



Eric Loy plays traditional Christmas carols on his 24-string harp-guitar on his album *The Second Noel*

Eric Loy,

guitarist extraordinaire, has a wonderful gift for understatement. For the Dayton-based musician, teacher, fan favorite and recording artist

to say he plays guitar is akin to... well, to Frank Lloyd Wright saying he liked to draw buildings.

"When I started out," Loy says, "it was all rock and roll stuff, and the music got heavier and heavier. But then I really got interested in classical guitar, and then jazz. Then I got into even more avant-garde type stuff. So, what I do today is hard to pigeonhole, and it makes it difficult sometimes to get gigs, 'cause I'm not in a rock band or a country band or a pop band ... it's a real hodgepodge mixture of classical, jazz and rock all together."

When asked if he generally performs solo or with a group these days, he says, "For the most part, most of my gigs these days are solo. I have done the band thing—a trio usually, with guitar, bass and drums—and I've had half a dozen or so of those over the past 50 years.

"On my newest album," he continues, "a few of the cuts are with bass and drums, a jazz/rock trio. But for the most part at my gigs I play solo, and I try to be a one-man band. I play finger style, drawing influence from people like Chet Atkins, Michael Hedges, Jeff Beck, Andres Segovia and Joe Pass, or whatever. I try to play three parts of the song at the same time, finger style, and make it fun and interesting for the listeners."

Loy's newest album is entitled *What I'm Doing* and features the virtuoso on 14 instrumental compositions. The styles showcased

on the tracks include classical, steel-string, electric, harp-guitar, piano and, on four songs, with a jazz/rock fusion trio. The album is available through iTunes or through Loy's website, ericloy.com, as are his other albums such as 2013's *Ligatures* and 2012's *The Second Noel*.

When asked if he sings at all, Loy laughs. "I do, but all of my albums are totally instrumental. If I play maybe a three or four hour gig, I'll throw in a half dozen vocal songs to try and mix it up for the crowd. I'll sing "Secret Agent Man" or "California Dreamin'" or even "Boris the Spider" by The Who. I love The Who—I've got a few years on me, so I saw them live a lot back in the old days, with Entwistle and Moon. I even had a ticket to see Hendrix years ago, right before Woodstock, but the bassist Noel Redding quit, so they canceled the show."

We chat away about classic rock legends for a few minutes, swapping stories, just a couple of old music fans, before I steer the conversation back to Loy's own music by asking him how many albums he's released altogether in his 51-year career.

"That's a good question," he replies. "On my brand new album, *What I'm Doing*, the one that just came out a month ago, I have a little catalog number that I use—I put a 15 on there. But actually, I've done a lot more than that, because I also released vinyl albums with my band back in the

'70s. We played all over—we even opened for Wild Cherry once back then, the guys who did "Play That Funky Music." So I've been around awhile. But I think since I put my first actual CD out in '96 or '97, I think this is like number 15 since then."

"What if someone locally wants to see you perform or pick up one of your recordings?" I ask. "What's the best way to find out more about you?"

"Definitely my website," he answers. "My shows are all listed on the site—I've got a complete itinerary there, and I always have my CDs for sale at my shows. Or if people can't make it out to a show, they can purchase any of the CDs through the website, as well. And there are videos on there, too—I play a 24-string harp-guitar. A good example of my work with that instrument is a video I have on the home page: in it I'm playing 'Carol of the Bells' on the harp-guitar."

Eric Loy will perform at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 16 at the Spirited Goat, 118 Dayton St. in Yellow Springs. He will also perform at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 8 and Friday, Jan. 22 at Michael Anthony's at the Inn, 21 W. Main St. in Versailles, reservations required. For more information, show dates and to hear or purchase Eric Loy's music, please visit ericloy.com.

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— Eric Loy, musician



Tim Walker is 50 and a writer, DJ and local musician. He lives with his wife and their two children in Dayton, where he enjoys pizza, jazz and black t-shirts.