



BCGS



newsletter

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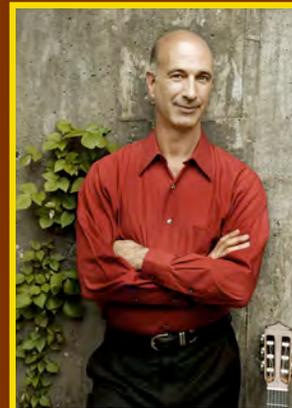
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THE BCGS PROUDLY PRESENTS

ARTIST SERIES 2011-2012



KATONA TWINS, GUITAR DUO

October 9, Sandwich, MA – Cape Cod
and
October 14, Boston, MA

HOPKINSON SMITH, LUTE

January 26, 2012, Boston, MA

XUEFEI YANG, GUITAR

March 9, 2012, Boston, MA

FESTIVAL 21: DAVID LEISNER, GUITAR

April 21, 2012, Boston, MA

ONLINE TICKETS: WWW.ITSMYSEAT.COM/BCGS.HTML

Letter to Members



Dear Members,

This edition of the newsletter marks a boundary between BCGS seasons, presenting an opportunity to reflect on both last year and our exciting new season.

Our 2011-12 Artist Series will be marked by a remarkable musical diversity delivered by exceptionally talented performers. The fantastic **Katona Twins** will kick off the fall with concerts on October 9th on Cape Cod and 14th in Boston. One of the best known guitar duos in the world, Zoltan and Peter Katona are equally at home in classical, flamenco, and pop genres, as evidenced by their European "Night of the Proms" tour during which they played in arenas for half a million people. This concert will surely appeal to even those who normally avoid classical concerts, so bring all of your friends!

The legendary lutenist **Hopkinson Smith** will visit us on January 26, 2012. Early Music America stated, "there may be no other performer on the early music scene who has a broader mastery of plucked strings as well as a deep knowledge of the literature for each... His innate natural curiosity, combined with an exceptionally broad and sharp intelligence, forms the driving animus behind his performances and recordings and is totally in service to the composer's intent." Hoppy is a graduate of Harvard University so we will surely feel the electricity of a "homecoming" recital.

Xuefei Yang is a charismatic international ambassador for the guitar and one of its most visible virtuosos thanks to her prestigious recording affiliation with EMI Classics. She is one of the first Chinese guitarists to achieve international success. Her incredible talent prompted John Williams to donate two of his guitars to her school for Fei and other students to play. Since completing her studies at the Royal Conservatory of Music in London on a full scholarship, Fei's career has taken her all over the world. We are lucky to have her for a solo recital on March 9, 2012.

Festival 21 will fittingly take place on April 21, 2012 with headliner **David Leisner**. A longtime faculty member at New England Conservatory and a local favorite, the prodigious performer/composer/teacher is currently co-head of the guitar department at Manhattan School of Music. He is a relentless advocate for new music and takes pride in the rediscovery of lesser-known masterworks. The 2012 edition of Festival 21 will strive to be the most interactive yet, bringing together the entire community in celebration of the present and future of our instrument.

As we look forward to the new series, I would like to take a moment to thank everyone who enables our organization to thrive. First of all, thank you to all of the members, advertisers, and donors for your energy, enthusiasm, and attendance at

our events. The Ana Vidovic concert drew almost three hundred while Jason Vieaux, Paul Galbraith, and Rafael Aguirre also dazzled large and engaged audiences. The Boston Guitar Orchestra, guided by the tireless and passionate Scott Borg, developed in leaps and bounds, culminating in a fantastic showcase performance at June's Boston GuitarFest. I am also grateful to George Ward, Will Riley, and Thuy Wagner, whose guidance of the Hingham Saturday Sounds series, our quarterly newsletter, and legal and financial issues are invaluable. Thank you to Brian Dixon and John Williams for their initiative in developing a presence for the BCGS on Cape Cod, and to Frank Wallace for his Festival 21 direction and website management. Karen and Jon Parsons continue to be generous, kind, and welcoming hosts to our artists. Much credit also goes to Oscar Azaret and all of our performance party hosts for get-togethers rich in music and friendship. Finally, special thanks to Bob Margo for his support and invaluable advice with programming as well as to Eliot Fisk and Zaira Meneses for their generosity, and creative ideas.

I wish all of you a wonderful, relaxing summer, and see you soon!

Sincerely,

Daniel Acsadi, *Director*

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CONNOR GUITARS

Festival 21 Review

Scott Borg

While the city of Boston readied itself for the annual April marathon, its resident guitar and new music aficionados prepared for what was going to be a marathon day of new music. "Festival 21", presented by The Boston Classical Guitar Society, is the premiere celebration in the city, and even perhaps the nation, of 21st century music for guitar. The entire day displayed the diversity and innovation that is found in new music composed for the guitar, and provided insights into the minds of both emerging and established composers. The audience also witnessed first rate performances by a number of local and international performing artists.

The Festival began with an open rehearsal of the Festival Guitar Orchestra, comprised of members from Timberlane High School, Keene State College, and the Boston Guitar Orchestra. For the members, it is a unique opportunity to combine their artistic skills in an ensemble setting while creating cooperative learning experiences. For auditors, it was also an opportunity to experience the processes involved in rehearsals, and to witness the various styles of different conductors. John Zevos, director of the Timberlane High School Guitar Orchestra, conducted the first hour of the rehearsal for "New England Sextets" by Frank Wallace. This composition is built from only a few motives, however, the contrast and thoughtful use of layering throughout its three movements makes this piece highly effective. Zevos' conducting was very succinct and accurate, and demanded the attention of the orchestra members. The second hour saw a very different conducting approach for the Festival 21 commissioned orchestral work "A Journey through Eastern Villages" composed by Scott Borg, BGO director. Borg's animated approach seemed essential for the group to tackle the difficult and ever changing tempos within.

Prepared and extended guitar technique extraordinaire Nathan Kolosko was the next leg in the marathon. This guy brought more nuts and bolts than a hardware store to his seminar, and displayed how versatile the guitar can be when you "think outside the box." Using a combination of alligator clips, paper, plastic, sinkers, and sticky tack, Kolosko showed how even the most minute alteration can create an entirely different sound world. Personally, I was waiting for Kolosko to pop a balloon full of rice over the guitar, a technique made infamous by Zorn's "Book of Heads." The participants then had the opportunity to try out some of the techniques discussed. For decades guitar innovators have been pushing the limits of extended techniques to an extreme. Many techniques are not pleasing to the ear and seem to be done for their own sake. Kolosko's performance was well balanced, his practical application of extended techniques was both musical and thought provoking.

The Belgian new music advocate, Maarten Stragier, was next in the festival. From the outset it was evident that Stragier combined a formidable technique with a clear sense of personality in his playing. His diverse program of new compositions of Nicholas Vines, Caroline Park, and Jerome Combier showed a

variety of compositional devices such as spontaneous outbursts of color, tone clusters, and minimalism. Vines composition "Les Effaceurs" deserves notable mention. The Festival 21 commissioned work, supported in part by a NEFA Meet the Composer grant, used the entirety of the instrument, was written in a very difficult yet idiomatic way, and appealed to the senses. This work was exceptionally executed by Stragier.

This concert hopefully expelled a few myths about new music for the guitar. Far too often you see composers writing for the guitar that quite frankly have no idea about the capabilities of the instrument, and unfortunately, this somewhat tarnishes the reputation of the guitar as a vehicle for serious music. These three pieces, however, hopefully demonstrated the shift that is occurring in guitar compositions.

During the brief coffee break, onlookers were entertained by a performance from the Keene State College Guitar Orchestra. Directed by Jose Lezcano, the ensemble's interpretation of some difficult and varied repertoire was admirable. Each guitarist was very secure in his or her parts, and this gave Lezcano the liberty to have some 'fun' with the group, adding a combination of stately rhythmic sections and areas of generous rubato throughout the performance.

The Olson/De Caro Duo was next up, and the combination of guitar and voice certainly gave the festival a breath of fresh air. This eclectic duo performed a concert entirely of works composed for their duo and revolved around the themes of science and music. The quirkiness of Donahue's "Scientiphlicity" and Wallace's "Men, Women and Molecules" contrasted well with the seriousness of Champlin's "Mass for Voice and Guitar." All three compositions worked well for the duo, especially "Men, Women and Molecules" which alternated the roles of importance between the voice and guitar effectively. Oslon's guitar abilities came to light with an impressive rendition of Dickenson's atmospheric piece "Orbit." In Gordon Chapel, the notes reverberating from Oslon's control of tone and tempo almost created a 'quasi-phase' effect which was hypnotic, and appealing to the senses.

To round up the afternoon events, the much anticipated Members Concert was presented. Performers in this concert included the Timberlane and BGO orchestras, Aaron Larget-Caplan, Jose Lezcano, Bob Margo and Wendy Silverberg, and the usual presence of the Back Bay Trio. All performances were extremely well executed. Larget-Caplan's performance was very secure and his ideas were clearly portrayed. Lezcano paid homage to his traditional roots and performed a selection of works that were stylish and full of zest. Bob Margo's transcriptions were highly effective and the balance between guitar and voice worked to perfection. The Back Bay Trio worked like a well-oiled machine, and the interplay and interaction between the members of the trio was very impressive.

The featured performance of the Festival was the evening concert, which began with the performance of Scott Borg's "A Journey through Eastern Villages" by the Festival 21 Orchestra. Seeing 43 guitarists on stage was quite the sight. The composition drew upon traditional monodic themes of

Japan, Java, and China, but was harmonized using various techniques, including "Third Stream" ideas and harmonies that are typical in those musical cultures.

Acclaimed Spanish Guitarist Rafael Aguirre was the last leg of the marathon and it was easy to see why judging panels have had no hesitation awarding him the top prize in numerous worldwide competitions. He has a perfect combination of technique and musicality. Unfortunately with competition winners all you sometimes get is technique, technique, technique, but Aguirre showed a lot of personality in his performance, which was probably one of the best concerts of the BCGS 2010/2011 Artists Series. By far, the most intriguing performance was of Rodrigo's "Toccatà." From a musical standpoint, the work seemed to be a mixture of all of Rodrigo's greatest ideas, and also seemed to be a mixture of all of Rodrigo's most technically demanding sections. Aguirre cruised through this composition creating a variety of moods and colors. Daniel Real's "Estalacticas y stalagmites" was another impressive new music composition and you could immediately hear many influences of composers such as Berio and Ginastera. Highly demanding on both hands, you could see that this was a newer piece for Aguirre and it lacked the 'spark' that he had shown in his previous pieces. That being said, it was still an extremely good performance and full of gusto! With the piece being written for Aguirre, and the composer in the audience, composer/performer interaction was no doubt out in full force, and they touched base on particular techniques that Aguirre was highly attuned to.

It just made me wonder - will anybody else be able to play such a technically demanding piece? I thought back on pieces that were considered cutting edge for their time, the melody from the "Ode to Joy", such simplicity and grace, and I thought - why is there the need for composers to create such demanding works that stretch the boundaries of the performer and instrument? 50 years ago Janacek stunned the world by putting a big fat E Major chord in root position into his piano compositions. Where has this E Major chord gone in guitar works?

Maybe it is this urge to venture into the unknown. It is this creative enthusiasm that is raising the profile of the classical guitar to a vehicle for serious music. These innovators of guitar composition have added to the guitar palette and given us gateways to new sound worlds. Aguirre finished with two encores, which included a very pleasing collection of themes from "Star Wars."

Festival 21 was yet again a success, and thanks must go to Festival 21 Director Frank Wallace, BCGS Director Dan Acsadi, and all those behind the scenes, who organized a great lineup of performances. Last year, the festival established many links with neighboring guitar communities and organizations, and this year was no exception. Next season will no doubt be bigger and better with more interactive workshops and seminars in the woodworks, and a great lineup of high caliber performers.

Classifieds

Job Opportunity

Worcester Academy of Music; opening for guitar teacher; minimum requirements: Bachelors Degree in Music (or near completion); experience teaching; able to read music; versed in a variety of music styles; Prefer candidates who live in or near Worcester. We are a relatively new community music school looking for a teacher who wants to get involved from the ground up and who is excited by the idea of building a guitar studio from something small into something much larger. Send resume and cover letter describing your teaching philosophy to Sarah at sarah@worcesteracademyofmusic.com. 508-635-6900; www.worcesteracademyofmusic.com

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I Wasn't the Shooter!

Donna Ricci

What does it mean to listen? And what do we truly hear? I did my post doc training as a prison psychologist in the Massachusetts Correctional Department where noxious auditory “fumes” infiltrate the senses. Yet, it was there that I truly learned to listen. We think we know what it means to listen to another person, and as musicians we pride ourselves on our auditory abilities. Yet it wasn't until I was in the midst of the most discordant sounds that assaulted my ears on a daily basis that I really began to understand what it means to truly listen to another human being.

I recall one case in particular. Mr. X was a young man in his early 20's, serving time for manslaughter. He had a substance abuse history and tried to block out the world with drugs—but the world would not be blocked out. Mr. X appeared interested in trying to make a better future for himself. He was a young adult when the incident occurred and had already served several years at this point. He was now scheduled for parole and willingly came to therapy to treat his full blown depression. Typical antidepressants can begin to take the edge off but true health comes from taking a seriously hard look at one's life.

In the first session he spoke of the crime, beginning and ending with an emphatic, “I wasn't the shooter!” I nodded, a noncommittal response neither agreeing nor disagreeing with his statement. Simply listening. During the course of treatment I remained neutral and asked him to speak more of the circumstances involving his upbringing and the steps he took that lead to his current predicament. In each session at one point or another he would say, “I wasn't the shooter,” determined to have me hear what he believed to be his truth or wanted to believe was his truth. This went on for several months. The day he had been granted parole I wished him luck. Thank you is

not a phrase one often hears around the prison, and I did not hear it from him. Instead, he looked me in the eye and said, “I was the shooter.” I gave my noncommittal nod. As he reached for the door handle, he turned and said, “But you knew that, didn't you?”

It was in prison that I learned why I wanted to become a psychologist in the first place. As the inmates would begin to talk I would listen. They would look to me to judge them. Yet, if I had wanted to do that I would have gone to law school. Some would look to me for forgiveness. I didn't go into the ministry. I became a psychologist because it is my belief that when we truly listen to another person that person has a real chance of hearing themselves, the true authentic self that they cannot hide from. It is only by hearing our truth that we begin to transform ourselves into the authentic beings we need to be.

We pick up a guitar. We pluck a string. We hear a note. We listen. Or we think we listen. Alone in our practice session we often hear what we want to hear, and this hearing can take the form of the tone quality of a Julian Bream or a novice player. We listen, or think we listen, and then we judge ourselves. But what do we really hear? So we turn to our teachers. “What do you hear?” we ask. And maybe they can tell us. And maybe they give that noncommittal look that says “Listen to yourself. You know the truth.” And then we sit in front of an audience. “Listen to me” we say. Or are we really saying, “Hear me the way I want to be heard?” When Mr. X returned having violated parole, he spoke those words that told me he was ready to truly listen to himself, “I was the shooter,” a sonorous prelude to a complex sonata. The truest audience sits with the noncommittal attitude, listening, waiting for the performer to *hear* herself truly and accurately and then project that truth forward.

Donna Ricci is a clinical psychologist in Brookline MA and the owner of Attune Coaching in Newburyport, MA (attunecoaching.com.) She performs in the New England area and can be reached at donna@attunecoaching.com.

SO YOU CAN PLAY, BUT CAN YOU WRITE?

The BCGS invites you to write an article for the newsletter. Send your ideas about guitars, music, concerts, or anything relevant to the BCGS to:

Will Riley, Editor
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*All submissions subject to editorial approval.

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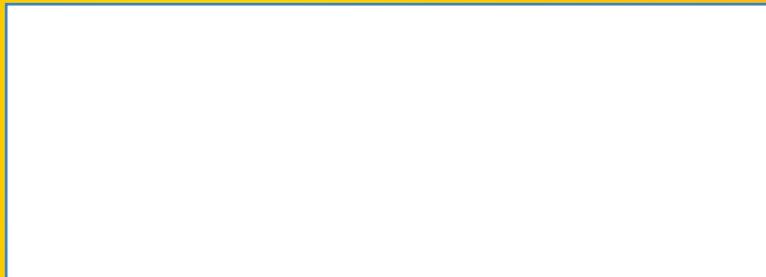
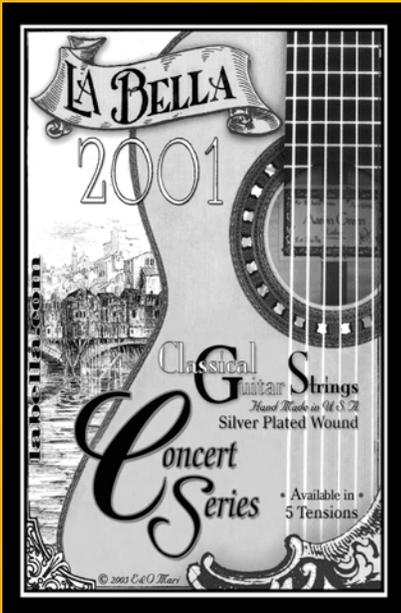
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