

Testimonial for Eric Henderson

I am the coordinator of the Anacapa Fellowship at The Thacher School, a boarding college-preparatory high school in Ojai, California. This program seeks to bring accomplished scholars and artists to campus both to perform and to teach. Last year, under the sponsorship of a prominent alumnus of the school, I invited Eric to come to Thacher for an evening guitar concert and, the following day, a master class with aspiring musicians. I am pleased to report that Eric's visit was an unqualified success: not only is he clearly one of the finest masters of guitar in the world today, but he exposed our students and guests to many aspects of musical history and technique that they would have never encountered anywhere else.

The concert showed both the depth of Eric's classical skills and his versatility in variety of sub-genres. He would introduce his selections with interesting stories, some about his experiences as a young student in Spain with Andres Segovia, some about other musicians, and his commentaries both before and after playing each piece allowed our students to appreciate the guitar in a context they could understand. He is, of course, a remarkable musician whose craftsmanship impressed everyone in the audience. His ability to connect with us added immeasurably to our appreciation of his music, much of it original composition. We have invited several professional guitarists to campus over the twenty years I've been here, and Eric's performance was the most memorable and satisfying. We all knew we were in the presence of a unique musician at the top of his field.

As a teacher of our young guitarists (who came to the class with a wide range of skills), Eric was able both to improve their technique and to inspire their spirits. His communication with them demystified the musicianship they had witnessed the evening before and allowed them to find ways to apply his experience and wisdom to their playing, humble as it might have been. He gave each of them an opportunity to ask questions and to show him their styles so that he could make helpful comments and urge them to maintain their enjoyment of the instrument. He worked seamlessly with the guitar teacher here to make the very most of the limited time available to them. Eric gave tangible gifts to these students as he generously afforded each of them his attention and encouragement.

Eric is a master musician with impeccable credentials, but he is also a dedicated teacher who cares about the legacy he will leave; he is bequeathing to future musicians the same gifts he received from the great teachers he has worked with. I am grateful that he shared his talents with us and know that he will continue to give generously of his time and effort in order to continue to enrich and enliven the tradition he so beautifully sustains.

Rod M Jacobsen

Rod "Jake" Jacobsen
The Thacher School