



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas College of Music

Ensemble Concert | Monday, November 17, 2025 | 8:00 p.m.
Paul Voertman Concert Hall

One O'Clock Lab Band

Alan Baylock, conductor

with Pasquale Grasso, jazz guitar

65th Annual Fall Concert

I Love Being Here with You (1961) Peggy Lee
(1920–2002)
arr. Alan Baylock

Shelby Yount, vocal solo
Jonathan Arcangel, tenor saxophone solo

Arc of the Pendulum (1999) Michael Brecker
(1949–2007)
arr. Alan Baylock

Jonathan Arcangel, tenor saxophone solo
Jack Goode, guitar solo

Blue Yonder (2014) Christine Jensen
(b. 1970)

Carter Stanton, trumpet solo
Zachary Johnson, drumset solo

Signs (1986) Neil Slater
(b. 1931)

Ryan Yumang, soprano saxophone solo
Jack Goode, guitar solo

Program two hundred thirty-five of the 2025–2026 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

Snake Eater (2004) Norihiko Hibino
(b. 1973)
arr. Eric Ladish

Shelby Yount, vocal solo
Alex Parker, trombone solo

Four on Six (1959) Wes Montgomery
(1923–1968)
arr. Alan Baylock

Pasquale Grasso, guitar solo

-INTERMISSION-

Hot House (1945) Tadd Dameron
(1917–1965)
arr. Brendan Lanighan

Medley: Elogie/Audrey (1956/1953) Earl "Bud" Powell
(1924–1966)
arr. Chris Byars

Oleo (1954) Sonny Rollins
(b. 1930)
arr. Alexander Siler

Airegin (1954) Sonny Rollins
arr. Teresa Um

Whirly Bird (1957) Neal Hefti
(1922–2008)

Pasquale Grasso, guitar solo

About Pasquale Grasso

It was the kind of endorsement most rising guitarists can only dream of, and then some. In his interview for *Vintage Guitar* magazine's February 2016 cover story, Pat Metheny was asked to name some younger musicians who'd impressed him. "The best guitar player I've heard in maybe my entire life is floating around now, **Pasquale Grasso**," said the jazz-guitar icon and NEA Jazz Master. "This guy is doing something so amazingly musical and so difficult.

"Mostly what I hear now are guitar players who sound a little bit like me mixed with a little bit of [John Scofield] and a little bit of [Bill Frisell]," he continued. "What's interesting about Pasquale is that he doesn't sound anything like that at all. In a way, it is a little bit of a throwback, because his model—which is an incredible model to have—is Bud Powell. He has somehow captured the essence of that language from piano onto guitar in a way that almost nobody has ever addressed. He's the most significant new guy I've heard in many, many years."

As he's done with many rising jazz stars, Metheny later invited Grasso over to his New York pad to jam and share some wisdom. He's since become a generous presence in Grasso's life, and his assessment of Grasso's playing is—no surprise—spot-on. Born in Italy and now based in New York City, the 30-year-old guitarist has developed an astounding technique and concept informed not by jazz guitarists so much as by bebop pioneers like Powell, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie and the classical-guitar tradition. His new digital-only EP series, available beginning in June from Sony Masterworks, showcases Grasso in the solo-guitar format, where his intensive studies of both midcentury jazz and classical meld into a signature mastery that is, remarkably, at once unprecedented and evocative.

But whom does it evoke? After a surface listen, Joe Pass and his essential *Virtuoso* LPs might come to mind. Now listen again. The sparkling, immaculately balanced tone; the tasteful tinges of stride and boogie-woogie rhythm; the stunning single-note lines that connect his equally striking use of chordal harmony—for Grasso, great solo arranging equals Art Tatum.

Many serious guitar heads have been hip to Grasso for a while now and are aware of his jaw-dropping online performance videos, his beautiful custom instrument -- built in France by Trenier Guitars -- and his early career triumphs. In 2015, he won the Wes Montgomery International Jazz Guitar Competition in New York City, taking home a \$5,000 prize and performing with guitar legend Pat Martino's organ trio. Last year at D.C.'s Kennedy Center, as part of the NEA Jazz Masters Tribute Concert, Grasso participated in a special performance to honor Pat Metheny, alongside his guitar-wunderkind peers Dan Wilson, Camila Meza, Gilad Hekselman and Nir Felder.

These days, Grasso teaches and maintains a packed gig schedule around New York, including frequent solo performances at the popular Greenwich Village haunt Mezzrow, where a regular Monday-night gig allowed him to develop his solo-arranging skillset. Not that Grasso thinks his work is done. "All [of the musicians I love are] inspiration for me to get new ideas and form my style, because it's still growing," Pasquale says. "And it's gonna be growing until the day I die."

How Grasso came to be such a tremendous talent is also, in many ways, the story of his older brother, Luigi Grasso, a gifted alto saxophonist who tours globally as a bandleader and collaborator. The brothers were born and raised in Ariano Irpino, a bucolic hillside town in Italy's Campania region. Their parents, while not being musicians themselves, were nonetheless passionate music lovers who filled the family home with jazz and classical sounds and took their sons along to events like Umbria Jazz. "Instead of watching TV at night," Grasso recalls, "my dad would put on a Chef Baker record and we'd listen."

Both boys started in music young. Luigi, suffering from asthma, began playing sax on the advice of a doctor who believed it would help the 6-year-old with his breathing. Pasquale decided not much later that he needed to play an instrument too, and when he browsed a local shop, the guitar caught his interest immediately. Dad happily bought the instrument, but not before striking a deal with his son: "If I buy this for you, you have to promise me that you'll practice." In the ensuing years Pasquale kept up his end of the bargain, as did his brother, hour after hour, every day. Grasso's mother later bought a book on how to read music, teaching her sons the skill as she absorbed it herself.

Grasso found his first important mentor in Agostino Di Giorgio, a New York-raised guitarist who'd moved to Italy as an adult, to take care of his aging grandparents. Di Giorgio, a spirited, hilarious character and a brilliant musician, was a star pupil to Chuck Wayne, the deeply influential guitarist and educator recognized for his work with Woody Herman, George Shearing and Tony Bennett, among many others. Di Giorgio helped Wayne to codify his distinctive concepts of chords and scales in two highly sought-after books and passed Wayne's methods along to Grasso. In the summer of 1998, the brothers attended a jazz workshop with bebop-piano royal Barry Harris in Switzerland. Harris showed both boys great kindness, and a relationship was quickly formed. Eventually, the Grasso brothers went from students at Harris' global lineup of workshops to being two of his right-hand instructors and assistants. To this day, if Pasquale doesn't have a gig on Tuesday night, he'll drop in on Harris' marathon teaching sessions in Manhattan to learn something new.

Harris' guidance helped to firm up Grasso's tastes and perspective in jazz, as did a couple of invaluable recordings his father introduced to him: One Night in Birdland, a live Charlie Parker Quintet compilation featuring Bud Powell and Fats Navarro; and Art Tatum's Solo Masterpieces box set. Regarding the latter, Grasso remembers, "I couldn't believe it. I would just play that all day, and I couldn't understand anything he was doing. It seemed like there were two pianos." Grasso felt a near-identical revelation later, after taking in a concert by the renowned classical guitarist David Russell. "I was shocked by his technique," he says, "because it sounded like two jazz guitars together. I told my dad, 'Maybe I should study classical, because I think that would help the way I want to play jazz.'" Grasso began in 2008 to fuse his hard-earned jazz technique with classical revisions and refinements at the Conservatory of Bologna, under the tutelage of guitarist Walter Zanetti.

In 2012, the same year that Pasquale toured extensively as a Jazz Ambassador on behalf of the U.S. Embassy, the guitarist relocated to New York. He hit the scene running, soon enough becoming part of working bands led by Ari Roland and Chris Byars, and settling into a regular gig with the late, great saxophonist Charles Davis. Grasso has also performed with Freddie Redd, Frank Wess, Leroy Williams, Ray Drummond, Steve Grossman, Tardo Hammer, Jimmy Wormworth, John Mosca, Sacha Perry, Bucky Pizzarelli, China Moses, Harry Allen, Grant Stewart and Joe Cohn.

On his initial Sony Masterworks recordings, Pasquale explores standards, ballads, and the repertoire of Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell and Charlie Parker, showcasing his sweeping abilities in the most intimate possible setting. Here you can experience his lifetime of listening and of challenging himself to transcend a bar set by Art Tatum so many decades ago. Coming later in 2021 will be Pasquale Plays Duke, including recordings with his trio and featuring vocalists Samara Joy and Sheila Jordan.

One O’Clock Lab Band Personnel

Alan Baylock, director

Sarah Griego, road manager

Woodwinds

Mario Montes Lara

Ryan Yumang

Jonathan Arcangel

Aidan Schwarz

Kyle Leonard

Trumpet

Isidoro Ramos, lead

Alejandro Muñoz, split lead

Miles Mabrey

Jack Phillips

Carter Stanton

Shelby Yount, voice

Trombone

Alex Schmidt-Karye

Alex Parker

Scott Schaffer

Bass Trombone

Donnie Nagle

Jeremy Kvale

Rhythm

Jack Goode, guitar

Brenin Coin, piano

Spencer Paulsen, bass

Zachary Johnson, drumset

The **One O’Clock Lab Band®** is the flagship ensemble of the University of North Texas jazz studies program, and is renowned worldwide for its artistry, innovation, and enduring legacy.

With seven Grammy Award® nominations spanning five decades and a discography of over eighty acclaimed recordings, the One O’Clock exemplifies exceptional musicianship—both individually and collectively. The ensemble presents dynamic concerts that highlight the diverse range of compositions and arrangements housed in the UNT Jazz Library—a cornerstone collection of big band repertoire featuring thousands of works by current and former North Texas jazz students and faculty, alongside iconic standards of the genre.

The band has performed in more than 20 countries, including Japan, France, Australia, and Russia. Its global presence includes appearances at prestigious festivals such as Montreux, North Sea, Umbria, and Monterey, as well as legendary American venues like Birdland (NYC), Blues Alley (DC), and Catalina’s (LA). In addition, the band continues to engage audiences through performances at music conferences, concert series, universities, high schools, and on-campus events.

Through unforgettable live shows, celebrated studio recordings, and a vibrant digital presence, the One O’Clock Lab Band honors its storied past while boldly shaping the future of jazz.