

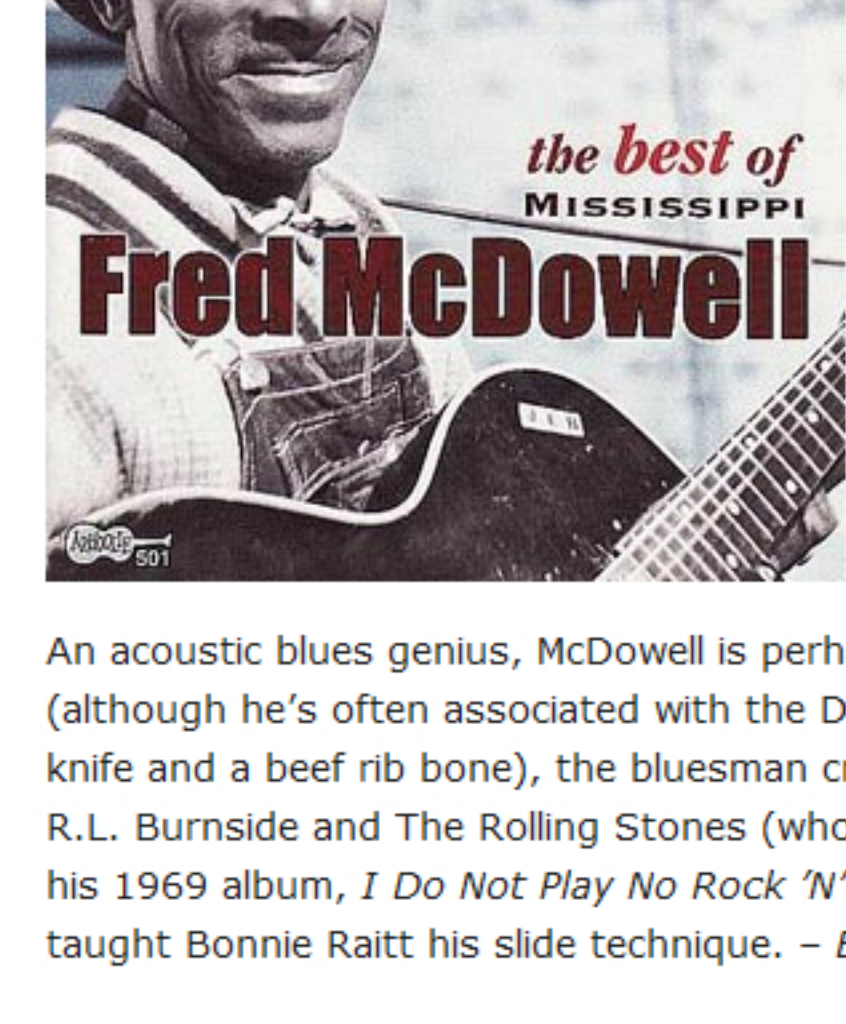
Gibson.com's Top 50 Acoustic Guitarists of All Time – #50-41

10.25.2010

Electric guitarists get all the glory – stacks of amplifiers, arenas full of fans, that big, big sound sending shockwaves through adoring crowds. Meanwhile, the acoustic players of the world are the sensitive souls, playing delicately and carefully in their unamplified corners of music history. The best acoustic guitarists have quietly made innovative sounds and amazing tunes that have altered how people think about the guitar.

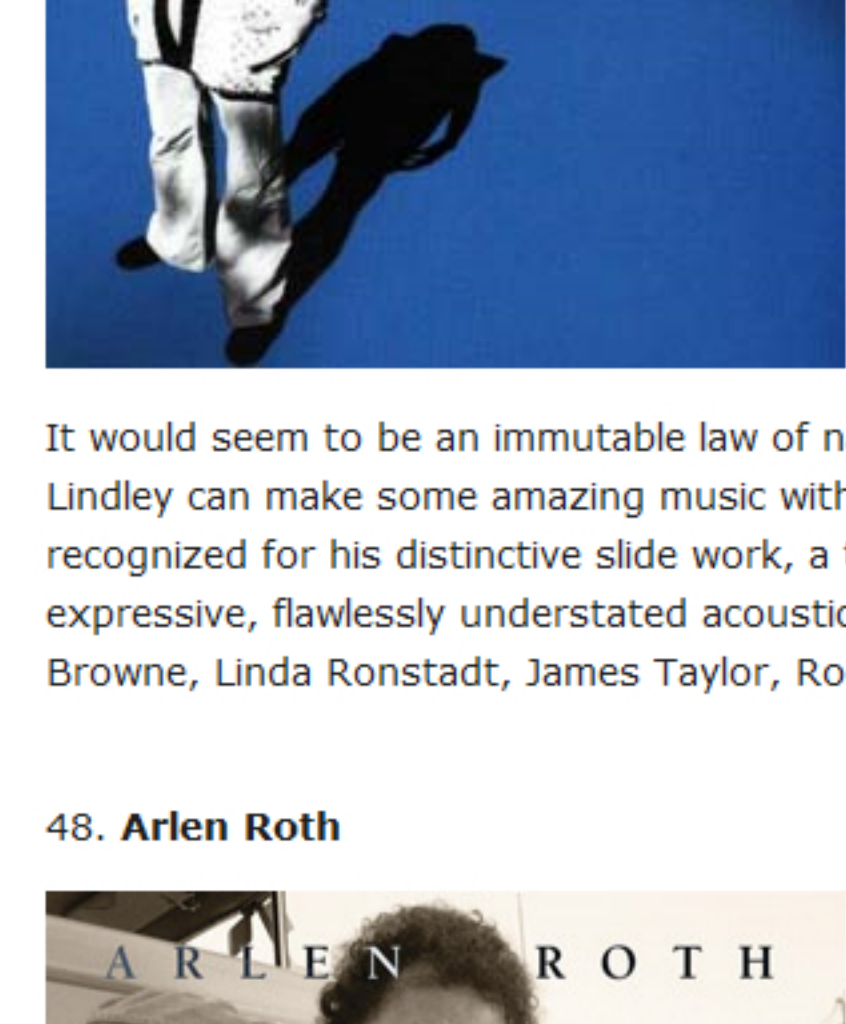
Well, *Gibson.com* thought it was high time that the most legendary of acoustic players finally got their due. In tribute to these masters of the guitar, *Gibson.com* is counting down the Top 50 Acoustic Guitarists of All Time – as voted on by Gibson's editorial team, writing staff and, most importantly, you, the readers. Today, we reveal #50-#41 on the list. Check back each day this week, as we unveil 10 more acoustic guitarists, with the Top 10 arriving on Friday morning.

50. Mississippi Fred McDowell



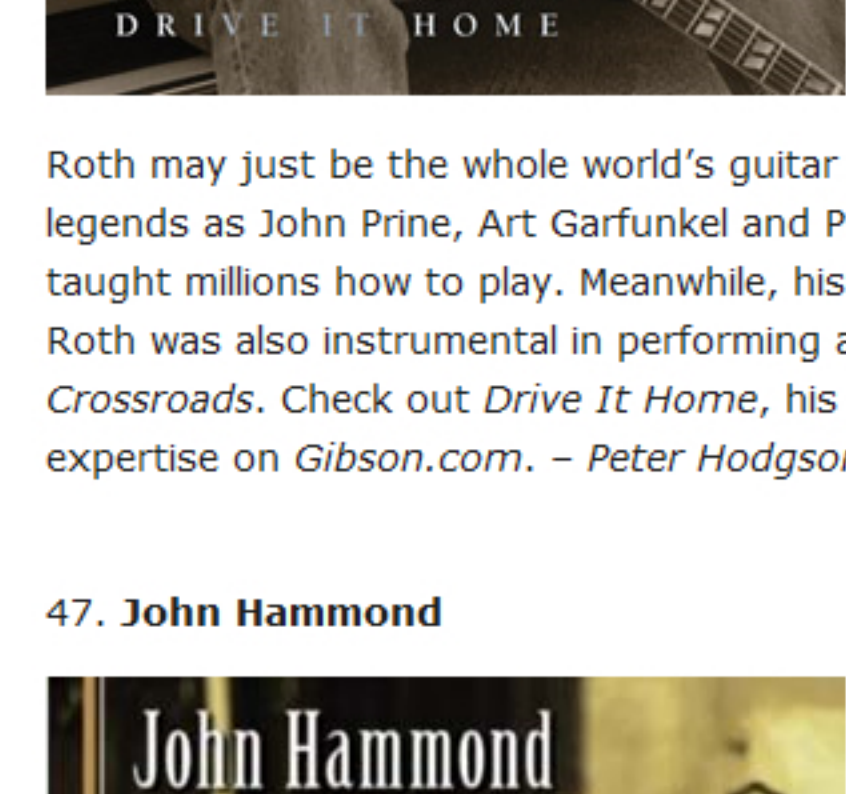
An acoustic blues genius, McDowell is perhaps the foremost example of the North Mississippi sound (although he's often associated with the Delta players). Whether picking or sliding (he first used a pocket knife and a beef rib bone), the bluesman crafted droning, hypnotic wonders that would influence the likes of R.L. Burnside and The Rolling Stones (who covered "You Gotta Move"). Although he declared on the title of his 1969 album, *I Do Not Play No Rock 'N' Roll*, he was friendly with the rockers he inspired, and even taught Bonnie Raitt his slide technique. – *Bryan Wawzenek*

49. David Lindley



It would seem to be an immutable law of nature that if an object in our universe has strings on it, David Lindley can make some amazing music with it – either on his own or in somebody else's band. While often recognized for his distinctive slide work, a true measure of Lindley's musical genius is in the way his expressive, flawlessly understated acoustic playing has elevated the music of such varied folks as Jackson Browne, Linda Ronstadt, James Taylor, Rod Stewart, Dolly Parton and Bob Dylan. – *Chuck Crisafulli*

48. Arlen Roth



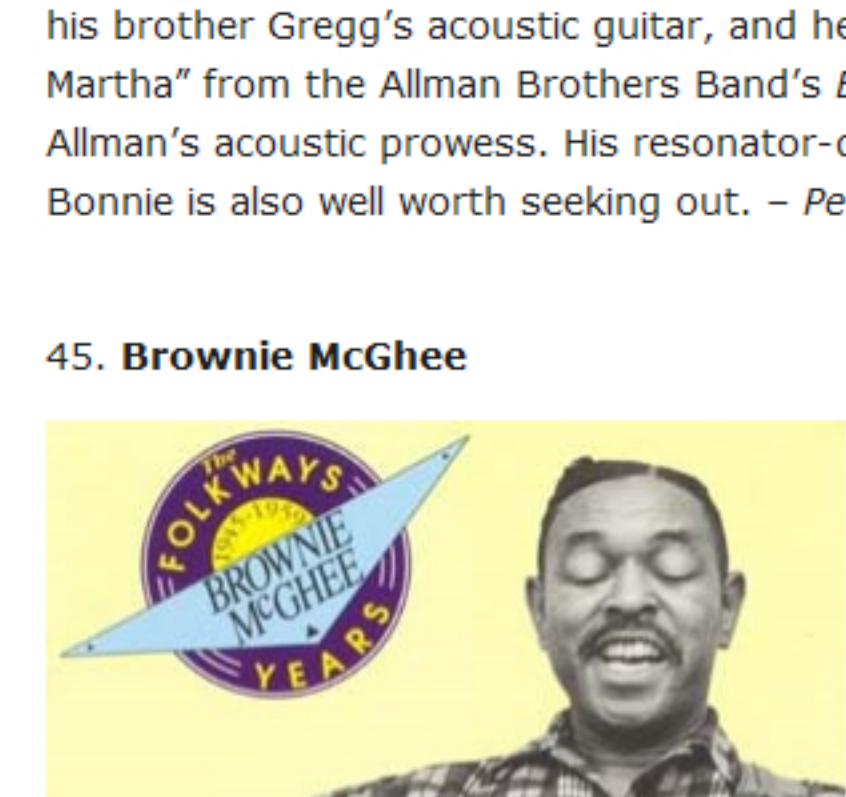
Roth may just be the whole world's guitar teacher. In between working as a solo artist and with such legends as John Prine, Art Garfunkel and Phoebe Snow, he founded *Hot Licks* where his video lessons taught millions how to play. Meanwhile, his *Complete Acoustic Guitar* book remains an invaluable resource. Roth was also instrumental in performing and directing most of the guitar scenes in the blues-inspired film *Crossroads*. Check out *Drive It Home*, his 1998 all-acoustic album. Plus, Roth continues to share his expertise on *Gibson.com*. – *Peter Hodgson*

47. John Hammond



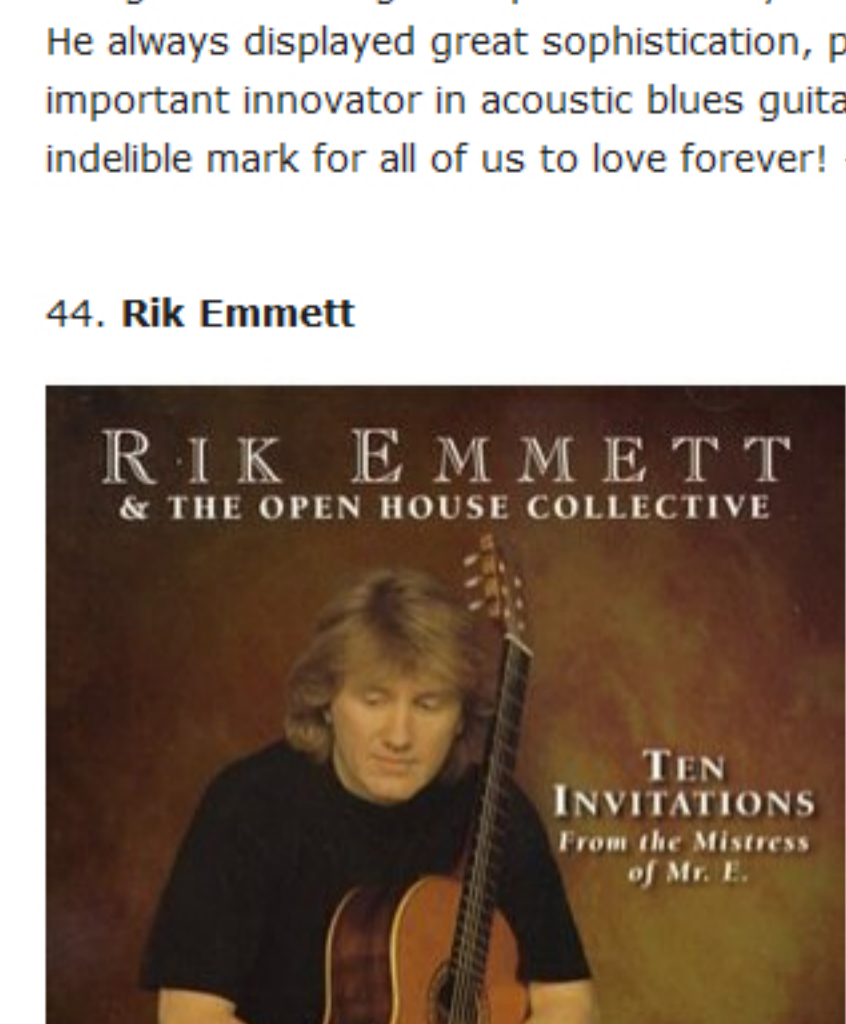
It's hardly surprising that John Hammond has been called "the white Robert Johnson." For four-plus decades, Hammond has, like many itinerant country-blues artists before him, played acoustic guitar with a fast-fingered finesse that leaves audiences marveling at his technique. Like Johnson, Hammond sometimes gives the impression he's playing two guitars simultaneously – one holding down the bass line, and the other delivering fiery rhythm work and solos. No artist has devoted himself more fully to keeping country-blues alive in its purest form. – *Russell Hall*

46. Duane Allman



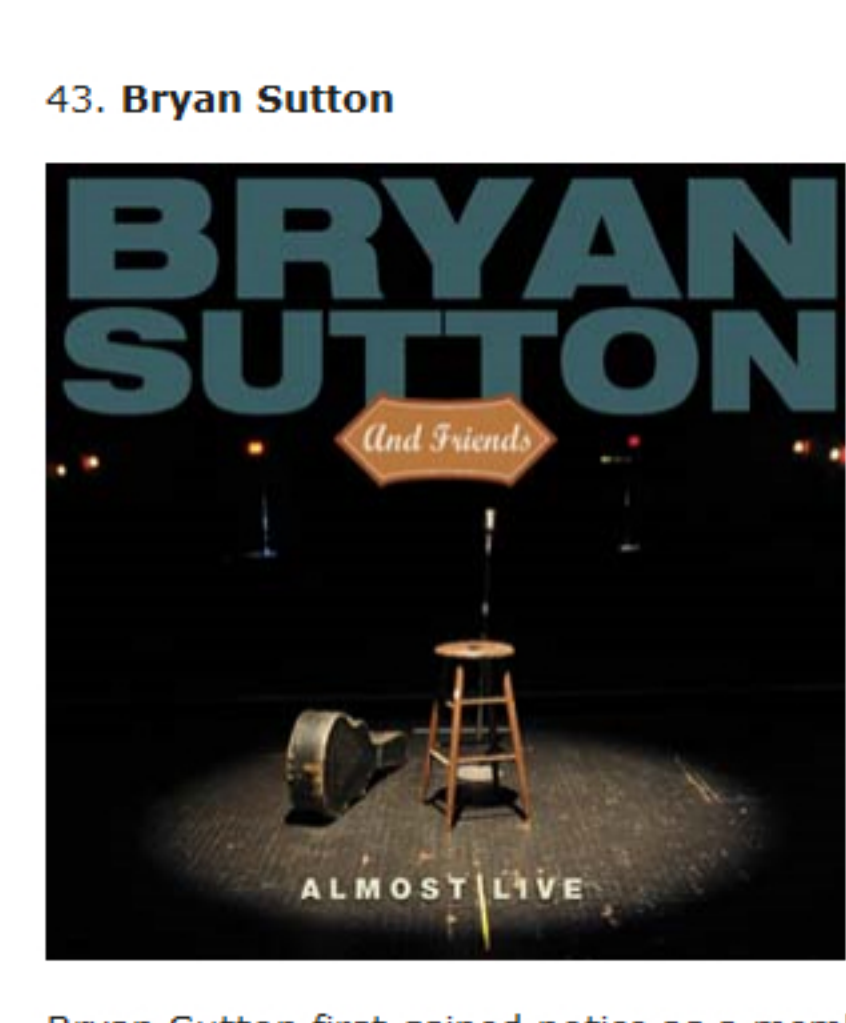
Although primarily known as an electric slide master, Duane Allman began by learning the acoustic blues on his brother Gregg's acoustic guitar, and he never forgot his roots. Check out the instrumental "Little Martha" from the Allman Brothers Band's *Eat a Peach*, a beautiful duet with Dickey Betts, for an example of Allman's acoustic prowess. His resonator-driven rendition of "Come on in My Kitchen" with Delaney and Bonnie is also well worth seeking out. – *Peter Hodgson*

45. Brownie McGhee



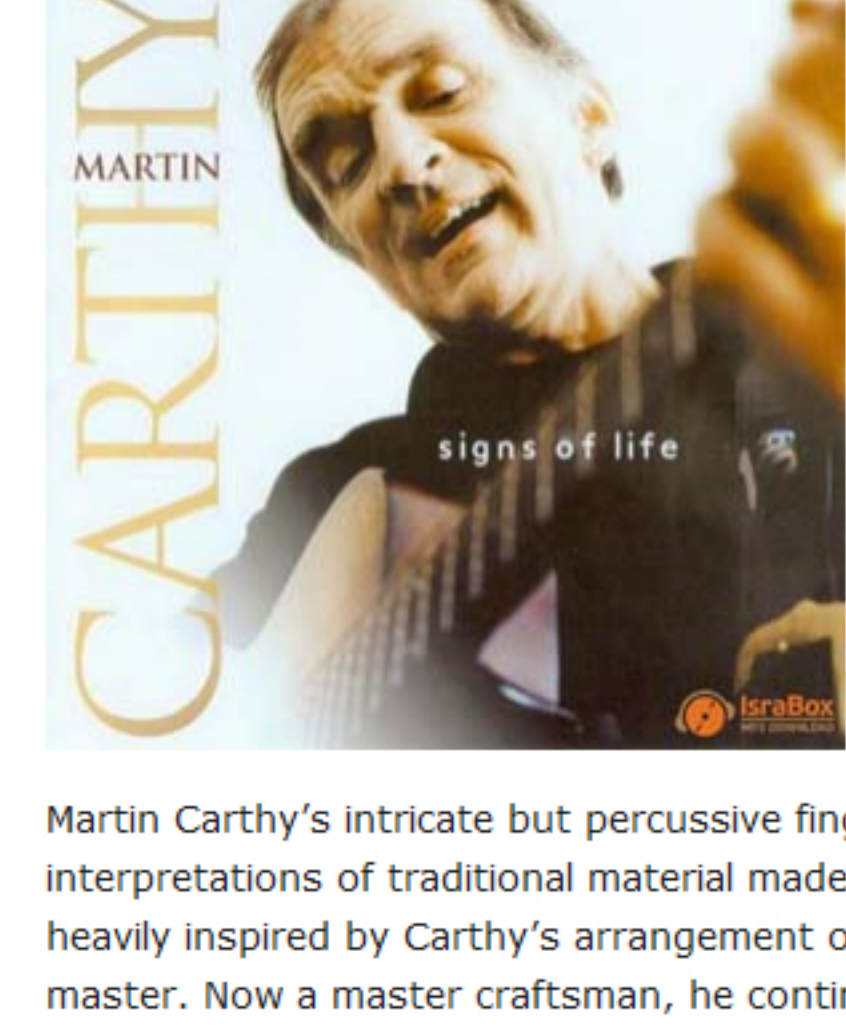
Brownie McGhee was always one of the most influential country blues players of the "true" blues era, and along with his long-time partner Sonny Terry, created some of the most iconic tunes and guitar parts ever. He always displayed great sophistication, playfulness and humor with his playing, and was unquestionably an important innovator in acoustic blues guitar. His wonderful playing, smiling face and incredible voice left an indelible mark for all of us to love forever! – *Arlen Roth*

44. Rik Emmett



To the casual fan, Triumph was known for their hard-driving rock and visually stunning concerts, complete with lasers, explosions and about a gazillion lights. But for Rik Emmett, the driving force behind Triumph, the music always reigned supreme, and despite their reputation as a hard rockin' band, a jaw-dropping classical acoustic piece from Emmett was always right around the corner. When he eventually, thankfully, left the constraints of Triumph, Emmett was finally able to really stretch his acoustic/classical guitar legs, and it's been nothing but an absolute joy to behold. – *Sean Patrick Dooley*

43. Bryan Sutton



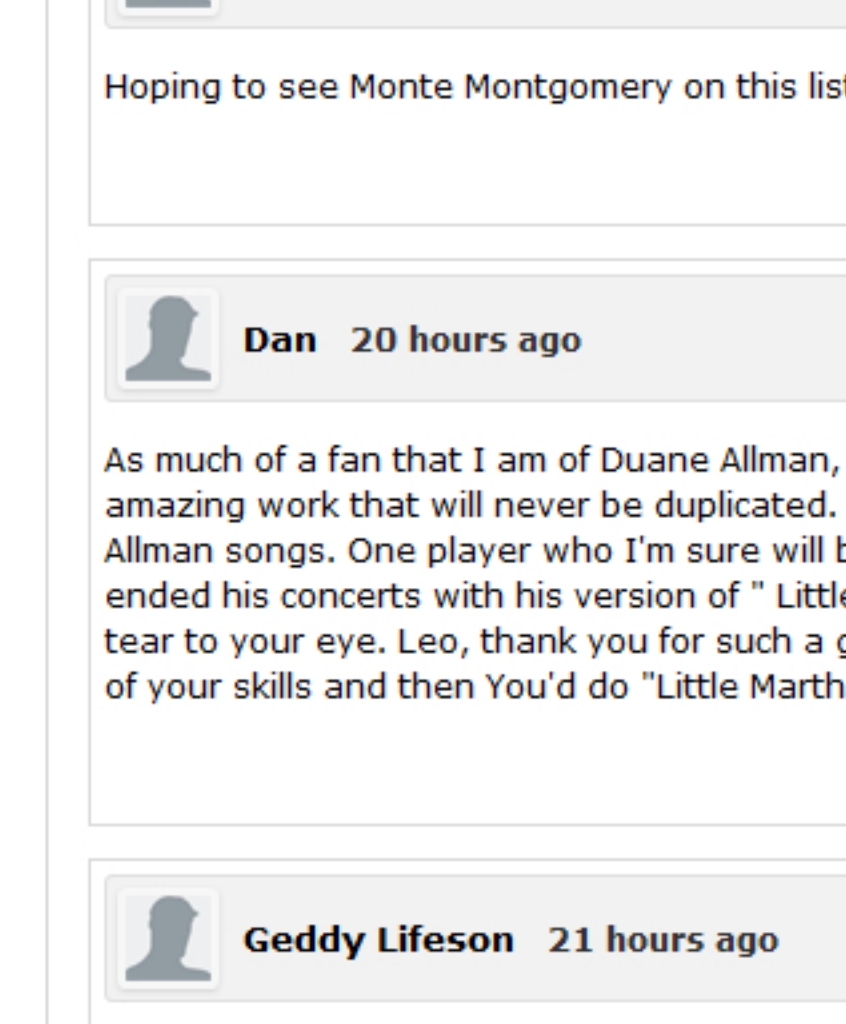
Bryan Sutton first gained notice as a member of Ricky Skaggs' Kentucky Thunder country/bluegrass band and quickly earned his reputation as a flatpicking virtuoso in his mid-20s. He's since gone solo, releasing his own records and becoming a top-flight session guitarist in Nashville. He's collaborated with an amazing array of bluegrass (and other) musicians from Dolly Parton and Doc Watson to the Dixie Chicks and Béla Fleck. Sutton has been named the guitar player of the year five times by the International Bluegrass Music Association. – *Bryan Wawzenek*

42. Martin Carthy



Martin Carthy's intricate but percussive fingerpicking style, use of unusual tunings and fascinating interpretations of traditional material made him a folk legend in London in the early '60s. Paul Simon was heavily inspired by Carthy's arrangement of "Scarborough Fair" and musicians acknowledge Carthy as a master. Now a master craftsman, he continues to ply his trade with consummate ease, picking perfection and not a little inspiration. – *Andrew Vaughan*

41. Eric Clapton



Old Slowhand earned his acoustic playing electric blues-rock in the '60s, but a whole generation of fans mostly knows Eric Clapton as an acoustic player. That's due to his 1992 *Unplugged* album (which earned him an armload of Grammys) and the subsequent blues release *From the Cradle*. The man formerly known as God proved his divine talents translated brilliantly when stripped down – his tasteful solos and clever licks shining through on Robert Johnson covers or a reworked version of "Layla." – *Bryan Wawzenek*

Votes for the Top 50 Acoustic Guitarists of All Time were included from Michael Wright, Bryan Wawzenek, Andrew Vaughan, Sean Dooley, Arlen Roth, Russell Hall, Ted Drozdowski, Paolo Bassotti, Dave Hunter, Peter Hodgson, Chuck Crisafulli and the Gibson.com Readers Poll.

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TheLastcoming65 59 minutes ago

Hoping to see Monte Montgomery on this list...

Like Reply

Dan 20 hours ago

As much of a fan that I am of Duane Allman, I agree his genius is electric blues and slide. He and Dickie did some amazing work that will never be duplicated. Still, "Little Martha" is a beautiful tune and one of my favorite Duane Allman songs. One player who I'm sure will be in the top five if not number one in your list, Leo Kottke always ended his concerts with his version of "Little Martha" in his encore. I hope he still does this as it will be bring a tear to your eye. Leo, thank you for such a great tribute. Your concerts were so amazing and I'd sit there in awe of your skills and then you'd do "Little Martha" and I always that, this a perfect ending to a great show.

Like Reply

Geddy Lifeson 21 hours ago

That's great, but where is Alex Lifeson?

Like Reply

James Mullen 7 hours ago in reply to Geddy Lifeson

Agreed, hopefully Lifeson will be mentioned higher up in the list. I wish Rush had done more songs that involved acoustic and classical guitar.

Like Reply

cito 1 day ago

I have a feeling that Dickey Betts is going to be missing from this list.....

Like Reply

Grafudge1 1 day ago

Davy Graham and Tommy Emmanuel will be in the top ten no danger.

Like Reply

Beteramp.com 1 day ago

ARLEN ROTH should be in the TOP 10 !!! c'mon guys he's amazing !!!

Like Reply

gitmon1 17 minutes ago in reply to Beteramp.com

Yeah, it's just he should have paid his Hot Licks people instead of doing a disappearing act at check time. No respect here.

Like Reply

Cassidy 20 hours ago in reply to Beteramp.com

I agree, Top 10 for Arlen, he's great!!!!

Like Reply

Jcv5150 1 day ago

I would think the last one would be up in the 30's at least. But he really hasn't done so much acoustic stuff so I'm sure after I see the rest of the 1-40, I may be satisfied he's right where he needs to be.

Like Reply

Kevinf25 1 day ago

I went and saw Jorma Kaukonen at his Fur Peace Ranch Guitar camp it's hard to believe he's not on the list. A fantastic picker that is helping the next generation improve their playing!

1 person liked this. Like Reply

mkr 1 day ago in reply to Kevinf25

You mean it's hard to believe that he's not in the 41-50 portion of the list?

Like Reply

Ghlof123 1 day ago

The element that all these artist have in common is they "bring it" forward in their playing. Their styles vary and backgrounds differ, but they all "bring it" to whatever piece they are playing. Some more than others, but music is so subjective, yet universally these players cut through it all and bring forth the purity of the song.

1 person liked this. Like Reply

Network 1 day ago

I've been a fan of Rik's since his Triumph days. He was always too good for that band. Nice to see a Canadian make the grade. Liona Boyd and Bruce Cockburn should be on your list too. Especially Bruce. He makes his Linda Manzer guitars just sing. He's such a fantastic finger picker. Check out his last live album if you need proof. Slice O Life - Live Solo It's a work of art.

Like Reply

BabsIennon 1 day ago in reply to Network

I am Bruce Cockburn fan and will have to check out that CD thanks.

1 person liked this. Like Reply

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