



Courtesy, Pavlo

Musician Pavlo blends world music into his unique guitar style.

Pavlo sharing his passion

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The son of Greek immigrants, Pavlo was born and raised in Canada, but the world musician honed his unique style of flamenco in the beautiful archipelago of Santorini.

Shunned by the industry at first for creating a sound record executives termed "too ethnic," today Pavlo has sold half a million copies of his seven albums in 47 countries.

We caught up with the Juno Award-nominated guitarist on the eve of his Jack Singer concert appearance, scheduled for 8 p.m. today.

PREVIEW

Pavlo performs tonight at the Jack Singer Concert Hall

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Q: You were nominated for a Juno Award in 2000. Were you around Calgary for any of the Juno festivities last week? Did you manage to take in any concerts or private parties?

A: The day of the actual Junos, the Sunday, I was in Fort Macleod, thanking the audience for not going to the Saddledome — otherwise no one would have seen me there! And the Saturday, which was the Gala Dinner where a lot of my friends were, I would have gladly attended, but I was performing in Banff. So I was basically around, but not close enough.

Q: The term "world music" is huge and can describe anything from Latin jazz to African rhythms. How would you best describe your particular style of music?

A: It's a Mediterranean, guitar-based music that incorporates my Greek heritage. I have bouzouki in my music, I have the dumbek, I have the djembe, that kind of stuff.

Q: When you first sent your self-titled debut out to industry folk in 1998, they said your sound was "too ethnic." Was that another way of saying, "We don't understand it?"

A: There's no such thing as "too ethnic" and even back then I knew that those guys were nuts. What does "too ethnic" mean? Guitar-based music in this country is huge — Oscar Lopez, Jesse Cook, myself — we've sold a lot of records. People love this music and why it was hard to find an avenue for it at the start boggles my mind. And, yeah, I don't think they understood the music, they couldn't pigeonhole it into a genre. But music lovers are either going to dig it or they won't.

Q: As people are becoming more open to other cultures, are they becoming more open to world music?

A: Absolutely. You look at a guy like Alex Cuba, who just won a Juno Award, he's playing Cuban music in Canada. And he sings in Spanish, and he has a great career going in Canada. People are open to hearing anything, as long as they dig it, and as artists, we just ask to be heard. If people don't respond, they don't respond, but at least they gave you a chance.

Q: You were raised with Canadian values, you've traveled all across the world and you incorporate many cultures into your music. As a world musician, what do you think about all the protests around the Beijing Olympics? Is it fair for politics to enter into entertainment events?

A: To be honest, I don't think it is fair. I don't want to get political, but sports and music, I would love for people to leave those alone. As athletes and musicians, we train our entire lives for opportunities, it's not fair for politics to get in the way. I don't make political statements on stage, so

I wouldn't want politics to get in the way of my music.

Q: We've heard that in your Calgary performance (tonight) you'll be bringing up a local celebrity to join you on stage. Can you tell us who this might be?

A: Hey, who told you that! I'll be honest with you. Oscar Lopez is a really good friend of mine and we were jamming in his house last night. And he's going to pop up on stage with me and jam for a few tunes. It's an honour because Oscar is someone I've admired for years, and to have become friends with him over the past year has been amazing. Right now I'm on a 21-city Canadian tour, but without a doubt, my Calgary show is going to be the highlight.

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