

FACT SHEET

# JON SHOLLE

**Hometown:** New York, N.Y.

**Musical idiom:** American roots music, especially jazz, country, bluegrass and blues

**Latest album:** *Out of the Frying Pan*

**Instruments:** Guitar, mandolin, dobro, lap steel, banjo, bass, etc.

**Record label:** Rounder Records, Cambridge MA

**Points of note:** *Out of the Frying Pan* is Jon's second album for Rounder. This all-instrumental project features David Grisman, Tony Trischka, Andy Statman and Kenny Kosek. His first Rounder album was the cult classic *Catfish for Supper*. Records by Esther Phillips, Allen Ginsberg, Sonny Stitt, Maria Muldaur, Chip Taylor and Kate & Anna McGarrigle feature Jon's guitar playing. He has appeared on the Broadway stage in "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" and "Big River". From 1984 to 1986 he was a member of the David Grisman Quartet.

**Additional data:** Jon won the "World's Champion Guitar" competition at the Union Grove NC Fiddler's Convention in 1967 & 1968. He appeared in the film "The Rode" with Bette Midler and on its platinum-selling soundtrack album. He also appeared in Peter Bogdanovich's "They All Laughed" with Audrey Hepburn and John Ritter. Jon also recently worked on Carter Burwell's soundtrack for Disney's "The Rookie" with Dennis Quaid.

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# JON SHOLLE

WHAT THEY SAY:

“Along with Mr. Grisman, who breaks up bluegrass’s running 16th notes with witty syncopations, the quartet’s most flexible soloist - from jazz to blues to bluegrass -- was the guitarist Jon Sholle.”

Jon Pareles’ review of David Grisman show at the Bottom Line :NY Times of July 19, 1985

“Jon’s guitar playing is hot, smooth, moody, fanciful -- just plain good.”

Guitar Player magazine review of “Catfish for Supper”

“This guy is one of the most under-rated guitarists on the planet!”

Rolly Brown in Flatpicking magazine interview

“Without overstating the case, Jon is the most astonishing, fluid, and energizing guitar player I have ever met. I thought that in 1963, and I think it NOW.” Alan Senauke in the liner notes for his CD “Wooden Man”

“Sholle has mastered the essential trick of playing his butt off without breaking a sweat...”

Michael Simmons in Acoustic Guitar magazine article on Western Swing.

“Jon Sholle is an incredibly versatile guitarist...”

Michael Parrish in musicHound’s “Folk: the Essential Album Guide”



# JON SHOLLE

Jon Sholle Webpage:  
[www.jonsholle.com](http://www.jonsholle.com)



**Rounder Records**  
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# ROUNDER RECORDS ARTIST PROFILE

## Jon Sholle

Jon Sholle has been a performing and recording musician for more than 30 years. His wide range of expertise keeps his guitar equally in demand as a jazz, rock, and folk performer. His latest release, *Out of the Frying Pan* (Rounder 0398), showcases his remarkable bluegrass chops on guitar, mandolin, and Dobro, with a supporting cast that includes David Grisman, Andy Statman, Tony Trischka, and Kenny Kosek.



Jon was a musical prodigy who first came to national attention when he won the Union Grove, N.C. Fiddler's Convention "World Champion Guitar" award in 1967 and 1968, while playing with the New York Ramblers (which at the time included Jody Stecher and Winnie Winston.) He quickly became a greatly in-demand player for sessions and live performances. Jon appeared in and played on the soundtracks for the movies *The Rose* with Bette Midler and *They All Laughed* with Audrey Hepburn and Dorothy Stratten, and played at sessions for Esther Phillips, Melissa Manchester, Sonny Stitt, Maria Muldaur, and Kate & Anna McGarrigle. He has appeared on the Broadway stage in *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* and *Big River*, and on television shows including *Saturday Night Live*, *Don Kirshner's Rock Concert*, and *Midnight Special*, and his guitar playing has been heard in countless commercial jingles.

He released his first solo recording for Rounder, *Catfish for Supper* (Rounder 3026), in 1979. This classic LP, which spotlighted Jon's swing guitar expertise, was reissued on CD in 1996. From 1984 to 1986 Jon was a member of the David Grisman Quartet, and his playing was featured on the album *Acousticity*, which reached #1 on the *Billboard* Jazz chart. Jon has worked frequently over the years with top New York mandolinist/clarinetist Andy Statman, and he appears on Andy's Rounder bluegrass CD, *Andy's Ramble*. Jon also compiled and wrote the liner notes for the 1996 compilation *Rounder Bluegrass Guitar* (Rounder 11576).

Other recent projects include Kenny Kosek's 1997 Rounder CD *Angelwood* (Rounder 0362); *My Time Ain't Long*, Keith Carradine's new stage show based on the life of Jimmie Rodgers; and Chip Taylor's CD *The Living Room Tapes*.



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## Jon Sholle

Jon Sholle is an incredibly versatile guitarist who has played bluegrass with Peter Rowan and Andy Statman, new acoustic music with the David Grisman Quintet, pop with the likes of Melissa Manchester and Bette Midler, jazz with giants like Esther Phillips and Sonny Siltz, and even backed beat poet Allen Ginsberg on several recordings. In a career spanning three decades, Sholle has released only two albums under his own name, but both are worthy of attention.

**what's available:** *Catfish for Supper 400* (Rounder, 1979) is a lively, eclectic recording that delves into classic jazz, Western swing, and bluegrass. *Out of the Frying Pan 400* (Rounder, 1996) is a straighter bluegrass offering on which Sholle plays with most of the New York bluegrass mafia (Andy Statman, Kenny Kosek, Tony Trischka, and Keith Edwards). David Grisman plays on Sholle's Dawgish swing tune, "Jon's Jump."

**Influences:**

- ☞ T. Bone Walker, Django Reinhardt, Lester Flatt
- ☞ Scott Nygaard, David Grier

**see also:** David Grisman, Andy Statman

Michael Parish

musicHound

folk

The  
Essential  
Album  
Guide

edited by Neal Walters  
and Brian Mansfield

foreword by  
Mark D. Moss,  
*Sing Out!*  
magazine

DURING HIS 30-YEAR CAREER AS A SIDEMAN, GUITARIST Jon Sholle has done it all. He's appeared on rock albums by Melissa Manchester and Maria Muldaur, played jazz with Sonny Stitt, recorded acoustic music with mandolinists David Grisman and Andy Statman, and performed in movies, television and on the Broadway stage.

"The mixed blessing of being a sideman is that you have to be able to play any kind of style, but then you fall in love with a few of them," says Sholle. "I feel a strong connection with blues, country, jazz and funk music. I love the older styles of American music from the Thirties through the Fifties—anything from before the advent of overdubbing."

But when he recorded his new solo album for Rounder, *Out of the Frying Pan*, Sholle decided to go back to his first love—a style of music that he's rarely been hired to play as a sideman. "Bluegrass was one of several musical styles that I assimilated during my developmental years," says Sholle. "It seemed like a natural choice for this album. It had always been pushed to the background before and never got done until now."

Predictably, the album Sholle ultimately recorded could hardly be called "pure" bluegrass. Although he played most of the rhythm parts and a handful of solos on a Martin D-18, Sholle's versions of several standards feature jazzy solos played on a Gibson L-5 archtop—hardly a bluegrass instrument. "I was unable to keep my jazz and swing influences out," admits the lifelong eclectic. "It's difficult for me to cast that style of playing aside."

Supporting him on the album are a cadre of like-minded instrumentalists, including old friends Andy Statman, David Grisman and banjo virtuoso Tony Trischka, all of whom have recorded in a number of styles. "We all go back quite a few years, so they know what I'm about," he says. "Some people aren't so open to all my different influences. I've been playing bluegrass a long time, and I've always felt that you could extend its harmonic boundaries a bit without detracting from the basic flavor of the music, as long as it's not overdone."

—CHRIS GILL

## jonsholle BLUEGRAZZ



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## Now music

### AFTER DARK

## Bluegrass Cottons to a New York Yankee

By MARY TALBOT

**A** TALENTED SOUTHERN boy's easy presentation of traditional and classic acoustic and electric swing tunes," is how a rhapsodic reviewer described Jon Sholle's album "Catfish for Supper." Which is perfectly accurate, except that Sholle is a born-and-bred New Yorker and even recorded his latest, "Out of the Frying Pan" (Rounder), a superb homage to some of the great chestnuts of bluegrass, in Westchester County, far, far from the Great Smoky Mountains.

It's not the first time that Sholle — who plays Sunday night as part of a semi-regular gig at Citron 47, an unpretentious restaurant-cum-music-venue on W. 47th — has been taken for an artifact of the South. Since the early 1960s, when Sholle began forging a reputation as a teenage guitar prodigy in Greenwich Village coffee houses, he has matched practitioners of the high lonesome at their own game.

"In the late '60s, I was in a band called the New York Ramblers. We used to go to a lot of fiddlers' conventions and swept all the prizes," recalls Sholle. "We were a bunch of long-haired Jewish



**OLE MISS-NOMER:** Jon Sholle

guys from up North, but the old-timers still gave us all their loving cups and ribbons."

In the succeeding decades, Sholle mastered the mandolin and Dobro (which he plays on the new record), as well as musical idioms ranging around jazz, Texas swing and blues — all of which pepper his bluegrass album. He has toured with the David Grisman Quartet and accompanied Kate and Anna McGarrigle, Bette Midler and Sonny Stitt. And he continues to pull inspiration from artists as diverse as Louis Armstrong, Lonnie Johnson, T. Bone Walker and Oscar Ale-

man, the late Argentinian guitarist who played in Josephine Baker's Parisian band.

Sholle's gigs are appropriately informal, hospitable affairs, and lately he's partnered with fiddler Kenny Kosek and whoever happens to drop by for sets of bluegrass, swing and jazz.

"Everything I do is based on American music," says Sholle, who likens his passion for bluegrass to a virus. "If your system is susceptible, it gets you."

Even if you're a Jewish guy from New York City. Sun. at 8 p.m., Citron 47, 401 W. 47th, (212) 397-4747.

remembers, "You know, Tony didn't like to play long solos, and there were some tunes where I wanted people to play long solos. Tony's concept of soloing was tied in to the bluegrass idea of soloing where you'd compose a solo and then vary it a little each time you play. But Mark O'Connor was different. Mark loved to play long solos. The problem was getting him to

every beat. I always thought of it as like a ride cymbal, where you get this constant shimmer that's happening, and it never stops sustaining. Physically that's just nutty on your hands."

The change to a quartet from a quintet was the first major conceptual shift in Grisman's group. It opened up the sound and allowed for a lot more spontaneous interplay. "When we went from

improvisation concept and getting away from this idea of each guy getting a standing ovation for his virtuoso improvisation." The quartet toured throughout the U.S., Japan, and Europe from '81 to '83 and was the core group for two albums, *Mondo Mando* and *Dawg Jazz/Dawg Grass*.

When Marshall and Anger left the group in early '84, a series of major changes ensued. Grisman began adding percussion to the group on a regular basis, and he went through a series of lineups featuring musicians with strong jazz and pop backgrounds. Jon Sholle, an old friend from Grisman's youth in New York, played guitar in '84 and '85, on tour and on *Acousticity*, an album that made it to the number one spot on the jazz charts. This recording also included legendary session drummer Hal Blaine, and it was the first time a percussionist was made a regular member of the group. Grisman recalls, "When the band started, the whole thing was that we were playing this music that would normally be played with drums, *without* drums. Ed Shaughnessy from the *Tonight Show* band played on one tune on *Dawg Jazz/Dawg Grass*, and it was a real gas playing with him. He told me that he used my records in drum clinics to show people that you don't need to have drums to have rhythm. So I thought, 'Well, why don't I try playing with drums?'"

Sholle's musical education was eclectic and wide-ranging; his credits include stints as guitarist with Esther Phillips, Melissa Manchester, Maria Muldaur, David Bromberg, and Peter Rowan. As a teenager growing up in New York City, he found himself equally fascinated with bluegrass, jazz, and rock 'n' roll. "One day I'd be listening to *Foggy Mountain Banjo* and the next day I'd be listening to 'Night in Tunisia,'" he recalls. "At night I'd be playing with a rock 'n' roll band doing Beatles and Stones covers. I was bitten by the bluegrass bug very early, but it was all going on at the same time, all these different styles bombarding me. Slightly later I got into a lot of blues—Muddy Waters, Howling Wolf, and particularly Lonnie Johnson." Playing with Grisman's band was the first time Sholle was able to use his complete array of styles, bringing a funky blues quality to the group that was well suited to the drums.

After Sholle left the group to raise a family, the acoustic guitar became less



Guitarist Jon Sholle puts on the Dawg.

stop. I tried to explain to him once that it's like climbing a mountain—when you get to the top, you stop. But he said, 'Yeah, but when I get to the top I see another mountain, and I want to climb *that*.'" Grisman recalls, laughing. "Mark's time was a little more laid-back, too. When Tony played, it was etched in concrete. Tony and I used to call ourselves the Gasoline Brothers. We would just take off and never stop. It was kind of like Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa, where they would just egg each other on till one of them gave up."

This group toured widely, recording *Quintet 80* before a skiing accident sidelined O'Connor, leaving Marshall to learn the guitar parts in a matter of days. "Physically it was a real challenge," says Marshall. "The guitar is a monstrous thing to play in that style. You have to leave the strings ringing and have all that sustain even in closed positions. It's not like boom-chuck, boom-chuck where you get a break

five to four, there was a kind of clearing out in the sound that David really enjoyed," says Marshall. "It gave us all more space so we could improvise rhythmically and not be stepping on each other all the time. It was about learning to focus, learning to get inside the music as opposed to playing at it, and learning that a band is a working thing, that all these gears have to work together. It's the sound of the band as a whole that makes this beautiful piece, as opposed to what you do to the sound. The quintet was more like, 'I play my role and you play your role, and we lock,' whereas Darol and I were really into weaving these lines in and out of each other. I'm more interested in the bigger sound as opposed to the concept of 'rhythm section plays, and guy solos and tries to become hero,'" he says, laughing. "I get much more excited when the ensemble creates something that's much bigger than any one individual. With the quartet, we really started exploring the group





「ってねえ(笑)」  
ジョンはギターそのものが大好きな  
です。だから、どんなものでもそのキ  
ーにあった場所を確保している時はワ  
ワワと叫ぶのね。たぶん、今日は  
あまり見せしめたくなくて持ってきた  
けれど、さして小さなキースを出す  
よ。ね、「ブルーグラス」っていうの。Aに  
チューンするんだけど、キコイツを使っ  
て曲をつくってるんです。いいよこれは、  
ブルーグラス。

回すきころ  
ワインテージ・ギター

「ワインテージ・ギター、というのほど  
はいいですよ」  
ジョンはワインテージが好きですよ、で  
す。あの、ワインテージの広告を見る  
と「レイヤーズ・ギター」(ワインテージ  
の層で新品同様がミント、その次に二  
ミント、ウェリグッド、と、程度が  
落ちていく、一番状態の悪いのがプアー  
、プレイヤーズ・ギターとか、ミュー  
ン・シャンス・ギターと呼ばれているもの  
はキースがたくさんあり、修理もかなりさ

ジョン・シールドのことをもっと知りたい  
人は、ホームページに付けてみて下さい。  
www.cloud.net/~johns



があつて、それがすごくいい音してて、  
よく見たら古いギターだった、というの  
なり分かるけど、何年ものヘリンボー  
ンで、キースもほとんどない。だからスコ

ロックンロールバンドでした。次に70年  
代の終わりにエスター・フィリップスの  
仕事で、新宿のディキシーランドジャズ  
クラブ。ここでは2カ月くらいやってま

の人がみんな和服を着て、馬矢を持って  
るの。家々の支障にはいろいろと勝り付  
けがされてすごくきれいだつた。あれ  
シヨックだつたなあ。あの時ほど日本を  
離れるのがいやだつたことはないな。

「お正月の東京はいいです。また日本に  
来てくださいね。では最後に、やはりリ  
ャのこの曲を録めさせてください。」  
ジョン D-28はヘアー履きが来なくても  
OK。低音がこれほど出る数は他にない。



HD 28レリアム #40000、ジョンの「ブルーグラス・ギター」。



ジョイス・アンダセン・バンド。最近彼女  
のバンドを手出すことが増えた。



ジョンはストラトの名手でもある。どんなギ  
ターでも彼には「ギター」なのだ。