

G R A P H I S

G U I T A R

G U I D E

THE BALLAD OF A CLASSIC GUITAR SHOP

By: Randy Lewis

Most Southland music fans know McCabe's Guitar Shop for the innumerable folk, country, blues, jazz and world-music concerts presented over the decades in the tiny back stockroom that can hold about 150 folding chairs when all the instrument cases are shoved out of the way.

But in 1958, Gerald McCabe opened the doors on Pico Boulevard in Santa Monica intending to focus on furniture design and restoration. His timing coincided with a booming interest in folk music that spurred millions of Americans to buy acoustic guitars, banjos, mandolins and other non-amplified musical instruments.

Someone brought in a damaged guitar one day and asked if McCabe could fix it -- it was made of wood, after all. McCabe and partner Walter Camp soon began repairing instruments and offering new ones for sale, and the little shop quickly became a hub for musicians living in or passing through Los Angeles, many of whom would perform in the intimate space after hours.

"Walter figured that if you're paying rent on a place 24 hours a day, why close the

doors at 5?" said Robert Kimmel, a former member of Linda Ronstadt's Stone Poneys band who was hired in 1969 as McCabe's first official concert director. "He was giving music lessons at night and then started doing concerts on the weekends."

McCabe's is now a Southern California institution. It's been a home to touring mu-

"The whole vibe is comfort..."

By: Dave Alvin

sicians and a supportive launchpad for aspiring local ones. It's frequently been more than just a stage, serving as a catalyst for a song, an album, a band, a friendship.

Loudon Wainwright III recorded a live album there, John Hiatt's 1987 breakthrough album, "Bring the Family," grew out of his association with McCabe's, the Ditty Bops practically grew up there and Richard Thompson played his first U.S. solo show there thanks to concert director Nancy Covey, to whom he's now been married for 25 years.

On Thursday, Thompson will participate in a tribute to the music venue scheduled to take place at UCLA's Royce Hall. The lineup includes Jackson Browne, Odetta, David Lindley, Jennifer Warnes, Bonnie "Prince" Billy, the Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band, Peter Rowan, Peter Case and the Ditty Bops. To mark the occasion, Calendar invited several performers to share their stories of the musical community that has grown up at McCabe's.

It's been such a great meeting place for so many different people. Arlo Guthrie was getting ready to go on stage one time, and Allen Ginsberg was there because we had him booked the next night. He said, 'Let me talk to Arlo; I haven't seen him in 20 years.' And they had this wonderful discussion. Sometime later, Arlo was playing the new Ash Grove on the Santa Monica Pier, and he started fingerpicking one of those "motorcycle blues" kinds of storytelling songs, and he starts talking about seeing Ginsberg after 20 years at McCabe's.

It was a great example of how this place has a way of reminding people of some of their strengths, or renewing connections

they may have lost, and the way that music reminds us of who we are and who we can be.

I had booked [accordionist] Flaco Jimenez to play, and then I get a phone call one day from this guy who gave me his name and said "We hear that you have Flaco Jimenez coming. We want to open, and we'll play for free." That sounded pretty good to me. I thought, "OK, how bad could they be?" He said, "We're called Los Lobos del Este de Los Angeles."

They were getting known by then in East L.A., but they definitely were not known on the Westside. They became friends, and I invited them to our wedding. . . . Through them Richard played on their record. There was a connection there.

Lewis, Randy. "The Ballad of a Classic Guitar Shop." 27 Sept. 2008. Web. 25 Apr. 2015. <<http://articles.latimes.com/2008/sep/27/entertainment/la-et-mccabes-guitar-shop-27sept2008>>.



*“Did you know my
guitar is like a rocket?”*

THE PHYSICS OF THE ACOUSTIC GUITAR

By: Ian Billington

Physics 211x

The guitar has been around in one form or another for centuries, but the principals behind how it works can be in use in musical instruments ever since the first cave man pulled the string on his bow and noticed a sound. A guitar is simply an expansion of this idea to create a series of strings tied taught, and placed over a large hollow body to resonate the sounds. There are also various styles of guitars all which have different sounds, the two most common in acoustic models being the classical, or nylon string, and the folk, or steel string. Each has their own unique sound from the materials of the strings, and the composition of the bodies, as well as the air between them.

There are six strings on a guitar, each with an open notes of E2, A2, D3, G3, B3, and E4, each with corresponding frequencies of 82 Hz, 110 Hz, 147 Hz, 196 Hz, 247 Hz, 330 Hz (Fletcher 2007). These frequencies represent the root tone of each string. What makes a guitar sound the way it does is the overlay of various frequencies on each string, or the overtones present. These patterns of overtones and their strengths is what

makes a guitar sound different from say, a trombone. In addition, this exact patterns of overtones is impossible to repeat, and so every instrument will sound different, and in fact every note as subtly changes from the exact location on the string where it is plucked to the force, direction, and the age of the string both off and on the guitar all have small effects on the sound.

These strings then transfer heir sound into the body of the guitar where they set up an internal resonance in the air chamber made by the body, and cause the back plate and face plate to vibrate. These vibrations cause the air to compress and rarify making the compression waves in the air that our ear interperets as sound. For a more complex discussion of these parts, see how the guitars strings, body, or the space between them works.

Billington, Ian. "The Physics of the Acoustic Guitar." 28 Nov. 1999. Web. 25 Apr. 2015. <<http://ffden-2.phys.uaf.edu/211.web.stuff/billington/main.htm>>.

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