

Alfonso Ponticelli & Swing Gitan

*"The spirit of gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt resonates in the work of Alfonso Ponticelli and his band."
— Howard Reich, Chicago Tribune*

Alfonso Ponticelli & Swing Gitan is Chicago's premier gypsy-jazz band.

The group plays the 1930s-style music of guitarist Django Reinhardt -- foot-tappin' swing played on acoustic instruments. It's a blend of the jubilant swing of early jazz with the feisty passion of gypsy music, plus a strong dose of guitar pyrotechnics and virtuosic improvisation.

Formed in 2001, Swing Gitan features bandleader Alfonso Ponticelli on lead guitar and a world-class lineup of musicians on violin, rhythm guitar and upright bass, with the occasional special guest. Over the years, they've played with many of the great contemporary gypsy-jazz players from around the world, including Bireli Lagrène, Stochelo Rosenberg, Moreno, Angelo DeBarre and the Robin Nolan Trio.

Around Chicago, Swing Gitan plays frequently at the Green Mill and Pops for Champagne. They've also played at the Chicago Cultural Center, the Field Museum, the Terra Museum of American Art, the Chicago Jazz Festival and the Chicago Summerdance Festival -- and they had the honor of performing at Millennium Park on its opening night.

Alfonso has studied gypsy-jazz music for more than a decade, having traveled several times to the annual Django Reinhardt festival in France. He introduced gypsy-jazz to Chicago in the 1990s, when he began teaching a weekly Django-style class at the renowned Old Town School of Folk Music, and he is often invited to teach his popular workshops at festivals around the country. A multi-instrumentalist, he won the 1994 U.S. National Mountain Dulcimer Championship and has played both banjo and guitar with the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra. He's also a gypsy flamenco guitarist, having been to Cordoba, Spain, to study with the great flamenco guitarist Vicente Amigo. At the Iridium in New York, Les Paul invited Alfonso to play as a special guest with his trio.



Web site: gypsyjazz.us

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Some of the venues played:

- The Green Mill
- Pops for Champagne
- Chicago Cultural Center
- Field Museum
- The Chicago Jazz Festival
- The Chicago Gypsy Jazz Festival
- The Chicago Summerdance Festival
- Millennium Park
- Django Reinhardt festival, Samois sur Seine, France

