

## Darol Anger – Bio

Darol Anger was born in Seattle, Washington during 1953. Playing music didn't feature in Anger's life until his parent's moved to New Jersey, circa 1964. The trigger that changed everything was hearing The Beatles on the radio. His parents bought the youngster a guitar soon afterwards, but it had a high action and Darol found it difficult to hold down chords. It so happened that soon afterwards, he saw an entertainer play violin in a local restaurant. Anger traded six strings for four, took violin lessons in school as well as privately, and joined the school orchestra. During his early high school years Anger picked up the guitar again in the hope of meeting and impressing lots of girls. That plan didn't really work out. By that time the Anger family had moved to the west coast again, settling in Marin County, California. Attending a Youngbloods gig where the opening band was Seatrain, Anger was totally impressed by Richard Greene's electric fiddle playing. Darol picked up his fiddle once again, and in time via Scotty Stoneman and John Hartford recordings he discovered the fiddle music of the late Vassar Clements [d. 2005] – the father of hillbilly jazz.

Following high school Darol Anger enrolled at the University of California in Santa Cruz. During this period he also built mandolins and played bluegrass music in a pizza parlour. Moving on from Clements, the teenager discovered fiddle virtuoso David Grisman, and the Grateful Dead offshoot band Old And In the Way. Bass player Todd Phillips, who Anger had known since the early 1970's, was taking mandolin lessons from Grisman. Phillips and Anger were in different bluegrass bands at the time, but as luck would have it, Darol ended up jamming with Todd and David. During the years 1975–84, Anger was part of the David Grisman Quintet/Quartet. The line-up changed a number of times, the final one to feature Anger being Grisman [mandolin], Mike Marshall [guitar/mandola] and Rob Wasserman [bass], while past alumni [1975-84] included Joe Carroll [bass], Todd Phillips [mandolin/bass], Bill Amatneek [bass], Tony Rice [guitar] and Mark O'Connor [guitar]. In 1981 the now defunct Kaleidoscope label issued Anger's debut solo album **"Fiddlistics."**

Post Grisman, Anger went on to record with pianist Barbara Higbie for the Windham Hill label. Darol also worked in a duo with Mike Marshall. By midway through the eighties, Messrs. Anger, Higbie and Marshall had formed the Grammy nominated folk-jazz group Montreux. The other band members being Andy Narell [steel drums], and Michael Manring [bass]. Their debut album **"Sign Language"** included the radio hit "To Be." In 1985 Anger helped form the jazz-influenced Turtle Island String Quartet and remained with them for eleven years appearing on nine albums, plus a retrospective. The original line-up consisted of Anger, violinist/composer David Balakrishnan, cellist Mark Summer and violinist Irene Sazer. The quartet took its name from poet Gary Snyder's book **"Turtle Island."** In Native American mythology Turtle Island is the name for America.

Anger and Marshall continued to work together and in the early 1990's recorded with the band Psychograss. Between 1993 and 2005 Psychograss issued three albums, while in the closing years of last century the Darol Anger/Mike Marshall Band issued a couple of albums, and as a duo Anger and Marshall reunited in 2002 for **"At Home And On The Range - The Duo Live."** Almost two decades after cutting his debut solo album, Anger recorded his sophomore set **"Diary Of A Fiddler"** [1999]. It featured duets with his heroes Vassar Clements and Richard Greene, and featured other fiddlers including Martin Hayes, Natalie MacMaster, Bruce Molsky, Stuart Duncan and Alasdair Fraser.

During 1995 Anger set up some recording equipment in his garage, and began work on the folk music tribute **"Heritage."** The list of contributors to the project reads like a who's who of American bluegrass/country/blues/folk musicians. Two and a half years in the making, the album was released during 1997 by the Island Records subsidiary label Six Degrees. Willie Nelson, Mary-Chapin Carpenter and Tim O'Brien, Mavis Staples sang on the recording, and Jerry Douglas, David Lindley and Sam Bush and others played on it. When Chris Blackwell left Island Records the week it was released, promotion of the record ceased.

In 1999 Anger recorded the NewGrange album with Tim O'Brien, Mike Marshall, Phillip Aaberg, Alison Brown and Todd Phillips. Those players had contributed to the earlier recording **"A Christmas Heritage"** [1998] which was released by Koch. **"Heritage"** and an enhanced version of **"A Christmas Heritage"** were reissued by Alison Brown's label Compass Records in late 2005. The album **"Head West"** by the super-group Comotion appeared in 2000. Apart from Anger, the line included percussionist Aaron Johnston, mandolinist/violinist Michael Kang [String Cheese Incident], saxophonist/clarinetist Paul

McCandless [Paul Winter Consort, Oregon], guitarist Mike Marshall, bassist Tye North [Leftover Salmon] and drummer Jeff Sipe [Leftover Salmon]. Anger has subsequently recorded albums with pianist Phil Aaberg and Fiddlers 4 – featuring Michael Doucet [BeauSoleil], old time fiddler Bruce Molsky and young cellist Rushad Eggleston. **“Fiddlers 4”** was nominated for a 2003 Grammy Award for Best Traditional Folk Album. In 2004 Anger formed The American Fiddle Ensemble, although they now work as Darol Anger’s Republic of Strings. Their **“Republic of Strings”** debut on Compass Records was followed in the Spring of 2006 by **“Generation Nation.”** Anger has also appeared as a special guest on recent tours by the jam-band String Cheese Incident.

When not in the role of performer, writer or producer, Anger has led seminars at Stanford, Oberlin and the Amherst Jazz Workshop. He is the String Chair of the International Association of Jazz Educators, teaches at the Berklee School of Music in Boston and at Mark O’Connor’s annual summer fiddle camp. Darol is a Contributing Editor for **Strings Magazine**, and was the recipient of a California Arts Council Composer Fellowship in 1995. Two years later he was nominated for the CalArts Alpert Award in the Arts. During the years 1982-85, Darol was the winner of **Frets Magazine** Readers’ Poll for Best Jazz Violinist.

#### Discography :

Solo - **“Fiddlistics”** [1981] ; **“Diary Of A Fiddler”** [1999] :

with David Grisman Quintet - **“The David Grisman Quintet”** [1977] ; **“Hot Dawg”** with Stephane Grappelli [1979] ; **“Quintet ‘80”** [1980] ; **“Stephane Grappelli/David Grisman Live”** [1981] ; **“Mondo Mando”** [1981] ; **“Dawg Jazz/Dawg Grass”** [1983] ; **“Acoustic Christmas”** [1983] :

with Barbara Higbie - **“Tideline”** [1982] :

with The Anger/Higbie Quintet **“Live at Montreux ‘84”** [1984] :

with Michael Marshall - **“The Duo”** [1983] ; **“Chiaroscuro”** [1985] ; **“At Home And On The Range-The Duo Live”** [2002] :

with David Balakrishnan and Matt Glaser **“Jazz Violin Celebration”** [1985] :

Montreux - **“Sign Language”** [1986] ; **“Let Me Say”** [1989] ; **“A Windham Hill Retrospective”** [1993] :

Turtle Island String Quartet - **“Turtle Island String Quartet”** [1988] ; **“Metropolis”** [1989] ; **“Skylife”** [1990] ; **“On The Town”** [1991] ; **“Spider Dreams”** [1992] ; **“Who Do We Think We Are?”** [1994] ; **“A Night in Tunisia, A Week In Detroit”** with Detroit Symphony Orchestra [1994] ; **“Homage”** with the Billy Taylor Trio [1995] ; **“By The Fireside”** [1995] ; **“Turtle Island String Quartet Retrospective”** [1997] :

with Psychograss - **“Anger/Marshall & Psychograss”** [1993] ; **“Like Minds”** [1996] ; **“Now Hear This”** [2005] :

with various artists - **“Heritage”** [1997] :

with Tim O’Brien, Mike Marshall, Phillip Aaberg, Alison Brown and Todd Phillips - **“A Christmas Heritage”** [1998] :

with Darol Anger/Mike Marshall Band – **“Jam”** [1999] ; **“Brand New Can”** [2000] :

with NewGrange [Anger, O’Brien, Marshall, Aaberg, Brown and Phillips] - **“NewGrange”** [1999] :

with Comotion – **“Head West”** [2000] :

with Phil Aaberg - **“Crossover”** [2004] :

with Fiddlers 4 [Anger, Doucet, Molsky & Eggleston] – **“Fiddlers 4”** [2002] :

with Republic of Strings [originally the American Fiddle Ensemble] - **“Republic Of Strings”** [2004] ; **“Generation Nation”** [2006] :

#### Arthur Wood

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