

Walter Strauss

Guitarist • Songwriter • Vocalist • Producer

“Michael Hedges meets Bruce Cockburn and together they steal Ry Cooder’s smoking jacket...”

Blame it on Rawlins, Wyoming. Fingerstyle guitar wizard Walter Strauss was born out there in the big open, and was seduced to look to the vast spaces of the American West for his musical inspiration. But while rooted in American folk forms, Walter’s music evokes far reaches of the globe as well. He’s worked with musicians from West Africa to Australia and Finland, and masterfully weaves threads of world music, American roots, and jazz into a brand uniquely his own.

Walter Strauss digs deep grooves for his audiences - he layers on highly articulated melodies and harmonies, rhythms and counter-rhythms in a way that gives the impression he is playing several instruments at once. His voice is smokey and intimate, and captivates with a sly charm be it a lusty proposition or an existential lament.

Of late, Walter has been performing solo and with The Walter Strauss Trio – with bassist Sam Bevan (David Grisman, Joe Craven) and drummer/percussionist Kendrick Freeman (Alison Brown, Rob Ickes). Over the last five years, he has also engaged in unique crosscultural collaborations, touring periodically in a duo with Malian kora virtuoso and 2010 Grammy winner Mamadou Diabate, and in a duo with Malian kamal’ngoni (hunter’s harp) master Mamadou Sidibe. Indeed, Maverick Magazine (UK) credits Walter with “an enormous sonic and musical and ethnic palette... world music on guitar.”

Before embarking on his solo career, Walter was widely respected as an ensemble musician, performing for more than 15 years at concert venues, theaters and festivals throughout the United States, Canada, England and Ireland. He toured extensively with Rounder Records’ eclectic folksters The Burns Sisters Band and performed alongside numerous first-rate musicians, such as fiddle legend Vassar Clements and British guitar treasure Martin Simpson.

Recently, Walter has established himself as a solo performer in the UK and Ireland. After his featured-guest performance on national BBC Radio 2, Walter received stellar press throughout the Isles then followed with a Spring ‘09 breakout tour of 22 clubs, arts centers, and festivals everywhere from London to Limavady.

Legendary British broadcaster Bob Harris gives Walter a big thumbs up, applauding “the brilliant playing of Walter Strauss,” and “what a lovely album it is” [Pulling Shadows]. fRoots Magazine says simply, “the man is class.” Both live and on disc, Walter weaves together a cohesive quilt of musical styles and somehow renders each more 3-D, more psychedelic. Walter colors outside the lines.