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Melding Metheny and the classics

BY PUNCH SHAW

FORT WORTH -- There are certain composers you expect to see on a classical guitar program.

Pat Metheny isn't one of them.

Six works by the contemporary jazz guitarist were among the pieces performed by Jason Vieaux at the Fort Worth Classic Guitar Society's concert at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth on Thursday night.

Vieaux, who is head of the guitar program at the Cleveland Institute of Music, offered a flawlessly rendered evening of six-string splendor that also featured usual suspects like Albeniz, Tarrega and Bach.

Those better-known works showed Vieaux to be a masterful technician. Tarrega's lovely romance, *Capricho Arabe*, which opened the concert, was nothing short of perfect. And his reading of Bach's *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro* was a smoothly gliding essay on bringing Baroque styles to classical guitar.

Vieaux added a modern touch with *El Decameron Negro* by contemporary Cuban composer Leo Brouwer, a programmed work about a warrior, a harp and a maiden (you had to be there).

The works by Metheny, however, revealed Vieaux as a fine arranger as well. His set, *Five Songs in Baroque Style*, took a handful of works by Metheny and transposed them into Baroque dance forms. Some efforts of that type just look good on paper. But this sounded great, too. Vieaux made us believe that Metheny belonged among the giants filling out the bill.

The concert could have used a bit more fire in places, and Vieaux was somewhat academic in his approach.

But it would be hard to find any chinks in the armor of Vieaux's technique. He was note-perfect all night long in a recital that gave us some great classical playing along with all that jazz.

