



CONCORD MUSIC GROUP

John Fahey

Though often categorized as a progressive folk artist, Fahey called on a variety of styles—including blues, Native American music, Indian ragas, experimental dissonance, pop, etc.—to demonstrate that the fingerpicking techniques of traditional country and blues guitar could be used to express an alternate universe of musical ideas. —AT



Vicki Genfan

Stepping into an arena of electric guitars and shredding, Genfan won *Guitar Player's* 2008 Guitar Superstar competition by relying on composition, dynamics, and some very cool percussive parts. We're extremely proud she is now one of the top solo-acoustic performers on the planet, and she continues to astound and thrill audiences. —MM

Rockers & Songwriters

Bonus list! It's always tremendously difficult to pare down these top-50 selections, so we added our favorite rockers—who-play-mean-acoustic and songwriters—with-cagey-acoustic-chops. Enjoy.



Joan Armatrading. Armatrading's propulsive rhythm-lead style always brings her exceptional songs to life.



Lindsey Buckingham. Buckingham seamlessly melds acoustic and electric textures, as on Fleetwood Mac's "The Chain."



Eric Clapton. His 1992 album, *Unplugged*, kicked off a massive upswing in acoustic players and instrument sales.



Donovan. His take on clawhammer picking astounded Swinging London in the '60s, and, hey, he taught the Beatles how to fingerpick.



Nick Drake. "Cello Song," from 1969's *Five Leaves Left*, is a lovely example of sensitive fingerpicking and emotive collaboration with the cello of the title.



Emmylou Harris. The Grammy-winning songwriter has her own Gibson signature model, the L-200 Emmylou Harris.



Steve Howe. The Yes guitarist has treated fans to many wonderful acoustic-guitar moments, but check out 2001's *Natural Timbre* for a full-on acoustic onslaught.



Jack Johnson. The pro surfer turned troubadour's buoyant and laid-back rhythms arguably started another acoustic-music surge in 2000.



Jorma Kaukonen. Kaukonen's folk roots run deep, and he's an outstanding fingerpicker. He even jammed on "Deep River Blues" in 2012 with our cover artist, Tommy Emmanuel.



Ronnie Montrose. Better known as an electric rocker, Montrose *loved* playing acoustic—which birthed the all-acoustic *Bearings* album in 1999.



Jimmy Page. Page's alternate-tuned acoustic audioscapes with Led Zepelin were some of the hallmarks of his prodigious production talents.



Janet Robin. Robin's String Revolution project is vibey and varied, and her solo-acoustic reading of the Beatles' "Here Comes the Sun" is almost "punk acoustic," and in a thrilling way.



Ed Sheeran. Sheeran broke out world wide in 2014 with *x*, and triggered yet another acoustic-music boom.



Stephen Stills. Hey, he's one of the masters of fingerpicking and alternate tunings.



Paul Simon. There must be 50 reasons to appreciate Simon, including the rollicking fingerstyle of "The Boxer," the chimy capoed-up magic of "Scarborough Fair," and the infectious Afro-inspired rhythm parts throughout *Graceland*.



Taylor Swift. Dig her music or not, Swift is likely responsible for turning on more players to the acoustic guitar than anyone else the past few years.



James Taylor. Not quite blues or folk stylings, Taylor's pianistic approach to fingerpicking relies on thoughtful dynamics and carefully articulated accompaniment to his voice.



Pete Townshend. From "Pinball Wizard" to "Behind Blue Eyes" and beyond, Townshend proved to rockers that the acoustic could be as devastatingly powerful as stacks of Marshalls or Hiwatts.