

DiMeola, Vignola just 2 of many guitar

It's guitars and more guitars.

Guitarist Al DiMeola is a third of "Rite of Strings," the all star trio with bassist Stanley Clarke and violinist Jean-Luc Ponty. On Saturday, they reunite at The Egg, 12 years after releasing their "Rite of Strings" album.

Both DiMeola and Clarke played in Chick Corea's mid-1970s fusion band Return to Forever, while Ponty played with Frank Zappa and a late version of the Mahavishnu Orchestra before forming his own band, as DiMeola and Clarke also did after leaving RTF.

Since playing at The Egg last year, DiMeola has released both "Speak a Volcano," a DVD recorded live in Germany last year with an electric band, and "Diabolic Inventions and Seductions for Solo Guitar," an acoustic tribute to tango master Astor Piazzolla.

Forget figuring out which is better: The DVD is a multi-camera production expertly planned, shot by shot, to reflect the dynamics and interaction onstage; and the CD applies DiMeola's tremendous skill to Piazzolla's lovely musical vision.

Clarke played here at the Van Dyck in a band that surprisingly featured another bassist two years ago, then in the all-star band Trio! at SPAC's Jazz Festival with Ponty and Bela Fleck last year. Clarke's newest release, "The Toys of Men," features an electric band with thumb-popping lead bass lines, steeped in the atmosphere of a fine, agile band. Ponty led a sharp and plugged in Afro-European combo at SPAC last year. On Saturday, DiMeola, Clarke and Ponty — all eminent bandleaders, soloists, composers and recording artists — reunite as peers. Show time is 8 p.m. Tickets are \$34.50. Phone 473-1845 or visit www.theegg.org.

GUITARS AT LENA

Frank Vignola brings his Quintet to Caffe Lena (47 Phila St., Saratoga Springs) on Saturday at 8 p.m. Sweet Hello opens. Vignola plays an old-fashioned Django-style arch-top guitar but with up-to-date song choices and skill.

Since playing at The Egg last year (on consecutive nights, as an opening act, stealing both shows) with his Frank & Joe Show band, Vignola has formed a new crew with mandolinist Josh Pinkham, guitarist Vinny Raniolo, percussionist Rich Zukor and bassist Pete Coco. Don't let Vignola leave until he plays "Limehouse Blues."

Admission is \$15, \$12 for members. Phone 583-0022 or visit www.caffelena.com.



Michael Hochanadel

JUKEBOX

caffelena.com.

The Caffe presents more guitar — what else? — on Sunday when Croatian guitarist Goran Ivanovic leads his band Eastern Blok (saxophonist Doug Rosenberg, bassist Matthew Ulery and drummer Michael Caskey) onstage to update folk songs from the Balkans with aggressive and ingenious improvisations.

Show time is 7 p.m. Admission is \$15, \$12 for Caffe members.

COUNTRY ROYALTY

Country superstars Alan Jackson, Brooks & Dunn and Jason Michael Carroll may bring five or more guitarists per band onstage on Saturday at the Times Union Center (51 S. Pearl St., Albany). That's not counting pedal steel guitarists, and steel players will tell you they deserve their own category.

Jackson's Strayhorns band includes four guitarists and a steel player, while Brooks & Dunn both play guitar and their band features four guitarists. Ronnie Dunn plays a specially painted neon blue guitar just for the song "Neon Moon."

Both Jackson and Brooks & Dunn have become Nashville royalty since releasing their debut albums in 1991, though both Brooks and Dunn released solo albums before teaming up. Jackson has released nearly 20 and Brooks & Dunn more than a dozen. So they will be as well-equipped with songs as with guitarists. Carroll is too new to country stardom to afford a comparable number of guitarists, with just one album, "Waitin' In the Country."

Show time is 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$66.75 and \$49.75. Phone 1-800-30-EVENT or visit www.timesunioncenter-albany.com.

SHAW & SON

OK, saxophonist Eddie Shaw doesn't play guitar, but his son Vann does, and Eddie's first claim to fame was leading guitarist and



The Rite of Strings, a supergroup featuring Al Dimeola, Jean Luc Ponty and Stanley Clarke, will perform at The Egg on Saturday

singer Howlin' Wolf's band. Now, Eddie has a new one: co-star in Schenectadian John Sayles' soon-to-be-released film "Honeydripper" about a fictional bluesman based on Guitar Slim — and Eddie Shaw played with him, too.

Shaw and his band Wolfgang, featuring guitarist son Vann Shaw, was to play Cheers Roadhouse Grill on Sunday in a Northeast Blues Society presentation. But the buzz on the film, on Shaw and on the show has heated up so much that now he's playing at Proctors (432 State St., Schenectady).

Show time is 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10, \$5 for students. Phone 346-6204 or visit www.proctors.org.

PRESTON'S ENSEMBLE

The brilliant guitarist and bandleader Frank Zappa chose keyboardist Don Preston for his iconoclastic virtuoso 1960s band/theater troupe the Mothers of Invention. On Monday, Preston brings his Akashic Ensemble — guitarist and synthesizer player Andre Cholmondeley and percussionist Cheri Jiosne — to the Recital Hall of the Performing Arts Center at UAlbany.

Starting at 4 p.m., Preston will both perform and speak of his work with Zappa and Robert Moog, who invented the polyphonic synthesiz-

er. Tickets are \$8, \$4 for students. Phone 442-3997.

BLUES BLAST

It's possible to play the blues without a guitar, but why bother? The free admission 5th Annual Lake George Blues Blast brings plenty of guitarists to Shepard Park at the lake on Saturday and Sunday. The Saturday lineup:

Noon: Mark Tolstrup; 1:15 p.m.: The Knobby Reed Project; 2:30 p.m.: The George Boone Blues Band; 3:30 p.m.: Papa Tas Cru; 5:15 p.m.: David Orloff and the Blues Elixir; 6:30 p.m.: David Malachowski and the Woodstock All Stars.

An expert and versatile guitarist and producer, Malachowski is also a respected bandleader. He formed the all star Bohemian Society dream band in 1991, then formed and led Shania Twain's first touring band and numerous Capital Rock pit-bands while also playing with Savoy Brown, Commander Cody & Ernie Williams, Aged in the Hill and others.

The Woodstock All Stars also features drummer Harvey Sorgen, keyboardist Pete Levin, bassist Ada Widoff, harmonica player Dennis Greunling, singer Jill Stevenson and guitarists Albert Cummings and Malachowski.

The Sunday lineup: