

Outside NAMM - The Best Pick and the "Wurst" Puck

by [Richard Gilewitz](#)

A full weekend of meetings inside convention centers with music manufacturers, music store owners, industry reps, and the sharing of songs and stories with fellow artists should be more than enough to satisfy any visitor or participant at the semi-annual NAMM Show (National Association of Music Merchants). But as always, that's only the beginning. Some of the real icing on the cake is what occurs out and about at nearby restaurants and music venues and throughout the host city. In this case, July brought us all to Austin, Texas for the 2006 Summer NAMM Session.

On Friday night I had the pleasure of accepting an invitation from the Saga folks and one of my sponsors, Shubb Capos (www.shubbcapos.com), for an evening of incredible music with Jon Jorgenson's Gypsy jazz swing group(<http://www.johnjorgenson.com/>). To my delight, Rick Shubb and his fast-picking bluegrass band started off an event that showcased Rick's banjo style, which I truly love. Watching Jon and Rick reminded me how much fun music can be- not only to play, but to listen.





Outside on Saturday while navigating my way from the Convention Center down to the legendary 6th Street area, I passed one of the typically unusual signs advertising a simple bite to eat. I was not sure about picking that venue and decided to move on to check out the music scene.



After ducking into a few clubs to hear some extraordinary music, I came upon one of the more fascinating talents of Saturday evening. Spray artist Carey Huckaby, blowing through poster-size magical galaxies or landscapes one after another, using nothing more than a plethora of spray paint cans, poster board, and a bucketful of crushed newspaper to form his artwork - not to mention a precautionary gas mask - and lightning fast hands as well as inexplicable talent. After briefly interviewing Carey I found out that he doubles as a pro boxer, which no doubt explains his quickness and precision as an artist.

As you might recall in the August Guitar Sessions article "Inside NAMM", I promised to reveal THE BATS! According to Bat Conservation International (www.batcon.org), 2.5 million bats live underneath the Congress Street Bridge in Austin and at dusk each night unleash their insect-craving-fury on the skies above. Locals and visitors gather en masse each evening to witness this spectacular event as the bats drift skyward to over 10,000 feet, uninhibited by stop signs, traffic lights - or potential "bat crashes". It is my understanding that the FAA warns approaching airlines to steer clear and divert during this period of bat frenzy. Just in case the airlines need proof, I recorded this phenomenon with my Sony digital camera and was able to capture a very brief segment of the [bats_in_action!](#)





As if I weren't stunned enough by the daily occurrences of this unique weekend, my friends from Gold Tone www.goldtone.com who designed and made my astonishing Banjitar and custom Weissenborn- took me out for a late Sunday night shuffleboard competition. As I stepped into an elevator in the parking garage on the way to our "venue", they burst into hysterical laughter at my reaction to the elevator's decor. Seems like I was the only one who didn't already know about "elevator art".

Had I not endured a ride in that elevator prior to the event, I am convinced that I could have won that evening's shuffleboard competition, but I humbly conceded my reining title of complete amateur. I did, however, win a wonderful weekend and have developed a newfound respect for the art

of the spray can, the pick, and the puck.

See you next year at NAMM!

Richard

Richard Gilewitz continues with his live stories on his newest release, "Live at 2nd Street Theater", available at www.richardgilewitz.com.