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KNOW WE'RE TALKIN

By Helen Marketti

An Interview with Jazz Guitarist Stephane Wrembel

On April 24, Stephane Wrembel and his band will be performing at the Bop Stop in Cleveland. There will be a show at 6:00 pm and again at 8:00 pm. This will be a show you do not want to miss. His brilliant compositions and special tribute to the work of legendary jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt will make for an ideal and enjoyable evening.



Stephane is from Fontainebleau, France, a town southeast of Paris.

It is the same town where Django Reinhardt (January 23, 1910 to May 16, 1953) was from. “The work of Django Reinhardt had always fascinated me,” said Stephane. “We are from the same town and so naturally I was drawn to him and curious about his life and music. I was around 18 years old when I started studying his work because I wanted to become a jazz guitarist. Every year they have a Django Reinhardt Festival in my home town. I remember attending and watching these incredible guitar players jamming together. I felt as though the music was speaking to me. There is something about Django’s music that struck me and I wanted to learn more. Django is to the guitar what Bach is to the keyboard.”

Stephane started out playing the piano before switching over to the guitar. “From the age of four until 16, I played classical piano. Then I started becoming more interested in the guitar. I was listening to Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, and The Police. These bands had rocking guitars so I decided that is what I wanted to do. I feel the guitar is a good physical fit for me as well. I feel a greater connection with the guitar than I do any other instrument,” he said.

Stephane has been fortunate to work on film scores with Film Director Woody Allen. “It was an organic process,” said Stephane. “I was contacted to see if I would be interested in scoring music for his films. I may receive information about a film setting or atmosphere and then I will decide how I will compose the piece. I composed the main theme music for *Midnight in Paris*. I scored the whole movie *Rifkin’s Festival*, his most recent film. Woody and I have worked together several times. We work well together. My style of music fits well with his movies. He knows what I can produce and I know what he wants and that combination works for us.”

In addition to composing music and performing with his own band, Stephane teaches guitar in person and online. He also puts together incredible guitar camps and workshops that bring musician masters from all over the world to participate as leaders. “I put together a lineup of amazing musicians when I plan the guitar camps,” said Stephane. “I have a vision of who can teach what and what will fit well with the concept I have in mind. I organize the classes in large groups and small groups. It’s important to find the right people who are the right fit and the right groove. In addition to the guitar camps, I also plan the Django a Go Go Festival and bring in masters from Europe. We will go to local pubs to jam and students are able to attend our shows. It is an amazing experience.”

For any budding guitarists, jazz guitarists or seasoned musicians, Stephane will be offering a FREE guitar workshop online through the Music Settlement Workshop on April 20 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm (EST). Check out www.themusicsettlement.org for more information and to RSVP.

A life in the Arts is a creative investment for Stephane. “Being a musician is an act of love. I know what I like to do and that’s exactly what I do. I love to compose, play with my band, organize festivals, and teach. You have to know what it is in life that you like. If you choose a life where you are involved in the Arts, you have no choice but to keep going because it is constant work. There is no backing down. It’s a great lifestyle. I am very happy. It is the life I chose. It’s a beautiful thing. I would never consider doing anything else. You have to love what you desire.”

www.stephanewrembel.com

For tickets to the show at the Bop Stop: www.themusicsettlement.org


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