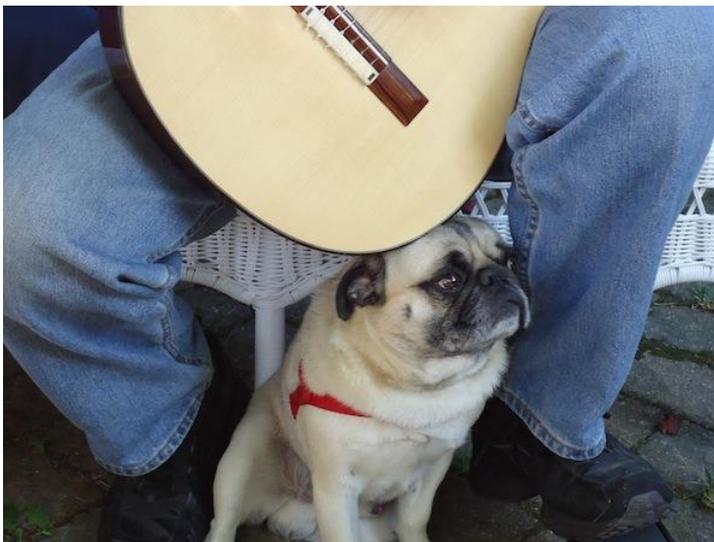


BCGS Performance Parties

By: J. Oscar Azaret

At performance parties, Discussions are typically tame, but on the topic of nails vs. flesh emotions may flare, and guitarists take arms defending their stance with cedar or spruce alike...



The idea of friendly informal performance gatherings was at the very genesis of the BCGS in the 1970's. A tried and true concept which flourishes to this date, as a member, every few weeks you receive an Evite to one of these gatherings. Roughly about a quarter of our members take advantage of these from time to time. The number of attendees is typically in the teens, and most, but not all choose to perform.

As the second photo here shows, some come just to listen. With few exceptions, our gatherings are held on designated Saturdays at 2:00PM, and we typically hang out for about 4 hours though everyone is free to arrive and leave as they need. Various society members graciously host the gatherings at their homes, though sometimes we might meet at a coffee house or some other public center in a more open mic sort of forum.

So, what is the usual protocol? Members start to arrive at 2:00PM and immediately a lively set of conversations take off whilst enjoying the snacks and libations provided. If you'd like to bring a little something for the party – great, if you didn't get to it – great also. There are always plenty of goodies to go around. This is the time to catch up with old friends, meet new ones, compare guitars, and chat about whatever. Usually between 2:45 and 3:00 the host (or designated MC) will decide to ask the group to grab chairs and start the performances. Depending on the size of the group, we may or may not have a play list sign up. Once we're all settled in with a glass of wine, or coffee, members will get up and play their prepared piece(s). The operative word here is sharing and welcoming at all levels – beginning to expert. Folks talk about the pieces, their experience in learning the pieces, about the composer, arrangement, ... since we all share many common pieces, it's lots of fun to get other's perspectives.

Playing goes on for about an hour with folks taking turns, and then we take a break and have more refreshments and great sharing. We gather again for a second round until everyone who wants to play gets a chance. Two pieces is a typical number played by each guest, though it can be greater or fewer, being sensitive to the size of the group. Afterwards, as the party winds down, we'll have folks who are off in pairs or small groups comparing arrangements, fingerings, guitars, or just solving the world's problems. Several duos/ensembles have spawned from these parties as people get to know each other and their common interests.

If you have not given one of our BCGS parties a try ... I highly recommend them. And don't fret about uncertainty and how to respond on Evite. Your answer can be changed at any time, and even if your plans change and you don't get to Evite, that's fine. The law of averages works in our favor.