

CROATIA RECORDS



Damir Halilic Hal - 2014 Porin Music Award Winner (the most prestigious Croatian music award)

Hal has recorded in the past decade five critically acclaimed albums.

Immediately after releasing the double album debut called **Gemini**, Hal's songs have made it to the top charts in the U.S., Australia and Europe. After that followed the concerts abroad and excellent reviews which facilitated the production of the next CD **Ocean** in Bologna which was produced by one of most exposed names of contemporary acoustic guitar, an Italian musician **Franco Morone**. Continuation of the musical journey brought the album **Infinity** from which the song **Speak To Me** recorded significant success in local radio stations (**Porin** award for best female interpretation).

The following album was **Trilogy** which saw the light of day in early August 2006. It was one of the biggest projects in the domestic discography. The triple album was recorded around the world, from Nashville, USA, Rome, Munich, and as far as Zagreb and Rijeka. The album features guest appearances of eminent musicians such as guitarist **John Jorgenson** drummer **JD Blair**, saxophonist **Jim Horn**, singer **Suzy Bogguss** (recipient of GRAMMY Award), producer **Woody Mann**, guitarist and blues harp player **Pat Burgesen**, Italian percussionist **Lucrezio DeSeta**, American blues musician **Michael Roach** and many other guests.

The album, **Mare Nostrum**, by **Damir 'Hal' Halili** , was recorded in September 2012, in London, England.

During the recording process, Hal had the honor of working with renowned producer, **B.J. Cole**, and highly-esteemed sound recorder, **Steve Honest**, both of whom earned their professional reputations by working with some of the most prominent artists in the music industry (Elton John, Sting, Bjork, REM, Mark Knopfler, Tom Jones, Depeche Mode, Dolly Parton,...)

The songs on **Mare Nostrum** can be divided into two categories. The first is a collection of short compositions, or miniatures, which are based on Renaissance music. The majority of this material was originally composed for orchestras in theatrical plays, which were later adapted as solo guitar compositions.

The second category of compositions are based on traditional Croatian music while simultaneously being very closely-related to classical solo guitar pieces. Hal's guitar-playing roots began by playing the mandolin in a school mandolin orchestra, and his guitar-playing abilities were later refined while playing with his father at family gatherings and parties. In both instances, traditional compositions laid the foundation for his musical repertoire in his formative years. Thus, Hal first acquired, and then

mastered, the compositional skills needed for the classical guitar. This mastery eventually led him to compose such gems as **Mare Nostrum**, **Croatica** and **Dalmatino**.

The guitar music composers who have had the most influence on Hal throughout his career are Brazilian composer, **Heitor Villa Lobos**, Paraguayan composer and a guitarist, **Augustin Barrios**, and the “father of contemporary classical guitar”, Spaniard, **Francisco Tarrega**. As a tribute to these great composers and in consideration of their musical presentation styles, Hal created the **Mare Nostrum** album by adding both interpretive and technical innovations.

The entire **Mare Nostrum** album was recorded with no tape-overs or corrections. The songs were played-out in full as if recorded live in concert. The “natural chorus effect” in some songs required two recordings, which were then separated to the left and right side of the panoramic sound pallet.

Croatian film producer, **Igor Modri** , traveled with Hal to London for the recording sessions. Igor shot and produced all of the video content for this project, which will be used for **Mare Nostrum** promotional events and for future concert tours. Additional vocal arrangements for these recordings were performed by **Tajana Duki -Mili** to broaden and deepen the dimension, breadth and dynamic quality of the music.

Hal has also performed in the USA, England, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, Hungary, Slovenia, Serbia, Poland, Czech Republic... .. From 2009 he is present on the official web site, of the world’s biggest guitar star, an Australian virtuoso **Tommy Emmanuel**. He shared the stage and collaborated with the world ’s biggest names, such as **Tommy Emmanuel**, **Muriel Anderson**, **Bernie Marsden**, **Michael Messer**, **Peter Finger**, **Franco Morone**, **Woody Mann**, and has brought many of them for the first time to Croatia.

Under the sponsorship of the City of Rijeka and the regional municipality, Hal is hosting the **Hal's All Star Guitar festival** with top name performers such as **Pierre Bensusan**, **Martin Taylor**, **Dominic Miller**, **Preston Reed**, **John Jorgenson**, **Antonio Forcione**, **Jacques Stotzem**, **Duck Baker**, **Tony McManus**.....

Hal is also the artistic director of **Kastav Blues Festival**, which draws thousands of visitors and is the largest and most important croatian blues festival. With his friend and colleague, **Deni Šesni** Hal is also a program director of **BIG Festival** (**Baska International Guitar Festival**) in Jurandvor and Baska on Krk Island.

SELECTED QUOTES BY WORLD’S LEADING PROFESSIONALS

If there is any justice in the world, Hal’s music will reach out from Croatia and touch people on every continent.

Michael Messer

Hal is wonderful musician and I admire his dedication to the guitar. I wish him success in his career and would like to see him take his music to the rest of the world....

Tommy Emmanuel

It is remarkable how Hal is able to play so many different styles of guitar music in such a brilliant manner. His technique and ideas show a musician with unusual talent. After hearing him play, it is clear that he is an important musician with much to offer the musical community in Croatia. I think he has the potential to be a major figure in the words of guitar.

Woody Mann

At the moment you think everything that can be said with an acoustic guitar is already said, there will be a voice from somewhere in the world, and may it be Croatia, that suddenly tells you new stories. It happened to me when the guitar was in the hands of a guy called Hal, a classical-trained player from Croatia. Hal plays in the best American fingerstyle tradition, but there always is this little something, this little extra, that makes his playing unique. Hey people, listen to him, this guy is great!

Thomas Kleemaier

Here is some noteworthy praise about Hal's guitar playing from other respected musicians in the music world:

Alan Nimmo of the U.K.'s scorching-hot blues act, **The King King** (For the SECOND YEAR RUNNING **King King** have won the 'Best Band' award at the **British Blues Awards 2013.**), said this:

I thought he was an amazing guitar player...very technical, very passionate with amazing skill and amazing faculty. His performance was like listening to one man play a guitar and the music sounding like ten people playing ten guitars. It was absolutely awesome!

Elliott Randall , legendary guitarist and ex-**Steely Dan** member said:

I enjoyed HAL's CD very much. Damir is a lovely player - and in quite a few styles. There's really enough for two albums in there! Warm congratulations on a 'job well done'

Blues harmonica ace, **Johnny Mars**, who has performed with many legends in the Rock & Roll and Blues music categories, offered this comment:

The guy knows how to play a guitar...blues, he's got it. He's got feeling. Rock guitar, classical, everything across the board...this guy is great!

Michael Roach, acoustic blues star and founder and past president of the **European Blues Association**, had this to say:

He's known all around the world because all the guitar players know [of] him. Even the blues guys have respect for Hal!

Hal's Official web site: www.halmusicland.com