

Peter Sprague

"One of the emergent great guitarists"

Leonard Feather

Peter Sprague was born in Cleveland, Ohio on October 11, 1955. He was raised in Colorado until 1963, when his family moved to Del Mar, California. Inspired by his father's love of jazz, he took up the guitar when he was twelve. By the age of fifteen he was devoting all his time and energy to learning music. He took private lessons, played in his high school stage band, and formed his first group **The Minor Jazz Quartet**.

Following a year's study at the **Interlochen Arts Academy**, Sprague studied privately and performed around the San Diego area until 1976. That year found him moving to Boston to study with many notable musicians including **Pat Metheny**, **Madame Chaloff** and **Albin Czak** (who taught Peter classical guitar). Peter returned to San Diego in 1978 and formed his ground breaking jazz group **The Dance of the Universe Orchestra**.

At the age of 20 Peter started recording his own albums on the **Concord Jazz** and **Xanadu** record labels. He has been a guest artist on many other records and performed and toured with **Chick Corea**, **Hubert Laws**, **Dianne Reeves**, **David Benoit**, **Sergio Mendes** and many others. On his debut with the **Chick Corea** band for a series of concerts at Disneyland noted Los Angeles Times jazz critic wrote in a review the following day "*Peter Sprague is one of the emergent great guitarists.*" Peter also worked with **Chick** on the film score to the movie **The Cat Chasers**, starring actress **Kelly McGillis**.

From 1990 to 1993 Sprague taught music at both **California Institute of the Arts** in Los Angeles and the **Musicians Institute** in Hollywood. He continues to teach every summer at the annual **UCSD Jazz Camp** in La Jolla, CA.

Peter was involved with the legendary record label **GRP Records** on a number of projects. He arranged **Chick Corea's** song "Spain" for the **GRP All-Star Big Band** record and video. This performance featured **Randy Brecker**, **Lee Ritenour**, **Dave Weckl**, **Ernie Watts** among many other jazz legends. Peter was featured on **David Benoit's** GRP releases *Letter To Evan* and *Shaken, Not Stirred*. Also on **GRP Records**,

Sprague played on **Eric Marienthal's** recording *One Touch* featuring **Russell Ferrante, Jimmy Haslip, Alex Acuna, and Ivan Lins.**

Peter has been the recipient of many awards:

- His CD *Planet Cole Porter* won the **Best Jazz Recording** of 2018 from the SDMA.
- In 2015 Peter was honored the **Lifetime Achievement** award at the **San Diego Music Awards (SDMA).**
- His CD *Blurring the Edges* won the **Best Contemporary Jazz Recording** of 1994 from the San Diego Music Awards (SDMA).
- **Best Jazz Musician of the Year** in 2000 by the SDMA.
- The San Diego Reader voted Peter the **Best Jazz Group** for the 2002 *Best Of* issue.
- 2004 **Best Jazz Artist** of the year by the SDMA.
- In 2006 Peter was the **Honored Musician** at the **Museum of Making Music's Evening of Note.**
- 2007 **Best Jazz Artist** of the year by the SDMA.
- In 2000 his CD *Nikki's Rose* was nominated for the **Best Jazz CD** by the SDMA.
- In 2003 his CD *Pass The Drum* was nominated for **CD of the Year** by the SDMA.
- In 2015 his CD *Dream Walkin'* was nominated for **CD of the Year** by the SDMA.

Peter has been the recipient of these grants and commissions:

- In 2000 Peter was commissioned to write an orchestral composition for guitar and orchestra with him as the featured. His twenty-minute piece, *Concerto for Two Guitars and Orchestra* was enthusiastically received when he performed it live with the **San Diego Symphony** at Orchestra Hall. The program was called "**Local Living Legends**" which also featured Grammy award winning violinist, **Mark O'Connor.**
- 2009 **Encinitas and Mizel Family Foundation Community Grant** to organize, promote, and perform 2 concerts at the Encinitas Library and Community Center.
- 2010 **Encinitas and Mizel Family Foundation Community Grant** to organize, promote, and perform 2 concerts at the Encinitas Library and Community Center.
- 2010 **Chamber Music of America's New Jazz Works Grant.** For this grant Peter composed for his group **The Peter Sprague String Consort.** They developed the music through rehearsals and performances and the grant culminated in the 2013 cd release of *Dr. Einstein's Spin.* The ensemble combines a classical string quartet with a jazz trio and has played numerous

concerts in the Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Diego areas. They also have a 2009 cd release called *The Wild Blue*.

- 2018 **Chamber Music of America's New Jazz Works Grant**. For this grant Peter will compose for his string trio group featuring Bridget Dolkas, Lars Hoefs and Duncan Moore.

Music Publishing:

Peter is active in the music book world having self-published eleven of his own books:

- *The Sprague Technique*
- *SpragueSongs*
- *The Jazz Solos of Chick Corea*
- *Jazz Solos of Charlie Parker*
- *Jazz Solos of Sonny Rollins*
- *Jazz Solos of McCoy Tyner*
- *Assorted Jazz Solos*
- *Soliloquy Songbook*
- *Blurring the Edges Songbook*
- *BrazilJazz Songbook*
- *Soliloquy Songbook*

Peter is also the chief organizer and transcriber for **Chick Corea's** music books published with **Hal Leonard Publishing** and has worked on these books:

- *Light Years*
- *The Eye Of The Beholder*
- *Inside Out*
- *Chick Corea Collections*
- *Beneath The Mask*
- *Paint the World*

Online Video Instructional Music Courses:

Peter has created 2 video courses for the **Open Music Network** company. *Jazz Guitar Foundations* takes students through 40 lessons of all the things that Peter works on to develop his technique and improvising skills. *Great Guitar Covers* is a course where Peter plays his solo guitar arrangements of jazz and classic pop tunes and then shares his unique harmonic moves and harmonizations.

SpragueLand

A variety of artists come to Peter's recording facility **Spragueland** to take advantage of Peter's excellent producing, playing, and engineering talents. The studio has a reputation for delivering distinctively crisp and well-balanced recordings, always impeccably tailored to the music. All of Peter Sprague's recordings have been

produced there since 1994 and to this date he has worked on over 375 other CD projects at SpragueLand.

What the Press Has Said

“As a jazz lover, I have sat front row to see greats such as Joe Pass, Joe Diorio, Anthony Wilson, and Pat Metheny. For those of you who don’t realize this already, Peter Sprague has a place right up there with great jazz guitarists of our time. More than just his instrumental and improvisational prowess, Sprague is a writer-composer of positively world-class abilities. *Taking It All In*, his latest release, is a wonderful and inspiring snapshot of the essence of Peter Sprague, the composer, musician, and human being.”

Craig Yerkes

San Diego Troubadour

November, 2005

“The jazz guitarist Peter Sprague calls his home recording studio SpragueLand, but sometimes it seems that the moniker better captures the way he has turned the entire southland into his own musical playground. Sprague is a highly versatile musician who draws on the wellsprings of jazz and Brazilian music as primary influences.”

Andrew Gilbert

San Diego Union Tribune

March, 2005

“(Nikki’s Rose) is a beautiful, sun-drenched celebration of life. Sprague’s music has always had an innate optimism to it. Not only did he compose some of his most inspired songs for this project, but Sprague also gathered an all-star congregation of jazz musicians to give it voice.”

Jim Trageser

American Reporter

November, 2001

Peter Sprague *Pass the Drum*

CD review rating: 4 Stars on a scale of 1-4 stars

“Peter Sprague boldly borrows Brazilian rhythms to revitalize a diverse collection of songs on his best album yet.”

Beth Wood

San Diego Union Tribune

2003

“Peter Sprague can just about do it all; his protean talents extend to exemplary jazz-guitar work that once had eminent critic Leonard Feather agog; composing and arranging for groups ranging from duos to combos to consorts to full symphony

orchestras; producing a variety of artists in his Del Mar, California art-roost, SpragueLand Studios; and holding audiences of all sizes spellbound with live performances that stretch genres and always reveal something shiny and new and soulful, even in familiar material.”

John D’Agostino

Wood and Steel

Winter, 2002