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## A G-Chord on an Old Martin – An Evening with Quinten Hope

Many parents pass on their expertise to their sons and daughters, but little did Joe Hope know that by teaching his son a simple G chord a rich body of work would emerge. Quinten Hope recounts that he practiced that G chord for quite some time, often quietly sneaking his Dad's Martin from its case as he wasn't allowed to touch the guitar without his Dad being present.

Texas Music Journal caught up with Quinten at the Granada Theater in Dallas on Sunday, February 8, 2009 where he was opening for Andy McKee (quite a guitar player in his own right). Since the show highlighted acoustic guitars, Quinten left his Strat in the case and played his repertoire on an old acoustic – his Dad's Martin.

The Granada Theater is a great venue for music, as no seat in the house is bad for viewing or hearing the musicians. When a trio is playing an acoustic venue, the Granada affords a bit of intimacy, allowing the audience to feel and experience the music for themselves. On this night, Quinten was accompanied by Joe Lee on guitar and Len Barnett on percussion. The three meshed well, weaving a rich tonal fabric that kept the audience engaged throughout their set.

Quinten jokingly commented that he had had to learn how to play an acoustic guitar for this particular set. This brought a laugh from the audience, as the opening number showed that he is as adept on the acoustic as he is on the electric. With Joe weaving his exquisite guitar lines into Quinten's lead, the audience was taken on a journey that ranged from hints of classical guitar to the blues and jazz.

Quinten opened the set with a piece that one would liken to a fusion of Paco DeLucia and Wes Montgomery, at times strongly influenced by Quinten's classical training, yet evolving into flowing jazz overtones. Hearing "Start of a New Day" and "Midnight Drive" in the acoustic version, rather than an electric rendering, painted a completely different picture. By using acoustic guitars without additional instrumentation, the pieces exemplified the virtuosity of each of the musicians.

This set was highlighted by two pieces, both completely different from each other and, again, tonally different from their electric versions. "Caron's Song" is a beautiful piece in its electric version, but in acoustic, one can really feel the intimacy and love that that artist is expressing for his wife. In contrast, "Q's Gigue" was a light, airy gigue that had you tapping your toes as the artists' fingers flew across their fingerboards.

If the set had stopped there, the evening would have been a great success; however, Quinten had one final surprise for the audience. He brought out Mike Clark from Junior and the Journeymen (see the upcoming TMJ article, "Friday Night at the Cadillac") to join the trio on stage. Mike delighted the audience with his strong charging blues vocals and guitar work. The trio provided the underlying guitar and percussion support that made Mike's three selections a dessert for the crowd. His rendition of Robert Johnson's Crossroads Blues was an extraordinary piece. Mike's powerful vocals capped off a great set.

After the set, TMJ sat down with Quinten back stage.

**[TMJ] How did you get started on this journey, and when did you decide that you wanted to do this professionally?**

[QH] My Dad played guitar and had a band that got together to play R&B, bluegrass and country. The played a lot of Jimmy Reed material. When I was about age 6, my Dad showed me how to play the “G” chord. That was the only chord I knew for 10 years, but I got really good at playing a “G” [laughs]. I used to sneak into where my Dad kept his guitar and I would carefully open the case and very quietly play it.

As my Dad was teaching me to play, he encouraged me to play “...the good music”. However, I discovered Kiss. In high school, I played with a pop band and found rock very easy to do. I formed a band that played rock and blues. We were good enough to be offered a contract by Warner. However, after four years we started arguing and fighting and then disbanded.

**[TMJ] There are two paths that a musician can take to pursue a musical career:**

- **skipping additional school and going straight into the business**
- **going onto college and studying music**

**Why did you decide on the latter route, going to the University of North Texas to study music?**

[QH] I met Joe Lee who was teaching at North Texas and started studying under him (about 14 years ago). I realized that there was a lot that I didn’t know about music and I wanted to learn more about it. When I went to UNT, it was all about breaking down a bunch of walls. I had to wrap my mind around new concepts. In the process I met some new and amazing musicians, like Andy Timmons, with whom I still play.

[Joe chimed in that Quinten had taken the things he had taught him and quickly developed them into three or four new ideas].

**[TMJ] How do you describe your music to someone?**

[QH] It’s a fusion of blues and rock. I’m not sure if everyone understands it, but you have to write with your heart and hope that people get it.

**[TMJ] What makes you most happy about your music so far?**

[QH] My recordings. “Reunion” reflects what I had really set out to do. Overall, I really want my instrumentals to be as strong as vocal songs. When you’re playing , you hit that one chord or even that that one note that is just perfect for the chord, and that makes you happy.

**[TMJ] What makes you saddest about your music so far?**

[QH] It’s knowing that there is not enough time in the world to do everything that I would like to do with my music. Even if I could play music even second of every day, I wouldn’t get to everything I’d like to play. We only have so much time on this earth. You get a birth date and death date; it’s what you do with the time in the middle that’s important in life.

**[TMJ] How does Texas influence your music?**

[QH] For a long time, it didn’t. Early in my music, I was influenced by NY, LA and Nashville. Then I went to UNT, where they were more focused on the jazz and classical with an emphasis more towards an East Coast feel (particularly NY).

In the last 5-10 years, I’ve started to pay more attention to Texas and blues musicians like Eric Johnson, David Grissom, and Robert Johnson. I found that Texas music has a certain tone and approach to melody. It has a certain rawness and realness about it; it’s not fake.

**[TMJ] What is your connection to the music program at Prestonwood Baptist Church?**

[QH] I have played guitar there for 9 yrs. [Quinten also teaches in their School of Fine Arts several days a week].

**[TMJ] What piece of advice would you give young people who are considering a career in music?**

[QH] Listen to what you like and find enjoyable in music; but always be open to new things. If you want to get into music, do it because you love it. But, be prepared. You have to love the journey, as the journey never ends. If you don't love the journey, you won't be happy.