

# Seven Serenades for Scalloped Fretboard Guitar

by Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard & fretless guitars)



Sunday, January 17, 2010, 7:30 pm  
Pena Pacha Mama  
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## Matthew Montfort and the Scalloped Fretboard Guitar

"It isn't every day that acoustic guitarists make their instrument sound a lot like an Indian sitar, but that is exactly what Matthew Montfort accomplishes on the instrumental 'Seven Serenades for Scalloped Fretboard Guitar.' What exactly is a scalloped fretboard guitar? According to Ancient-Future.com, guitar maker Ervin Somogyi took an acoustic guitar back in 1978 and 'carved out the wood between the frets so that the pads of Montfort's fingers touch only the strings, reducing friction while he bends them to produce ornaments more characteristic of the sitar.' Montfort demonstrates that even though he has considerable chops and technical prowess, he is much more interested in feeling and expression than technique. An adventurous, consistently engaging demonstration of what Montfort can accomplish on the scalloped fretboard guitar." – Alex Henderson, ALL MUSIC GUIDE

Matthew Montfort is well known as the leader of the pioneering world music group Ancient Future, and for his work on Glissentar (11-string fretless guitar), jazz guitar, flamenco guitar, mandolin, charango, sitar, and gamelan. He has performed in 2003 and 2005 at the Festival Internacional de la Guitarra on the golden coast of Spain near Barcelona, which showcases top guitarists from all over the world. He toured India in 2006 and 2008, performing at prestigious events such as the Festival of India in Mumbai with sitar master Pandit Habib Khan and tabla maestro Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri. He holds a B.A. in World Music and Composition and an M.A. in Arts and Media Technology from Antioch University. Montfort wrote the book "Ancient Traditions — Future Possibilities: Rhythmic Training Through the Traditions of Africa, Bali, and India," which has been used by many musicians to improve their rhythm skills.

"This album reveals a thorough knowledge of Hindustani microtonal ornaments, transferred in ways that create one of the most distinctive guitar sounds in contemporary music. However, it also reveals a lifetime of exploration in world music, which can be immediately summoned in a flash of inspiration. When this level of mastery is reached, there is no need to rewrite. The first improvisation has the depth of a reworked composition." – Teed Rockwell, INDIA CURRENTS

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**MATTHEW MONTFORT'S  
"PURPLE RAGA"**

**"IN MY JUNIOR YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL** I made a conscious decision to devote myself to music that fused ideas from various world traditions," says Ancient Future's Matthew Montfort. To that end, Montfort attended the Ali Akbar College of Music in San Rafael, California, in 1977, and studied with South Indian vina master K.S. Subramanian. He also modified his guitar to better accommodate the techniques he was learning. "The vina has frets similar to a scalloped-fretboard guitar," explains Montfort. "And Subramanian taught me many techniques of pulling the strings across the frets to create the various note-bending ornaments, which are often combined in very involved ways." Sometimes, the various world traditions Montfort works with include his own. "I began to think about the intersection between raga and the music of Jimi Hendrix after seeing a photograph of Jimi in the front row of an Indian music concert; his roasty wigge in awe of what he was experiencing," he says. "Then one day a student of mine was having difficulty improvising over the chord changes in 'Purple Haze' and I had the idea that the techniques learned by studying Indian music would help my student to improvise more effectively. Visit [guitarplayer.com](http://guitarplayer.com) to watch Montfort demonstrating the raga he devised from the 'Purple Haze' solo, and read the accompanying lesson. —Dory Cleveland.

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