

STRUNZ & FARAH - BIO

Performing together since 1979, Grammy nominees Strunz & Farah are the innovators of an entirely new expression for the acoustic guitar. Well ahead of their time they created an original style that now is widely influential. Originally from Costa Rica and Iran respectively, Jorge Strunz and Ardeshir Farah have brought the musical influences of their native lands into their highly virtuosic, rhythmic, and improvisation-rich original instrumental compositions, inspiring fans and many guitarists worldwide. Their meeting in 1979 in Los Angeles, where they are still based, marked the first time that Latin American and Middle Eastern music, along with other important elements, came together on the guitar. They remain the undisputed masters of the style they created.

The Music

S&F's music is perhaps best described as original multi-cultural acoustic instrumental improvisational guitar music, or world jazz. Their music emphasizes and luxuriates in sensuous melody and rhythm with a colorful and passionate expression, and is saturated with their cultural roots. Afro-Caribbean, Latin American folk, flamenco and Middle Eastern music all converge in an essentially jazz context, especially in the sense of improvisation, and is a unique contribution to the diversity of contemporary guitar music.

1979 Strunz and Farah met in Los Angeles through a mutual friend and began to prepare material for their first recording project, "Mosaico". Jorge had just finished recording his 4th album with Caldera for Capitol Records, and Ardeshir was working with expatriate Iranian singers in LA.

1980 They recorded "Mosaico", which received an enthusiastic response from listeners on the Los Angeles jazz radio station KKGQ, and began performing together. The recording was released in 1982 on their own label Selva, and included renowned South Indian violin virtuoso Dr L Subramaniam on two tracks, as well as Luis Conte on latin percussion. It was one of the earliest recordings of what was later to be called "World Music".

1982 They appeared on the PBS TV special Sound Festival with guests L Subramaniam and Luis Conte, Alex Acuña and others, as part of a bill with Jose Feliciano.

"Mosaico" released.

They played at the Ojai Festival, along with Flora Purim and Airtó

1984 "Frontera", their second album, was released on Fantasy/Milestone Records, through the auspices of Dick Bock, who was instrumental in bringing Ravi Shankar and Jean Luc Ponty to American audiences, and which included guest musicians Stanley Clarke, and Iranian santur master Manoochehr Sadeghi.

They were featured on the "Soundboard" guitar video series of John Schneider. They performed at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco with Larry Coryell. They were featured and interviewed in a Guitar Player magazine article.

1985 They released "Guitarras" on Milestone/Fantasy Records, with special guests Indian sarod master Ashish Khan, and the beloved Iranian singer Hayadeh, among others.

1986 They were invited to perform at the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. Swiss press named them the "revelation" of the Festival. Claude Nobs later invited them to perform at his chalet privately for Eric Clapton and Phil Collins.

Jorge appeared with Jackson Browne as a featured soloist at the Amnesty International concerts in Los Angeles and San Francisco, which also featured such artists as Peter Gabriel, U2, Sting, Santana, Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and others.

1987 They embarked on a tour of Peru, performing in Lima, Arequipa, and Cuzco, as a guitar trio with Ciro Hurtado, which included television appearances.

They appeared with Jackson Browne, David Crosby, and Graham Nash at the Hollywood Palace for a benefit concert.

1988 They were invited by Leo Brouwer to perform their original music at the Havana International Guitar Festival. They were given the premier spot at the Teatro Nacional, and they played to a full and enthusiastic house, and the show was televised.

They recorded their album "Misterio" direct to 2-track in an audiophile recording.

Jorge went to Russia and Latvia with South Indian violin virtuoso L Subramaniam for concerts and recordings.

1989 They recorded with Joan Baez on her album "Speaking of Dreams".

Appeared at the Wiltern Theater in Los Angeles with Toure Kunda.

Composed and recorded the guitar music for the TV series "Drug Wars: the Camarena Story", aired nationally on NBC in 1990, in a collaboration with Charlie Callela.

Appeared on the NBC TV movie "LA Takedown", and performed an original composition.

1990 They recorded their hit album "Primal Magic", which went to the #1 position on the Billboard World Music charts for 12 weeks. It was named Billboard's "World Music Album of the Year", and also made Billboard's Top 200.

They embarked on a 40 city US tour with Jackson Browne, which included an appearance with him on the David Letterman Show, as featured soloists.

Jorge appeared again as an invited soloist with Jackson Browne in the concert for Amnesty International in Santiago Chile, featuring artists such as Peter Gabriel, Sting, Wynton Marsalis, etc.

1991 They toured extensively in the US with over 130 shows, including the Atlanta Jazz Festival and the Mountain Winery in CA, , and were invited to play in Costa Rica for the first time of many, where they performed for 2 nights at the Teatro Melico Salazar, San José's largest theater.

They toured the Canadian Jazz Festivals, including two nights at the Montreal Jazz Festival.

Played at the Concord Pavilion on the show with Miles Davis.

Performed in Puerto Rico at the Salon de Bellas Artes.

Played at Royce Hall UCLA on a double bill with Flora and Airtó.

1992 They recorded "Americas", which was nominated for a Grammy for best World Music Album, and sold hundreds of thousands of copies. It was also #2 on the Billboard World Music chart for months.

Played at Stanford University, and the Mountain Winery again.

Played Quito, Ecuador for first time.

Performed again at the Montreal Jazz Festival.

Toured extensively in the US in September and October, including a performance at the Wadsworth Theater UCLA.

Performed in Costa Rica for the second time.

1993 Strunz & Farah appeared in Paris, France for 10 performances over two weeks with their quintet.

They performed in Quito, Ecuador for their Fiestas Quiteñas.

They appeared in NYC at the Beacon Theater with Spyro Gyra and Bela Fleck.

They performed at the Concord Pavilion CA with Kenny Loggins.

They appeared at Los Angeles' famed Greek Theater for the first time, with Dave Benoit.

They performed at the Russian River Festival in California.

They performed at Mexico's world-renowned fine arts Cervantino Festival to an enthusiastic 8000 people.

They appeared with Manhattan Transfer in LA at the Wiltern Theater.

1994 Were invited by the Dallas Classical Guitar Society to perform at the prestigious fine arts venue, the Meyerson Symphony Hall.

Performed at the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts in a double bill with Bela Fleck.

Performed at the Montreal Jazz Festival for the second time, where they performed in front of 85,000 people outdoors. The Montreal press called them "Irresistible!"; also in Quito Ecuador for the second time, and Costa Rica for the third time.

1995 Released "Heat of the Sun", which spent 4 months on Billboard's World Music Chart, mostly in the top 10. Billboard recognized it as among the top 5 World Music Indie records, and Strunz & Farah as among the top 10 World Music artists overall. Their label Selva was among the top 5 World Music Indie labels that year.

Recorded "Joseph and his Brothers" for children's label Rabbit Ears with Ruben Blades.

Performed at the Greek Theater LA for the second time, with John Tesh.

Played at the House of Blues LA for first time.

Recorded the guitar parts for Sting's IMAX Living Sea movie and album.

1996 Tour of Canada.

Pasadena, Long Beach, and San Jose Jazz Festivals.

1997 Played in Puerto Rico again, at the Salon de Bellas Artes, to critical acclaim, and again in Costa Rica.

Were invited to perform at the U.S. Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute in Washington DC, with President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore in attendance.

Played again at the Concord Pavilion CA, with George Benson and David Sanborn. Also performed at the Villa Montalvo in CA.

Released their first live album, "Live", recorded in front of a studio audience in Los Angeles.

1998 Performed in Panamá for the first time at the Balboa Theater to a capacity crowd, returning also to play yet again in Puerto Rico, and in Costa Rica performed a benefit concert for the Children's Hospital at the Teatro Nacional.

Released their album "Wild Muse".

They appeared with Jackson Browne as featured soloists in a concert at the Santa Monica Civic Center which included Bonnie Raitt, Sarah McLachlan, and Los Lobos.

Recorded as special guests with flamenco master guitarist Gerardo Núñez on his album "Calima".

Performed at the prestigious Martinique International Guitar Festival.

1999 Toured Texas and Florida

Performed at the Skirball Center, Los Angeles, plus many other dates in CA, including the Villa Montalvo again, and played Las Vegas.

Jorge went to India with L Subramaniam for concerts and recordings

2000 Appeared on BET Jazz national TV show; toured in the US.

Appeared as featured soloists on Cyrus Chestnut's album "A Charlie Brown Christmas" on the track Für Elise.

Released their first compilation CD, "Best of Strunz & Farah".

2001 Released their "Stringweave" album, featuring guests L Subramaniam, classical guitarist Liona Boyd, and Puerto Rican cuatro virtuoso Edwin Colon Zayas, among others.

Played again in Puerto Rico at the Heineken Festival, toured the eastern US and Texas, as well as dates on the West Coast and Las Vegas.

2002 Performed in Chico CA for the Sierra Nevada Brewery PBS TV shows.

Toured US East Coast, and presented again in Costa Rica

West Coast tours, including the Villa Montalvo again.

2003 Released their DVD "In Performance"

Released their "Rio de Colores" album.

Dates in Texas and California; East Coast tour again.

2004 Performed at the Freer Gallery of Art at the Smithsonian in Washington DC

Released their "Zona Torrida" album, which included guests Jihad Racy, Carlos del Puerto, and Charlie Bisharat.

Were featured on Woodsongs national radio show, from Lexington KY.

Other Texas and West Coast dates.

2005 Performed at the Rochester Jazz Festival, appearing with Chick Corea.

West Coast performances.

Released "Desert Guitars", their second compilation.

2006 Released "Fantaseo", their 13th studio recording, which included guest artist Hubert Laws.

Gave concerts in Florida, and returned yet again to Costa Rica. More West Coast dates, including the Herbst Theater in San Francisco, also Texas and Las Vegas, and Vancouver Canada.

2007 Returned to Quito, Ecuador to play the Teatro Sucre.

Tour of Western Canada. Dates in Florida.

Performed at Cornell University, Statler Auditorium

Played the Mehregan Persian Festival in CA

Performed as invited guests with Rodrigo y Gabriela in LA at the Fonda Theater.

Are invited to return to the Herbst Theater in San Francisco.

2008 Tour of Eastern Canada, including another appearance at the Montreal Jazz Festival, and the Rouyn Quebec Festival.

Played at the Hochstein Theater, Rochester NY.

Texas and West Coast dates.

2009 Performed in Sofia, Bulgaria, National Palace of Culture.

Jorge is invited to accompany Sting on his remix of "Send Your Love" for the "Songs for Tibet" project recording.

Jorge released his first solo recording, "Neotropical Nocturnes", with Ardeshir appearing on the piece "Idilios" as a special guest.

East Coast Tour.

Were invited by Rodrigo y Gabriela to play a piece with them on their album 11:11

Played at the Nashville All Star Guitar Night at the Ryman Auditorium with Tommy Emmanuel and others.

West Coast dates.

2010 Texas, Arizona, and West Coast appearances.

2011 Released "Journey Around the Sun", their 14th studio album.

West Coast and East Coast tours.

2012 East Coast, including a show at BB King's Blues Club in Manhattan, and Canada tours, including yet another appearance at the Montreal Jazz Festival.

West Coast performances, including Grand Performances in LA, Herbst Theater in San Francisco.

Panama invited them back for another concert.

Were invited to present two concerts in India, one in Mumbai, the other in Delhi, to great reviews.

2013 Were invited to the Heineken Jazz Festival in Puerto Rico.

Various West Coast performances.

2014 Released their album "Moods and Visions", featuring the percussion of Luis Conte.

Performances in Canada, and the Northeast US Coast; twice in NYC. Numerous West Coast shows.

2015 East Coast tour, West Coast and Arizona dates.

Invited to play at the Maui Blues and Jazz Festival.

2016 West Coast and AZ dates.

They were featured on Troy Grady's "Cracking the Code" Youtube Channel.

2017 Played two concerts in Merida, Mexico: at the Teatro Peon Contreras, and in the Atrio de la Catedral.

Tour of Texas; perform in Las Vegas again. Various West Coast appearances.

2018 Released their album "Tales of Two Guitars", which was rated #3 in Amazon's Hot New Releases in the Fusion category.

Toured Texas; numerous West Coast appearances, and performed at MIM in Phoenix AZ.

Some Artists S&F Have Shared The Stage With:

MILES DAVIS – CONCORD JAZZ FESTIVAL CA

GEORGE BENSON – CONCORD JAZZ FESTIVAL

CHICK COREA – EASTMAN THEATER ROCHESTER NY

JEAN-LUC PONTY – CHAVEZ THEATER, EL PASO

RAY CHARLES – DETROIT MOTOR SHOW

BELA FLECK – MOUNTAIN WINERY, BEACON THEATER, SCOTTSDALE PAC, CERRITOS PAC

JACKSON BROWNE – MANY TIMES, INC TOUR, ALSO AS FEATURED WITH HIM + CROSBY,

STILLS & NASH, EMMY LOU HARRIS, LOS LOBOS, SARAH MCLACHLAN, PETER GABRIEL

KENNY LOGGINS – CONCORD PAVILION

SERGIO MENDES – CHAVEZ THEATER, EL PASO

JOSE FELICIANO -K CET TV SOUND FESTIVAL

RAY CHARLES – DETROIT MOTOR SHOW

SPYRO GYRA – THEATER IN THE ROUND HOUSTON, CONCORD JAZZ

DAVE SANBORN – CONCORD JAZZ

KEIKO MATSUI – NUMEROUS, INC TOUR ALL CO-BILLS

JOHN MAYALL – MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL

CHRIS BOTTI – THORNTON WINERY

LEE RITENOUR – VARIOUS, INC IRVINE MEADOWS AMPHITHEATER

LARRY CARLTON – VILLA MONTALVO CA

HIROSHIMA – RODNEY STRONG WINERY, OTHERS

RIPPINGTONS – LONG BEACH JAZZ FESTIVAL

YELLOWJACKETS – CONCORD JAZZ FESTIVAL

SIMPLY RED – MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL

TOURE KUNDA – WILTERN THEATER LA

MANHATTAN TRANSFER – WILTERN THEATER LA

BONNIE RAITT – POPLAR CREEK PAVILION IL

FLORA PURIM & AIRTO – ROYCE HALL UCLA, OJAI MUSIC FESTIVAL

STOCHELO ROSENBERG – MONTREAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

RODRIGO Y GABRIELA – HENRY FONDA THEATER LA, AS SPECIAL GUESTS LIVE

TOMMY EMMANUEL – RYMAN AUDITORIUM NASHVILLE

NORMAN BROWN – VILLA MONTALVO

PONCHO SANCHEZ – HYATT NEWPORTER, US CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS

WASHINGTON DC

DAVE BENOIT – GREEK THEATER HOLLYWOOD

JOHN TESH – GREEK THEATER, HOLLYWOOD

LARRY CORYELL – GREAT AMERICAN MUSIC HALL SF

DAVE MASON & TRAFFIC, GARY WRIGHT – PASO ROBLES CA AUTUMN FEST
ACOUSTIC ALCHEMY – HOUSE OF BLUES SAN DIEGO, HUMPHREY'S BY THE SEA SAN
DIEGO
BILL KANENGISER – COUNTRY CLUB RESEDA CA
FOURPLAY – THORNTON WINERY CA
HALL & OATES – BLUE SUN FESTIVAL WESTLAKE VILLAGE CA
MIKE MCDONALD – BLUE SUN FESTIVAL
CRAIG CHAQUICO – VILLA MONTALVO

AWARDS:

- “Americas” nominated for Grammy for Best World Music Album 1992.
- Their album “Primal Magic” was named Billboard’s “World Music Album of the Year” 1990.
- Jorge, as part of Strunz & Farah, was awarded a Premio a la Superación by President Calderón of Costa Rica for his cultural achievements in 1991.
- In 1994, Jorge was given an award from the Presidency and Ministry of Culture of Costa Rica for his work with Ardeshir Farah.
- In 1995, Billboard Magazine recognizes them as among the top 10 World Music Artists overall.
- In 1998, Jorge was given an award for their benefit concert for the National Children’s Hospital in San Jose, Costa Rica.