

MANDOLINQUENTS

Biographies

Simon Mayor is widely regarded as Europe's leading mandolin virtuoso, as well as fine fiddle player, guitarist, composer and wit. Since 1990 he has accepted invitations from around the globe to play at folk, world and classical festivals. In 1999 he was special guest of the Classical Mandolin Society of America at their annual convention. Meanwhile his recordings have been applauded everywhere from BBC World Service 'Recording of the Week' and Radio 2 'Album of the Week' to magazines such as Q, Vox, Folk Roots and Cosmopolitan! In May 2000 he entered the Classical Artist Top ten.

His off-beat humour surfaced in his own series for BBC Radio 2 Marooned with a Mandolin - 'the best programme on Radio 2 this week' in The Independent on Sunday. Aside from the mandolin, he played swing fiddle on the album Five Guys Name Mo and has written four music books for the mandolin.

Oh and something he's won't tell you it was him playing mandolin on the hit line dancing album from the illustrious cast of TV's Emmerdale.

Richard Collins first picked up a guitar at the age of nine and within a couple of years was stunningly adept on a number of stringed instruments. By his mid-teens he was much in demand at bluegrass festivals and arts centres in his native Hampshire. Now highly regarded as a mandolinist and guitarist, he is also one of the hottest (and subtlest) 5 string banjo players around. He tours regularly with American artists has even been dragged back across the Atlantic for session work in Nashville!

Richard appeared as both actor and musician with the Royal Shakespeare Company in their 2002 production of 'A Winter's Tale'. His own 'A Band like Alice' recently recorded an album for EMI's new world music series. His latest project is a plectrum style guitar teaching DVD which he managed to record inbetween Mandolinquents commitments and indulging in what he was trained for - maintaining and tuning pianos.

Apart from his consummate skill as a musician, Richard has reputedly the largest repertoire of self-deprecating banjo jokes in the world.

Hilary James may be best known for her fine singing, but she takes her place in the Mandolinquents pounding the mighty mandobass.

Her superb voice defies categorisation and has featured everywhere from Classic FM to Radio 1's Andy Kershaw. Covering everything from traditional folk music to blues and swing her three solo CDs have been played on radio stations from Los Angeles to Latvia and brought an invitation to make a video with MTV award winning editor/producer Dan Leberthal in Hollywood.

Hilary James presented music education programmes for national BBC Radio for six years and has illustrated a children's song book for Faber Music.

Together with Simon Mayor she has written over 60 children's songs, as well as topical songs for news programmes.

Gerald Garcia is equally at home at the Wigmore Hall or Glastonbury Pop Festival.

One of the world's finest guitarists, he's toured with the likes of John Williams and Paco Peña, appeared with such diverse talents as Michel Legrand, Barbara Streisand, Larry Coryell and Wayne Shorter, has six solo albums out on the Naxos label... and always brings the wackiest sense of humour to his performances!

Gerald's rich and varied musical career has included playing with the Chilean group Quimantu, and collaborations with Asian and oriental artists, notably the Pipa virtuoso, Wu Man.

His wider travels have found him as far afield as Borneo, the Arctic Circle and China, where he was the first British guitarist to play in recent times. In September 1995 he toured four Chinese cities in a duo with guitarist John Williams.

Gerald studied Chemistry at Oxford University and now lives in Oxford where he enjoys cycling, cooking, computer music, Taoist Yoga and conducting the odd chamber orchestra.

The Hereford Times

"The 'Mandolinquents' mesmerised a capacity audience at the Courtyard last Thursday with superb musicianship and a zany sense of fun." *Hilary Carnson*

Guildford Advertiser

"One of the highlights of the Guildford International Music Festival, the audience left with senses sated by the energetic and atmospheric sound of the mandolin... this was a wondrous evening of perfectly executed music"