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Daniel Bachman Guitar

Program

(All Compositions by Daniel Bachman)
Untitled I

Levee

Orange Co. Serenade

Untitled II

Untitled III

Old Country Rock

Sarah Anne

Coming Home

BY STEPHEN HU/FOR THE FREE LANCE-STAR

The music of Daniel Bachman invites the listener into a whirlwind of resonating strings and wood. His songs dance with pulsating rhythms, droning chords, and shimmering notes that evoke a wide range of moods, all played solo on an acoustic guitar.

"If I play a song that's 15 minutes long, it's going to have variation in tempo, in meter, in voicing," said Bachman. "It's broken up. It's not going to be boring, I hope, but there is a hypnotic element to it. Especially when you're used to hearing someone sing. That's a major element that's just taken out of the mix. It'll get weird and it'll be completely normal. It'll be toe-tapping and it'll be completely out of time signature. Really, the main thing is I'm just trying to get out some kind of emotion in a tune." Bachman's unusual style is influenced by the trance-like guitar work of John Fahey and Jack Rose. Both of those artists took the acoustic guitar to new levels of improvisation based on extended folk structures. St. George's Episcopal Church in Fredericksburg is presenting Bachman as part of its chamber music concert series on Sunday, Dec. 14.

Bachman is from Stafford County and cut his musical teeth playing electric bass in local rock bands. He picked up the bass after playing trombone in his middle school concert band.

"It was never a cool instrument to play," said Bachman. "You don't feel cool playing trombone when you're 14 years old. You've got braces in the mouthpiece and nothing's really working out. The bass was cool. I never wanted to play the guitar. I was always the bass guy. I still like playing the bass."

Bachman's route to the guitar began when he bought a secondhand banjo. "This dude sold me a bummer of an instrument," said Bachman. "It was like a Honer banjo from the '80s. The action was, like, a half-inch off the fingerboard. It was unplayable. But that's how I learned patterns, fingering and a lot of those tunes. So, when I started getting better, I was watching this video online and this guy had tuned his guitar to an open tuning. I hadn't even thought about that."

Bachman's transition to the guitar was confirmed when a friend played him the music of the late Jack Rose, a Fredericksburg native.

"Those are still the records that have a lot of emotional weight," said Bach-

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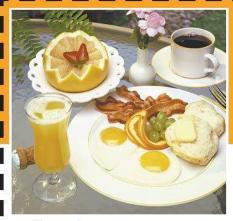
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Upcoming Musical Events at St. George's

Sunday, December 14—3:00pm Guitarist Daniel Bachman Sunday, January 18—3:00pm Chanson du Soir

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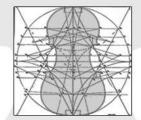
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509-1 Jackson St. Fredericksburg, VA 22401 540-645-7499 wmmasonviolins@yahoo.com www.wmmasonviolins.com man. "It was a pretty big point. It changed my head space about a lot of stuff. Guys could make a living doing this stuff. One guy made a living doing it and he was from Fredericksburg, which is like a mind-blowing development. You can actually pay bills by playing the guitar."

Since that epiphany, Daniel Bachman has made a career as a guitarist through hard work and nonstop touring. Part of what forced him to tour was a lack of gigs in Fredericksburg.

"I kind of think it was better that I couldn't get shows in Fredericksburg, because it kind of forced me to go meet more people," said Bachman. "I would have to go to D.C. or Philly because I knew people there that could book me a house show or something. So I just tried to grow and did three or four tours up the East Coast and a little bit of the Midwest."

Bachman moved to Philadelphia, where he worked day jobs while playing music at night, eventually getting his first record deal. He has since released five albums under his name and two collaborations with other acoustic artists. His career got a boost last year with a rave review on Pitchfork and a Tiny Desk Concert video that was posted by NPR and went viral.

"You get an NPR thing or a Pitchfork thing and it doesn't put butts in seats," said Bachman. "It doesn't even necessarily sell records. It's just a thing that happens. But it does add a level of legitimacy in some people's eyes. I never planned to do this full time. I just kind of fell into it."

(Stephen Hu is a writer and musician who thinks a lot of open tunings.)







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