



# Musicians of the Midnight Sun

Thank you for visiting the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website. Even though these blogs are being posted many weeks after the launch of the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website, my hope is that they will remain as a document along with the website itself with the intention to give a little bit more of a personal story of my relationships with these featured artists.

## George Mandeville:

I got to know George through the early to mid 1980s when we travelled to perform at festivals in southern Canada. He was the go to guitar accompanist for Metis fiddlers such as Richard Lafferty and Angus Beaulieu and was the one man rhythm section for the “Metis Reelers”, a group that performed traditional Metis dances.

Back then, I recognized George as a very capable musician with a solid groove and nailing all the parts consistently for whoever he was backing up. I didn't truly appreciate the nuances and intricacies he brought to the stage until I started to work with him and his son, Lee in the 1990s. See, George was passionate that Lee learn to play music, introducing him to different instruments until Lee found his way to the fiddle. Under his father's tutelage, Lee quickly became an award winning fiddler as a young man. I suspect this is partly due to the fact that in his younger years, George himself was mentored by master Deninu Metis fiddler, Angus Beaulieu and as I have said before, Metis music was imprinted onto their DNA from the beginning.



Lee and George Mandeville (photo © George Mandeville)

When I started to play Bass with this father/son duo, I heard right away how much of the musical arrangement George carried in his guitar parts. I found myself having to dance in between the Bass lines, rhythm grooves and lead lines he was playing simultaneously. Believe me, those Bass lines alone are pretty tricky. After not playing with them for a few years, they asked me to play with them at a local stage for a summer solstice event with no rehearsal. I came off that stage feeling like George had just kicked my ass all the way down the block and back, there was no way I could keep track of all the parts he was playing and how quickly the change ups happened. My appreciation and respect for the musicianship of the Father and Son duo deepened after that gig.

I have not heard very many guitar players play in that style before and when I asked him where he picked it up, he said one name, Peter Lafferty. Peter is an amazing guitar player from Fort Simpson who was one of the first guitar players from up here to play in a finger picking style rather than strumming a rhythm part. Peter will be featured in an upcoming episode of MMS.



L-R, George Mandeville, Lee Mandeville, Pat Braden

George has always been so encouraging to me as a player. As much a friend as a fellow musician. And, without really talking about it, recognizes my own mixed blood ancestry and encourages me to express and celebrate that on the stage and in my own music. I learned a lot about music from George in this interview and got to know him a lot more as well.