



ing as much as any other job I could have had at that age.”

The banks stopped flying in after the 2008 recession, “so I made a conscious effort to establish myself more online, which has paid off.” Talent is nice, and Wilson thinks he offers a “warm, pleasing tone and a song-like, expressive quality — a shaping to the phrases.” But there’s lots of talent in the world. “I’m always thinking, *How are people going to find me?*” For starters, “There are a lot of event sites, places like GigSalad and WeddingWire. You post your photo and your sound samples, and you get reviews from past clients.” Today, “Ninety five percent of my performance work comes because people Google and find me on one of those sites. I do about 25 gigs a year, mostly weddings. It’s not my main

source of income, but it’s a big part.”

Besides performing, “almost everybody teaches at some level. I teach three days a week for about 15 hours; half kids, half adults. I get students mostly by word-of-mouth,” thanks in part to his role as co-founder (with Puppington) of the Encinitas Guitar Orchestra.

“We have 35 to 40 players, ranging from professionals who act as coaches to people still struggling to read music.” Participants pay a fee and commit to 12 rehearsals, with a public concert at the end. “It’s a wonderful educational tool. The students get to perform without being the sole focus; they learn from the players around them; and they learn to play in time. And it supports the teaching, because if you’ve got to play a concert for your



The mural in the lobby of downtown’s Symphony Towers hints at the hidden Copley Symphony Hall hidden within.

friends in three weeks, you’re going to practice.”

But 15 years ago, before the orchestra, he used to post flyers. “My office is still up in Encinitas, and I dropped a stack in a laundromat situated right next to Rancho Santa Fe.” A retired financial man picked one up, “became my student, and went on to become

my patron. Through the lessons and experiencing my music, he became a believer in what I had to offer. He saw what I was doing with the orchestra and with my solo playing as promoting the guitar in San Diego — a direct application of his money to the arts. He helped the orchestra record an album; he bought me a

concert-level guitar; he paid for my [garage] studio and a lot of my recording equipment.” All told, “in the neighborhood of \$15,000.”

The studio and equipment allowed for further sponsorship from other believers in what Wilson had to offer. He has made his last two albums with funding from Kick-

starter; the first, a series of Spanish dances by the Spanish composer and violinist Pabre de Sarasate that Wilson arranged for guitar and performed (\$2750); the second, a collection of original flamenco pieces for guitar and ukulele entitled *Flamencolele* (\$2503). In both cases, the goal was to create “something remarkable that pushes things forward and advances the art. People are interested in what’s new. Everything I’ve ever done that’s been even marginally successful has had that quality to it.” The Sarasate dances had never been played on a guitar. “And there are a handful of people who have recorded classical Spanish guitar on a ukulele, but not flamenco. I thought, *Let’s take this and see if there’s interest in having this type of music done on what is right now a very popular and*

