

Guitar League Profile

Vinny DeBenedictis



1. What got you interested in playing the guitar?

I have always had an interest in music and singing. I started playing guitar in my late teens to be able to play along with songs that I liked to sing.

2. How long have you been playing the guitar?

Like many others my age, I started playing years ago but I stopped playing with work and family obligations. Since retiring a few years ago, I have started playing again and also started taking lessons.

3. What music gets you excited and why?

I enjoy songs with strong rhythms and vocals that are fun to play and sing along with. Of course, YouTube is great for the play/sing along. Most of the songs I play are from older artists (Neil Young, James Taylor, Van Morrison, Gordon Lightfoot)

4. Are you playing guitar as much as you would like to and if not why?

I try to find time to play every day but that does not always work out. When I can, I will sometimes play for a few hours working on songs or exercises from my lessons and also just playing along with my varied collection of songs that I've pulled from the internet.

5. When was the last time you listened to a new artist, band or guitar player?

I think the newest artists that I like to play are from the 1990's and 2000's. They would include artists like Coldplay, the Chili Peppers, Oasis. I also enjoy some Gillian Welch, Ed Sheeran, Norah Jones and other playable/singable artists.

6. What are you practicing and why?

Lately with my lessons I have been focusing on Great American Songbook songs including, for example, Night and Day, Fly Me to the Moon, It had to Be You. The jazz chords for these songs are challenging and I also try to learn the melodies. This has helped me to better understand different chord shapes and notes in multiple locations on the guitar neck.

7. Who are your top three musical influences and why?

I look for songs with singable vocals and playable chords and rhythms, so I seem drawn to the styles of Neil Young, James Taylor and John Denver.

8. What is your greatest guitar playing challenge?

Barre chords are always a challenge but as I work on American Songbook tunes, my ability with locating and playing barre chords has improved. I no longer avoid songs with barre chords. Now I need to continue practicing them to be able to shape them more quickly.

9. What musical accomplishment are you most proud of?

Recently I have been reading notes and playing melodies. Being able to read and follow the notes on a score allows me to add variation to songs.

10. How would you describe yourself as a musician in one sentence?

I consider myself to be an intermediate guitar player who enjoys playing and singing a variety of different music styles.

11. Do you keep your guitar playing to yourself or do you play for audiences?

I don't play gigs, I don't have the confidence for that yet. I absolutely enjoy playing with others. I have several musicians in my family and playing with them is always enjoyable. Playing with Guitar League every month is also fun and gives me a chance to play songs that I might not have selected on my own.

12. What style do you mostly play and why?

I tend to lean toward folk, softer rock, country/bluegrass and American Songbook tunes. Singable and strumable.