

**PICKER OF THE WEEK** -- Pete Huttlinger's guitar may have just six strings, but when he starts plucking, they produce a whole band's worth of sound. His dexterous picking, which won him the title of 2000 National Fingerstyle Guitar Champion and plenty of industry praise, is nothing short of audacious.

Besides plenty of foot-stomping, fast-picked bluegrass tunes, Huttlinger, who lives in Nashville, takes on some more unusual fare. Stevie Wonder's "Superstition" and Steely Dan's "Josie" are among the full-band tunes he coaxes from his Collings. Playing every part, his style makes him the closest thing to musical maestro Bobby McFerrin, only on guitar.

"I still look at the guitar as sort of a broad palette of things available to me," said Huttlinger from his car, just off of Highway 287 in Texas as he commuted between shows. "It's the most honest relationship I have. Period. Because with the guitar, it gives to me in direct proportion what I give to it. If I spend a lot of time practicing, it's going to give in kind."

Huttlinger makes a homecoming of sorts this Saturday with a show at The Center for Arts in **Natick**. A California kid, he came east to study at Berklee College of Music and spent many a night busking in the subway while here. Since graduating in 1984, he's gone on to perform in many of the country's great halls with pop stars including John Denver, with whom he toured for four years before the singer's death in 1997.

Lately, he's been doing solo work, and Saturday's show will feature tunes from his latest CD, "The Santa Rita Connection."

*Huttlinger performs May 7 at 8 p.m. at TCAN, 14 Summer St., Natick. Tickets are \$18, or \$17 for students and seniors. Call 508-647-0097 or visit [www.natickartarts.org](http://www.natickartarts.org).*