

Musician Develops Travel Guitar

Story by Loretta Jackson; Photos by Dylan Bailey



Mike Aiken sits on his motorcycle while playing the "Travelin' Bone."

Clunk. Blam. Boing! That's the sound a full-size guitar makes slammin' against the back fender when you try to carry it over your shoulder while riding a motorcycle. It's also the sound a guitar makes when you try to force it into an overhead bin on an airplane. Blam. Bonk. Thud. Twang!

Now, there is good news: that problem is solved, thanks to a talented guitarist and singer/songwriter, Mike Aiken (www.mikeaikenmusic.com), and folks at a major guitar manufacturer, Takamine. Mike is an endorsed artist of Takamine Guitars, a firm with some 40 years in business. The honor is shared by Garth Brooks, Toby Keith, Bruce Springsteen and others who deserve it. Mike and "Tak" officials got together and agreed there had to be a better way to take a guitar on the road. Talks led to the development of a new travel guitar, one whose design retains the mellow sound of a full-sized instrument.

Mike said, "My lifestyle isn't easy on a guitar. It needs to be able to take the abuse of travel and still sound great." Mike Aiken and wife Amy, who sings harmony, love to travel. Both for years have entertained fellow bikers at various events all along the east coast. More recently, Mike and Amy have added sites such as beach bars in far-away resorts. That's because they now live on a boat and love sharing music with a nautical twang. There are lots of those lively tunes on Mike's new CD, "Getaway", a showcase for 10 originals, plus others. The album could be described as "salty folk

rock" – a blend of different beats mingled with a whisper of sea breeze and rum.

Recently, the couple sang and talked about the new guitar design at a logical venue, a sail boat show held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philly. The pair lives aboard a 42-foot cutter rig they call "Ocean Girl". And thanks to Amy's background in Engineering, they've converted into a sound studio the "Bay Queen," a 1941 Navy harbor tugboat berthed near the couple's home port, Norfolk, VA.

The pair has done a lot of traveling and they'll do even more when the new travel guitar becomes available from Takamine Guitars. It's been christened the "Travelin' Bone" – the Mike Aiken Signature Series. The new guitar has a solid Spruce top, Mahogany back and sides and a Rosewood fingerboard. It sports a VT Preamp, chrome tuners and a neck and body that are fully bound with some tough stuff that covers the edges of the sound box and the neck, thus protecting the end grains of the tone woods while adding a finishing touch to the instrument.

Inquiries are coming in steady and Mike is glad to answer all questions about the "Travelin' Bone". It's a small-bodied wonder that can be played straight or as an acoustic/electric guitar. Mike's first CD, "Travelin' Bone," is the instrument's namesake and a tribute to freedom — the freedom to take along your guitar and wander, by bike, boat or airplane. Mike and Amy's gear is always at the ready aboard their floating home. And now, their new guitar will always be ready for the next adventure, too. Check out the website:

www.mikeaikenmusic.com or call for info toll-free, 877-606-5773.

Then, enjoy your own *travelin' bone* on a *getaway* to remember.



The "Travelin' Bone" fits nicely on the back of your motorcycle