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## “THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN FINGERSTYLE GUITAR” *BUSTER B. JONES*

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### **About Brooks:**

He just doesn't need much more than two thumbs, eight fingers and six strings on a wooden box to carry his listeners away. The protege of Buster B. Jones, Brooks Robertson wowed guitar fans around the world even as a child. At age 14 he appeared on Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion", where he won first place in a talent competition for 12-20 year olds. In 2010 he won 1st place in the country category and 2nd place overall in the "Yamaha Six String Theory Guitar Competition" in Los Angeles.

In 2012 Brooks received the Horizon Award for young, up and coming guitarists by The National Thumbpickers Hall of Fame, and was recently voted Portland, Oregon's "Best Emerging Artist" by Deli Magazine. Still in his early 20s, Brooks continues perfecting his craft learning new tunes, styles and techniques, as well as composing his own groovy and soulful original music.

**"I was completely knocked out with the acoustic guitar virtuosity of Brooks Robertson! Brooks has a very original touch and sound plus monster chops."**

**-Lee Ritenour**

Hailed by prominent exponents of his instrument like Nokie Edwards, Thom Bresh, John Jorgenson and Mason Williams, the young fingerstyle guitarist embodies the creative vision of a postmodern world: It's the music that counts. Brooks utilizes his superb technical abilities to play bass, rhythm and melody simultaneously and surpass the borders of conventional genres. He merges hauntingly beautiful compositions, country rhythms and jazzy harmonies with funky licks into his very own art form – sometimes delivered with a punch, sometimes with a smile.

Brooks was born in Eugene, Oregon in 1989. Seeing Buster B. Jones perform at a festival near his home town became a life-changing experience for the kid from the sticks. Just eleven years old, he was immediately inclined to pick up the guitar. Soon, the world renowned fingerstyle virtuoso and instructor dedicated his spare time to introducing his new fan into the secrets of the fretboard, and after six months of lessons the natural talent performed his first show with his mentor.



**"He is slicker than a cat on a greased pole."**

- **Nokie Edwards**

**"Brooks Robertson plays like the house is on fire."**

- **Thom Bresh**

**"Brooks Robertson is a superb and exciting guitarist. I love his playing!"**

- **Pat Bergeson**

**"A guitar orchestra on six strings"**

- **Jean Bartlett**  
(Pacifica Tribune)

**"Brooks is well-equipped to carry on the legacy of Buster B Jones' powerful and funky guitar style. Any player would be very proud to have such an accomplished guitarist as a protégé. Brooks' personal playing and composing style is equally compelling, as audiences around the world are finding out. The solo guitar's future is in good hands with players like Brooks out there!"**

- **John Jorgenson**

When Buster B. Jones took him under his wings, Brooks began playing high-profile gigs such as the Nokie Edwards Festival, the NAMM Show in Anaheim, the Montreal Jazz Festival or the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield among others. By the time he was a teenager he had become the youngest endorsee of Godin Guitars and traveled to several states and foreign countries to perform. Brooks went on to play on Garrison Keillor's National Public Radio classic "A Prairie Home Companion" in 2004, where he won first place in a talent competition for 12 to 20 year old participants.

**"All guitar players are like Franksteins. Their music is made out of bits and pieces of other players. In Brooks' case, he's a son of a Franken chops, the well known monster picker Buster B. Jones. Buster and Brooks are both so scary ... the legend continues."**

**- Mason Williams**

In recent years, while still appearing regularly at prestigious events like the Annual Chet Atkins Tribute Concert and Chet Atkins Appreciation Society (CAAS) Convention in Nashville, Brooks focused on perfecting his craft, soaking up new tunes and styles and techniques as well as blending them into his own groovy and soulful original music. He entered the "Yamaha Six String Theory Guitar Competition", which drew participants from more than 40 countries all over the world. Brooks was invited to perform in the finals at the Broad Stage in Los Angeles in March 2010. A star-studded jury, including Steve Lukather and Lee Ritenour, eventually chose him as winner of the country category and second place winner overall.

In 2013 Brooks began working in a duo with fingerstyle guitar champ John Standefer. The Brooks and John duo has since been impressing audiences around the country with a unique brand of guitar artistry. Their album "We Came To Play" is in high regards with some of the worlds top fingerstyle guitarists.

**"Take a listen to Brooks and John! Their playing weaves magic, surprises the ear, lifts the heart and takes the listener to a better place. I've known these guys for a long time and I have witnessed their maturity as players, arrangers... now recording artists. Great work Gentlemen, Bravo!"**

**- Tommy Emmanuel CGP**

**An orchestra of different sounds and rhythms coming from two performers! John and Brooks know so many different kinds of music, and they fit them all together beautifully into their guitar duo. Personally, I love to hear the double-thumbpickin' country style, and these guys are great at it!**

**- Guy Van Duser** (*Berklee College of Music*)

Although he is deeply rooted in the powerful tradition of the genre, founded by the likes of Merle Travis, Jerry Reed, Thom Bresh and Buster B. Jones, Brooks also draws inspiration from the elegant mastery of the legendary Chet Atkins and other phenomenal players. His own compositions and arrangements have even been compared to fingerstyle jazz champions Lenny Breau and Earl Klugh.

**"Brooks Robertson has one of the very best techniques in fingerstyle guitar. You can hear the influences of Buster B. Jones, Jerry Reed, and all the great fingerpickers past ... and he's writing some fabulous new material. An amazing guitar player who's showing the rest of us how it's done! Nobody whops Brooks Robertson!"**

**- Richard Smith**

Now, as energy and maturity come together, this young man is ready to electrify the world with the sheer acoustic beauty his fingers create, when touching a set of strings.

## **Awards**

2004 Winner of A Prairie Home Companion Talent Competition

2010 Winner of Country Category and 2nd Place Overall  
- Lee Ritenour's Six String Theory Guitar Competition

2012 Horizon Award from The National Thumbpickers Hall Of Fame

2012 Portland, OR Best Emerging Artist Award  
- Deli Magazine

2014 Winner of Country Category  
- Lee Ritenour's Six String Theory Guitar Competition

2014 Recipient of Six String Theory Global Music Competition Full-Tuition  
Scholarship to Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA

## Discography / Recordings

2006 Thumb Like It Hot

2007 American Fingerstyle

2009 Into The Trees

2011 Twister (DVD)

2013 We Came To Play

2014 Fingerstyle Survival Guide (Instructional DVD)

2015 GuitarSmiths





## **Performance History (brief)**

**Chet Atkins Appreciation Society Convention** Nashville, TN

**A Prairie Home Companion** St. Paul, MI

**Montreal Jazz Festival** Montreal, Canada

**Toronto Fingerstyle Association** Toronto, Canada

**The Quasimodo** Berlin, Germany

**Musikmesse** Frankfurt, Germany

**6th Annual Guitar Festival Reitberg** Reitberg, Germany

**Great Woods Music Festival** Manitoba, Canada

**Guitars For Life Festival** Hazebrook, France

**Irish Guitar Festival** Drogheda, Ireland

**Third and Lindsley** Nashville, TN

**The National Folk Festival** Bangor, ME

**NAMM Show** Anaheim, CA

**USC Thornton School Of Music** Los Angeles, CA

**Portland Jazz Festival** Portland, OR

**Timeless** Herford, Germany

**Moritzhof** Magdeburg, Germany

**Musikhaus Spula** Delmenhorst, Germany

**Cultura** Reitberg, Germany

**Alberta Rose Theater** Portland, OR

**Safeway Waterfront Blues Festival** Portland, OR

**National Fiddle Festival** Weiser, ID

**North Carolina Fingerstyle Convention** Wilksboro, NC

**Lord Of The Strings Concert Series** Dana Point, CA

**Boulevard Music** Culver City, CA

**Mildred Owen Concert Hall** Pacifica, CA

**Arcata Playhouse** Arcata, CA

## **Performance History (*continued*)**

**The Jefferson Center** Roanoke, VA

**Chet Atkins Tribute Concert** Franklin, TN

**Schuettekeller** Beühl, Germany

**The Shedd Institute** Eugene, OR

**Guitar Masters Concert Series** Bakersfield, CA

**The Aladdin Theatre** Portland, OR

**International Guitar Festival** Freepsum, Germany

**Lutherhaus** Osnabrück, Germany

**Egan's Ballard Jam House** Seattle, WA

**Sierra Nevada Brewery** Chico, CA

**Mississippi Studios** Portland, OR

**Cafe Vielfalt** Lemgo, Germany

**Tiepolo-Keller** Wuerzburg, Germany

**Haus Siekmann** Sendenhorst, Germany

**Beall Concert Hall** Eugene, OR

**Dusty Strings** Seattle, WA



## Teaching History

**Instructor at Artichoke Music** Portland, OR  
*2012 - Current*

**Private Instructor at Brooks Robertson Music, LLC** Portland, OR  
*2010 - Current*

**Instructor for TrueFire** Worldwide  
*2014 - Current*

## Master Classes & Workshops

**Tommy Emmanuel Guitar Camp USA** White Castle, LA

**Thornton School of Music USC** Los Angeles, CA

**University Of Oregon School of Music** Eugene, OR

**Chet Atkins Appreciation Society Convention** Nashville, TN

**National Fiddle Festival** Weiser, ID

**Irish Guitar Festival** Drogheda, Ireland

**6th Annual Guitar Festival Reitberg** Reitberg, Germany

**Schuettekeller** Beühl, Germany

**Musikhaus Spula** Delmenhorst, Germany



## Reviews

"In the world of Chet Atkins' style fingerpicking, Buster B. Jones was a legendary figure. Atkins himself once said, "Buster B. Jones is the best fingerpicker I've heard since Jerry Reed... " At the age of 11, Brooks Robertson heard Jones play at a Nokie Edwards-curated festival in Eugene, Oregon. It changed his life. "Some switch went off," he says, "from that point on, I was interested [in guitar]." He quickly took up the acoustic guitar.

As fate would have it, Jones himself would soon relocate from Nashville to Eugene. For several years, Robertson would be mentored by the virtuoso. Though Jones passed away in 2009, Robertson has kept the fingerpicking torch going."

- Fretboard Journal

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"My current home, Portland, Oregon has broken a number of interesting musical acts in the last few years (my recent favorite, the band Dolorean) and spawned it's own parody on the Independent Film Channel (*Portlandia*), but this 23 year old Oregonian may be our cities' greatest musical treasure yet.

Having already played the Montreal Jazz Festival and won numerous guitar competitions, Lee Ritenour says that Robertson "has a very original touch and monster chops." Citing the late Buster B. Jones as a major influence, Robertson has been playing since being exposed to Jones' music and shortly thereafter became a student.

A highly developed finger picking style firmly in place, Robertson's third CD, *Into The Trees*, sounds like the work of an older artist, but don't let the age fool you, he's been gigging all over the world for the past 12 years. His light touch on the fretboard (and is currently the youngest guitarist to endorse Godin guitars) pervades all of the tracks on the album.

Penning about half of the tracks on the album, Robertson performs all with equal aplomb, sparsely accompanied on a few by banjo and sax, though no musician credits are listed. A couple of the sax accompanied tracks tread dangerously into the smooth jazz arena, but the rest are reminiscent of the best finger pickers you've heard. Just when you start to hear Robertson's favorite influences sneaking into the mix, he heads out into virgin territory with his own unique voice.

Best of all, this young artist knows the importance of a great recording as well – the tracks have a wealth of dynamics and ambiance – I was reminded of the purity displayed by Alex DeGrassi's early vinyl releases on the Windham Hill label.

If you're looking for a new acoustic guitar virtuoso to enjoy, look no further."

- Jeff Dorgay

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"In 2000, 11-year-old Brooks Robertson caught the legendary guitarist Buster B. Jones in concert in Veneta, Oregon. The Eugene (OR) born and raised Robertson was dazzled and couldn't stop talking about the amazing guitar player.

Born in Ames, Iowa, in 1959, Buster B. Jones was considered one of the top-of-the line fingerpicking guitarists in the world. In 1990, he took top honors at the prestigious National Fingerpicking Championship held in Winfield, Kansas. A few on the list of the famous he shared his stage with included Chet Atkins, Marcel Dadi, Tommy Jones and John Knowles. Called a "fluid rhythmic force" on guitar by Guitar Magazine, Mr. Jones was known nationally and internationally by reviewers and fans as "Le Machine Gun," though with a style never so fast that it didn't leave room for the sweet.

Not long after Brooks saw Jones in concert, his dad bought him a guitar.

"My dad taught me my first three and a half chords," Robertson said. "Then he signed me up with my next teacher, Buster B. Jones." As it turns out, Buster met his future wife to be during that Oregon tour. They married and Buster moved from Nashville, TN to Harrisburg, OR, about 30 minutes from where Robertson lived. Besides becoming Robertson's guitar teacher, he also became a mentor to the young man and really a member of the family.

"He saw himself as a young man when he looked at me and watched me play," Robertson said. Only six months under Jones' tutelage, Robertson was invited to tour with Jones.

"That was a dream come true to tour and learn from my hero." Robertson was a prodigy on guitar — wowing crowds with his own fingerstyle expertise at such legendary stages as the NAMM Show in Anaheim, the Montreal Jazz Festival, the Nokie Edwards Festival and the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield. At age 14, Robertson played on Garrison Keillor's National Public Radio classic, "A Prairie Home Companion," and took first prize in the 12-to-20-year-old talent competition. At 17, and getting ready to start his senior year at South

Eugene High School, Robertson released his solo debut "American Fingerstyle." By that time Robertson had played more than 200 gigs with Jones.

Robertson, and the world, lost their beloved Buster B. Jones on February 2, 2009.

"I was blessed to have had the opportunity to spend time with him," Robertson said.

Saturday night, Robertson — whose own fans include such guitar legend makers as Mason Williams, Pat Bergeson and Nokie Edwards — is taking his fingerstyle talent to the stage of Pacifica Performances Mildred Owen Concert Hall. This is the crowd-pleaser's second annual Pacifica performance.

The guitarist, who simultaneously plays bass, rhythm and melody, will lead his audience on a journey where country rhythms, jazzy harmonies, melting compositions and funky licks meet and converge on the "Robertson" road of virtuosity. The artist's jukebox will shine a light on such folks as Buster B. Jones, Jerry Reed, Laurence Juber, Thom Bresh, Chet Atkins and more. He will also feature his own compositions and arrangements, which have been compared to such fingerstyle jazz champions Lenny Breau and Earl Klugh.

"One of the reasons why I love the guitar so much is because it seems, the more I learn, the more I am aware of how much there is to learn," Robertson said.

"To travel the world sharing the music I love with people who enjoy and appreciate it — this is the only career for me."

By Jean Bartlett  
Pacifica Tribune

## Endorsements

