

## LUTHIER TIM GONZALES TO HOLD GUITAR WORKSHOPS

by J. Scott Iverson

Tim Gonzales wants to help you have a better relationship with your guitar. The Summerhays Music luthier is offering a series of four workshops that will cover everything from basics such as the difference between bronze and phosphor-bronze strings to acoustic theories like scale length and its effect on tone and performance. Do you know what a basic guitar setup is? the four elements? in which order they should be checked?

"Most people don't have a clue on what's what, let alone in which sequence they should be checked," says Tim. "People always asking this and that about their guitars. This seemed like the best way to help the most people."

Talk to Tim about his luthiery for any length of time and you'll get the feeling he believes in magic; not just because his first hand-made guitar, patterned after the Martin HD-28, has an inlaid I Ching hexagram around the rosette and a yin-yang at the top, or that the fingerboard of his wife's guitar (similar to a Taylor Grand Concert) is inlaid with the phases of the moon, but because for Tim, building a guitar mirrors the process of life.

"They're the same thing. (They are) about finding enjoyment in the little things. Guitar building is such a great model of life for me because if you focus on the whole process, it'll drive you nuts and you'll get totally discouraged. Break it down into a bunch of little steps -- there are probably a thousand little steps that go into an instrument -- and you have to do one at a time, well, and then enjoy what you've done with that step. Through following that process, it gets done."

Tim's interest in the guitar came relatively late, during his second year in college. "When I started, I said 'I just wanna learn three tunes, Blowin in the Wind and a couple of John Denver tunes.' I learned them and I was hooked and wanted to learn more. (I still don't know Stairway ...)"

But learning tunes is one thing ... why go to all the trouble to make a guitar? "The way my mind works is, once I jump into something, I want to follow it around; like music -- who influenced whom? where'd they get that idea? who do they listen to? ... With the guitar, it was the same thing: how does it work? what is it about? It was natural to want to learn how to build one of these things."

That curiosity led him to Redwing Technical College in Minnesota for a one-year course in luthiery. Tim was so curious, he stayed an extra year; one just wasn't enough to explore all the aspects which intrigued him. Then the magic started happening: "I had cast the I Ching (earlier) and my reading was 'work hard day and night and you will prosper.' I started calling around. My wife and I were pretty open about going wherever. She's a nurse midwife. We were hoping to get back to the mountains. The day after I started calling around, a guy from Summerhays showed up at the school looking for someone to come to Salt Lake. Simultaneously, a position opened-up at LDS hospital for my wife."

Thus, "Gonzo Guitars" was born to represent Tim's luthiery. Thusfar, Summerhays Music and Acoustic Music have been home to his skills. "It's a mixed bag," he reflects. "The two major categories, building and repair are both very different. I'd say my time is about a two to one ratio, repair to building."

What about now, after three years? "Those guitars (I made) have been the best teachers I've ever had because they are responsive. My playing really improved. When I finished my wife's guitar, my style completely changed because it would sing out in a different way." And the challenges? "It's hard. The biggest thing is the propaganda of the big manufacturers. People don't realize what a good instrument is. Through propaganda, companies fill people's heads with slants on the truth. I've been to some major guitar factories. When you get there, you realize it's an assembly instrument. Actually I'm amazed at the quality they do get, but there's a lot of people touching it along the line. That's not how it's presented."

Hence, Tim's decision to hold the upcoming series of workshops. No matter what kinds of questions you might have about your acoustic, you can learn the answers and get the personal attention you've probably been craving for a long time.

Tim's approach: "People do what is right for them. My job is to support that and help them in that. Part of that means being honest with them about their expectations. I work with them to help them get what they want."

And if it's a smidgen of magic you want in your favorite guitar, Tim can help you have that, too.

The two-and-a-half-hour workshops are being held June 8th and continue every other week (June 22nd, July 6th and July 20th) starting at 6:00pm. Cost is \$5.00 per session or \$15.00 in advance for the series of four. For more information, contact Tim at Summerhays Music, 944-XXXX or at home, 359-XXXX.

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