

Guitar virtuoso Stanley Jordan to perform at Cape Town Jazzathon, speak at #MEX23

 By [Martin Myers](#)

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Stanley Jordan, guitar virtuoso and four-time Grammy nominee, will perform for the first time on 23,24 June 2023, at GrandWest Casino and Entertainment World, Cape Town. This marks a significant victory for the Cape Town Jazzathon and Music Exchange 2023 (#MEX23) where Stanley will also deliver a keynote address.



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In a career that took flight in 1985 with commercial and critical acclaim, Stanley Jordan has consistently displayed a chameleonic musical persona of openness, imagination, versatility and maverick daring. Be it bold reinventions of classical masterpieces or soulful explorations through pop-rock hits, to blazing straight-ahead jazz forays and ultramodern improvisational works-solo or with a group, Jordan can always be counted on to take listeners on breathless journeys into the unexpected.

Key to Jordan's fast-track acclaim was his mastery of a special technique on the guitar's fretboard. Instead of conventional strumming and picking, Jordan's innovative "touch technique" is an advanced form of two-handed tapping. While a handful of other players were using similar techniques, Stanley's fluid, multi-layered textures and sheer virtuosity raised the bar for excellence

To date, Jordan has performed in over 60 countries on six continents. He has performed at many festivals, including the Kool Jazz Festival, the Concord Jazz Festival, and the Montreaux International Jazz Festival.

Jordan, based in Sedona, Arizona, is an artist-spokesperson for the American Music Therapy Association, and he has done numerous lectures and demonstrations on the healing applications of music.

We recently chatted...

▣ ***What is your purpose?***

My individual purpose is to help create a sustainable future by promoting peace, healing and understanding through music. My collective purpose is to join with others to co-create a beautiful and sustainable future as a collaborative work of art.

▣ ***What does music mean to you?***

Fluid vibrational architecture.

▣ ***My music is about...***

The further actualisation of human potential through the edifying effects of auditory mindfulness.

▣ ***What is your motto?***

I'm not here to fit in; I'm here to make a contribution.

▣ ***Fame is about...***

Talking to the world or shining for the world. It can be a good thing but only when you have something valuable to offer. I've often held back because I wasn't sure. Tom Waits once said, "I've always been afraid I was going to tap the world on the shoulder for 20 years, and when it finally turned around I was going to forget what I had to say. "

⚡ ***Retirement will happen when...***

I notice that no one's responding to me and I figure out that they can't see me because I'm no longer in the earthly dimension.

⚡ ***I don't do...***

"Never say never"

⚡ ***I would love to co-write with...***

Stevie Wonder, or even Jim Carrey who's actually a talented songwriter.

⚡ ***Where do you go for inspiration to create?***

I love to hike down into the desert canyons where it's so quiet you can literally hear your own heart. From there I can tune in to the quiet inner voice that's the source of my best music.

⚡ ***What is the most enjoyable aspect of your work?***

I love immersing my soul deep into the music and tapping in to the divinely transcendent experience of a connection to a deeper world.



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■ ***The song you must do during every show?***

I approach each show uniquely so there's no song that I do every time. But I would say the two most requested songs are *The Lady in My Life* and *Stairway to Heaven*.

■ ***Any funny moments on stage?***

Oh gosh there are so many. Here's one: usually I can play when I'm tired because the music gives me energy, but one time I was so tired that I literally fell asleep while performing. When I woke up I was still playing. I had no idea where I was, but I realised one thing: I can play guitar in my sleep.

■ ***My heroes are...***

Pythagoras, Jesus Christ, Guido Monaco, Galileo, JS Bach, Clara Schumann, Sun Ra, Milton Babbitt, Buckminster Fuller, Cecil Taylor, Jean Houston, Jimi Hendrix, Ken Wilber, Cornell West and Marianne Williamson.

■ ***My style icon is...***

Sun Ra

■ ***Which living person do you admire most and why?***

Right now I would say Marianne Williamson because she's bringing politics into the 21st-century.

■ ***What is your most treasured possession?***

My peace of mind. More valuable than any physical possession.

■ ***It's your round, what are you drinking?***

I'm having a Margarita with no salt, and probably a drink as well.

■ ***Dream gig to do?***

The Cape Town Planetarium in the South African Iziko Museum, for sure!



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■ ***Any nicknames?***

Space Jordan

■ ***If you were not a musician, what would you do?***

Marry one.

■ ***Pick five words to describe yourself?***

Aye aye aye aye aye!

■ ***Greatest Movie Ever Made?***

2001: A Space Odyssey.

■ ***What book are you reading?***

Scheduling of Resource-Constrained Projects by Robert Klein. I have a lot of projects and I hope to manage them more efficiently using the mathematical techniques in this book.

■ ***What song changed your life?***

Symphony number 6 by Tchaikovsky. I attended a performance at the age of 10 and that was the moment that I fell in love with the Symphony Orchestra.

■ ***Who do you love?***

My daughter Julia, and my girlfriend Jacqueline and her spirit dog, Star.

■ ***What is your favourite Word?***

I'm in love with language and words in general but my favourite word would be "music" because from there I can get to all the others.

🎵 ***Top of your bucket list?***

Getting back to all the people I've disappointed and finding a way to make it right.

🎵 ***Your greatest achievement?***

It's hard to narrow it down but here's one thing I'm particularly proud of: I'm a software coder and I created an app built on video game technology that allows me to use music to navigate a 3-D model of the solar system and deep space.

🎵 ***What do you complain about most often?***

I complain about all the time I have to spend doing interviews when I'd really rather be making music.

🎵 ***What is your biggest fear?***

I don't want to say because I don't want to give it any power.

🎵 ***Happiness is...***

Feeling deeply connected to my authentic inner self, and sharing that self with wonderful people who love me for who I am and who appreciate my contribution to their lives.

🎵 ***On stage, I tend to...***

Lose track of time and play a bit too long. But people don't seem to mind, or at least they say they don't mind...

🎵 ***The best life lessons you have learned?***

A healthy lifestyle requires purification on every level.

Meditation purifies the mind.

Fasting and clean diet purifies the body.

Deep relaxation purifies the nervous system.

Fresh air purifies the lungs.

And music purifies the emotions.

🎵 ***What has been your favourite journey so far?***

This may sound weird but I absolutely love practicing — sometimes even more than performing. And the main thing I do when I practice is to go on musical journeys. I explore the spaces and contours of the musical elements including harmony, texture, and rhythm. I find my favourite musical places and then I want to perform so I can bring people to those places.

🎵 ***Do you do charity work, and if you do – what do you do?***

I try to bring joy, love and healing through Music. Most recently I played for babies in the neonatal intensive care ward at a hospital.

🎵 ***Wishes and dreams?***

I want to complete my concerto for guitar and orchestra and I want to perform in a live broadcast from outer space.

ABOUT MARTIN MYERS

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