

Recommended Creative String Players List

Here's a variety of my favorite string players and bands that I think all modern string players (and everyone else!) should be exposed to.

HERE is a YouTube Playlist including all of these performances, or you can click on the links/search YouTube title and artist of each piece. I chose just one example for each, but all of these musicians are worth checking out further. In no particular order, the genres range from Swing and Jazz to Prog Rock to Indie/Alternative.

- Stuff Smith - Undecided
 - o My personal favorite jazz violinist – Stuff Smith was all about the groove, he swings so hard! He’s known as one of the first violinist to experiment with amplification back in the 1930’s.

- Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli - Nuages
 - o The creators of the ‘Gypsy Jazz’ genre with their famous band, ‘Quintette du Hot Club de France’.

- Shine (Live) - Stephane Grappelli and David Grisman
 - o Great live recording by Grappelli and monster of the mandolin David Grisman.

- Stephane Grappelli and Joe Venuti - I Can't Give You Anything But Love
 - o Joyous performance with ‘Chicago style’ violinist Joe Venuti accompanied by Grappelli.

- Reinhardt, Grappelli, Eddie South – Bach Double
 - o Jazzed up Bach! Performed by the creators of gypsy jazz (Grappelli and Reinhardt) along with the ‘Dark Angel’ of the violin Eddie South.

- Didier Lockwood - All The Things You Are
 - o Didier Lockwood is the jazz violinist with the most amazing use of colors I’ve ever heard.

- Turtle Island String Quartet - A Night In Tunisia
 - o Innovative string group started in the 1980s that developed many of the modern techniques improvising violinists use today.
 - o They’re still creating and performing!
 - o CELLISTS: Look into the Turtle Island Cellist Mark Summer if you want to learn to groove!
 - o <https://turtleislandquartet.com/>

- Darol Anger – Borealis Darol Anger & Mike Marshall
 - Former member of the Turtle Island String Quartet, and one of the great innovators of the percussive technique known as the ‘chop’.
 - Great composer, producer, and educator, with many resources available on his website.
 - <https://darolanger.com/>

- Casey Driessen Fiddling & Singing on a Gondola (Chopping master!)
 - Casey Driessen is the CHOPPING MASTER! He took the ‘chopping’ percussive technique that Darol Anger invented with the Turtle Island String Quartet and has turned it into an art form.
 - Casey and Oriol Saña have developed the ‘Chop Notation Project’ which creates and establishes a standardized music notation to read and write the percussive bowed string technique known as the ‘Chop’.
 - He has a series of videos called ‘Techniques & Skills with Casey Driessen’ where he shows various chopping techniques and how to practice them. I highly recommend them: They’re available for \$20 on his website at <https://www.caseydriessen.com/>

- Ray Nance – Duke Ellington Mr Gentle Mr Cool
 - Jazz violinist, trumpeter, and vocalist well known for being a longtime member of Duke Ellington’s band.
 - Also worked with Earl Hines and Horace Henderson, along with his own band in Chicago.

- Tornado Rider I Peed On A Bird – Rushad Eggleston
 - Rushad Eggleston is the PETER PAN of the CELLO (he’s magic).
 - Awesome innovation in chopping, strumming, and rhythmic cello playing.

- Jean-Luc Ponty – Cosmic Messenger (1978)
 - Jazz Fusion – Jean-Luc Ponty is well known for his innovation with electric instruments, effects (guitar pedals, etc), and technology since the 1970s.

- Mahavishnu Orchestra - Cosmic Strut
 - Rock/Jazz Fusion band, electric violinist Jerry Goodman.

- Goat Rodeo Sessions - NPR Tiny Desk Concert
 - Supergroup with Yo Yo Ma (cello), Edgar Meyer (bass), Chris Thile (mandolin), and Stuart Duncan (violin).
 - So much top level musicianship in this group...
 - <https://www.yo-yoma.com/sounds-symphonies-archive/the-goat-rodeo-sessions/>

- Rhythm Future Quartet - Bushwick Stomp
 - Led by violinist Jason Anick and guitarist Olli Soikkeli, this acoustic jazz ensemble pushes the gypsy jazz genre to its limits with incredible virtuosity and brilliant original tunes.
 - <http://www.rhythmfuturequartet.com/>
 - <http://www.jasonanick.com/>

- Andrew Bird - NPR Tiny Desk Concert
 - Violinist Andrew Bird plays many genres, from jazz (Squirrel Nut Zippers) to his own indie music which often features effects, looping pedals, and some incredible whistling.
 - <http://www.andrewbird.net/>

- Kishi Bashi - NPR Tiny Desk Concert
 - Indie Rock Violinist Kishi Bashi shows off the possibilities of the looping pedal with violin (and beatboxing) in this great Tiny Desk performance.
 - <https://www.kishibashi.com/>

- Danish String Quartet – Shine You No More
 - Modern string quartet creating some awesome Scandinavian influenced original music, along with being fantastic overall musicians.
 - <https://danishquartet.com/>

- Christian Howes – Crazy (Gnarls Barkley)
 - Fantastic musician and brilliant educator, former Berklee Professor
 - Has some really great resources available online: <http://christianhowes.com/>
 - Offers a free One Month Trial to his online ‘Creative Strings Academy’, which contains a ton of instructional videos and sheet music for learning to improvise in many different styles as well as valuable business advice for musicians: https://christianhowes.com/csa-free_trial/
 - Definitely join his free Creative String Player FB group for daily inspiration from some of the most innovative string players out there today: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/creativestringsacademy/>

- Echae Kang – Sunny (A Funky Looping violin cover)
 - Probably my personal favorite looping cover ever – It’s absolutely brilliant, great evolving layering of harmony, rhythm, and melody!
 - Echae is a phenomenal musician, with tons of great original music.

- Aleksey Igudesman – Salsa De La Luna
 - Part of the infamous Igudesman & Joo comedy duo, extremely creative and innovative violinist, composer, and choreographer.
 - Much of his music is available for purchase on his site: <https://www.alekseyigudesman.com/>

- Regina Carter – Ray Brown Trio feat. Regina Carter - Lady Be Good
 - An actively performing creative violinist who explores the use of the violin in a variety of styles.
 - <http://reginacarter.com/>

- Jeremy Cohen and Quartet San Francisco – Tango Toscana
 - Virtuoso violinist and composer Jeremy Cohen has created some wonderful compositions that show off a range of unusual string techniques, particularly those developed within the Tango tradition.
 - Many of his compositions are available for purchase on his site: <https://www.violinjazz.com/>

- Tracy Silverman – NPR Music Tiny Desk Concert
 - Tracy Silverman is a great innovator and performer, a former member of the Turtle Island String Quartet.
 - Great use of modern pedals, extended range instruments, looping, etc.
 - He has written a book on developing groove for string players that I highly recommend, called the ‘Strum Bowing Method’: <https://www.strumbowing.com/>

- Johnny Frigo – Polka Dots & Moonbeams
 - One of the great American jazz violinists of the 20th century
 - Virtuoso and incredibly flexible, absolutely lovely interpretations of many classic songs.

- John Blake, Jr. – A City Called Heaven
 - John Blake Jr. personally introduced me to playing jazz for the very first time when I was attending a Suzuki institute at the age of 10.
 - He was a brilliant teacher, and one of the foremost champions of improvisational string playing education in the United States.
 - He co-wrote (along with Suzuki pedagogue Jody Harmon) the ‘J.I.M.E. Jazz String Method’.
 - <http://www.johnblakejr.com/>

- Steffen Zeichner – On The Sunny Side of the Street (Solo looping)
 - I hope you enjoy some of my own music too!
 - Feel free to reach out with any questions or if you’re interested in taking any lessons to develop yourself within any improvisational genre!
 - <https://sizviolin.com/>