

Arts & Entertainment

Great guitar never sleeps — Sean Weaver plays Pacifica

By JEAN BARTLETT
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

On guitarist Sean Weaver's website (www.seanweaver.com), 17-time GRAMMY award recipient and Grand Ole Opry inductee Vince Gill calls Weaver a "monster" on guitar who needs to be heard because "he's got game." Turns out these are not casual, one-time words of praise from the legendary singer, songwriter and guitarist.

The two musicians met through a mutual friend, Mark Gill (Vince's cousin), when Weaver was all of 12. Their paths crossed again and in the fall of '96, when Weaver was a freshman in high school, Gill invited the young guitarist to jam with him at a band sound check in Washington State. In December of '99, Weaver (who had just won the Jimi Hendrix Electric Guitar Competition) was brought up on Vince Gill's stage to play a few numbers at a Caesar's Palace performance.

With Gill's strong recommendation, Sean headed off to college at the School of Music at Belmont University in Nashville the fall of 2000. Their paths have continued to pass many times over the years and Gill has made it clear to the young guitarist from Olympia, WA, that he is a fan.

The Sean Weaver Trio is playing Saturday night at the Mildred Owen Concert Hall. Along with Weaver on guitar and vocals, Jim Nichols will play bass and Kent Bryson on in drums. Singer Morning Nichols will also join the trio for a few numbers. The wattage of these four musicians may well spotlight the town.

"I first met Jim and Morning in July of 1996 at a guitar workshop in Nashville which I was attending on a summer family vacation," said Weaver.

"I played a jazz guitar arrangement of 'Polka Dots and Moonbeams' for Jim and he was very complimentary. The following year we met again at the Chet Atkins Appreciation Society and a very long-lasting and dear friendship ensued."

Jim Nichols is a legendary Chet Atkins fingerstyle guitarist and often he would

offer Sean tips on the Atkins' style. "These lessons always ended up being at dinner time or late in the evening and more than a few times. Morning had to be 'louder than usual' to ensure the guitar lesson ended in time for her to eat or sleep," laughed Weaver. "Whichever was most pertinent at the time!"

Among the songs on the menu for the Sean Weaver Trio's Saturday night gig are "Reedology" (Jerry Reed); "Ain't Misbehavin'" (Fats Waller, arrangement Chet Atkins); "Hideaway" (Freddie King); "Lenny" (Stevie Ray Vaughan); "The Wind Cries Mary" (Jimi Hendrix); and "Meet Me In The Morning" (Bob Dylan, re-arranged with a heavy blues-rock guitar vibe.)

Weaver said there are no other professional, working musicians in his family, but his paternal grandfather dabbled on piano and his dad's brother played guitar as a kid and eventually became quite the guitar collector.

"I got my first guitar at age nine and it was a cheap import, probably 100 bucks," said Weaver. "It was a three-quarter size beginning acoustic guitar with steel strings. Not a great instrument, but it got me started and I progressed to better guitars."

Weaver's first electric guitar was a Stratocaster copy purchased second-hand from a pawn shop. His first good acoustic guitar arrived when he was 14 years old. It was a Lowden 0-25 with a cedar top. His first good electric guitar, received Christmas of 1993, was a Fender Stratocaster. He said it has been modified extensively and he still plays it. It will be with him at his Pacifica gig.

Weaver's earliest favorites on guitar were Vince Gill and Eric Clapton, and

then he added Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jimi Hendrix, Chet Atkins, Jerry Reed, Mark Knopfler, George Harrison, Jeff Beck, Richard Bennett, Mike Bloomfield and Albert Lee (among a few others) — and all are still inspiring favorites. He said his first gig was when he was 10.

He made 5 bucks playing at a Christmas party at his Dad's dental office. Next was a junior high performance where he played Stevie Ray Vaughan for peers who loved Nirvana. But they liked it and encouraged him.

"I always knew I was going to be a lifetime musician," said Weaver. "Even before I had a guitar to learn on. It took me three years of pestering my parents to get them to buy me one but I knew that somehow I would get a guitar and play it as a critical part of my life's journey. It was merely an unstoppable urge and passion for music."

Besides his '93 Fender Stratocaster, Weaver has a 1958 Strat, which he keeps under lock and key except for studio occasions.

He also has a Robin Guitars Avalon (like a Gibson Les Paul, but better sounding), a Bill Hollenbeck Jim Nichols model (for Chet style finger-picking) and a couple of Fender Telecasters for country-related styles. His primary acoustic guitars are the Kevin Ryan Mission Grand Concert (custom order), Olson Small Jumbo Cutaway, Collings OM-1A, Gibson 12-string (strung with 4 octave strings and two regular strings for 'Nashville Tuning') and a Martin 12-string kept in standard 12-string tuning for rhythm guitar.

Sean's guitar playing has taken him to California, Nevada, South Carolina, Indiana, Georgia,

Kentucky, Massachusetts, Washington and Tennessee.

He said his favorite gig to date has to be back in April when he was a featured guest of the Vince Gill & Friends show at the Ryman Auditorium.

"He didn't tell me to turn the amp down," Weaver laughed. "In fact, in the middle of a loud wailing kind of guitar solo, Vince actually cranked the amp all the way up!"

Sean said his Pacifica performance is going to be fun.

"I get to play music with fantastic musicians and friends. I also hope to turn the audience onto some of the best songs they may have never heard, interpreted with a whole dose of soul. At the end of the day it's the songs that I am really in love with and the guitar is my instrument of choice to express them. This makes me happy and methinks a glee for music can be infectious!"

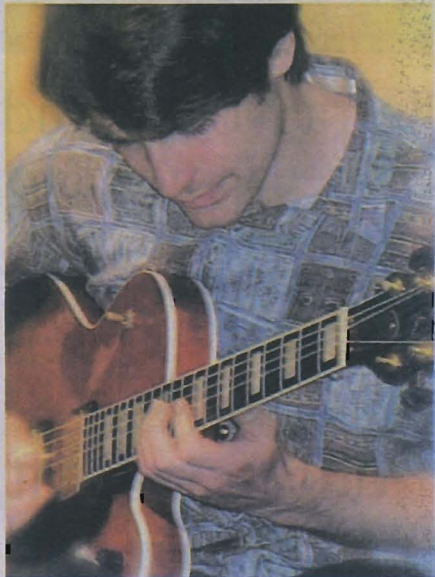


PHOTO COURTESY OF ARTIST
Guitarist Sean Weaver

If you go:

Where: Pacifica Performances Mildred Owen Concert Hall, 1220 Linda Mar Blvd.

When: Saturday, November 7 at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$20 general. \$15 members, seniors (62+) and students with current ID. Senior/student members \$12. Under 18 FREE. Available at door 30 minutes before show or in advance online at www.pacificaperformances.org by Friday, noon.

Reserved seats: Available by phone (minimum purchase: 4 tickets members, 6 tickets nonmembers).

Contact: call 650-355-1882 or email info@pacificaperformances.org

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