

JOHN ETHERIDGE TO PLAY SOLO GIG AT THE TOLMEN CENTRE

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 17TH 7.30pm

Tickets £10/£9 concessions

Tel 01326 341353 or email tolmen@constantinecornwall.com

Cafe meals available but pre-booking essential

John Etheridge hardly needs introducing to anyone with a nodding acquaintance with contemporary jazz guitar, but his range and experience extends far beyond jazz. He grew to prominence back in the 70s with rock-jazz fusion group Soft Machine (with whom he still tours); he spent six years on the road with gypsy jazz virtuoso Stephane Grappelli; he plays regularly with jazz violinist Chris Garrick as a duo and in the quartet Sweet Chorus; and he has worked and toured extensively with the foremost classical guitarist of our era, John Williams; he tours too with the Frank Zappa tribute band the Zappatistas. Other collaborators have included Richard Thompson, Nigel Kennedy and many more.

John will be playing in our downstairs space, where a relaxed arrangement of tables and chairs and a bar open throughout will create just the atmosphere to enjoy this most engaging and generous of musicians. Those who have never seen John perform will be amazed by his virtuosity and passion, while those who have seen him only in combination with other musicians can look forward to something quite different and very special.

Bill Starling, friend and writer, has this to say:

“John Etheridge is not just another great guitarist, he is a master of the instrument and he knows how to use it to best effect in an enormous range of settings. He is fast, a great chord man, inventive but subtle, as good with a pick as finger style, as at home on acoustic as on electric guitar. Critically, he knows what to leave out, when to use nuance and suspense and when to let rip. Taste and talent are the indisputable hallmarks of this incredibly accomplished and well-rounded musician who reads, and responds to his fellow musicians and his audience equally well.



Let me try and give you a flavour of a solo gig: John will kind of wander on stage, as if slightly puzzled by what he finds there but he soon settles his array of guitars around him and begins sharing himself, his warmth and his considerable talent with his audience.

Numbers will have long and engaging, seemingly rambling introductions, some built upon anecdotes and reminiscences of old colleagues, some inspired by the venue or some small item in the news – but all full of wit and wordplay. Stories of his days on the road with Stephane Grappelli will be delivered in John's trademark French accent, you'll swear you can smell the pastis, and you'll feel the admiration and affection he holds for the great man. John will change his programme on a whim or in response to a call for a favourite. Sometimes he'll strap on one guitar, then slip it off to install another in its place while he potters around the space that he simultaneously commands and shares so generously. There are few more enjoyable sights than watching John joking with his audience, arms resting across his old Yamaha, grin beaming across his face.

People who attend his gigs know how routinely generous he is. He'll be there after the performance, signing CDs, chatting amiably, sharing a joke and laughing with them. The shyest of his fans will have no difficulty approaching him because they can see that he is unaffected by his talent and utterly devoid of conceit of any kind, probably moreso than anyone else I know.

This approachability also helps make John the great teacher and mentor that he is. His workshops and masterclasses are always in demand, providing fun and great experiences for the students. John is delighted to share all the considerable gifts he possesses.

So, that's John Etheridge the musician. But what of the man? I'm proud to be able to call him a friend and I know him to be a complex, thoughtful, intelligent, erudite, warm and incredibly open human being. When being interviewed during a live recital with John Williams on BBC Radio Three earlier this year, John E was asked about his relationship with Stephane Grappelli. He characterised Stephane as a great man and very down to earth, encapsulating his assessment in the single, made-for-the-moment word, 'unsolemn'. I could think of no better description for John himself."

And jazz critic Peter Bacon:

"He plays Frank Zappa's music, he plays Django Reinhardt's, he can coax the gentlest melody in harmonics from an acoustic guitar, and he can out-rage the wildest heavy rocker. John Etheridge has to be the complete guitarist."

And Pat Metheny says simply: "one of the best guitarists in the world"