

# Guitarist

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

JULY / AUGUST 2001

VOL. 16 NO. 10

## 2001-2002 Sundin Hall Series Announced

At the sold out **Classical Guitarathon** on May 26th, 2001, next season's **Sundin Hall** series was announced by **MGS Artistic Director** STEVEN RINGS. Season tickets will go on sale to **Minnesota Guitar Society** members first, in early August, 2001 and then to the general public, 3-4 weeks later. Mark your calendars now!

(...all concerts start at **8:00 PM**...)

Six of the nine dates from last season were sold out, so, an updated membership is highly recommended for the coming season.

If you are receiving the bi-monthly **Guitarist** newsletter in the mail, then you are a current **MGS** member.

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Saturday, October 13 . . . . .	Los Angeles Guitar Quartet ( <i>the world's hippest guitar group</i> )
Sunday, October 14 . . . . .	Los Angeles Guitar Quartet
Friday, November 16 . . . . .	Eduardo Fernandez ( <i>back by popular demand</i> )
Saturday, December 15 . . . . .	Acoustic Guitarathon
Friday, January 25 . . . . .	Tim Sparks: world touring local luminary
Saturday, February 16 . . . . .	Amadeus Duo: Thomas Kirchner & Dale Kavanaugh
Friday, March 15 . . . . .	Michaell Nicollela: performing on both classical and electric guitar
Saturday, April 20 . . . . .	Martha Masters: winner of the 2000 GFA competition
Friday, May 24 . . . . .	Classical Guitarathon



***A salute to Steven Rings...******... and a new job for Paul Hintz***

As many members of the Guitar Society already know, STEVEN RINGS has been accepted into the doctoral program in Music Theory at Yale University, and resigned his position as Artistic Director with this Society, effective at the end of August. Steve was instrumental in the planning, promotion, and specifically the grant-writing that made our recent concert series the most successful in our history. Our increased membership, and exciting plans for the future, owe a great deal to his energy, insight, and abilities. He will be missed, and we wish him success and happiness in his new endeavors.

Replacing Steven, under the new title of Managing Director, is PAUL HINTZ, a long-time Guitar Society member who has served as Secretary and Board Member for the last year and a half. In addition to carrying on Steve's responsibilities in support of the concert series, Paul will begin serving as editor of the newsletter (to which he has been a frequent contributor).

Having been handed a parachute by the world of corporate technical editing earlier this year, Paul has returned to teaching, as well as taking on these new duties for the Society and maintaining an active performing life as a jazz guitarist. Please introduce yourself to him at the next concert—he's the guy selling the T-shirts in the lobby.





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 Detail from  
*Instrucción de Musica sobre la Guitarra Española*  
 by Gaspar Sanz (1675)

## Guitarist *A publication of the 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.*



**Everything That's Real**

by Steve Haskin

Everything was happening for Ellis. She was just about to make it big. Her band, Bobby Llama, had just won "Best Unsigned Band in America" in a contest sponsored by the Sam Goody record store chain. Winning this prestigious contest meant that Bobby Llama would soon have a record contract, first step to fame and fortune. The Star Tribune said, "When you see Ellis, you'll say, 'Yes, she will be on the cover of Rolling Stone someday.'" Ellis seemed to have it made. Then she quit.

I couldn't wait to ask Ellis what had happened. Why would someone stop just when the success they had worked so hard for seemed so near. After hearing the song *Rock n' Roll Star* from her incredible new CD, *Everything That's Real*, I didn't need to ask. The song details the life of a rising star, someone who is about to become your typical rock star, someone who "wears dark glasses in the night." Ellis didn't want to be a star. She wanted something more substantial. Something more real. "He said, 'It's all about delivery, when you let go of the punch line.' I think it's all about deliverance and I'm going to take my time." Deliverance—a spiritual goal rather than the fifteen minutes of fame that winning a few more contests might have brought. She turned her back on the Faustian bargain to attend to her spiritual salvation. I'm positive this was a wise, wise thing to do.

Ellis quit Bobby Llama on the verge of their success and came home to the Twin Cities to make a new solo album, her third. We can all be glad she did because *Everything That's Real* is as good as they get. It's a collection of songs about love, loneliness, and self-affirmation, accompanied by Ellis's accomplished guitar playing and subtle bass and drums. It doesn't rock you like a great rock band might but more like a lover's warm arms could.

Here's a brief run-down of some of my favorite songs. *The Fool*, the album's opener, is a song about breaking up. The singer is accused of being a fool for leaving her lover. But the song seems to ask, "Who's really the fool here?" Ellis, who grew up in Texas, uses the remnants of her southern accent to great effect. Diphthongs draw out her vowels in a way that the pure vowel sounds of your typical Minnesota accent can't match. She often starts a little flat in pitch, coming up gradually to her notes in the way of a flamenco singer. Drummer Peter Anderson adds lovely tambourine on the chorus and fills in between the phrase with drum rolls that Ellis refers as *The Little Drummer Boy*-effect. *Love Song* follows and it is the counterpart to the first tune; a long litany of her lover's attributes culminating with the request to "Take me as I am." Soft background vocal and subtle bass, played by Brian Roessler, help the tune along.

*The Phoenix* is naturally, about catharsis. The song has some of Ellis's nicest guitar playing, with a base

*Everything That's Real ( to page 4 )*

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*Everything That's Real (from page 3)*

line in the chorus that features parallel fifths. When I interviewed her, I expressed my admiration for her knowledge of Egyptian mythology. She told me she got the idea for this song from her recent reading of the latest Harry Potter book. I was still impressed.

Ellis belts out the blues in *Oh My Dear Child* as she advises her listeners to follow their instincts on the road toward self-affirmation. This is her most accomplished vocal so far. She jazzes up her otherwise folksy guitar work with minor 7th chords and, again, the rhythm section gives the song just the boost it needs.

Speaking of guitar, *Promises* has a two-minute solo guitar intro that sounds like it came from the green hills of Ireland. Ellis, a self-taught guitar player, told me it was originally just an exercise she wrote to improve her playing. Her study led to the song.

In *Angel* Ellis expresses her loneliness and, again, her craving for spiritual values: "I feel lost. I'm trying to move forward." She prays for an angel's help. I asked her, did you mean a real angel? "Of course," she answered. I should have known.

The title tune is the album's rocking-ist. The singer tells us to "question everything." *Oak Tree* is a lazy, on-the-front-porch kind of song. A little peace amid life's chaos. *Run Away* is Joni Mitchellesque in its wide melodic leaps. Finally, *I'm Alright* reaffirms the singer's spiritual quest but she's "still in the thick of it."

What a record!

*Everything That's Real* was recorded by John Kuker at Seedy Under Belly studios. Ellis chose John because of his knowledge of analog recording and his collection of vintage equipment. Drummer Pete Anderson used a small kit, made by Yamaha, called Hip Gig. The kit's

size allowed the drums to be recorded without compression and created a more natural sound.

The Star Tribune may be right in predicting that Ellis is destined for the cover of Rolling Stone but I see her more as headed for the cover of The Advocate or The Progressive or maybe, like Ani DiFranco, the cover of Mother Jones. One thing I'm sure of is that Ellis is not going to be one of those conceited rock stars who ends up "wearing dark glasses in the night." Her eyes are wide open.



See Ellis (above) live at this year's **Acoustic Guitarathon, December 15th at Sundin Hall.**



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The National Anthem of Malaysia

# MALAYSIA

Arr. by Bill Scheel

Stately

The musical score is written for guitar in a single system with a treble clef and common time signature. It consists of seven staves of music. The first staff begins with a 'Stately' tempo marking. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes), rests, and fingerings (0, 1, 2, 3, 4). There are also some unusual symbols, such as a circled '8' below the first staff and a circled '8' below the sixth staff. The score concludes with a double bar line and a fermata over the final chord.



## Two New Jazz Guitar CDs Reviewed

by Paul Hintz

Two current releases by the well-respected Concord label highlight the strength of the mainstream jazz guitar tradition, while at the same time they raise some questions about the future of that tradition.

First, is a double-CD reissue of two live recordings by the original line-up of the *Great Guitars*—Charlie Byrd, Herb Ellis, and Barney Kessel. Disc 1 is *At the Winery* from 1980; disc 2 is *At Charlie's Georgetown* from 1983 (the last recording of this line-up). They share many of the group's trademark elements: grab-bag repertoire drawn from old popular songs (such as *Sheik of Araby*) and well-known classics (such as *Body and Soul*) of the 'Great American Songbook' tradition, intricate 3-part arrangements or relaxed 1- or 2-guitar performances that feature each of the three co-leaders in turn, and competent if entirely bland backing by drums and electric bass.

This is jazz as entertainment, and honestly so. In many ways, the Great Guitars group, especially when recorded live, was part of a tradition in jazz dating at least to the Jazz at the Philharmonic concerts organized by Norman Granz beginning in the very early 1950s, and beyond that to the vaudeville tradition of touring troupes of performances: Each member of the ensemble gets a chance to showcase 'signature' licks and tricks, and faultless presentation is prized over risk-taking improvisation. Nothing wrong with that, and in the case of these recordings there's a great deal of interest for any guitarist who wants to listen to a variety of source-ideas about soloing on and arranging 'standard' material in a very audience-friendly way. But, because no real chances are taken, and because only by taking chances do new things appear in any art, this re-issue set isn't likely to suggest to any guitarist what might come next in the world of jazz guitar.

That same is true, for different reasons, with Kenny Burrell's new CD, *Lucky So and So*. Let's start with the packaging, and end with the music. That may sound backwards. But that's going to be the point. Here's the first sentence from the blurb on the back of the CD: "Combine a consummate sense of swing, an encyclopedic musical vocabulary and always excellent taste and you have the one-and-only jazz guitar artistry of the legendary Kenny Burrell."

Even allowing for the fact that this was written by some PR hack and not a musicologist, what exactly qualifies someone as "legendary"? And why would anyone still living and working even want to be labeled this way?

The superlatives are piled higher in the liner notes, written by the usually more reliable guitarist and author Jim Ferguson. We get the usual recitation of Burrell's sound-byte-size bio: Detroit native, member of the cadre of Detroit jazz musicians who moved to New York in the late 1950s, appeared on hundreds of recordings, notable for his blues-inflected soloing, director of the Jazz Studies program at UCLA, expert on the music of Duke Ellington. We get a sentence about the bassist and drummer. We get no information about the pianist (who's described as playing "keyboards"). The only real news here is that Kenny Burrell sings on four numbers.

It's not good news. Not that he sings badly, exactly. The intonation is all right. The phrasing is all right. There's not much support for the held notes, but that's not a terrible flaw in a jazz singer. The real question is, why did he bother? Burrell has one of the truly distinctive guitar tones in jazz (although it's not well-recorded here). The world has no shortage of very good jazz singers. Why didn't he hire one, and do what he does best, and relieve the competent but completely generic "keyboardist" of the task of taking any solos?

Like the Great Guitars CDs, Burrell's latest recording seems wholly unconcerned with the question of what jazz guitar in the 21st century ought to sound like. It's a monument to "legend" making, an exercise in revisiting the past. Unlike the Great Guitars CDs, which present jazz-as-spectacle and so have a sense of aliveness even beyond their live-recording origins, there seems to be no real musical reason for the release of the Burrell CD. If you want to hear the real deal Burrell, find his CD with John Coltrane, or *Midnight Blue*, or I'll lend you, maybe, my battered copy of a Chess Record 2-fer that I've owned for over 20 years.



Concord Records can be reached at P.O. Box 845, Concord CA 94522 or online at: [www.concordrecords.com](http://www.concordrecords.com).

## An Exercise for the Well-Toned Guitarist

by Paul Hintz

I recently started teaching guitar again, after a hiatus of about 10 years. I'm glad to be back—confronting, on the guitar, the truth of Zen teacher Shunryu Suzuki's observation that "...in the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, while in the expert's mind there are very few." One of the guitar's areas of possibility is tone. And it's interesting to me how beginning students do, and do not, experience tone. The "noises" in their minds, of nervousness in the lesson, of doubts, of just the other 167.5 hours of the week, often make it hard for them to hear the sound of the notes they're playing.

Of course, even experienced guitarists can be 'tone-challenged' in one way or another. This year, I heard an internationally known guitarist play unamplified in a small venue. I'd heard the guitarist once before, in a larger hall, using a wireless amplification system that resulted in a *Wizard of Oz*-effect (the guitar sound appeared to come from somewhere above and behind the curtains) and a thin, colorless tone. Unamplified, in a small, live hall, the guitarist's tone was rich and warm. The amplification or lack of same? The different halls? My own ears?

I've experienced this now-hear/here, now-gone aspect of tone in my own playing. The condition of the strings, shape of the room, size of the crowd, degree of tension in my hands, arms, head—all seem to affect the sound coming from the guitar. Which suggests that tone isn't some "thing" that's abstractable and separate from the guitarist, the room, the audience, or even the guitar itself. "Tone" is one way of describing the interaction of all those elements. Tone is the color of the moment itself.

Tone is therefore the most personal aspect of playing an instrument. Especially in the jazz tradition, where I've devoted most of my learning and playing, nothing is more important than cultivating a tone that is yours and yours alone. And how can you do that if you don't listen to yourself? If you don't listen for a place within you that isn't affected by room or audience or the surface mental noise of the day-to-day?

How to learn to pay attention in that way, to that moment? What happens when you embark on a process of paying attention? And it is a process, simply because paying attention to playing the guitar is more a

long sequence of little decisions than one big "New Year's Resolution" act.

One source of possible answers, and techniques for learning to pay attention, is a book by jazz pianist Kenny Werner. The book opens with an autobiographical account of his path toward greater self-awareness while playing, and includes a series of guided meditations and exercises. Here's one bit condensed from Werner's exercises:

Sit with your guitar held as though you're about to start playing. Close your eyes. Bring your left hand up to the strings. Feel any place in your body where there's extra, unneeded tension. Let it go. Fret one of the strings with your left hand index finger. Don't think about which string or which fret. Don't think about the name of the note you're playing. Just listen to the sound. Say to yourself, "That's the most beautiful sound I've ever heard." When the last whisper of that sound has dissolved into silence, move your hand and play another note, repeating the sentence. Do this for a while. Do this every time you sit down to play the guitar.

There's much more to Werner's book, and his is only one of a number of similar resources for learning to hear your tone.

And when you're doing something as beautiful as playing the guitar, why on earth would you want to have your attention be anywhere else?

Kenny Werner's book, *Effortless Mastery*, is available from Jamey Aebersold Jazz at P.O. Box 1244, New Albany, IN 47151-1244, or online at [www.jajazz.com](http://www.jajazz.com).



Paul Hintz plays 7-string jazz guitar, solo and in DUOTONIC with drummer/vocalist Carole Selin. By the time you read this, he'll have been paying attention to the tone of his long-awaited Dale Unger archtop for almost two months.





**Events,**Sunday, July 1st

PAUL HINTZ, solo 7-string jazz guitar  
Crema Cafe  
34th and Lyndale, Minneapolis, 7:30-  
10:30 pm

Thursday, July 5

GLEN HELGESON with AXIS MUNDI (TRIO)  
The Dakota Bar and Grille, St. Paul  
8:00 - 11:00

Thursday, July 5

JP & THE LAVA LIZARDS  
Central Park Concert  
Faribault, MN  
7 - 8:30 PM  
Free 507-332-2072

Friday, July 6

JP & THE LAVA LIZARDS  
Nicolett Island Concert  
Minneapolis, MN  
7 - 8:40 PM  
Free

Saturday, July 14

TIM DAVEY

Dunn Brothers Coffee at Roseville Library  
Hamline & County Rd. B, 5-7 pm

GLEN HELGESON with AXIS MUNDI  
3:00 - 4:00 (4-piece)  
Raspberry Festival, Hopkins  
9th and Main. Info: 952/931-0878

Thursday, July 19

7:00 - 8:30 (4-piece)

GLEN HELGESON with AXIS MUNDI  
Thursday Night Live at Phalen  
Amphitheater, St. Paul  
3rd parking lot on right on Phalen Dr.  
Info: 651/774-5422

Friday, July 20

SCOTT FRASER GUITAR DUO  
Country Pub Wine Cafe  
301 N. River Front  
Mankato, MN  
8:30 - 11:30 PM

Saturday, July 21

PAUL HINTZ, solo 7-string jazz guitar  
Dunn Bros., Snelling and Grand, St. Paul,  
9-11 pm

PAVEL JANY with BOSSA NOVA and BRAZIL-  
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Sandstone, MN  
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Monday, July 23

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Church St. and University Ave., U of M.  
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Thursday, July 26

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7:00 - 8:00 (trio)  
Excelsior Bandshell, Excelsior  
on Lake St. next to lake Minnetonka.  
Info: 952/474-5233

Friday, July 27

PHIL HEYWOOD  
The Art House, 8 pm  
(3981 Lexington Ave., Eagan, MN;  
952/423-2781)

DUOTONIC, jazz duo, PAUL HINTZ on 7-  
string guitar with drummer/vocalist CAR-  
OLE SELIN

Borders in Richfield, 8-10 pm

Saturday, July 28

4:00 - 5:30 (5-piece)

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www.sliceofshoreview.com

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200 Walnut Street, Mankato, MN  
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Saturday, August 4

7:30 - 9:30

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**Events, to page 10**

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- Dusan Bogdanovic - *Unconscious in Brazil*
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- Stephen Funk Pearson - *Hudson River Debut*
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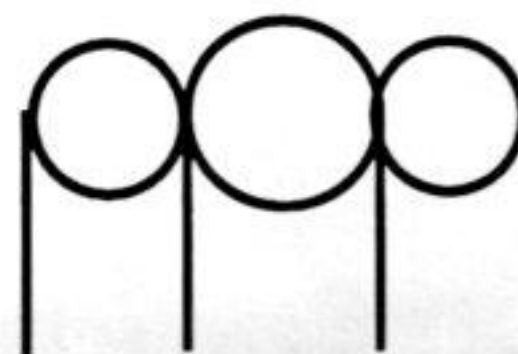
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Twin Cities Jazz Society, P.O. Box 4487, St. Paul, MN 55104-0487.

Thanks for your support!



*Classifieds are free to members and can be placed by mailing ad (please type or print clearly) to: MGS, PO Box 14986, Mpls., MN 55414 or call: 612-677-1151*

**Guitarists or small acoustic ensembles** wanted to perform in an intimate cafe-style surrounding in Dakota County. Some original material preferred. Payment dependent on attendance. Call Dan at 952-423-2781

**Minnesota Mandolin Society** is looking for guitarists. We play classical, ragtime, ethnic and folk music. Call Peter at 651-687-1766 (days) or 612-898-0563 (eves)

**Twin Cities Jazz Information!** Call the Twin Cities Jazz Society JazzLine: 651-633-0329

**Classical & Jazz guitar lessons** by professional instructor with degree in classical guitar and more than 15 years of teaching experience. For more info, call Pavel Jany 651-649-0114

**Guitar Lessons:** folk, classical, country blues, American finger-style. 30+ years experience. Call Ed McGarrity at 612-588-9252

**David Qualey** (finger style guitar) **songbooks** for sale. \$5 ea. Geo. Seifert, 651-481-1639

**I buy guitars!** Dakota Dave Hull, 612-724-6995

FOR SALE: **Contrerras "Studio" guitar**, 1972, appraised at \$1075. Accept offer, Caroline 612-377-8402

FOR SALE: **Ovation Custom Balladeer Model #1612** for sale w/hardshell case \$439 firm. **Yamaha G-120A** classical w/case \$90. 612-633-0329

FOR SALE: **1974 Ramirez Classical** (Indian Rosewood) \$4,200 & CHD Martin Acoustic \$2,100. Dave 605-665-3578

FOR SALE: **Baby Grand Piano, Schimmel.** Ebony laquer. 5 feet 8 inches. Purchased in 1978. Well maintained and cared for by original owners. \$14,500. Carolyn, 715-835-5321

FOR SALE: **1974 Yairi (Brazilian Rosewood)**, \$500, call John at 612-929-7475.

FOR SALE: **1980 Martin D-25K.** Rare model w/beautifully figured Koa sides and top. Distinct appearance w/tortoise pick guard, and other special appointments. Perfect condition, rarely used. One owner. \$2,000. Call Al at 612-473-5224.

FOR SALE: **8 Course Renaissance Lute** made by Eric Saline. Bird's eye maple. \$1,200. Steve, 612-729-2984.

FOR SALE: **1921 Steinway M**, 5' 7", Serial No. 204747, Mahogany Finish, excellent condition, \$28,000, call 651-292-4929

FOR SALE: **1990 Taylor 555**, 12-string. Balanced sound. Great action. \$800.00, Call Paul Hintz at 651-699-6827

***Events, from 10***

**Sunday, August 5 (cont.)**

PAUL HINTZ, solo 7-string jazz guitar  
Crema Cafe, 34th and Lyndale,  
Minneapolis, 7:30-10:30 pm

CURTIS & LORETTA  
White Oak Rendezvous  
Deer River, MN  
(218) 246-9393

**Friday, August 10**

3:00 - 5:30 (4-piece)

GLEN HELGESON with AXIS MUNDI  
Highland Fest, St. Paul  
West side of Ford parkway and Cleveland.  
Info: 651/699 9042

DUOTONIC, jazz duo, PAUL HINTZ on 7-  
string guitar  
with drummer/vocalist CAROLE SELIN  
Borders in Woodbury, 8-10 pm

**Saturday, August 11**

PHIL HEYWOOD  
Coffee Grounds, 8-10:30  
1579 Hamline Ave. N., Falcon Heights  
651-644-9959

**Monday, August 13**

JP & THE LAVA LIZARDS  
Minnehaha Falls Concert  
Minneapolis, MN  
7 - 8:40 PM Free

**Sunday, August 19,**  
4:00-5:00 (4-piece)

GLEN HELGESON with AXIS MUNDI  
Bloomington Jazz Fest, Bloomington  
Normandale Lake Bandshell  
Info: 952/563-8877