

The History of the Guitar

By Bill Swick

Including the history of the guitar is part of most state's curriculum when teaching guitar class. It has been my observation that this is one of the areas that is frequently overlooked by both teachers and administrators. While the idea of lecturing to your students about the history of guitar sounds boring, my students are always surprised by how interesting it can be.

While lecturing may not be the best way to teach the history of the guitar, sharing some knowledge about each guitarist and each composer as they are introduced in class may be a great way to teach the history of the guitar. Students should have an idea when composers lived, what musical period they represent, what style of instrument they played, who were their peers, their influences, etc.

There are many books on the history of world music which completely ignore the guitar. More and more there are books dedicated strictly to the history of guitar, both picture books and academic books.

Here is a listing of books to consider"

A Concise History of the Classic Guitar by Graham Wade published by Mel Bay Publications

A Concise History of the Electric Guitar by Adrian Ingram published by Mel Bay Publications

A Concise History of Rock Music by Graham Wade published by Mel Bay Publications

There are many picture books on the market which can be helpful when showing students photos of old instruments. When evaluating a book, consider if the book is a history of the guitar or a history of the people who built, performed, and composed for the guitar. There is a big difference. The three mentioned above are mostly about the people involved in the development of composition and performance. Many guitar history books are about the design and construction of guitars.

The three recommended books are inexpensive, quick reads and have just the right amount of material for a guitar classroom.