



Michael Nix
From “Banza” to “Banjar”, A Lecture-Concert
A history of the banjo and its music from the 1600’s to modern times.
Program Description

Michael Nix presents a short history of the banjo in America in a lecture-concert, featuring three types of historical banjos and the Banjar, a modern seven-string classical banjo of his own design:

The “Banza” or Gourd Banjo (1630’s-early 1800’s) Early music of African dance, minstrel music, and the influence of African and minstrel banjo on Appalachian banjo styles.

The Classical 5-String Banjo (mid to late 1800’s to present day) The influence of European classical guitar playing on finger-style classical banjo.

The modern 5-String Bluegrass Banjo (Early 1900’s) The influence of classical banjo style on modern bluegrass banjo styles.

The Banjar, A modern 7-String Classical Banjo (2004) The development of the modern 7-string classical banjo by Michael Nix with compositions and arrangements for the instrument.

“What an amazing concert. Your repertoire and skill held us enthralled. Thank you for an extraordinary evening.”

–Genevieve Fraser, Village Lyceum Series, First Congregational Parish, Unitarian, Petersham, MA

Banjar: The Art of the Modern Seven-String Banjo

Michael Nix

Banjo history and the development of the modern Banjar

The "Banza " or Gourd Banjo (1630's-early 1800's)

Juba Dance	African
Cripple Creek	Appalachian

The Classical 5-String Banjo (mid to late 1800's to present day)

Theme from Zarana	Joe Morley
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The modern 5-String Bluegrass Banjo (Early 1900's)

Precious Memories melody	J.B.F. Wright
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The Banjar : A modern 7-String Classical Banjo (2004)

Zarana (Oriental Quick Step)	Joe Morley
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Spanish Fandango Variations	Michael Nix
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Precious Memories (1925)	J.B.F. Wright
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Intermission

Music for Banjar, Compositions and Arrangements of Michael Nix

Wintersong	Michael Nix
Barton Cove	Michael Nix
Sarabande, Bm Violin Partita	J.S. Bach
Dallas Rag	Dallas String Band
Greensleeves Variations	Michael Nix
Choro	Michael Nix
Summertime	George Gershwin
Canarios	Gaspar Sanz

Michael Nix, Banjar: The Art of the Modern 7-String Banjo

Michael Nix performs on classical guitar, Banjar, banjo, and mandolin, throughout the United States and Asia; has recorded for the PBS series “American Experience”, several independent documentaries, numerous CD projects; and his compositions are performed internationally. His music has been heard “Weekend Edition”, and other NPR programs.

A banjo innovator, Michael Nix designed the Banjar; a modern seven nylon string banjo combining elements of the five-string banjo and classical guitar; bringing the classic finger-style banjo of the late 1800's into the twenty first century. His instrumentals, songs, and compositions draw from classic banjo and guitar, early banjo, folk, jazz and world music traditions.

In 2017 Nix performed his compositions for New Classic Banjo at the Smithsonian Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. Nix participated in Seegerfest 2014, and other concerts commemorating the life of Pete Seeger. In 2012 Nix performed American music at the Surin International Folkore Festival in Thailand with the Sorvino Dance Project.

Nix toured as a member of the Monadnock Classical Guitar Duo, and as a soloist he was on the New Hampshire Touring Program for four years from 1979-1983. Throughout the 1980's he was a featured performer for the Connecticut Classical Guitar Society's Andres Segovia outreach program “The Guitar About Town. In 1988, he performed at the Bushnell Hall in Hartford CT, commemorating a 1931 Andres Segovia performance with Madam Emilita Segovia as the honored guest. Nix was member of The Moser/Nix Duo, which formed in 1995, performing music and recording for mandolin and guitar. He founded The NixWorks Ensemble in 1999, a flexible chamber ensemble, to explore multiple creative influences and genre. Nix formed The Pioneer Consort in 2005, with violinist Chris Devine, and cellist Greg Snedeker to play World Chamber Music. He currently performs with Chris Devine as the Devine-Nix Duo.

Michael Nix's concerts have been described as “touching” and “transcendent”:

“Michael Nix takes the listener along on a new voyage with a completely different musical vessel. Listeners will discover a shimmering versatility.” —Ritchie Davis, The Recorder

“... breathtakingly beautiful to hear.” –Peter Mix, “Acoustic Musician” Magazine

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