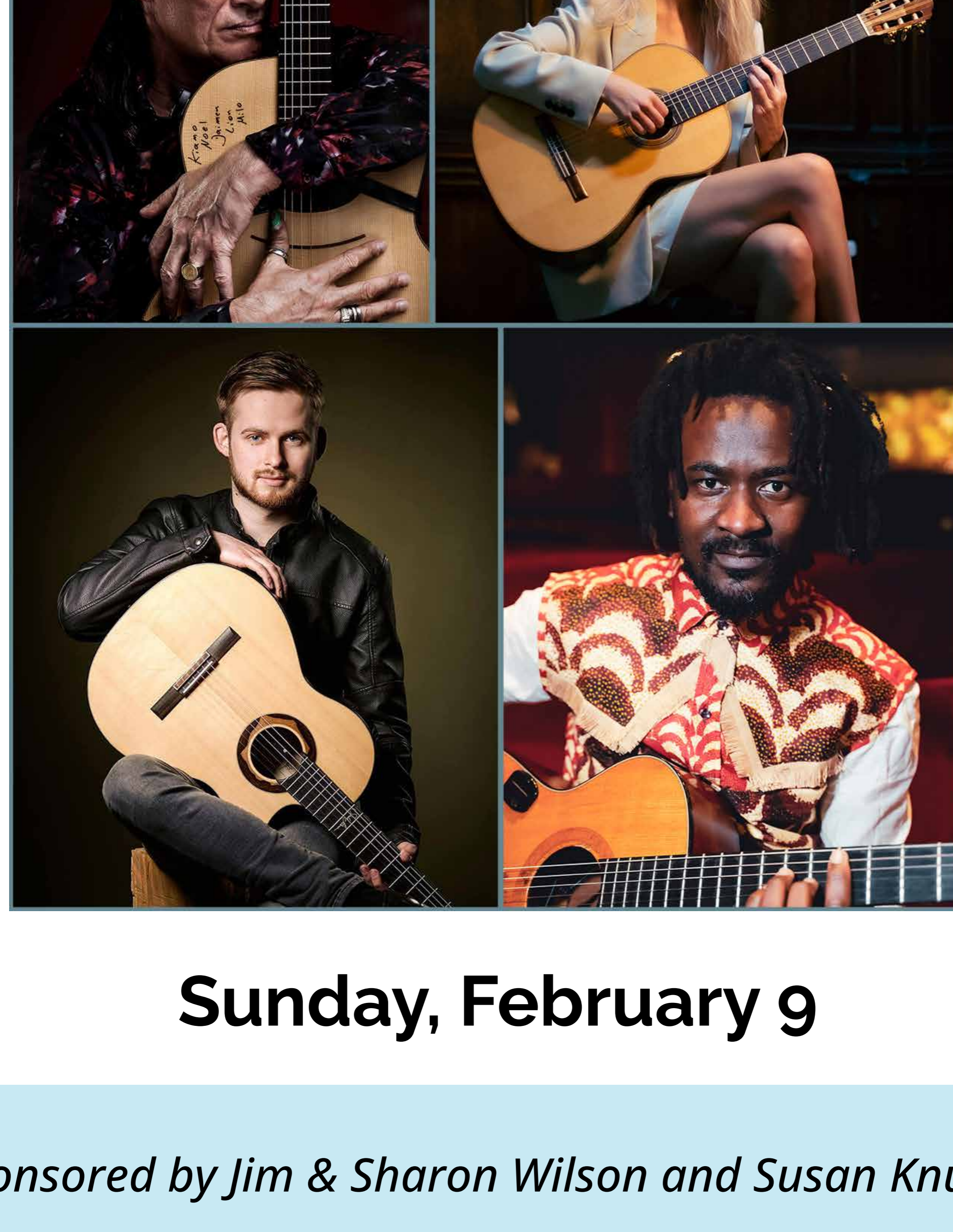


International Guitar Night

25th Anniversary Tour



Sunday, February 9

Sponsored by Jim & Sharon Wilson and Susan Knutson

For IGN's 25th annual tour, Brian Gore has assembled a lineup of 3 exciting new guitarists making their US debuts to join one of IGN's all-time favorites. LULO REINHARDT is well known to IGN audiences. The grand-nephew of legendary Django Reinhardt, Lulo plays Latin Swing music, a combination of Gypsy Swing with Latin rhythms. ALEXANDRA WHITTINGHAM is a dynamic classical guitarist with a repertoire ranging from the classics to contemporary composers. NIWEL TSUMBU has kept his unique Congolese percussive style alive over the past twenty five years living in Ireland. SONKE MEINEN is a leading Contemporary Fingerstyle guitarist, mixing the incredible dexterity of his high-speed compositions with sensitive ballads.



Lulo Reinhardt

Lulo Reinhardt, a name associated with World Music and his patented Latin Swing, is a guitar virtuoso with unmistakable roots. He was born in Koblenz, Germany on December 10, 1961 and comes from the famous Reinhardt family. Lulo was raised in the Sinti tradition where Django Reinhardt's music played a massive part. When he was five, Lulo was already inspired by his father Bawo Reinhardt's record collection which included everything from Brazilian guitarist Baden Powell to the Shadows. His father was also his first guitar teacher and his mentor until his death in 2013.

Lulo played for twenty years in the family band, The Mike Reinhardt Sextet, starting at twelve as a rhythm guitarist and then later as a bassist until 1993. In 1993, he founded the band I Gitanos together with his father Bawo Reinhardt and Cousin Bavo Dége.

The band recorded three albums in their own language, Romnes. 1994 I Suni, 1997 Ab i Raisa, and 2009 Best of I Gitanos. This is significant, because in addition to the quality of their music, the band also made Sinti and Roma culture accessible to a wider audience. The band continued until Lulo's father's death in 2013.

Determined to grow both musically and personally, Lulo founded his own band in 2002: With 'Lulo Reinhardt Project', he would only release his own original compositions –a band that is 99.9 % cover music free, as he likes to put it. From 2008, the Lulo Reinhardt Project was renamed the 'Lulo Reinhardt Latin Swing Project'.

A big dream came true in 2017. Lulo Reinhardt visited Calcutta in India, the origin of the Sinti and Roma. There he recorded 'Gypsy Meets India' with Debhashish Bhattacharya and his longtime percussionist Uli Krämer. A film project planned for 2020 will document the migration of the Sinti and Roma from India. Lulo Reinhardt will retrace the way back to India, to where the migration from the Sindh region (India / Pakistan) originated.

A Sinto and a cosmopolitan, Lulo Reinhardt continuously embraces the new and the unknown in his dreams, ideas and plans, so we can expect many exciting projects in the future.



Alexandra Whittingham

After studying classical guitar, piano, jazz guitar and composition at Chetham's School of Music for seven years, Alexandra Whittingham gained a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Having been awarded first class honours and the Timothy Gilson Guitar Prize in 2019, she returned to the Royal Academy the following year to complete her master's degree. She graduated with a distinction, a Diploma of the Royal Academy of Music (awarded for an outstanding performance in a final recital) and the Regency Award for distinguished studentship.

In May 2021 Alexandra released her debut studio album My European Journey, which explores the guitar's great coming of age in nineteenth-century Europe. The album reached No.1 on the iTunes Classical Chart as well as taking first place on The Presto Chart solely through pre-orders before its release. My European Journey sees Alexandra's passion for nineteenth-century music combine with a love of discovering lesser-known composers and bringing them into the spotlight.

Maintaining an active online presence, Alexandra has gained over 270,000 subscribers on YouTube during recent years, where videos of her performances have collectively surpassed 41 million views. Her audience online has led to live performances all over the world including at the Cayman Islands Arts Festival, Texas' South by Southwest Festival and the British Embassy in Paris. She also played a twenty-seven date tour throughout Germany, Holland and Austria in 2022.

Closer to home Alexandra has performed at Abbey Road Studios, County Hall, Milton Court Concert Hall, the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester and Wells Cathedral. She has also appeared as a concerto soloist with Gorton Philharmonic Orchestra, Dorset Chamber Orchestra and Orquestra Vigo 430 with whom she performed three concerts in Spain in 2021. She is delighted to be an Augustine Strings artist, using their Regal Blue range, and plays a 2011 Christopher Dean guitar.





Niwel Tsumbu

Niwel Tsumbu is a virtuosic Congolese-born, Ireland-based guitarist. He has created a unique and exhilarating style drawing on influences as diverse as jazz, classical, rock, folk and rhumba. At times Tsumbu’s music is a deep emotional well, drawing joy and sadness from universal human waters. At other times it’s a high-tech vehicle flashing with excitement across nations, continents, and the cosmos.

Having steadily developed his international profile over the past decade, Tsumbu has earned praise from All About Jazz for his ‘exquisite and almost seamless’ global fusion. He has recorded with artists like Nigel Kennedy and Steve Cooney and performed with Sinéad O’Connor, Buena Vista Social Club and Baaba Maal. In 2021, Tsumbu’s global reach was cemented with his guitarwork on the Grammy Award-winning album *They’re Calling Me Home* by Rhiannon Giddens and Francesco Turrisi.

The keystones of Tsumbu’s music are his sophisticated sense of rhythm, his virtuosic guitar playing and his thrilling improvisations. Whether playing rhumba or jazz, plucked nylon or amplified electric, Tsumbu’s intricate guitar work always invites re-listening. Tsumbu is accordingly in high demand as an African guitar teacher for the World Music Method, and his popular Instagram reels videos garner up to hundreds of thousands of views.

Growing up in Kinshasa, Tsumbu was first exposed to traditional Congolese music at church. At the same time, he was absorbing Western classical composers like Beethoven and Vivaldi over the radio. At the age of sixteen, he took up the guitar and quickly distinguished himself with a prodigious ability to play traditional Soukous and Rhumba styles. His teacher Crispin Ngoy introduced him to jazz. At the age of seventeen, against his family’s wishes, he secretly enrolled at a music college for a year, and Tsumbu’s passion for music, despite not owning a guitar at the time, saw him walk for hours each day to listen and play.

In 2004, Tsumbu relocated to Ireland. There, his ten-piece band toured the country performing his *Big Bang Symphony*, and he began an important long-term collaboration with the percussionist Eamonn Cagney (as displayed on their 2022 album *The Art of the Duo*). Tsumbu has become a prominent figure in the Irish arts, regularly appearing on national TV and radio, and with his most recent project, *Pontún* with the legendary Steve Cooney and other musicians, Tsumbu plays venues like the National Stadium. From his base in Ireland, Tsumbu regularly tours abroad in China, Spain, France, Lithuania, Catalonia, Germany and elsewhere.

‘I don’t think of styles when I play or listen to music,’ Tsumbu says; ‘all music is just sound. It is like water for me, the same that falls from the sky becomes the sea, the river we drink, shower in and so on. Everything that I have heard, from traditional Congolese music to classical, jazz, rock pop, metal, has influenced me. I like it all, and it is all part of my culture as a citizen of the universe.’

Tsumbu sings in his native Lingala as well as French and English. His songs can have a political focus, as in ‘Africa, Eh!’ from *Song of the Nations*, which addresses the hypocritical profiling of migrants based on their skin color; can cast its eye on the larger universe, as in ‘Halley’s Comet’; or can showcase complex polyphony and finger-picking, as in ‘Tears of Joy’ from *The Art of the Duo*. It’s hard to argue with the *Journal of Music*’s view of Tsumbu’s art as ‘a musical river flowing whose sources range from classical to Central Africa and way beyond.’

In live performance Tsumbu is compelling. He thrives on playing alike on the largest stages, like London’s Cadogan Hall and the World Exposition in Shanghai, in the intimate atmosphere of a traditional Irish pub session, or in a classical music context, as when he performed Steve Reich’s *Electric Counterpoint* during a *Crash Ensemble* concert to a rapturous reception.

After touring the U.S. with Rhiannon Giddens in 2024, Niwel will return in 2025 to showcase his original music as a member of *International Guitar Night*.



Sönke Meinen

A single guitar and a bar stool – Sönke Meinen doesn’t need much more to break with the expectations of a conventional guitar concert and to enthuse his audiences all over the world. With his captivating performances, the charismatic musician makes acoustic guitar music accessible to everyone who is looking for something original, handmade and extraordinary or simply for finest musical entertainment.

Sönke Meinen embraces all influences from folk, classical music and pop to jazz and film music. On only six strings he sounds like a whole band and explores every possibility of his instrument: One moment he unleashes guitar fireworks in “Sparklemuffin”, “Perpetuum Mobile” or a barnstorming mashup of Michael Jackson’s “Bad”, and the next moment he moves his audience with hauntingly beautiful and melodic ballads. Even with his versatility, his guitar playing is always uncompromisingly unique and on a world-class level – virtuosic, delicate, groovy.

The concerts of the award-winning musician are by no means for guitar connoisseurs only. He shares unbelievable and hilarious stories about his compositions and leads through a top-class concert evening in a pleasantly empathetic and relaxed manner. With his playing, Sönke Meinen has acquired an outstanding reputation in the international guitar scene.

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