

Fine pickins at Rose Garden

Guitar summit held before Steel Rail

If you teach it, they will come. At Mansfield's Rose Garden Coffeehouse, the organizers and volunteers all have an interest in music and many play instruments and sing. And they know that many people who come to their monthly folk shows also play music, if only for their own enjoyment.

So it was a natural fit when Rose Garden coffeehouse leader, Samuel "Mac" McLanahan decided to offer an "acoustic guitar summit" prior to the March 19 show, featuring renowned fingerstyle guitarist Rolly Brown and Canadian folk-bluegrass guitar standout Dave Clarke.

"A workshop like this gives living room players the chance to learn from world class players and pick up tips they'd be hard-pressed to find elsewhere," says McLanahan, who has run the coffeehouse for more than 15 years. "Just being in their presence for two hours will be truly inspiring."

The workshop will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. and participants will get up-close guidance and then will watch their teachers in action. Brown will open the 8 p.m. show, followed by Clarke's group, Steel Rail.

McLanahan said about 15 people have signed up for the workshop, and there is room for only a few more.

Brown is a former national fingerpicking champion from Philadelphia who has performed styles from gypsy jazz to country to



Courtesy photo

Steel Rail – from left, Dave Clarke, Ellen Shizgal and Tod Gorr – will perform at the Rose Garden Coffeehouse on March 19.

contemporary standards at music festivals worldwide. He has worked as a sideman for Magpie, Priscilla Herdman and many others. He also has taught guitar for 40 years and is an instructor at WUMB-FM's Summer Acoustic Music Week.

McLanahan said Brown will spend one hour teaching a "nuts and bolts"

approach to various music styles.

Clarke, who lives in Montreal, has been called one of Canada's finest bluegrass guitar pickers for his work with Steel Rail and the legendary Quebec group the White River Bluegrass Band. Along with songwriter David Francey, Clarke earned a Juno Award (the Canadian

MUSIC PREVIEW

THE ROSE GARDEN SHOW

With Brown and Steel Rail, 8 p.m. Saturday. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. The cost at the door is \$12 or \$10 in advance via the web site. For more information, call 508-699-8122; www.rosegardenfolk.com.

equivalent of a Grammy) in 2002. McLanahan said Clarke will spend an hour showing students his approach to cross-picking, floating and solo flatpicking.

For the second hour, all students and their teachers will come together for a session on duo playing and for a question-and-answer session.

Steel Rail is a dynamic, refreshing folk-country and bluegrass group that performs ballad-like melodies reminiscent of fellow Canadian Gordon Lightfoot, yet with lush bluegrass-style harmonies. Formed in 1991, the group has opened for the Seldom Scene and the late Bill Monroe, the considered father of bluegrass music. The group's two CDs, "A Thousand Miles of Snow" and "The Road Less Travelled," have garnered rave reviews in Canada and the United States.

The workshop costs \$30 and attendees will receive special concert pricing and preferred seating. Reservations are required and can be made by calling 508-699-8122, by E-mailing mac@rosegardenfolk.com, or by visiting www.rosegardenfolk.com.

– STEPHEN A. IDE
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