liked it's fanfare quality. You'll find it in beginning/intermediate collections in the key of D. For starters I decided to try it in D Major tuning (DADF#AD). It seemed like a logical choice. Then I tried Dsus4 tuning (DADGAD) and G Major (DGDGBD). Nothing was clicking. Finally I decided to transpose the piece to C and try it with Csus2 tuning (CGCGCD). Things began to get interesting, to sound better. The essential difference between D, G, and C tunings is on which string you find the 3rd of the key (or 2nd or 4th in suspended tunings). In D tuning it's on the third string, in G it's on the second string, and in C it's on the first. The change is simple but the effect can be dramatic. (If you'd like to read more on this topic you'll find that I covered it in detail in the March, 1999 issue of *Acoustic Guitar* magazine.)

I've written out the first eight bars of "Trumpet Tune" in the key of C. The tablature is in Csus2 tuning. Play it through to get used to how it works. The open strings make it fun.

In the Variation 1 I've applied a retrograde operation to the rhythm in the first two measures. Melodies are often restated in retrograde. In this case I left the melody notes in the original order but reversed their rhythm pattern. The bass line is unchanged. Notice how the 16th-dotted 8th note patterns create a new

Trumpet Tune

Tuning: Csus2

1

4

7

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HINTZ, from page 3

of composition, could be said to be a synthesis of 19th century European/Romantic piano music with turn-of-the-(last)-century African-American social dance rhythms and forms, so 'fingerstyle' guitar is a synthesis of Euro-American and African-American elements. Since it is an approach to playing, more than a set of particular pieces, its limitation is also its strength: it's a very guitaristic way of making music. Bach is Bach, and for that matter ragtime is ragtime, no matter what instrument is being used. But 'fingerstyle' guitar is idiomatic to the guitar. Part of that idiom employs in varying ways 1) rhythmic and harmonic/melodic counterpoint between the bass (the thumb's notes) and the treble (the 'i-m-a' notes) 2) the guitar's friendliness, in standard EADGBE tuning, toward sharp keys and dislike of flat keys that can't exploit the open (unfretted) strings; and 3) the guitar's friendliness toward alternate tunings, which alter the sonority of the instrument in beyond the standard tuning, and the 'miniature piano' concept of thumb ('left hand') versus fingers ('right hand').

People have spent books defining jazz. A shorthand definition might isolate three elements: 1) a strong and steady rhythmic pulse (swing) most often characterized by emphasis on the second and fourth beats of a four-beat meter; 2) a harmonic language based on 7th chords; and 3) improvisation of melodic lines, all or parts of the harmonic structure, and rhythmic patterns superimposed on the underlying 'swing.' These elements are in three-way tension in any performance labeled 'jazz.' The less they are in (a dynamically maintained) balance, the more likely it is that people who otherwise appreciate what they label 'jazz' will find that performance unsatisfactory. If one or more element is missing entirely, the label 'jazz' begins to sound wrongly applied. On the other hand, many styles that are usually labeled 'jazz' ("free jazz" for instance, and rock/jazz fusion) are excluded by the definition I'm offering.

That can be a problem, as we'll see in the discussion of Duck Baker's work

in a future column. I've tried to be careful to make these general definitions clear for this reason: Most guitarists who have worked, or who are working, at the intersection of the 'fingerstyle' tradition and the 'jazz' tradition have come from one path or the other. Just as 'ragtime' and 'jazz' share many aspects of origin and audience, but are fundamentally different ways of articulating 'time' ('swing') and composition/improvisation, so 'fingerstyle' with its ragtime-like roots, and 'jazz' have some irreducible area of disagreement. How a given player copes with those disagreements is part of the fascination, for me, of playing in this hybrid style.

This first column has been devoted to a general description of the territory that the label "fingerstyle jazz guitar" is meant to cover. Future columns will discuss the contributions of some of the most prominent players, past and present, whose "maps" of this territory, drawn in reference either to 'fingerstyle' or 'jazz' origins, appear to be the most influential; among them, George Van Eps, Joe Pass, Blind Blake, Stefan Grossman, Duck Baker, Pat Donohue, and Martin Taylor. Reader comments, questions, opinions, etc. would be most welcome.

Paul Hintz performs as a solo fingerstyle and jazz guitarist throughout Minnesota. He's also half of the jazz/spoken word duo "DuoTonic," and the guitarist in The Carole Selin Quintet. A CD re-release of his tape of original material, Two States of Mind, is planned for summer of 1999. He can be reached at 651-699-6827 or <phintz@scisoc.org>

JOYNER, from page 5

feeling in the same string of notes. The same process was applied to measures three and four in Variation 2. The result would be different if I had approached the four measures as a whole instead of in two bar sections. Play with these variations, "loop" them, improvise around them.

In Variation 3 we move on to measures five and six of the original. The melody is in retrograde with the bass line and rhythm untouched.

I applied augmentation to the bass line of measure 7 in Variation 4. Stretching the bass line out in this way is a common way to extend a section of music. Maybe the result would be more interesting if the original pattern wasn't uniform quarter notes. What do you think? Various things could be done to the melody line to accommodate the new two measure environment. Rests might have been added, some note values augmented, or new notes added. Here I simply repeated the line.

Exercise 5 shows all elements of the final four measures in retrograde. Does it sound strange to you? Part of the fun of the process is finding the music in the new material. This example provides some tricky 16th note patterns. Can they be made to work? Try slurring notes with hammer-ons, pull-offs, and slides.

We return to the first four bars for Variation 6. Diatonic inversion was used. A whole step down becomes a whole step up. In diatonic inversion the new note is adjusted to remain in the key. In this case, it works well to play the last note of each bar as an anticipation to the next bar's phrase.

You can mix techniques. Try repetition, augmentation, or diminution on Variation 1. Try an alternating thumb bass line someplace. The field is wide open.

I hope you find surprising and interesting musical gestures in your activities. If one piece of music doesn't bear fruit, try another. Be playful. This is fun stuff. We've merely touched the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Have fun.

Trumpet Tune Variations

Tuning: Csus2

Var. 1

Var. 2

Var. 3

Var. 4

Var. 5

Var. 6

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REVIEW

A transcription of classical guitarist Scott Tennant's arrangement of "Wild Mountain Thyme" (\$5.00) has been published by Guitar Solo Publications. Tennant's arrangement of the traditional Scottish melody is in Dropped D tuning and falls well within an intermediate guitarist's capabilities. The music is airy and gentle, a lovely piece of work. You can almost smell the heather as you play

it. Tennant recorded his arrangement on the Delos CD, *Wild Mountain Thyme* (DE-3207).

The Guitar Works of Paulinho Nogueira, Volume 1, 9 Pieces (\$15.00) is a new addition to GSP's *The Great Guitarist of Brazil* series. Nogueira lives in Sao Paulo where he works as a master guitarist, teacher, singer, songwriter, and instrument designer. His 1968 method book has seen 20 reprints

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MGS Member Performance Calendar

Compiled / edited by Joanne Backer and Pavel Jany

MAY

SATURDAY

1

JAMES ALLEN with J. Mojo Blues Band at Snoodles, 8:30-12:30 p.m.

SCOTT FRASER w/GENE SWANSON, Caribou Coffee, Brooklyn Park, 8-10 p.m.

MICHAEL HAUSER and dancers appear at the Festival of Nations, River Centre, St. Paul

SUNDAY

2

PAVEL JANY, at Dunn Bros. Coffee, Grand Ave., St. Paul, 9-11 p.m.

MICHAEL HAUSER, see May 1.

MONDAY

3

MICHAEL HAUSER and Cuadro Flamenco appearing at the Loring Bar, 9 p.m.-12:30 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

5

PAVEL JANY, Caribou Coffee, Minnetonka, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

SATURDAY

8

DELIRIO AMOROSO, Miniature House Operas by Handel presented by EX MACHINA, Art Gallery, Hennepin Ave., Methodist Church. FFI: 651-455-8086

SUNDAY

9

JOHN BLACK, Dunn Bros. Coffee, Grand Ave., St. Paul, 9-11 a.m.

EX MACHINA, see May 8.

THURSDAY

13

KATY TESSMAN, singer-songwriter, U of MN Student Center, St. Paul Campus, 12:00 noon.

FRIDAY

14

JAMES ALLEN with Stir Fry, Borders Bookstore, Woodbury, 7-9 p.m.

SATURDAY

15

PAVEL JANY, Caribou Coffee, Brooklyn Park, 8-10 p.m.

MICHAEL HAUSER, solo, at the Walker Art Center Late Night Series, 10:30 p.m.

SUNDAY

16

JOHN BLACK, see May 9.

KATY TESSMAN, singer-songwriter, The Coffee Grounds, Hoyt & Hamline Ave., Falcon Heights, 7 p.m. FFI: 651-644-9959.

TUESDAY

18

SIMEON HAMBRO, solo at Dunn Bros. Coffee on Grand Ave., St. Paul, 8:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

19

PAVEL JANY, see May 5.

FRIDAY

21

JAMES ALLEN at Great Waters Restaurant, St Paul, 8:30-11:30 p.m.

PAVEL JANY, Borders Bookstore, Midway, 8-10 p.m.

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JOYNER, from page 9

and is still a best seller. The nine pieces in the new book cover a period from 1960-1990. The compositions are for one and two guitarists and range from easy to challenging. The rhythms are characteristic of Brazilian music. The harmonies are lush while maintaining a relative musical simplicity. You are guaranteed to walk away with some good chord ideas. "Soneto em Mi Menor" ("Sonnet in E Minor") is a charming elementary level study in 6/4. The most difficult element in the other pieces is making sure to read the music correctly. "Tons e Semitons," which Nogueira names as his most daring composition, is for solo guitar with strings one and six tuned down to D. It is printed on two staves in order to illustrate the rhythms and voices. Reading this format is daunting, but not as hard as it first appears. It is a pleasure to play through Nogueira's music, to follow his unique fingerboard logic, and to witness the presence of a creative musical mind. GSP materi-

als can be ordered directly from the publisher at www.gspguitar.com. In Minneapolis they can be obtained through The Podium (612-331-8893).

Minneapolis guitarist Tony Hauser collaborated with recorder player Clea Galhano to make *Distribution of Flowers*. The music comes from composers in Galhano's native country of Brazil — Heitor Villa-Lobos, Mozart Camargo Guarnieri, Pixinguinha, among others. Argentinian bandoneon master Astor Piazzolla is also represented.

Chirping birds at the beginning of the CD set the tone for the serene atmosphere that will be created. The interpretations suggest romantic whispers, wine, and candlelight. *Distribution of Flowers* is a very enjoyable recording, well played, and cleanly recorded. For more information contact Hauser Artists at www.hauser.artists.com, or telephone 612-870-9529.

Creative cross-pollination of regional musics has become popular in World

Music. *Mountain Tale* (Zebra Acoustic Records) accomplishes such interbreeding with great success. The Bulgarian Voices [Angelite], the Moscow Art Trio, and Huun-Huur-Tu bring their Bulgarian, Russian, and Tuvan roots together to create compelling music.

The textures constantly change — tight harmonies of the women's choir, rasping vocals and Tuvan folk instruments, and modern Russian jazz sounds. Snaky lines reminiscent of Don Cherry stumble upon Klezmer-esque ensembles which then might round a corner into otherworldly harmonies. I could list some of the Tuvan stringed instruments, rattles and drums, but I would probably spell them wrong and you wouldn't even know it. You want guitar? It's there, too. This is a superb album and highly recommended to anyone interested in World Music or edgy music in general. Zebra Acoustic Records are widely available. Visit them at www.zebradisc.com.

CALENDAR, from page 8

**SATURDAY
22**

JAMES ALLEN, see May 21.

TONY HAUSER at the Anderson Center in Red Wing, MN from 4:30-10 p.m.

KATY TESSMAN, singer-songwriter, Dunn Bros. Coffee, Lake St. & Humboldt, Uptown, Mpls. also featuring Jean Henze, Brownen Williams and Dave Stanoch, 612-827-5094.

**SUNDAY
23**

PAVEL JANY, see May 2.

**SATURDAY
29**

TONY HAUSER, solo guitar, 3 p.m. in the Lakewood Cemetery Chapel, 3600 Hennepin Ave., Mpls.

**SUNDAY
30**

PAVEL JANY, see May 2

JUNE

TUESDAY

1

SCOTT FRASER w/GENE SWANSON, Treasure Island Casino, Red Wing, 8 p.m.-12:30 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

2

PAVEL JANY, see May 5.

SCOTT FRASER w/GENE SWANSON, see June 1.

THURSDAY

3

SCOTT FRASER w/GENE SWANSON, see June 1.

FRIDAY

4

JAMES ALLEN, see May 1.

SCOTT FRASER w/GENE SWANSON, see June 1.

SATURDAY

5

JAMES ALLEN, see May 1.

SCOTT FRASER w/GENE SWANSON, see June 1.

SUNDAY

6

JOHN BLACK, Dunn Bros. Coffee, Grand Ave., St. Paul, 9-11 a.m.

MICHAEL HAUSER, see May 3.

MONDAY

7

SCOTT FRASER w/GENE SWANSON, Minnehaha Falls Band Show, 7-8:30 p.m.

MICHAEL HAUSER, see May 3.

SUNDAY

13

JOHN BLACK, see June 6.

WEDNESDAY

16

PAVEL JANY, see May 5.

SUNDAY

20

PAVEL JANY, see May 2.

FRIDAY

25

SIMEON HAMBRO, 7:30 p.m., Dunn Bros. Coffee, Roseville (Co. Rd. B & Hamline Ave.).

SUNDAY

27

PAVEL JANY, see May 2.

WEDNESDAY

30

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