

Walter Strauss

Guitarist • Songwriter • Vocalist • Producer

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

If you haven’t heard Walter Strauss play, then you’ve never heard music like this before. This California guitar maestro’s songs are full of the groove and fire of an African dance party, the dynamics and textures of a string orchestra, and the back-porch soul of American roots music. It’s out of this world music.

Walter Strauss digs deep grooves for his audiences - his singular guitar style layers on highly articulated melodies and harmonies, rhythms and counter-rhythms, giving the impression he is magically playing several instruments at once. His songs soulfully trace forgotten histories and life’s paradoxes in the 21st century, and his vocals have a smooth wood smoke and whiskey intimacy that pulls the listener in, making them feel the song is for them alone. His guitar interpretations of exotic world music are showstoppers.

In addition to touring solo in the US and abroad, Walter has collaborated with wide-ranging talents, including a duo with 2010 Grammy-winning kora player Mamadou Diabate, guitar virtuoso Alex de Grassi, and The Burns Sisters. He’s worked with musicians from West Africa to Australia and Finland, and masterfully weaves threads of American roots, world music traditions, and jazz into a brand uniquely his own. Of late, Walter has been performing solo, in a duo with Wassoulou hunter’s harp player Mamadou Sidibe (Mali), and with The Walter Strauss Trio – with bassist Sam Bevan (David Grisman, Joe Craven) and drummer/percussionist Kendrick Freeman (Alison Brown, Joe Craven).

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 luminary 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 Lima-vady. His May ‘11 *Planet Solitaire* UK release has been garnering abundant airplay and rave reviews across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and the accompanying tour took him to 23 venues and festivals across England and Scotland. Welsh *Taplas Magazine* sums it up: “HOW has this innovative guitarist stayed off the radar for so long? Technically, stylistically and most important of all, passionately, he is up there with the greats... he genuinely has what they have and in similar quantity.”

Walter’s most recent project as a producer and arranger – former Waybacks frontman Stevie Coyle’s creative concept CD “Ten in One” – has been praised on both sides of the Atlantic, from *The Village Voice* to the noted British music and film magazine *Uncut*.

Legendary British broadcaster “Whispering Bob” Harris gives Walter a big thumbs up, applauding “the master 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, he weaves together a cohesive quilt of musical styles and somehow renders each more 3-D, more psychedelic. Walter colors outside the lines.