

Fingerstyle Acoustic Guitar is James Woolwine's follow-up to his 2015 debut album, Solo Piano Destruction. Wait a minute! The first album was solo piano and the second is acoustic guitar? Yep! Woolwine is also a singer-songwriter, so don't expect this artist to get into a repetitive rut any time soon! Of the ten tracks on the album, nine are solo acoustic guitar and one is vocal and guitar; seven of the ten are original compositions and three are original arrangements of covers. Although the music is quite varied, most of it has a gentle, peaceful vibe.

It's interesting to note that Woolwine started piano lessons at the age of seven. He immersed himself in classical music and dreamed of composing symphonies and concertos. In high school, he was winning scholarships and competitions, but his desire to be a rock star soon won out. At sixteen, guitar lessons were added to his piano studies and he later attended Berklee College of Music as a guitar major, graduating cum laude in 2004 with degrees in Performance and Music Business. That explains why one album is piano and one is guitar.

Fingerstyle Acoustic Guitar begins with a short introductory piece that sets the tone of the music that follows. "Crossfit Envy" was given the title as a joke. It was composed as Woolwine watched The Crossfit World Championships on television and incorporates a riff he originally composed for piano. It's a beautiful piece with a flowing melody and intricate finger work. "Ashley's Star" was composed by one of Woolwine's college teachers, Jon Finn. Played at a relaxed, easy tempo, it moves along with grace and tenderness. One of the challenges of being a music teacher is waiting for students to arrive for their lessons. Woolwine composed "Waiting" over a period of days while doing just that, enjoying the process. The piece very effectively combines several melodic themes over a classical guitar-style rhythm - a favorite. "Pure Imagination" is Woolwine's solo guitar arrangement of the song from the 1971 movie, Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. Dreamy and more than a little wistful, it's a beautiful arrangement. "Changing Course" was given that title because it changes course several times within the piece. Some of the themes are in a more classical style, and some have a moderate rock or even a folk feeling, successfully combining several of the many influences on Woolwine's music. The closing track is a cover of Metallica's "Sad But True." Woolwine arranged the song for a course on music licensing. Encouraged to be creative and dramatic in his interpretation, Woolwine thought it would be interesting to take a heavy song and turn it into an acoustic ballad. It is interesting and a great ending for the album.

Fingerstyle Acoustic Guitar has something for everyone, so if you enjoy solo acoustic guitar that's a little different, be sure to check this one out!