

PRESS KIT

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Joe Venegoni

MASTER MUSICIAN
PRODUCER & DIRECTOR

BOOKING & CONTACT INFORMATION

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Venegoni Music / BMI

San Francisco, New York, Tucson

CD Recordings & Downloads

www.myspace.com/joevenegoni

www.cdbaby.com/cd/venegoni

Rights Management

Registered with Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI®)

www.BMI.com

Booking & Information

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Workshops & Master Classes

Education Programs

Contact Booking for Pricing

World Wide Web

www.myspace.com/joevenegoni

www.cdbaby.com/cd/venegoni

www.linkedin.com/in/venegoni

Videos

Facing East Dance & Music: www.fedm.org

Venegoni on YouTube: www.nme.com/nme-video/youtube/search/joe%20venegoni

San Francisco World Percussive Arts Festival: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqEEpHtrtPE

Magazine Articles

Marin Magazine July 2010

www.marinmagazine.com/Marin-Magazine/July-2010/Shattering-the-Silence

Newspaper Articles

St. Louis Post Dispatch Feature Article "Music in Motion" by Paul Harris

Innerviews by Anil Prasad: www.innerviews.org.inner/cloud.html



A MUSICIAN'S MUSICIAN . . .

"To anyone who is a fan of Bela Fleck, Chick Corea or Pat Metheny, Venegoni's work is a must. A musician's musician, Venegoni is a master at one of the world's oldest instruments, the dulcimer."

- *NY Village Voice*

"Venegoni has taken the dulcimer into the realm of fusion, and has extended its harmonic possibilities in a manner no less revolutionary than Hendrix did with the guitar."

- Piero Scaruffi, *Chicago Tribune*

"Excellent! Venegoni sees the dulcimer as having sounds unheard. With gusto, imagination and invention, he brings exciting new music from what resembles a miniature version of the insides of a piano."

- *The Indianapolis Star*

"This intense, ranging form of self expression - pioneered by John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy and Pharaoh Sanders - frequently is tried but seldom brought off as successfully as it is here; the music is furiously energized without becoming disintegrated."

- *St. Louis Post Dispatch*



"This is jazz of a different color. It is easy to find sax players - David Sandborn, Kenny G. and Wayne Shorter rank among the best - and guitarists like Mike Stern and Al Di Meola. But I defy you to find someone who bases all his work around the dulcimer. Joe Venegoni is nothing if not original."

- *The San Francisco Chronicle*

"*Open Road* is one of the Top 10 Albums of the Year. The performance is tight, imaginative and skillful. There is always something unexpected or arresting to savor."

- *Bay Area Music Magazine*

"Describing the music on Venegoni's recordings, or in one of Venegoni's live performances, one tends to revert to "motion" words such as "propulsion" and "momentum" and "flow." Venegoni's compositions might convey the feeling of a purposeful departure, and the gathering momentum of an eventful journey, with fleeting, lyrical reflections along the wayside. This sense of motion in his music no doubt makes a forceful play upon the imagination of his audience."

"The Artists' performance of Venegoni's vivid compositions betrayed an unmistakable commitment to them. As the old saw goes: They stole the show!"

- Paul Harris, *St. Louis Post Dispatch*

ABOUT THE ARTIST

“That man can get music out of anything . . . ”

While auditioning his string band for a folk music program at the Springfield Art Museum in Missouri, Joe Venegoni was introduced to musicologist Max Hunter. Hunter, impressed with the string band's talent and proficiency on authentic folk instruments, invited the string band to perform at the Mountain Folks Music Festival in Branson, Missouri. Immediately following the band's performance at the festival, Silver Dollar City, an 1860's Ozark Mountain Theme Park, signed the band to a two year contract. Unbeknownst to Venegoni, Max Hunter, a colleague of Allan Lomax, had assembled a collection of recorded American folk music for the Library of Congress. Upon signing the contract with Silver Dollar City, Hunter approached the string band and provided them with his entire collection of recorded folk music to perform at the park.



So began Venegoni's full-time career as a folk instrumentalist and backup singer in the *Swing and Turn Jubilee Band*. The string band's increasing popularity resulted in a band tour throughout the Ozark Mountain Region. They performed at small town community centers, college campuses and folk festivals. Venegoni gained notoriety as a musician's musician, a man who could “get music out of anything he picked up”.

In true folk tradition, Venegoni learned the music passed from generation to generation “by ear”. He cultivated his ability to hear rhythms and melodies, and to quickly reproduce the sound. He also acquired a thorough understanding and appreciation of traditional and folk music. Venegoni developed his virtuosity on various folk instruments such as; the hammered dulcimer, mountain dulcimer, autoharp, and developed a technique on harmonica inspired by Blues legend, Sonny Terry.

“Gathering momentum of an eventful journey”

Venegoni returned to his hometown of St. Louis, Missouri and began composing original music that introduced folk instruments into a contemporary format. He formed his own Jazz ensemble, *The Joe Venegoni Quintet*, and began performing at St. Louis Jazz Clubs and festivals. Within months of establishing *The Joe Venegoni Quintet*, the band emerged as the “best new band” in St. Louis, catching the attention of critics and musicians from around the St. Louis Metropolitan Area.

One such musician was Henry Claude, a percussionist for the St. Louis Symphony working under the direction of Leonard Slatkin. The meeting between Claude and Venegoni would be a significant turning point in Venegoni's career. Venegoni hired Claude to perform in his Quintet and Claude, a faculty staff member at Washington University, invited Venegoni to join him accompanying dance classes. Venegoni had such a “natural gift” as an accompanist and emerging percussionist, that Claude offered Venegoni a position as a full-time accompanist in the Dance Department and mentored him on percussive instruments.

Curious how accomplished a musician he had become, Venegoni entered a national music competition performing his original compositions. Venegoni was an award-winner for three distinct instruments: autoharp, hammered dulcimer and Appalachian dulcimer. After attending a Japanese Kodo Ensemble concert, Venegoni adopted the technique of “bending notes” on the strings of the instruments, which he introduced for the first time at the next competition. He incorporated this technique into his compositions then recorded and released “Orient” on his debut album, *Occurrence*. The reviews of *Occurrence* were in: “This intense, ranging form of self expression - pioneered by John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy and Pharaoh Sanders - frequently is tried but seldom brought off as successfully as it is here; the music is furiously energized without becoming disintegrated.” - *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. Encouraged by the results, Venegoni continued.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Venegoni and Claude attended Katherine Dunham's (Kennedy Center Honoree) annual conference at the Center of Creative Arts (COCA) to observe a Dunham technique class and study the master drummers from Cuba and Senegal. While visiting, Venegoni was introduced to Miss Dunham, who invited him to "sit in" with the class. His performance with Miss Dunham led to frequent lectures and demonstrations at the Dunham School located in East St. Louis. Venegoni learned many principles from Miss Dunham, most importantly, "Music and dance are one." Venegoni perfected his ability to pick up the rhythm of the music inherent in the movement of the dancers.

Susan Gash, of Gash/Voight Dance Theater, presented a master technique class at Washington University. Upon hearing Venegoni as the accompanist, she commissioned him to compose and record scores for a full length evening performance, titled *Unheard Voices*, about three generations of women set in the Ozarks. Gash/Voight performed the show nationally and internationally. Fittingly, Venegoni received wide critical acclaim for his authentic and original music score.

In 1990, Venegoni visited San Francisco to mix and master his next album. While visiting, he was offered several opportunities he felt would expand his artistic boundaries. He relocated to the Bay Area where a strong and vibrant dance scene intersected with musicians from every corner of the world.

"Music in Motion"

Shortly after his arrival in San Francisco, Venegoni was invited to Stanford University to conduct an eight (8) week workshop. That assignment turned into fourteen (14) years as artist in residence in the Dance and Drama Departments. Additionally, Venegoni has served as a guest artist at The Juilliard School, ODC/SF, Perry-Mansfield, and Washington University. Venegoni also performed and conducted workshops at the Conservatoire National Supérieur et Musique et de Danse—Paris, the San Francisco Ballet and UC Berkeley. He conducted and performed master classes for international dance companies such as: Margaret Jenkins, Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, Mark Morris, ODC/SF, DV8 of London, Matthew Bourne Dance Company and the Rambert Dance Company of London, and Baryshnikov's White Oak Project.

As a composer, Venegoni created scores for the "who's who" of dance companies and independent choreographers including: Robert Moses' Kin, Janice Garrett & Dancers, and Arturo Fernandez's Left Coast Dance. His expertise in "bending notes" to create an Asian aesthetic proved to be of great benefit. Venegoni was commissioned to write evening length scores and became Musical Director for Sue Li-Jue's Facing East Dance & Music and Kulintang Arts. He received an *Isadora Duncan Dance Award* (Izzie) nomination for his performance in *Pai Gow Potluck*, from Facing East Dance & Music's production of *Rice Women*. Venegoni won an Izzie for Best Ensemble Performance, recognizing his work with dance artist Robert Moses and cellist Dan Reiter.



In addition to leading his jazz quintet, Venegoni performs with international Artists, Grammy Award winners and nominees such as: Melody of China, an ensemble of National First Rank Artists, and virtuoso Jiebing Chen from China; master vocalist Shweta Jhaveri and percussionists Krishna Both and Poolivar Shrinivasan of India; American Jazz artists Michael Manning, Fared Haque, Carl Weingarten, Jeff Oster and Tom Lattinand; symphony soloist, Dan Reiter; and the groundbreaking improvisational ensemble Cloud Chamber.

Venegoni regularly produces and directs music and dance concerts for: World Percussive Arts Festival, USGS Pacific Rim, Kathryn Keats Show, and the Bridge Concert Series; along with workshops and educational programs at Esalen Institute and the California Institute of the Arts. He has produced and directed over thirty (30) studio recordings and appeared as guest artist on over twenty (20) albums. Venegoni is a recipient of awards and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Zellerbach Family Fund, the Missouri Arts Council, California Arts Council, and a New Work Fellowship from the Marin Arts Council.

DISCOGRAPHY

CD / Albums

Duets: Joe Venegoni & Tom Lattanand, Coming 2015

Where Rivers Meet. 2010, Venegoni Music/BMI. Joe Venegoni Quintet.

Music In Motion – Commissioned Works for Dance. 2004, Venegoni Music/BMI. Joe Venegoni Soloist.

Open Road. 1994, Multiphase Records. Joe Venegoni Quintet.

Critical Path. 1991, Multiphase Records. Joe Venegoni with Carl Weingarten.

Occurrence. 1987, Multiphase Records. Joe Venegoni Quintet.

Ensemble Performances

Dark Matter. The Cloud Chamber Quintet. 1998, Supersaturated Records.

The Wiry Concord, by Curt Veeneman. 1996, Capstone Records.

At The Court of the Chera King. 1995, Water Lily Acoustic Records.

Guest Appearances

Hand in the Sand. Carl Weingarten. 2004, Multiphase Records.

Escape Silence. Carl Weingarten. 2002, Multiphase Records.

Blue Faith. Carl Weingarten. 1999, Multiphase Records.

The Acoustic Shadow. Carl Weingarten. 1996, Multiphase Records.

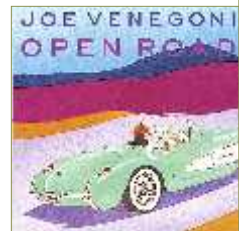
Redwood Melodies. Carl Weingarten. 1995, Multiphase Records.

Pandora's Garage. Carl Weingarten. 1992, Multiphase Records.

Wild Strings. Jasmine. 1988, Rounder Records.

Discography Available

www.myspace.com/joevenegoni and www.cdbaby.com/cd/venegoni.



PERFORMANCE VENUES

Musical Director / Producer
Composer / Music Concert Performer
Accompanist / Workshops & Education

USA

California

University

Stanford University – Palo Alto (*Artist-in-Residence*)
University of California – Berkeley
California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) – Santa Clarita
University of California – Irvine
Sonoma State University – Rohnert Park

Institute

Esalen Institute – Big Sur

Dance Theater

ODC Theater – San Francisco
New Performance Gallery – San Francisco
San Francisco Ballet – San Francisco
Dance Mission Theater – San Francisco
Brady Street Dance – San Francisco
Cowell Theater – San Francisco

Selected Performance Venues

Yoshi's Jazz Club – Oakland
Sebastiani Theater – Sonoma
Throckmorton Theatre – Mill Valley
Freight & Salvage – Berkeley
Clarion Music – San Francisco
Cowell Theater – San Francisco

New York

Central Park Festival – Manhattan
South Street Sea Port Festival
Cami Hall

Arkansas

Walton Art Center – Fayetteville

Tennessee

Café 123 – Nashville

Illinois

Chicago Jazz Festival – Chicago
The Heartland – Chicago
Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville

Missouri

University

Washington University – St. Louis
University of Missouri – St. Louis
Southwest Missouri State Univ. – Springfield
Center of Creative Arts (COCA) – University City

Festivals

St. Louis Jazz Festival – St. Louis

Theme Park

Silver Dollar City – Branson

Selected Performance Venues

BB's Jazz Blues & Soups – St. Louis
The Downstream – St. Louis
COCA – University City

International

France

National Conservatory of Music & Dance – Paris, France

Ongoing Workshops and Master Classes

Various Venues

Music Composition & Performance for Modern Dance

Music for Dance: for Dancers/
Choreographers/Dance Instructors

Planning for a Successful Career in the Arts: A Primer for the Independent Artist

Drumming Circle

Organizational Team Building

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Press Kit & Program Design

Teresa Fiore

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