

BOB EVANS

2003 U.S. NATIONAL FINGERSTYLE GUITAR CHAMPION (WINFIELD, KANSAS)



Bob Evans IS NOT a well known restaurant chain. Bob Evans **IS** an award winning, Canadian finger-style guitarist. He combines an eclectic mix of contemporary finger-style guitar and traditional roots music along with a warm vocal style, tilted sense of humour and down to earth stage presence to provide a refreshing performance experience.

In September, 2003, Bob won the prestigious **National Fingerpicking Champion** title in **Winfield, Kansas**, having placed 3rd in the same competition the year before. He became only the second Canadian to have won the title in the 25 years of the competition, the other being the well known guitarist Don Ross.

His newest recording, **4 On 6**, is set for release in November, 2007. **4 On 6** is a collection of arrangements and reinterpretations for solo guitar of 12 classic songs by The Beatles.

4 On 6 follows his two previous CDs on the Acoustic Tonic Music label; **The Voice in the Grain** was nominated for **nominated Best Instrumental Recording** at the **2004 Western Canadian Music Awards** and **2005 Canadian Folk Music Awards**. The first CD, **Caffeinated Coffee**, won **Outstanding Instrumental Album** at the **2000 Western Canadian Music Awards**.

In the beginning....

Like so many others of his age, Bob recalls that music really began for him that night in February, 1964, when The Beatles first appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show.

"I was 10 years old, and that was really the moment that the light went on for me in terms of music. The Beatles music was the first music that really meant anything to me.", he says.

It was also the start of his performing career. Seeing The Beatles on the small screen inspired him and a group of friends to form The Jr. Beatles.

"We were in grade 4 at the time. We would put on these shows in our basements where we would invite friends over and charge them 10 cents admission to watch us sing along to Beatles records with guitars made broom handles for necks and bodies cut out from cardboard.", he recalls. "I guess in a way we anticipated Karaoke by 30 years or so."

The Rock and Roll Dream goes to Folk....

He pursued the "rock and roll dream" for the next five years in neighbourhood bands while playing at school and church dances. Initially, however, he was only allowed to be the singer and eventually was promoted to bass guitar.

Then in 1969 he had another musical epiphany.

"I was in grade 10 and I had finally saved up enough money to buy a copy of a Telecaster. I had bought the guitar at the start of the week. I wanted to play blues and rock like Michael Bloomfield and Jimmy Page and Eric Clapton and all those other guys. Coincidentally, that same week a friend convinced me to go with him and check out this thing called The Regina Folk Festival. We had no idea what it was all about, but it sounded exotic to our youthful ears.

Within the first hour on the first night I knew I had made a terrible mistake buying an electric guitar. I've been exclusively an acoustic player ever since then."

"I had started playing a bit of classical and flamenco guitar in high school. But the two guitarists that really got me started on fingerstyle guitar were Jim Kweskin and Bruce Cockburn. Two different types of players, but they were the ones I cut my teeth on for guitar. I spent a lot of time learning their material."

He also listened to other influential players of the day like Leo Kottke, John Renbourn, Chet Atkins and Doc Watson.

Coming out of high school in 1972, Bob pursued a career in music through the late 1970's. Performing a diverse mix of traditional ballads, classic piano rags arranged for guitar, bluegrass, jug band and swing music, he appeared at festivals and folk clubs across the country, as well as on national radio and television.

He recorded extensively during this period, including two solo albums. He was also featured on two compilations of international ragtime guitarists released on the guitar-based label **Kicking Mule Records**, as well as writing and performing music for theatre and dance companies.

Time out ...

Then in 1979, following the "career path" of many musicians, he settled down to raise a family and eventually pursue a career in information technology. Over the next few years the guitar was gradually set aside, only being pulled out sporadically for special projects.

"Occasionally I would get a call to play for some special occasion or such. So I'd pull out the guitar, dust it off and try to get my fingers loosened up again. I'd be starting from scratch in the callouses department and my fingers would be raw and aching by the time I was done playing. Then the guitar would go back in the closet. It was really discouraging, because I could remember things that I used to be able to play, but that I couldn't even come close to getting my fingers to do anymore."

The Big "Come Back" ...

In the mid 1990's, as his children grew up and began to move away from home, Bob began to get the beginnings of an urge to pick up the guitar again. But it wasn't until 1999 that he seriously returned to playing.

He recorded his well received CD, **Caffeinated Coffee**, which was originally conceived as a demo to send to folk clubs. *Caffeinated Coffee* went on to garner exceptional reviews and was awarded **Outstanding Instrumental Recording** at the **2000 Western Canadian Music Awards**).

Since then he has performed throughout Canada, the United States, Taiwan and Britain.

"I'm enjoying this so much more this second time around. I've had such good fortune these past couple of years winning the fingerstyle competition at Winfield and getting the recognition I've received for my two CDs."

I think one of the big differences is this time I m composing my own works for the guitar, whereas before I was primarily performing traditional music or arranging other people s material. This creative outlet has provided me with an immense amount of satisfaction.“

His reemergence into the guitar world has also found him with a new set of guitar influences.

“When I returned to playing in the late 90s, I almost felt a bit like Rip Van Winkle. I hadn t been following the development of the acoustic guitar scene for almost 20 years. It was amazing to see how much this whole scene had taken off and the amazing players that had emerged and the wealth of recordings that were available. I ve been inspired by a whole new group of guitarists that have opened my eyes to new possibilities for the guitar. Tommy Emmanuel would certainly be at the forefront, but I ve also discovered Chet Atkins in a major way. “

While his recent recordings have been of an instrumental music, his live performances continue to encompass a wide range of vocal and instrumental material. Blaming it, in part, on his love over the years of the diverse and unusual radio programming of CBC hosts like Jeurgen Gothe, Max Ferguson and Allan McFee, Bob is not afraid to present a traditional ballad alongside the Theme From Peter Gunn or one of his original compositions.

He’s developed a reputation for well-paced shows reinforced with a healthy dose of his own off-kilter sense of humour.

Hitting the airwaves ...

In November of 2001 Bob was given yet another outlet for sharing his passion for guitar music. for five years he produced and hosted a weekly radio program, **Six Strings & A Million Possibilities**. The program focused on music from the very big world of the guitar covering a wide range of musical styles.

“Yeah. It was a fabulous experience. The program aired for five years. I was able to play pretty much any musical style as long as the guitar is the main focus. I featured flamenco, blues, country, classical, rock, jazz, Sacred Steel guitar. It was pretty much a case of you name the style and we can probably find a guitar feature in it. I also had the chance to interview and produce features for the program on so many of my favourite guitarists.”

Bob also produced a version of the **Six Strings and a Million Possibilities** as a summer replacement show for CBC radio in the summer of 2006. The program is now on hiatus, but he has plans to revive it in the future when time permits.

Gazing into the crystal ball ...

Where does he see his interests taking him in the future now?

“At the moment, without a doubt, my main interest is still the solo guitar. So, that will continue to be my main focus. I m getting to the point where I am feeling confident in the material I m composing, and that I m finding an identity for myself in my music. The next step is to start pushing my personal limits more, improving my technique, expanding the palette of sounds I can draw from the instrument. At the same time my musical interests are expanding beyond what I have typically been drawn to over the years. I want to start incorporating more of the sounds that I hear in music from other cultures, and I d like to begin expanding on the forms that I can write in. But the bottom line is I ll still intend to focus on the solo guitar.”

For More Information

Bob Evans can be reached through any of the following contacts:

Web site: www.BobEvansGuitar.com

Email: bob@BobEvansGuitar.com

Phone: (306) 529-9153

Snail Mail: 129 Douglas Ave. E.
Regina, SK
S4N 1H2
Canada