

Guitarist entertains 5.4.7 crowd "on his own terms"

By Jan West

Leaning passionately into his guitar, Celtic finger style guitarist, Jerry Bar-

low, entertained a crowd of over 50 enthusiastic music lovers with a combination of traditional tunes and original melodies at

Greensburg's 5-4-7 Arts Center on Saturday evening.

The Center's current gallery show of Flint Hill

landscapes and all its beauty provided a fitting backdrop to Barlow's comfortable sense of humor, showmanship, and adept musical renderings.

Varying selections between lively, seafaring shanties and the soothing, often haunting, folk melodies of Ireland and Scotland, Barlow captured and kept his audience through two sets. "For those of you who are thinking to leave during the intermission," he teased, "we're planning to give away a car later...and we'll even help you put it together."

Barlow's ease of per-

formance and mastery of technique undoubtedly results from years of performance and song writing including 18 years in Nashville's inner circle.

Not only has he composed selections for the likes of Conway Twitty and other artists, Barlow also has appeared at the original Grand Ole Opry himself.

Having traded that scene for his dream to perform Celtic jigs and melodies on his own terms, Barlow now resides in Golden, Colorado and plays a variety of venues including private homes, store openings, libraries and the like.

As he prepared to end the evening, he decided to add an original tune. "I don't know if I'm ready to do this for you or not," he said as he tuned his guitar to perfect pitch, "but every time I play this, I think about you all here. You know, you're our heroes," he added. "You give us all hope."

The melody, "Fields and Fences," floated through the crowd with a sweet sadness, capturing the essence of rain-freshened wheat fields against a darkening sky. All in all, Barlow created an enjoyable evening in outstanding surroundings.

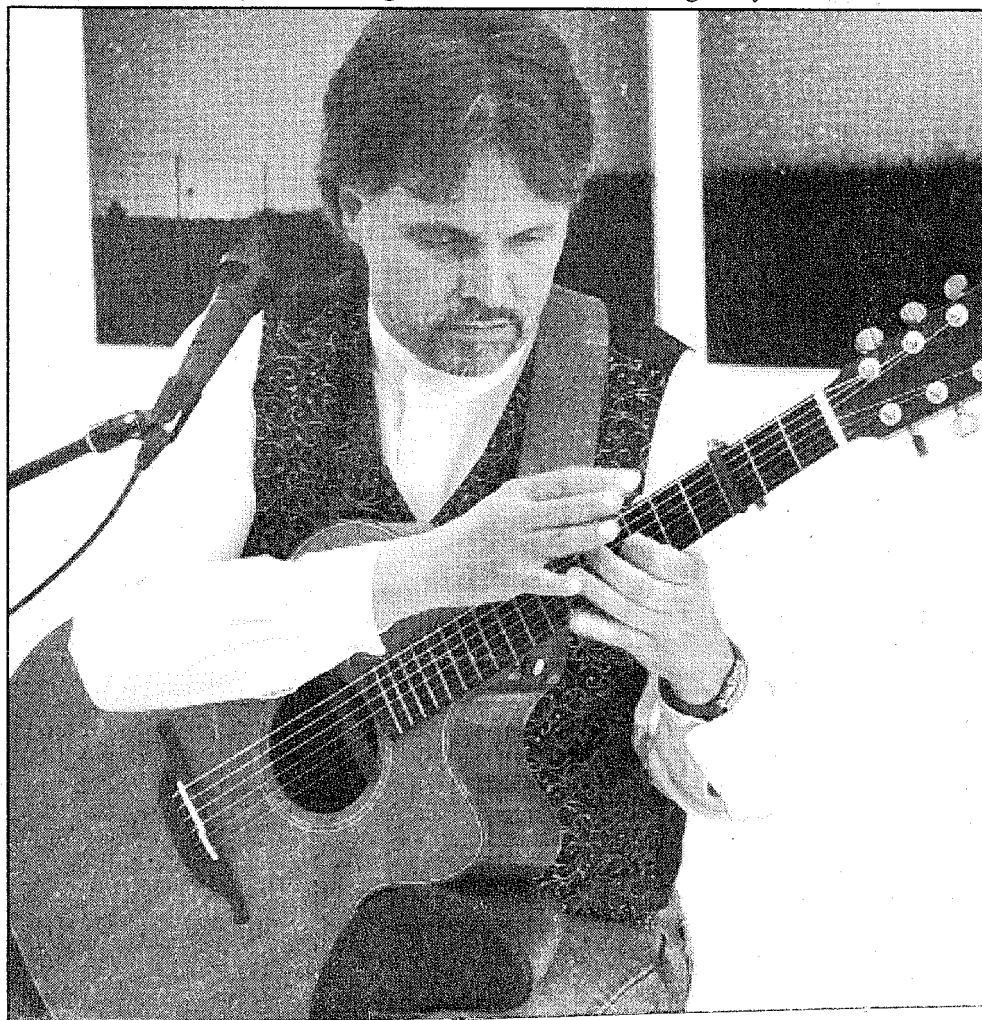


Photo by Matt Cartledge |

Jerry Barlow indicated Saturday night his willingness to return to Greensburg as

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RE: Estes Park Music Festival Winter Series at the Stanley Hotel

Hi,

For the past three years on Valentine's Day weekend, the Estes Park Music Festival and the Stanley Hotel look forward to another sold out concert featuring Jerry Barlow on Celtic Guitar. His program, personality and extraordinary talent are warmly received and a standing ovation with encore is always part of the afternoon performance.

Just wanted you to know how much we cherish our relationship with Jerry and look forward to Valentine's Day 2012.

Nancy Stevens
Director of Programming
Estes Park Music Festival
February 28, 2011



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March 17, 2010

Jerry Barlow
18230 W. 3rd #1
Golden, CO 80401

Dear Jerry,

I wish to thank you very much for appearing at the Town of Vail Public Library last Tuesday, March 9th. Your performance was absolutely delightful and I was pleased to see so many faces in the audience, both adults as well as children. I loved your stories, humor and the variety of songs (both instrumental as well as vocal) which you played. It was a charming evening for all! I felt the audience was engaged and entertained by your performance. You were also so gracious, both during the intermission and then again after the performance, as folks engaged you in questions and dialogue – thank you for that added treat!

I do hope that you enjoyed your brief visit to the Vail Valley. Thank you so much for your patience, too, as we worked through the necessary paperwork for your transient vendor license. I hope your sales were successful – we are pleased to have your CDs in our music collection and they're even more special as they are now autographed.

In closing, allow me to thank you, once again, for bringing your musical talents to the patrons of the Town of Vail Public Library. We were truly honored to have you perform for us. Take care, and until we meet again.

Yours sincerely,

Lori A. Barnes
Town Librarian

Spotlight On Music

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719/846-3311

I really didn't want to slip and slide six miles down my muddy road to listen to Jerry Barlow last Friday evening. The road-slime had caused me to cut a class in town that morning and the dreary weather had put me down for a nap in the afternoon. Had it not been for the fact that Joan MacNeish had promised me that Jerry Barlow was a wonderful Celtic musician, and not at all like the dour personality that he appeared



**Cynthia
Berresse
Ploski**
Special to The
Chronicle-News

to have on the flyer picture....Had it not been for that, and the fact that I have never been disappointed in a Concerts for

Causes performance, I would have gone back to bed.

But instead I gulped down a hot cup of tea and cold sandwich, and went to town. It proved to be worth the effort. When I left the concert to slog back home, the road seemed a little dryer and my heart a lot lighter.

It was an evening of surprises.

First of all, there was Jerry himself. He is a smiling, sensitive and talented guitar player incorporating elements of finger style guitar learned from his previous teacher, our own Jaquie Gibson, who attended the concert to enjoy the results. "Pretty intimidating," Barlow confessed, "to play in front of my teacher."

He need not have worried about that. She, and the rest of us, were impressed.

Furthermore, Jerry Barlow turned out to be engaging and even funny. His patter between songs had the audience loose and laughing. That dour look on the flyers was nonexistent, replaced by moments of intense concentration on the intricacies of his complicated fingering.

The ambiance may also have contributed to the feeling of fun for the audience was surrounded by First Street

animals.

And then there was the flirty exchange with front-row lady Lillian Young ("Lillian Young- Forever Young" as she calls herself)—almost 105 years young.

Barlow remembered her from the last time he had played in Trinidad, and the handsome, smiling Jerry had obviously impressed Lillian. Their back and forth chatter was delight for the rest of us—in addition to finding in Lillian a wonderful role model for our own becoming "old" challenges.

But oh! The music!

For those who may not be familiar with Celtic music, I'll jump into teacher mode for a few minutes. The Celtic people are commonly believed to have originated in the central European areas of Switzerland, Austria and southern Germany. By 500 BC they had spread across Europe from the British Isles to Turkey and become renowned for their iron working skills. This was, after all, the Iron Age, a big

technological jump from the Stone Age.

By the next technological leap, the Bronze Age, they had dispersed as a tightly knit culture, but their art and music remained and became incorporated into local musical traditions. Today, in addition to the purely folklore-based Celtic jigs and reels I danced in Nova Scotia as a teenager (and which are alive and well today throughout Northern Europe, Canada and the United States) plaintive Celtic melodies can be heard and enjoyed in New Age Music, such as performed by Enya and the group known as "Celtic Women."

It's pronounced with a "K" by the way, not a "C" (unless you are talking about a sports team.)

Jerry Barlow places his storytelling songs into their his-



Photos by Cynthia Berresse Ploski

Teacher (Jaquie Gipson) and former student (Jerry Barlow) reunite

ing "Loch Lomand" in the same empty way, now that I have learned it was a song sung by bereaved families after seeing their sons, prisoners of the Jacobite Rebellion, hanged in England on the "High Road" and their heads thrust aloft on pikes by the wayside. No wonder they chose to trek the "Low Road" back to Scotland, singing this beautiful lament.

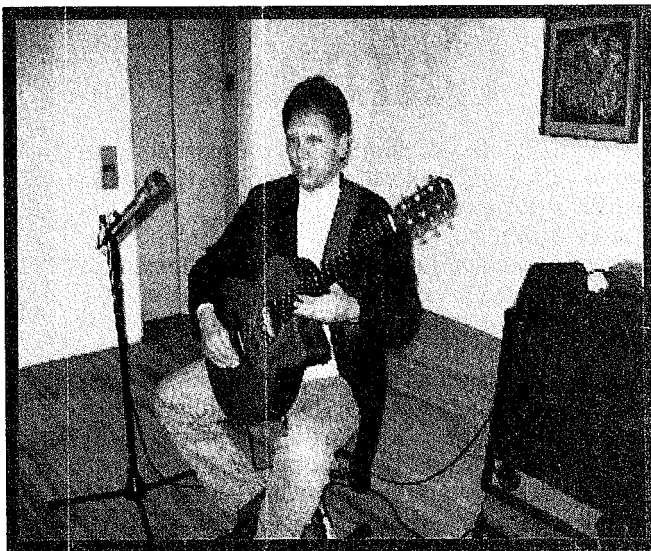
We were treated to jigs and sea shanties, gavottes, dirges, battle songs and medieval melodies, played on a single guitar, but with varying tunings. As Jerry explained, "Celtic music was not written for the guitar." In fact, it was written for the fiddle, flute, tin whistle, bagpipes and a host of other long-dead and unusual instruments. Changing the tuning of his guitar strings allows Barlow to imitate the sounds of some of those original instruments.

He praised Joan MacNeish for her "wonderful idea," Concerts for Causes. In fact, it really is proving to be a brilliant and innovative idea. For one thing, it provides venues for traveling artists who are making their living by performing. It gives audiences in this, our small-town and rural environment, access to live entertainment of top quality. And because our City of Trinidad Arts and Cultural Advisory commission picks up the performers' fees, all the money collected at the door goes to worthy charities.

This evening's proceeds benefitted the Trinidad Arts Council's children's programs and our local animal shelter, Noah's Ark.

Each month features different performers, different venues and different beneficiaries. And each time I attend one of these I emerge with a smile.

Like the one on my face when Jerry Barlow serenaded Lillian "Forever" Young with "I've Got the Hots for You."



Jerry Barlow explains the Celtic tuning of his guitar

Buffalo Theater and Buffalo Public Library Present the Unique Celtic Music Stylings of Jerry Barlow

Leslie Earnest
Harper County Journal

On Sunday, April 18, attendants at the Buffalo Theatre had the opportunity to enjoy the unique stylings of Jerry Barlow, Celtic fingerstyle guitarist. Jerry uses traditional Celtic music from Ireland, Scotland, Britain and even France, along with a blend of his own Celtic inspired compositions to wow crowds across the nation.

Jerry is an Indie Award winner who has had his songs featured on a PBS documentary titled *Song of Our Children*, and the newly released documentary *Learn More About Climate*.

Jerry started off the evening with an explanation of what Celtic fingerstyle music is and how it is played. Throughout the show, he explained to the audience what he was doing and a little about the songs themselves. Each song brought a different history lesson. His wit and humor had the audience laughing along with him. He found ways to involve the audience during the entire show. Jerry has the unique ability to not only perform his music, but entertain the crowd as well.

Jerry's music included modern day pieces and original Celtic music, and anything from slow-moving to fast-paced songs. He played two very humorous sea chants that he sang along with, a Scottish march, and even an early 1700's Irish Jig. He also played a piece that he wrote for Greensburg, Kansas that was absolutely moving.

People from Buffalo and surrounding areas came to experience this performance. One couple drove all the way from Fairview, Oklahoma. They felt that it was most definitely worth the trip. They said that the show was "fantastic, wonderful", and that they "loved the humor". They were "really impressed that a little town could draw such talent and that they want to do so."

This was one of the most enjoyable concerts that I have ever had the privilege of attending. I was captivated by the music, and even almost moved to tears during some pieces. The entire concert was peaceful, humorous, spellbinding, and moving all at the same time. I am glad that I was given this opportunity and hope to get the chance again.

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Harper County Journal
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Jerry Barlow Wins International "Indie" Award



Jerry Barlow's title song from his CD, *BRING DOWN THE STORM*, has won the prestigious Independent Music Award ("Indie") Award for Best Songs of 2006. The Colorado Celtic Fingerstyle Guitar player's tune was one of 25 songs picked from thousands submitted from around the world by a panel of well-known music industry professionals such as Peter Gabriel, Wynonna, Cindi Lauper, David Grisman, and Patti Loveless.

Among the list of the 25 winners sharing Jerry's prestigious award include such world class songwriters as Kris Kristoferson, John Gorka, Sam Bush, and Gregg Brown. Jerry said that he was "pleased and proud" of his award and "honored to be in such company."

Songs from his Jerry's first CD, *KEEPSAKE* have been played on National Public Radio and were included in a PBS documentary *Song of Our Children*. He recently completed an engagement as the featured musician for Imagination Makers Theater Company, performing at two elementary schools a day, Monday through Friday, for a period of three months, presenting a children's play about an Irish family coming to America.

Jerry also performs solo for children in the Denver Schools and described these appearances in his monthly newsletter, "I present a great deal of historical as well as musical information and often spend as much time answering questions as playing music. I'm glad to see schools presenting a variety of music and culture to children who otherwise would have very limited exposure."

Jerry's internationally recognized arrangements of Irish, Scottish and Appalachian music on fingerstyle guitar have been described as "heart warming" and "uplifting".

In concert, the warm and accessible performer brings traditional Celtic tunes alive by sharing the history, humor and legends behind the music.

Keepsake and *Bring Down the Storm* are now available at the Denver Folklore Center, *Twist & Shout*, Amazon.com or at any of Jerry's performances. For more information about his schedule, bookings, lessons, or ordering CDs check out website www.jerrybarlow.com or call 303/756-4418.



Celtic Melodies at the Center for the Arts

Guitar enthusiasts of all abilities won't want to miss Celtic fingerstyle guitarist Jerry Barlow at the Center for the Arts, Friday, October 29th, at 8pm.

The development of the fingerstyle technique has pushed the limits of guitar playing. The method requires guitarists to play bass, melody, and chords at the same time using their fingers rather than a flat pick allowing the listener to hear all the musical complexities from one instrument. What the Spanish musical culture did for the development of classical guitar, artists like Barlow are similarly affecting traditional Celtic melodies, with modern renderings of the music using the fingerstyle approach.

It has been thirty years since fingerstyle Celtic guitar first emerged and Jerry Barlow has certainly made a name for himself amongst the circles of other fingerstyle players. He has been featured in Master Workshop articles of *Fingerstyle Guitar Magazine*.

However, Barlow is no newcomer to the music industry. As a songwriter in Nashville, Barlow's songs were recorded by Conway Twitty, Eddy Arnold and Jeanny Pruitt. While in Tennessee he discovered Appalachian music which is the distinctly American adaptation of melodies from the British Isles and the predecessor of Bluegrass and Country music. It's no wonder then that this self-proclaimed history buff was drawn to studying the historically significant tunes.



Jerry Barlow

For seven years Barlow has dedicated his musical career to writing and performing his own unique Celtic influenced compositions. Keeping with the tradition of the music that inspires him, Barlow's repertoire consists of playful jigs, spirited reels and dreamy airs. His songs have been used as sound clips on NPR's morning edition they have been described as "music to soothe the soul, warm the heart and lift the spirit."

Enjoy an evening with Jerry Barlow at the Center for the Arts on Friday, October 29th at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15 and are available at the Center or by calling the Center Box Office at 349-7487 to pay by Visa or Master Card.

Barlow will also be performing a concert in the Gunnison Arts Center Theatre on Friday, November 12th at 8 p.m. For tickets contact, 641-4029

A Pleasant Evening on the Plains

Submitted by *Don's Place* on June 22, 2009 – 10:52 am. Reprinted with permission from the Dodge City Globe.

It could not have been a more beautiful evening on the Kansas prairie. We attended the concert by Celtic guitarist, Jerry Barlow, at the 5.4.7 Arts Center in Greensburg Saturday evening. A standing-room-only crowd enjoyed every minute of Barlow's polished and entertaining performance.

I have to confess I have a little problem with a whole evening of Celtic music, particularly when it's primarily instrumental and there are no pounding battalions of flying feet and rigid arms. Those fiddle tunes all sound the same after a few bars, at least to me.

Mr. Barlow, however, brings a broader musical perspective to his interpretation of all things Celtic. His experience as a professional songwriter in Nashville for 18 years widens his focus. He admitted that his Celtic purist friends chide him for including a Van Morrison tune, but the arrangement was excellent and he jokingly referred to the song's emergence during the drug-laden '60s by calling it his version of "acid Celtic." Barlow brings a charming wit to his introductions of each tune, something he undoubtedly honed while working in the show "Country Music, USA" at Opryland.

Barlow's program included lots of ballads, which were haunting and expansive. And, of course, the jigs and marches that give Celtic music the power drive. You could look down any row of listeners and see fingers patting, toes tapping and heads nodding. We just couldn't help ourselves.

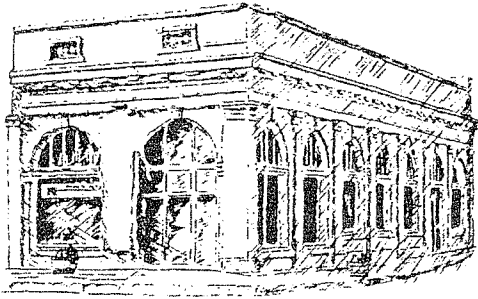
The revelation of the evening for me was the up-close experience of watching an accomplished instrumentalist play the guitar with a technique I've never seen before: finger-style guitar. The style of playing developed in the '60s when guitarists starting experimenting with Celtic tunes usually played on pipes, fiddles, or drums. The style seems to rely on amplification – some of the music is played entirely on the fret board with no picking or strumming. The notes, which can come fast and furiously, seem to be produced by tapping the string against the frets. There's an element of harp playing as well, as the strings are plucked by both hands at the same time. It was fascinating to watch and even more fascinating to listen to. In the hands of an accomplished and intelligently sensitive artist like Barlow, the guitar can produce an incredible range of tonal variety, sounding like a plaintive flute or whole sections of an orchestra.

As an audience member, there's this thing that happens when all the elements of a performance come together. It's a kind of wave of positive energy that sweeps the performance to a higher level because everything is perfectly conceived and executed. I remember this feeling being almost overwhelming at a performance by the Royal Shakespeare Company in New York in the 1980s. The show was "Nickolas Nickleby," an adaptation of a sprawling Dickens novel...The tickets were expensive, even considering the scope of the production...The staging was perfect, the music was perfect, the story was powerful and there was a palpable sense of a few hundred of us having shared a unique experience. There's that wave of "perfectness."

I often felt that wave during rehearsals at the Depot, when an actor connected with the moment in a perfect way – realizing for the first time what the scene was really about, or nailing the timing of a comic bit. I have also felt that wave during a particular performance, when the cast was all on the same wavelength or a singer found the right interpretation of a phrase...

You might not think that an evening of Celtic instrumental music would be a likely candidate for the wave. You would be wrong. Clearly, the combination of well-chosen music expertly performed, with an entertaining patter and the Kansas prairie out the wall of windows – that's an art form at its best.

We should stop saying there's nothing to do around here.



DEMING ARTS COUNCIL

100 South Gold, Deming, NM 88030

(505) 546-3663

demingarts@swnm.com

December 1, 2007

Jerry Barlow
c/o 2382 S Fillmore St
Denver, CO 80210

Dear Jerry:

On behalf of the Deming Arts Council I want to thank you for your willingness to come to the borderland of Deming, New Mexico, to perform on November 11, 2007. We had a great turnout, and the audience was not disappointed!

The combination of instrumental virtuosity and congenial audience rapport is a rare quality in a performer. Celtic guitar is a genre new to Deming's offerings, but you touched many a heart as you both educated and entertained.

Again, our gratitude for a memorable concert. We wish you continued success, and we look forward to having you with us again when your schedule permits.

Sincerely,

Veronika Barnes
Music Programs Coordinator
Deming Arts Council