



# Guitarist

The Minnesota Guitar Society • PO Box 14986 / Minneapolis MN 55414 • Vol. 36 No. 4 / Winter Issue 2020

## Minnesota Guitar Society Mission Statement

Promote the guitar in all its stylistic and cultural diversity through sponsorship of public forums, concerts, and workshops.  
Serve as an educational and social link between the community and amateur and professional guitarists of all ages.

## Warm Up Your Winter, Join Us Online!



**Mimi Fox**  
**Saturday**  
**December 5**



**Acoustic Guitarathon**  
**Saturday**  
**January 23**



**Emanuele Buono**  
**Saturday**  
**February 20**

Visit [www.mnguitar.org](http://www.mnguitar.org) to sign up for our email list and get all the news quickly and easily.  
There you can also reserve your virtual ticket for the upcoming concert each month.

### Our Season at a Glance

Friday, September 25 Johan Smith  
Saturday, October 17 Patterson/Sutton Duo  
Saturday, November 14 Amadeus Guitar Duo  
Saturday, December 5 Mimi Fox  
Saturday, January 23 Acoustic Guitarathon  
Saturday, February 20 Emanuele Buono  
Friday, March 26 Manuel Barrueco  
Saturday, April 24 Thu Le  
Saturday, June 5 Classical Guitarathon

### IN THIS ISSUE, more about...

Mimi Fox on page 2  
Acoustic Guitarathon artists on page 3  
Emanuele Buono on page 5  
Society News and Notes on page 6  
Our Guitar Education Programs on page 7

## Mimi Fox, Saturday, December 5

**T**hey say that the third time is the charm, and while both of Mimi Fox's previous two appearances on our concert series (in 2002 and 2013) were charming indeed, we are especially delighted that she is sharing her artistry with us this season. For her concert this time, she will be playing an all acoustic show with her 6 string, 12 string, and baritone guitars. She will be performing jazz standards as well as some pieces from her most recent highly acclaimed recording, *This Bird Still Flies*.

Internationally recognized guitarist, composer, and recording artist Mimi Fox has been named a winner in six consecutive *Downbeat Magazine* international critics' polls. Among the many accolades she's received from writers and colleagues, *Guitar Player Magazine* called her "a prodigious talent who has not only mastered the traditional forms but has managed to reinvigorate them." In conjunction with Heritage Guitars 30th anniversary, the historic Michigan-based company rolled out the Mimi Fox Artist Signature guitar model.

Fox has performed and recorded with a long list of the jazz world's most commanding players. She has also performed with legends Stevie Wonder and John Sebastian and with Patty Larkin's La Guitara project. Her YouTube videos have received hundreds of thousands of views.

Fox has released over ten recordings, including her most recent, *This Bird Still Flies* (2019, Origin Records), which showcases her skills as both composer and performer. She established her credentials as a worthy successor to legendary jazz guitarist Joe Pass with her astonishing 2001 Origin Records solo album, *Standards*, but Fox first introduced herself to the international jazz scene in the 1990s with a pair of well-received CDs on the Monarch label.

Her busy schedule includes performances at major clubs and in concert halls from New York to Tokyo,

tours of the Caribbean, Asia, and Europe, and jazz festivals from Montreal to Monterey. She has headlined at the legendary Blue Note and Village Gate in New York City, The Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., and other world-class venues in Boston, Seattle, and San Francisco.

Fox has composed and performed original scores for orchestras, documentary films, and dance projects, with grants from funders such as Meet the Composer and the California Arts Council. She has received repeated grants to give concerts and workshops in California prisons as part of the Arts In Correction program. She has appeared on many television and radio shows including *BET on Jazz* and *Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz*.

A devoted educator and clinician, Fox has taught masterclasses worldwide and served as head of the guitar program at the Jazz School in Berkeley and as Adjunct Professor at New York University. In 2005, she received an award from the International Association of Jazz Educators for outstanding service to jazz education. She has published best-selling books and video lessons for Mel Bay Publications and TrueFire.

Born in New York City, Fox started playing drums at nine and guitar when she was ten. She was inspired by the wide variety of music enjoyed by her family—show tunes, classical, Dixieland, Motown—and her own inclination toward pop, folk, and R&B. At age 14, she bought her first jazz album, John Coltrane's *Giant Steps*, which changed the course of her musical life. She began touring right out of high school and eventually settled in the San Francisco Bay area.

We're hoping to feature an interview with Mimi, to be done by Ben Abrahamson, on our YouTube channel in advance of the concert itself. And more information about Fox's schedule, recordings, and many teaching books and videos can be found on her website, <[www.https://www.mimifoxguitar.com/](https://www.mimifoxguitar.com/)>

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## Acoustic Guitarathon, Saturday, January 23

Our Society has a long history of “Guitarathon” events. In fact, our earliest concerts were in this format and showcased prominent members of the Society and the guitar community. In addition to the traditional season-ending Classical edition, a second Guitarathon featuring other styles has been a regular part of our series. This season, we’re happy to present four outstanding performers, each offering a unique and powerful vision of “acoustic” guitar. As a bonus, two of the artists will close the concert with a set of duets!



### Dan Schwartz

Dan Schwartz is a Minnesota musician who plays roots-based, melody driven tunes on harp guitar and lap steel. Dan earned a degree in American Finger-Style Guitar Performance from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, where he dove deep into the works of Michael Hedges and Leo Kottke. Dan has written and released ten CDs and has been featured on several internationally

released acoustic guitar compilations, including *Masters of Acoustic Guitar* on Narada Records. His recordings have earned him a nomination for guitarist of the year (Minnesota Music Academy) and Folk/Roots album of the year (*Mpls. St Paul* magazine). While Dan does enjoy sharing his music center stage, some of his favorite musical

moments have been as a side-man for friends and folk heroes Neal and Leandra, Peter Mayer, and Dan Navarro (Lowen and Navarro). For this Guitarathon, Dan will be playing selections from his latest recording, *High Plains Gospel*, a collection of fingerstyle guitar tunes played on harp guitar and acoustic lap steel.

### Christopher Olson

Christopher Olson has performed solo and with groups of all sizes at events and venues throughout the Midwest. Chris’s guitar playing is featured on many recordings, some of which include his original compositions. He is currently part of several active ensembles (though not nearly as active in 2020). He has shared the stage with internationally renowned artists including Ingrid Jensen, Tierney Sutton, and Maria Schneider, and with local Twin Cities musicians such as Debbie Duncan, Joan Griffith, and Laura Caviani. A prominent educator, Chris is currently teaching at three colleges in three different states. His Guitarathon performance will include pieces he plays in a duo with Twin Cities vocalist Camille Gross, and original compositions that can be heard on an upcoming CD by the jazz trio Framework. More information, recordings, and lessons can be found at [www.chrisolsonmusic.com](http://www.chrisolsonmusic.com).



*Guitarathon continued on page 4*

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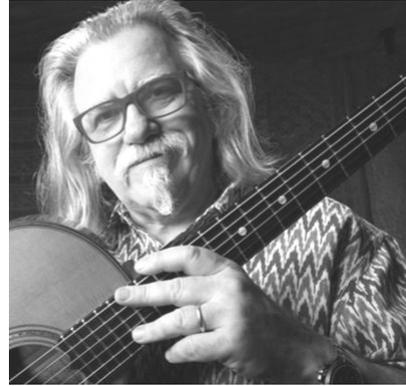
Guitarathon continued from page 3



**Phil Heywood**

Phil Heywood plays guitar with a bluesy swing and an ear for whatever it takes to make his tunes speak. An Iowa native, Phil has been based in the Twin Cities since the mid-1980s, adding merit to the Twin Cities' reputation as a guitar town. He has toured with Leo Kottke, played with Chet Atkins on *A Prairie Home Companion*, won the National Fingerpicking Championship, and shared the stage with a host of luminaries from

near and far, including Pat Donohue, Norman Blake, Claudia Schmidt, John Renbourn, John Hammond and Adrian Legg. His selections for the Guitarathon are likely to include an arrangement from the American folk songbook, an original piece, and/or something from the lesser-known of Leo Kottke's early- to mid-career instrumentals.



**Tim Sparks**

Tim Sparks has been redefining the acoustic guitar repertoire since he won the National Fingerpicking Championship in 1993 with a ground-breaking arrangement of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*. Sparks continues

to surprise, challenge, and thrill audiences with his diverse repertoire and stunning technique. Equally at home with country blues, jazz, or music from cultures around the world, his extraordinary ability has earned him an international reputation as one of the most innovative guitarists working today. On his latest release, *Chasin' the Boogie*, his playing evokes the sounds, sights, and smells of "New Orleans sportin' houses, Harlem speakeasies, and a world of tobacco fields, fire-breathing itinerant preachers, moonshine on Saturday night, and rapturous Gospel singing on Sunday morning."

Following their solo sets Phil Heywood and Tim Sparks will team up to perform a sample of their work as a duo. Tim and Phil will draw from a far-flung repertoire that includes music from the hinterlands of northeastern Brazil, the American South, Harlem speakeasies, and the studios of Abbey Road.

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## Emanuele Buono, Saturday, February 20

One of the pleasures of our concert series is getting reacquainted with long-time friends of the Society, artists local and international, with a history of great past performances.

Another, equally satisfying pleasure is getting introduced to new artists and new voices on the guitar. One such new-for-us artist is sharing his music with us in February.

Emanuele Buono has established himself as a musician with a unique musical and technical ability to make the classical guitar sing. His complete artistry has been consistently praised around the globe by the press following his performances and has earned him the respect of the most prominent guitarists today. His latest recording on Naxos was an American Record Guide's Critic's Choice Award winner.

Emanuele's journey onto the international concert scene started with the XIII International Guitar Competition and Festival of Alessandria (Italy) in 2008, where he was awarded the prestigious Golden Guitar as the best young concert-player of the year. In 2009, he won the Gold Medal at the prestigious International Christopher Parkening Competition (California, US) by unanimous decision of the jury and became the youngest winner in that competition's history.

Since 2008, Buono has also won numerous first prize and top prize awards at important competitions throughout Europe, including Gargnano, Ruggero Chiesa of Camogli, Fernando Sor of Rome, and Michele Pittaluga of Alessandria (all in Italy), Split (in Croatia), Alhambra of Valencia and Gredos San Diego of Madrid (in Spain), and Biasini of Basel (in Switzerland). These resulted in an invitation to record for Naxos and Brilliant Classics and to make his debut on the D'Addario Performance Series at Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall (New York) in 2014. He has also

made his debut in other major concert halls including the Konzerthaus in Vienna, Manuel de Falla Hall in Madrid, Hermitage Theatre in St. Petersburg, Lysenko Hall in Kiev, and the International House of Music in Moscow. His concert tours have included renowned guitar festivals in Europe and the US.

Born in Turin, Italy in 1987, he began his studies when he was very young. At the age of eighteen, he was awarded a first class degree with honors at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory in Milan and later furthered his studies at the Accademia Chigiana of Siena, where he obtained the certificate of merit twice in succession.

For a sample of Buono's recorded artistry over the past several years, search for him on YouTube. His program for us on February 20 will include these favorites of the repertoire:

Suite No.6 in D Minor  
by Sylvius Leopold Weiss (1687–1750)  
Fantasia, Alemande, Courante, Bourrée  
Sarabande, Menuet, Giga

Divertimento Op.13 No.2  
by François de Fossa (1775–1849)  
Largo cantabile, Rondò allegro

Passacaille by Alexandre Tansman (1897–1986)

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Dear Friends,

**Grants.** As we go to press, we are awaiting word on four pending grants to fund overall operating expenses for the MGS and program expenses for Guitar In Our Schools and Guitar Opportunities for All Learners, for all of 2021. The combined effects of the pandemic itself plus its economic aftershocks have caused every funder to recalibrate priorities, revise guidelines, add or suspend grant programs, and modify their submission and review procedures. All of this change creates opportunities for us to grow, as well as uncertainty. Awards will be announced in December and January. We expect to have news to share in the spring issue.

**Fundraising.** As much as we're pursuing grant sources of support, the truth is that the MGS needs a robust, many-sided approach to fundraising. That's where you can help. We need people on our Fundraising Committee to help plan and implement events or activities to sustain the MGS, make new friends, and connect with our members. Contact me if you'd like to put the "fun" in fundraising.

**Memberships.** Memberships are what keep us strong. When it's time to renew yours, please consider the monthly-payment option now available through our website.

**Concerts.** Please join us. Each concert will be available for one week after the initial streaming. All non-local artists will provide special, pre-recorded, high-quality video-recordings. The two Guitarathons will, as always, present some of the finest Minnesota-based guitarists. Look for more information about each concert at our website. We ask for donations for each concert, but the concerts themselves are free.

**Guitars.** An essential part of our Guitar Education Programs is providing guitars for schools, classes, and students who need but cannot afford to buy them. We thank the following friends for recently donating instruments: Ruth LeMay, MGS board member David Buending, MGS member Dick McDaniel, and the nonprofit organization Instruments In the Cloud. In addition, MGS board secretary Dan Lehn, owner of Cadenza Music in St. Paul, connected us with the Ortega Guitar company, which provided 24 guitars at-cost and additional guitars as a donation. This generosity is wonderful, but the need is ongoing. We need guitars. In playable condition. For more information, contact me. To make a cash donation, visit <[www.mnguitar.org/join-renew-donate](http://www.mnguitar.org/join-renew-donate)>, and put "for guitars" in the comment line of the form.

Stay safe. Stay well. Every donation matters. Every membership matters.

Thanks.

—Paul Hintz / Email: <[mgdir@mnguitar.org](mailto:mgdir@mnguitar.org)>

We thank the following organizations for their support of our Guitar Education Programs:



Established in 1994, Ortega Guitars introduced German design to authentic and traditional methods of guitar making. Committed to innovation and quality, we strive to improve what is expected at every level of all our acoustic instruments.



We thank MRAC for a grant to fund Guitar Opportunities for All Learners.

*This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.*



## Guitar Opportunities for All Learners (GOAL)

Last fall we launched this program to work with students in the Special Education Department at **White Bear Lake High School** and their full-time teacher David Melvin.



Jared Waln (pictured above) is our visiting teacher. He works with students twice a week for two hours, some using standard guitars and others using adaptive guitars and a methodology developed by Ruth LeMay, head of the Guitar Department at Southwest High School in Minneapolis and the founder of GuitarsUnlocked. We are currently seeking funding to guarantee a second full year (2021–22) at White Bear Lake, and hope to identify a second partner school.

## Guitar In Our Schools (GIOS)

In this program, we work with un- (or under-) funded music programs at metro area K-12 public schools to support guitar classes where they exist and help create them where the full-time music teaching staff and school administration have identified a need. We provide visits by visiting international artists to give masterclasses or mini-concerts, residencies by skilled and experienced local teaching artists, and material support (curriculum, guitars, accessories). We are working with three schools and have pending grants to fully fund all of 2021.

**Southwest High School in Minneapolis** has been a key part of this program since its start. We can't support the Guitar Orchestra class with visits by international concert artists this season, but we hope to provide online lesson support and perhaps, by spring, send a second teaching assistant to work with Ruth LeMay and learn about her amazing approach to adaptive guitar education for students with special needs.

We are glad to be working with **Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis** for a second year. Teacher Nick Wilson (band, orchestra, general music) has built a strong two-semester program of guitar classes. We hope that we can help Nick start a guitar orchestra at Roosevelt in the near

future, and that this year we can provide distance lessons for some of his students.

Our newest partner school, **Parkway Middle School in St. Paul**, is one of the few Montessori middle schools in Minnesota. This creative, student-focused model is well-represented by music teacher Denae Olson, who single-handedly launched a guitar class with some duct-taped-together instruments and only a basic knowledge of the guitar herself. The class is always filled to capacity. We won't offer a new supply of duct tape, but we have new guitars, an energetic visiting teacher, and plenty of curriculum resources to send. Distance learning presents challenges for everyone in both our education programs this year but our teaching artists, and the teachers at our partnering schools, are problem-solvers one and all. Ben Abrahamson, for example, is creating short topic-specific videos for the at-home/distance-learning students at Parkway.

## Our Teachers

**Ben Abrahamson** has performed across Minnesota, including several MGS events, and beyond. He's a part of the Acoustic Guitar Showcase and a member of the flamenco community. He's also known for his original music and an innovative series of video interviews with emerging artists in various musical styles, available on his YouTube channel. For our team, he's the visiting (in-person and online) teacher at Parkway Middle School in St. Paul.

**Milena Petković** is establishing a reputation as both a solo classical guitarist and in duos with Maja Radovanlija and Ben Kunkel. She was featured in a Showcase concert for the MGS in 2019, and can be found on YouTube—look for the performance of *Asturias* recorded for MPR. She has been part of the GIOS team from the start and will be our visiting teacher at Roosevelt HS next spring.

**Jared Waln** introduced himself to many of us in the MGS community with his performance at the 2019 Classical Guitarathon. An active studio teacher for over a decade, he was a visiting teacher for us at Southwest HS last year and has worked extensively with Ruth LeMay since then, partly in preparation for his role with the GOAL program. He's pursuing his M.M.Ed. at the University of St. Thomas, where he is also an Adjunct Instructor in guitar.



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