



JUNE 2005

CONCERT REVIEW

Pete Huttlinger, June 24

BY JENNIFER GELBAND

Pete Huttlinger isn't a comedian. But he is a pretty entertaining storyteller. Though it doesn't really matter, the finger picking guitarist could say just about anything, because the audience at the Esther Simplot Performing Arts Center last Friday was still reeling in shock and awe at the dude's insane mastery of sound. Folks were there to see the mind-blowing guitarman'ship; the witty chatter was just icing.

Huttlinger joked that having a band wasn't as lucrative a business strategy as going solo, so he learned to finger pick his way through all the sounds of every song-a one-man band without the traditional foot stomping antics that wires up all the noise making devices. On just his guitar he nailed a few originals, some classic rock ditties and several oddly comfortable show tunes-but the highlight of the night was Stevie Wonder's "Superstition," complete with horn riff, bass line and melody all zooming off one guitar.

CD REVIEW

The Santa Rita Connection: Pete Huttlinger

Pete Huttlinger must moisturize with butter each night, because his fingers are slick. This national fingerpicking champion guitarist is so dexterous that his solo guitar album, *The Santa Rita Connection*, sounds like mad-bluegrass-party-people fiercely enjoying their craft. And there ain't no multiple tracks here.

This is not your-college-pal-with-an-acoustic-Fender-on-the-front-porch kind of entertaining; this is brilliant musicianship-the CD you show off to music snob friends and say, "You gotta hear this guy!"

And it's also engaging-perfect for a rainy day inside or a sunny summer picnic because Huttlinger is crafty beyond his Ray Romano-like appearance. On *Santa Rita* there's a Stevie Wonder number and one twangy rendition of a Broadway hit that is just faintly recognizable and significantly cooler than the original.

Huttlinger's non-rip-offs are equally ants-in-pants hopping because he writes whimsical songs about his friends, about fly fishing, about his dog-all under the watch of Santa Rita, the patron saint of impossible dreams.