



Local Entertainment

Making music behind the guitar and behind the scenes

8/13/2010 5:49:06 AM

By **Christina Killion Valdez**
The Post-Bulletin, Rochester MN

Chris Millner pauses while describing his music career. Partly because there's so much to it that it's hard to know where to begin.

For one, there's his time playing guitar, bass, banjo and mandolin alongside many famous musicians on world-wide tours, television shows and in the studio. Then there's his work as an industry man hammering out deals on behalf of musicians when it comes to movies, television, the Internet and video games.

But mostly Millner pauses because he doesn't want to come across as bragging or as a name-dropper.

That doesn't stop him from tipping his hat to the top-notch musicians he's met in Rochester though.

"I think there are some great players in this town," said Millner, who lived in Los Angeles for 23 years before moving to Rochester to be near family a few years ago. "I don't know why, but I was really surprised."

Among the local bands he's sat in with are KnuFunk, Keep It Saxy and Jazz Sensation.

Next weekend's ARTiGras, however, will be the first time Millner will perform his original music locally. To do so he's asked several local players to join him, including Geoff Matson on saxophone and Kevin Wilson on bass.

Pulling from his vast experiences and education, which includes a master's in studio guitar from the

University of Southern California in Los Angeles, Millner said his original music ranges from jazz to blues to bluegrass.

And although he said he would like to perform more, this time around it would be different.

From 1989 to 1998, Millner traveled the country and the world with major national acts, adding, "Oh, and please don't ask me about Vegas show bands."

Ready to stay home for awhile, Millner got involved in the business side of the entertainment industry and eventually began working for the American Federation of Musicians in the National West Coast Office as a contract administrator for motion pictures, television, video games, soundtrack albums and special projects involving the Internet and multimedia.

Millner continues to consult for organizations such as Minnesota Public Radio, Video Games Live, and the American Federation of Musicians often traveling to Los Angeles. He also teaches guitar lessons and was recently hired as regional manager for the Twin Cities based Along Came Music.

And while he's a long way from star-studded California, Millner noted that he worked on music contracts for "A Prairie Home Companion" the movie, but only recently met the musicians in person when they performed with Garrison Keillor in Rochester.



Musician Chris Millner will perform for the first time locally at next weekend's ARTiGras in Mayo Park.

If you go

What: ARTiGras, the second annual celebration of the arts presented by the Rochester Arts Council and funded in part by the Southeast Minnesota Arts Council

When: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Aug. 21

Where: Mayo Park, behind Mayo Civic Center

Admission: Free

Activities:

- **ARTiVillage**, a juried art show and sale from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

- **ARTiKids**, children's activities such as steamroller art, balloon animals, tree activities, plush monster adoptions, screen printing and the Children's Museum Rochester's Ready Set Go Raceway from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

- **ARTiStage** entertainment

11 a.m. Pat Costello

11:30 a.m. Annie Mack

Noon String Quartet, Rochester Symphony Orchestra members

12:30 p.m. Melissa Adams

1 p.m. Fair Trade

2 p.m. Roger Nelson

2:30 p.m. Midnight Cowgirl

3 p.m. Brass, Etc.

3:30 p.m. Julianna and the Blue Lotus Middle Eastern Dancers

4:30 p.m. Med City Jazz Collective

5 p.m. Sawtooth Bluegrass Band

5:30 p.m. Hoag Park

6 p.m. Chris Millner Band

6:30 p.m. Shaia Dance Collective (Middle Eastern Dance)

- Civic Theater and Friends Stage, will have poetry readings and theatrical performances