

newsletter

Letters to Members

Dear Members,

Many thanks to all of you who responded to the recent fundraising drive, and to everyone who sent donations with their membership fees earlier this year. Your financial gifts help support and maintain the variety and high quality of BCGS-sponsored events.

As the 1998-1999 season draws to a close, I would like to acknowledge everyone who helped make this past year a success. My warmest thanks to:

- the BCGS staff and Board of Trustees. Without the assistance of these dedicated volunteers, BCGS could not survive!
- all the volunteers who helped at concerts or with special projects.
- the performance party hosts who opened up their homes or businesses for our monthly gatherings.
- and everyone who contributed articles, reviews and other information for the newsletter.

Plans are well underway for next year. The 1999-2000 season will kick off on October 2 with a concert by Robert Ward and Alex Dunn at the First Baptist Church in Wakefield. Later in the season, on March 12, BCGS will present the 1998 GFA winner Denis Azabagic in concert.

Boston Guitar-Fest 99 will take place at Tufts University on November 13 (date tentative). We are delighted and honored to be co-hosting this event with the Music Department at Tufts, and Peter Clemente deserves a special thanks for forging this link! Chairman David Locke, director of a series at Tufts called *Women in Music*, took an interest in our theme for this year's festival, *Women and the Classical Guitar*. David Locke is furthermore scheduling our event to coincide with the department's annual *World Music at Tufts* festival. BCGS has invited Virginia Luque, who gave a stunning performance at Guitar-Fest 97, to be this year's featured artist. She will be playing some of her own compositions, and her concert will most certainly be an asset to the world music festival. Guitar-Fest 99 will also feature a concert and talk by Berit Strong, and a lecture on female classical guitar composers by Olav Chris Henriksen. Stay tuned for more details!

Gloria Vachino
Executive Director, BCGS

Dear Members,

For me, the '98-'99 BCGS season reaffirmed that the Classical Guitar is very much alive and well today. The events of this season reflected a changing world of the instrument - one that is much more expansive than that of 25 years ago. Featured artists, from the U.S. and abroad, presented a wide array of music from past to present. New compositions, richly influenced and infused with elements of world music and jazz, were performed by guitarist/composers, and a new generation of young performers was featured. Together they continue to expand the rich tradition of classical guitar.

At the opening of the season, we were treated to excellent ensemble playing by John Muratore and Peter Clemente, who performed a wonderfully varied program of music with skill and sensitivity. The annual Guitar-Fest, featuring music from Latin America and the Caribbean, brought together Brazilian guitarist-composer Paulo Bellinati, Haitian guitarist-composer Amos Coulanges, Argentine guitarist-composer Claudio Ragazzi, and Brazilian guitarist Silvio José dos Santos. The inspiring concerts and informative presentations made this an especially exciting and memorable event. In March and April, two young and very impressive guitarists, Franco Platino and Jason Vieaux, gave outstanding solo guitar recitals. All the concerts were of exceptional quality, and together displayed the rich, varied repertoire of present day classical guitar, and the ever expanding performance options available to today's classical guitarists.

The 7th Annual New England Guitar Competition, sponsored by BCGS and The Boston Conservatory of Music, was another

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Review of Franco Platino's Concert

by Kyung Yoo

It was a cloudy and windy Sunday afternoon, and I was ready to listen to the performance of the 1997 GFA Naxos prizewinner. As I arrived at the BU Marsh Chapel, the seats were less than half filled, and I wished that more people had shown up for the concert. Finally, everything quieted down, and all I could hear was the sound of anticipation from the audience. All of sudden footsteps were heard, and Franco walked on stage with a quiet and graceful manner.

Franco started his program with Bach's *Violin Partita in D Minor* playing with such a calm and elegance that I could really feel a touch of Italian baroque sound gently emanating from his guitar. Throughout the entire Suite, the musical consistency, technical fluency and musical sensitivity of his playing transcended the D minor suite to a new artistic level. I personally respect any player who starts out a program with Bach's music because his music is not only the basis for all his successors, but it is also very musical, if one knows how to play it. The *Chaconne* is among those pieces that most require a musicality that stems from one's life experiences, and I was wondering what Franco's *Chaconne* will sound like when I listen to him again in 10 years. It seemed a little strange, but I felt I had known Franco for quite some time by his playing.

In the second half were *Un tiempo fue Italica Famosa* (the glorious past of Italica, a famous Roman city near Seville in Spain) by Rodrigo, *Omaggio, scritto per Le Tombeau de Debussy* by de Falla and *Capriccio Diabolico, Omaggio a Paganini* by Castelnuovo-Tedesco. All these pieces are very difficult, and Franco performed them with such style that the audience could relax and enjoy the serene and passionate Spanish sound from his guitar.

Franco exhibited his ability to perform the best of both traditions to their highest level throughout the first and second half of the program. It was such a joy to discover a young virtuoso who will take part in the mission of introducing the rich heritage of the classical guitar music to worldwide audiences. Congratulations!!

BCGS in the Public Eye

by Gloria Vachino

...In the News

BCGS and the Hingham Public Library concerts were recently featured in the South Weekly section of the Sunday Boston Globe. Columnist Judith Montminy, a former classical guitar player, interviewed George Ward, library director Dennis Corcoran, and Kyung Yoo (who performed on April 18) in person, and spoke with me by phone. The Globe article highlighted the library's success in attracting local residents to the Sunday afternoon concerts, and mentioned how these recitals have helped BCGS achieve its mission of bringing an awareness of the classical guitar to Boston area communities.

George Ward deserves a special thanks for initiating the Hingham Library series. Thanks also to Jake Matthews, Larry Spencer, Charlie Carrano, Will Riley, Lance Gunderson, Robert Margo, and Linda Rossman (and her music ensemble La Jouissance) for donating their time and talent to these library recitals!

In addition to the Hingham Library concert series, monthly classical guitar recitals have been held at the Lucius Beebe Memorial Library in Wakefield since February. These recitals are slated to continue next season, so if you are interested in performing, please call either George Ward at 781-545-7863 or me at 781-224-4203.

...At Mount Ida College

The recent flurry of library recitals and other BCGS-sponsored events caught the attention of Leo Archambault, a faculty member at Mount Ida College in Newton. Mr. Archambault and his colleague Michael Brown conduct a monthly presentation and entertainment series called "City Beneath the Hill", which spotlights Boston-based individuals and organizations. The goal of the series is to inform the Mount Ida campus community about Boston's rich cultural diversity. At Mr. Archambault's invitation, Will Riley and I gave a joint presentation on May 6. Following my brief overview of BCGS—who we are and what we do—Will gave the audience a taste of the classical guitar including an informal discussion of the music on his program. Our thanks to Mount Ida College for this unique opportunity to publicize BCGS!

Newsletter Editor Sought

After three years as editor of the BCGS newsletter I will be stepping down, and am looking for someone to assume this responsibility. Managing the newsletter has been a fun and creative venture and I highly recommend the challenge! If you are interested in taking on this role, please contact me at 781-224-4203.



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Frank Wallace's compositions and arrangements are available from LiveOak Publications, at 75 Bridle Rd., Antrim NH, 03440 or by email: liveoakmusic@hotmail.com. Currently available are: *Quadrangle*, four movements for solo guitar, \$10; *From the Windy Place*, four movements for solo guitar, \$10; *Suite Blues*, \$5; *Cancionero Nuevo*, 20 songs for lute or vihuela in tablature from the 16th century cancioneros with translations, \$15; *Art of Flemish Song*, in tablature for lute, 15 songs from early 16th century masters (Josquin, de la Rue, Ockeghem, etc.)

with translations from the original Italian, French, Dutch and Spanish, \$15.

CDs by Frank Wallace include *Ay de mi* - songs and solos for vihuela; *The Art of Flemish Song* - Renaissance songs with Nancy Knowles, soprano; *Lanterns of Fire* - Spanish renaissance sacred and secular music with LiveOak and Company; all on Centaur Records. Soon to be released are Frank's first solo guitar album of his own compositions and Duo LiveOak's performance of works by Schubert and Mertz played on an 1822 Panormo and an 1854 Gutierrez. CDs are \$15 — add \$2 for postage/handling to any order.

Three Thumb Songs

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- *A - Vibrato 1; shake arm slowly - fingertip stays in place
- B - Slide finger on fingerboard so that sound does not stop
- C - Vibrato 2; bend string back and forth on fret, changing pitch slightly
- D - Mordent - quickly hammer on and pull off in one action

Teacher List

The teacher list is continually being updated. If you would like to be added to the list, send information to Gloria Vachino, 196 Broadway, Wakefield, MA 01880 or email glorv@world.att.net

Audie Bridges; (781) 245-8302, aubri@aol.com. Lessons taught at The Music Emporium, Lexington, beginners to advanced; Classical, Guitar Ensembles, Jazz, Pop, Improvisation and Arranging for Guitar.

William Buonocore; (508) 879-2058, wbuon@aol.com. Faculty: The Boston Conservatory. Private instruction available, all levels welcome.

Maurice Cahen; (617) 625-1966, mauricecahen@compuserve.com. Teach Classical, Jazz & Latin guitar styles as well as harmony, ear training, composition and improvisation classes. Lessons given at the Brookline Music School, Brookline; Powers Music School, Belmont; Robinson Studios, Marlboro or privately in Somerville.

Peter Clemente; (508) 842-9583 or (508) 754-7319. Faculty: Boston University, Tufts University, and Clark University. All levels taught; Classical and Folk.

Glorianne Collver-Jacobson; collver@world.std.com. Faculty: Wellesley College. Lessons given in Classical and Flamenco Guitar and Lute (all levels). Private instruction also available.

Paul Cortese; (508) 879-3508. Faculty: Winchester Community Music School, the Community Music Center of Boston. Private lessons also.

Ronald Dienstmann; (508) 655-8983. Lessons taught at Cambridge Music Center, Cambridge (617) 491-5433 and the Performing Arts Center, Framingham (508) 875-5554. Beginning to advanced levels offered.

Lance Gunderson; (207) 439-7516 (Portsmouth, NH area) or (617) 527-4904 (Cambridge, Newton), lgunder@ibm.net. 30 years experience. Private instruction, all levels in Classical, Flamenco, Jazz. Also: theory, composition and improvisation offered.

Olav Chris Henriksen; (617) 776-8688. Instruments: lutes (Renaissance, Baroque, the orbo, 20th-century lute), Early guitars (Renaissance, Baroque, 19th-century, vihuela), Classical guitar. Faculty: The Boston Conservatory, University of Southern Maine, Gorham. Private lessons in Somerville.



Grant Hooper; (617) 876-6219. Classical guitar lessons given by experienced performer and teacher. All elements of classical guitar technique covered. All levels accepted. Harvard Square location.

Karen Jacques; (508) 655-8466, great-blue5@earthlink.com. Classical guitar lessons, all ages and levels through the Rivers Music School, Weston; the Powers Music School, Belmont or privately in Wayland. Certified Suzuki instructor.

Carlton D. Kish; (617) 868-1597, classical-guitar@juno.com. Faculty: St. John's Preparatory School in Danvers, Brookwood in Manchester-by-the-Sea. Also teach privately at studio in Cambridge. Students successfully competing in N.E.G.C. at Boston Conservatory. Private instruction available, all levels welcome.

John Morgan; (508) 588-3671. Private lessons available in the Brockton, Dedham and Waltham areas. Fifteen years experience; beginning to advanced levels offered.

John Muratore; (617) 522-8582. Faculty: Dartmouth College, The All Newton Music School. Private Classical guitar instruction available, all levels welcome.

Thomas Noren; (617) 522-9527, Thilm@aol.com. Classical Guitar and Brazilian music instruction. Private lessons, or through Longy School of Music.

Anne O'Connor; anneoc@bicnet.net. Faculty: Fitchburg State College (adjunct), Performing Arts Schools of Worcester, Pakchoag Community Music School, private studio in Fitchburg, MA. Lessons given in Classical (all levels) and Folk (beginner) guitar.

Apostolos Paraskevas; (781) 393-0105, appar@bu.edu. Hold DMA in composition. Artist Diploma in guitar performance. Lessons at Boston College and Boston University. Private lessons in Medford. Advanced students only.

Eleazer Perez; (508) 365-4970. Lessons given at the Music Box in Fitchburg, beginning to advanced levels. Guitar class for adults also taught, Assabet After Dark, at the Assabet Regional High School, Marlboro.

Lisa Ricetti; (978) 658-7990, LRicetti@aol.com. Faculty: Northern Essex Community College, Continuing Ed.. Private lessons also available in Wilmington/Tewksbury area, all levels and ages. Suzuki registered Classical Guitar Instructor for ages 4-12.

Will Riley; (617) 524-1458. Childbloom Guitar Program teacher for ages 5-12 at Ohrenberger Elementary School, West Roxbury.

Andrew D. Robinson; (781) 246-5497. Lessons taught at Sarrin Studio, Wakefield and Edgewood Elementary School in Stoneham. Private lessons also available in Wakefield.

Silvio José dos Santos; (617) 536-7247 or (617) 536-6340 x119, dossantos@brandeis.edu. First Prize Winner of the 1993 NGSW National Guitar Ensemble Competition. Faculty: The Boston Conservatory Extension Division. Also, private instruction from beginning through advanced levels. Lessons in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

Joseph Scott; (508) 539-0124, jscott@capecod.net. B.M. Boston Conservatory, 1985. Faculty: Milton Academy Private lessons, Classical and Folk fingerstyle, through Cape Cod Conservatory, Barnstable, (508) 362-2772, or by special arrangement, private studio.

Jeffrey Hamilton Steele; (978) 282-3106, jeffry@cove.com. Classical and other styles taught at the North Shore Conservatory at Endicott College, Beverly; and privately in Gloucester and Arlington.

Berit Strong; (978) 263-3418, beritstrong@hotmail.com. Lessons offered at private studio in Acton. All levels and ages welcome.

Frank Wallace; (603) 588-6121, liveoakmusic@hotmail.com. Guitar and Lute lessons, all levels. Also run Childbloom Guitar Program for 5-12 year olds in Antrim, Peterborough and Keene, NH.

Robert Ward; (781) 279-7960, rward@lynx.dac.neu.edu. Faculty: Northeastern University, The Brookline Music School and the New School of Music, Cambridge. Also, private lessons in Stoneham. Beginning to advanced levels.

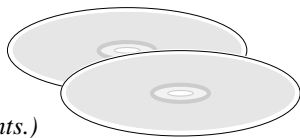
Seth Warner; (207) 773-8986. Classical Guitar Instructor at the University of Maine at Farmington, and the Songbird Creative Center, Yarmouth Maine. Lessons available in the Portland area as well. Beginning to advanced levels, chamber music coaching, and basic musicianship and history.

Perspectives

Producing Your Own Classical Guitar CDs:

(An Ongoing Saga by Jeffry Steele)

(This article will appear in the BCGS newsletter in three separate installments.)



As much as I enjoy performing on classical guitar, my major focus in recent years has been on recording. This may seem a backward approach. Aren't we first supposed to make our name as concert artists, and then hope major record labels will start calling us up offering contracts? I'm not waiting around. To quote a Phil Ochs song, "If I've got something to say, sir, I'm going to say it now!"

Apart from one CD which is on Centaur Records and distributed by them, I sell my CDs at concerts and on the Web. But at this time, rather than focus on how to get more people actually buying my recordings, I prefer to start the next recording project — a process which has taught me more as a musician than any lessons I have taken.

The Decision to Buy

To go at your own pace, on your own schedule and with a thorough knowledge of the equipment at hand, one needs a recording set-up at home. For *Guitara Illuminata: The Music of Josquin des Préz*, I knew I would need a multi-track unit (as I would be playing each of two guitar parts). I called a music store (in 1996), and the salesman told me I should check out the new Roland VS-880 8-track hard-disk recorder, which he had just seen at a trade show. He described it as "wicked stupid", which, as it turns out, is a high compliment from someone born in the mid-1970s. Selling for \$2000, it was one of the first such recorders to have adequate storage (or track minutes) for a whole guitar duet album. I bought the first one he could get in, which included the internal digital effects board (another \$250). This earliest version of the operating system was still a little wet behind the ears. The newest version, the VS-880EX, now sells for \$1750 and includes everything I had to subsequently pay extra for (at a total of \$2750!). Upgrades for the VS-880 are issued on Zip disks. This caused me to buy a Zip drive—which plugs into the VS-880's SCSI port—at a computer store, giving me a reliable way to store audio data off the hard disk. (The alternative storage method, using a DAT recorder, took forever and was not reliable). In fact, you may record directly to a Zip disk (though its 100 MB capacity doesn't buy you much time).

At this time, I also charged up a DAT (Digital Audio Tape) recorder (the Tascam DA-20) for mastering. DAT recorders can work with different "sampling rates", but CDs only use one: 44.1 KHz. In addition to recording the master tape, this unit came in handy for combining tracks created in separate "songs" (the basic level of organization on the VS-880) into one continuous album, without leaving the digital domain. The more I made use of the VS-880's digital editing capability, the more I required it. It allowed me to record much as Glenn Gould did, seamlessly splicing together the best of sometimes many takes. Some may say this is cheating, but the process did much to shape my concept for

each piece, which enhanced my live performance in a way that hours of simply practicing could not. I also found myself taking more risks as a player, my performance not becoming too "careful" out of fear of making mistakes.

There are now many other stand-alone hard-disk units to choose from. I would not recommend the Mini-Disc recorders for CD-quality classical music. There are also many hard-disk systems based around your computer, that function in more or less the same way, but often without the dedicated hardware interface. If you hope to release CDs of your live unedited performance, however, you may be able to get by with a simple stereo DAT recorder - like the portable Tascam unit that has mic inputs — and one or two good microphones. But be advised that even a note-perfect live performance will require digital editing for professional results.

The Recording Environment

Unless you're going to do extensive soundproofing, you need to record in a space without exterior walls. I use the upstairs bathroom, adding ambience digitally (via the above mentioned internal effects). It's easier to make clean edits when the ambience is not recorded with the guitar, so you're not editing out the reverb "tail" of any note that you are grafting onto another.

Another advantage to digital reverb is that you can put off deciding how much of it to use until final mixdown. The president of Stedman (whose mic is described below) complimented me on the natural ambience heard on my *Clear Away CD*; he was surprised to learn that most of it was *digital* reverb. Eric of Earthworks (another microphone company) scoffed at digital reverb as being nothing more than a series of echoes, unable to match the complexity of the real thing. But if you listen carefully to the sound of a space that you like, you can emulate many of its characteristics with the digital reverb's parameters. In particular, I found it effective to cut the low end of the reverb's "wet" signal quite a bit. My ambition is to someday fool even Eric. Some engineers have captured natural reverb by playing the final mix over speakers in a space of their choice (at, say, 6 AM, before traffic begins), recording the reflections along with the original track. Of course, if you're the kind of guitarist who can walk into that same space and play a note-perfect performance - before a plane passes or the garbage trucks make their rounds - all the better.

In addition to a quality pair of headphones, one needs a pair of near-field (you're meant to sit close to them) "reference monitor" speakers. I bought the Alesis Point Sevens, being the least expensive option; I also figured I didn't need the "low end" of larger speakers for mixing a guitar CD. In retrospect, I would say this is almost true - as I do hear more of my recorded guitar since adding a powered subwoofer.

To get the signal from any quality microphone into the recorder one needs a mic pre-amp with phantom power. This is not a good place to scrimp, as the first one I ordered ended up being too noisy — though it took my ears a few months to fully perceive it.

(Part II-next issue)

Calendar

BOARD MEETINGS

SATURDAY, JUNE 26.

(following performance party: see below)
Berit Strong (978) 263-3418, 271 School St., Acton

PERFORMANCE PARTIES

SATURDAY, JUNE 26, 2:00 P.M.

Berit Strong (978) 263-3418, 271 School St., Acton. From points east: Take Rte 2 West about 18 mi. to 1st rotary. Go 3/4 turn and exit at Comm. Ave. Take right at first street sign— Berit's house is 1 1/2 mi. on left. From west: take Rte 2 East, go past 4 Acton exits, then exit at unmarked School St. and then at a huge cornfield.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 15, 2:00 P.M.

Alan Carruth, 553 High St., Dedham Square, (781) 329-9484. From Rte 128: Take exit 15 to Rte 1 North (traffic light at top of exit ramp, cinema on corner). Go approx. 1-3/4 mile on Rte 1 to 4th traffic light; Eastern Ave. (Finagle a Bagel on right, Gulf station on left). Take left on Eastern Ave. into Dedham center. Eastern Ave. ends at High St. (about 150 yards beyond) and there are 2 parking lots on right. Park in the 2nd larger one. Walk to corner of Eastern Ave./High St. and cross High St. You will be in front of the shop.

NEW ENGLAND AREA CALENDAR EVENTS

SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 8:00 P.M.

Jeffrey Steele (guitar) and Kristina Martin (soprano) perform the Music of John Dowland, *Crystall Teares, Fine Knacks & Fantasies*. Second Congregational Church, 35 Conant Street, Beverly. Tickets: \$10/\$8/\$5. Call 978-282-3106.

FIRST WEEK OF JUNE (DATE AND TIME STILL PENDING)

Providence Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra, CD Release Party! Fleet Bank Center, Providence, RI. Call either Beverly Roy, President (401)-463-9166 or Mark Davis, Musical Director, (401) 861-6825 for more information, including exact date and time.

TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 8:00 P.M.

Providence Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra, performance at Roger Williams University, ("The Barn-Arts Center"), Bristol, Rhode Island. \$5. Call (401) 861-6825 for more information and directions.

SATURDAY, JUNE 26

American Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra, perform at "Waterfire", Providence, R.I. Free. Call (401) 861-6825 for more information.

TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 8:00 P.M.

Duo Maresienne (Olav Chris Henriksen, lute; Carol Lewis, viola da gamba) perform works by Dowland, Hume, and Pinkham, at St. Peter's Church, Weston, MA \$12/\$8. Call (617) 625-1898.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 8:00 P.M.

Duo Maresienne (Olav Chris Henriksen, lute, Carol Lewis, viola da gamba) perform works by Dowland, Hume, and Pinkham at St. Christopher's Church, Hampstead, NH \$12/\$8. Call (617) 625-1898.

THURSDAY, JULY 1, 8:00 P.M.

Duo Maresienne (Olav Chris Henriksen, lute, Carol Lewis, viola da gamba) perform works by Dowland, Hume and



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FRIDAY, JULY 9, NOON - 1:00 P.M.

Carl Kamp (guitar) and Deborah Nunes (keyboard) Brown Bag Concert, Butterfield Park Bandstand, East River Street, Orange, MA.

ONGOING EVENTS

THURSDAY EVENINGS 7:00- 10:00 P.M.

Eric Anthony performs classical guitar repertoire with emphasis on Spanish composers (Albeniz, Tarrega, Sor, Rodrigo, etc.) at the Tasca Spanish Tapas Restaurant, 1612 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA. Free valet parking, no cover charge. (617) 730-8002.

PREVIEW OF 1999-2000

BCGS-SPONSORED EVENTS

THURSDAY, SEPT. 30, 7:00 P.M.

Pre-concert lecture by Robert Ward and Alex Dunn at the Lucius Beebe Memorial Library, corner of Avon and Main Streets, Wakefield (approx. 1/2 mile off Rte 128). Free admission. Call (781) 224-4203.

SATURDAY, OCT. 2, 7:30 P.M.

Robert Ward and Alex Dunn perform at the First Baptist Church, Common and Lafayette Street, Wakefield, (approx. 1/2 mile off Rte 128). Admission by donation.

SATURDAY, NOV. 13 ALL DAY (DATE TENTATIVE)

BCGS and the Music Department at Tufts University co-host the 6th annual Boston Guitar-Fest 99: *Women and the Classical Guitar*. Concert by Virginia Luque, concert and talk by Berit Strong, lecture by Olav Chris Henriksen.

SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2000

1998 GFA winner Denis Azabagic in concert. Time and location to be determined.

* * *

Advertising in the Calendar is free of charge.

Send your listings to: Gloria Vachino at

GlorV@worldnet.att.net or

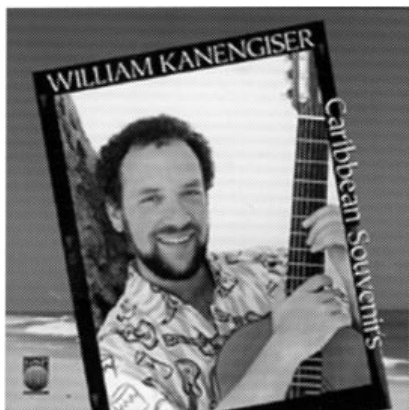
call (781) 224-4203.

Deadline for the September-November issue is August 1.

Listings submitted after this deadline will be posted on the BCGS Website.

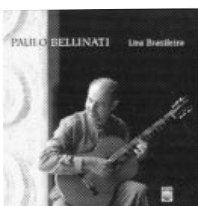
* * *

New recordings from GSP!



William Kanengiser *Caribbean Souvenirs*

*Brouwer, Gottschalk, Ponce, Casseus,
Garcia de Leon, Cordero, Angulo*



Paulo Bellinati *Lira Brasileira*

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Paulo Bellinati *Afro-Sambas*

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Baden Powell and Vinícius de Moraes*

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Dusan Bogdanovic *Unconscious in Brazil*

Adam Del Monte *Intimate*

Andrew York



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Mysterious Habitats

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Rondo Alla Turka*

Philip Hii
*J.S. Bach -
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The Society Speaks

Thanks to all of you who responded to this survey! Remember—these surveys give all members the opportunity to express their personal opinions on a variety of subjects, and they provide a wealth of information for the readership. The topic for the next survey is listed at the end of this column. Please note that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor.

Performance Anxiety

Based on frequent comments overheard at performance parties, it is clear that performance anxiety is one of the major stumbling blocks to playing well (or playing at all!) in front of others. Memory lapses, trembling, clumsy hands, and the inability to concentrate plague many players. Knowing that everyone suffers from performance anxiety at one time or another does little to quell peoples' fears!



If you have conquered, or at least partially overcome, your fear of playing in public, discuss how you channel your nervousness and focus your concentration. If you suffer repeatedly from performance anxiety, list some of the factors that interfere with your ability to play.

If you hesitate to participate in these surveys please remember that responses can be submitted anonymously and that sharing your thoughts can benefit others.

* * *

First of all, choose pieces you can handle. Too many players try to perform pieces they have no business playing. Work breathing into your practices and performances. If you can control your breathing, you'll reduce your anxiety. Put breath marks on your music. Don't wait until your performance to apply them—make them part of your daily practice.

The pieces you perform should be well prepared. The better you know a piece, the more confident you'll be. Once you've mastered a piece, try to memorize it away from the instrument. Practice by hearing the piece in your mind and visualizing your hands playing the piece.

Regarding performance anxiety, Pepe Romero comments: "No matter what, the sun always comes out the next day and life goes on." So don't get so caught up in one performance that you hesitate to perform again. Use these tips and you will experience better performances. *John Morgan*

With few exceptions it seems, performance anxiety afflicts musicians of all genres and abilities. Aside from drugs —

which, apparently, may not work reliably (I have no personal experience) — about the only things one can do are: (1) prepare, (2) prepare, and (3) prepare. It is said, for example, that Manuel Barrueco sometimes retunes his guitar to random notes before playing a piece, to test whether he really knows the correct fingerings. It helps to recognize that, a few virtuosi aside, most everyone's performance ability falls several notches short of what they can play in practice, so one should limit the difficulty of one's public repertoire accordingly. It is important to practice performing, i.e., work up full programs, and play them start to finish, without stopping to correct mistakes. If one cannot play a piece satisfactorily in practice, it isn't going to get better on stage. More is better! Frequency of public performance tends to lessen anxiety — and there is safety in numbers — anxiety tends to decline if there are other people on stage that can screw up with you. Recognize that the real purpose of performance is to enjoy oneself while communicating to an audience, not a test to see if one can play error-free. In any case, most listeners cannot tell the difference between mistakes and the real thing, especially with 20th century guitar music.

Bob Margo

Even addressing this topic makes me anxious, and frankly I don't think I have much to offer, except to say that perhaps the BCGS should outlaw performance anxiety. As a condition for membership we would all have to sign a form stating that performance anxiety must be "checked at the door" for any BCGS sponsored events.... Ah, where's the wizard when you need him? *Oscar Azaret*

Taking deep breaths before playing is very helpful. Trying to take music at a slightly slower tempo than you might play it at home can be calming and beneficial. Being totally prepared on the piece you are playing really helps since if you have any places that you don't know cold, they'll be the first ones to go when you're under performance pressure! Using a tape recorder to record your sessions when you're getting ready to perform a piece has been helpful to me to create a little bit of performance-type pressure. I think it's helpful to play a piece before one or two people you really feel comfortable with before you bring it in front of a larger group. Other than that, I'm still working on dealing with these problems!! *Anonymous*

I'm not sure I'll ever conquer performance anxiety completely, but two things have helped me a great deal: 1) Perform frequently. I'm always surprised at how nervous I am when I'm performing for the first time in a long time. Don't let it get to be a long time!

2) Perform from a motivation of love — love for music and love for people. Forget about impressing people. Forget about what

people might think if you mess up. Forget about whether you'll be "good enough." Instead, think about sharing music you love with people you love — even if those people happen to be total strangers. Once I take the focus off myself and start getting excited about giving the gift of music to others, I'm much less nervous. *Larry Spencer*

Whenever I hear someone talk about performance anxiety, I am reminded of the very common fear of public speaking. As a longtime member of Toastmasters, an organization that helps people develop public speaking skills, I have learned tactics that can be applied to performing in public. 1) Your nervousness is normal. Even experienced players experience some trepidation. 2) Practice, practice, and practice some more. Confidence is gained through practice! If possible, practice in front of a close friend before performing in public. 3) Think positively. You CAN play in public as well as you can in your living room. 4) Have a passion for what you are presenting to your audience. If you are working on a piece you do not particularly care for, don't perform it! Instead, play something you love. 5) Remember to breathe! Breathing deeply and steadily is a form of relaxation. 6) Finally, remember that the majority of your audience wants to see you succeed and will overlook the occasional mishap. *Gloria Vachino*

In my forty plus years as a guitarist, I've experienced my share of performance anxiety. Here are some things I've found to help deal with it. Know what you are doing. Know every piece as thoroughly as possible. Towards that end, do a detailed analysis, formal, melodic, and harmonic. Be able to visualize the score and the fingering. Be able to hear the entire piece in your mind. Be certain the piece is thoroughly practiced and "in the hand." Julian Bream has said: "If you are nervous, it means you haven't practiced enough." John Williams has said: "If I've prepared properly, it usually goes well." If you are not comfortable playing from memory, then read from the score. Paul O'Dette and many others never perform from memory, so you won't be alone. Play as often as possible for others, for your teacher, for friends, and master classes, and for the microphone. Recordings are revealing. Give a practice recital, preferably in the same room in which you'll be performing. Be sure the chair is comfortable and similar to what you are used to. Practice starting "cold," with little or no warm-up, but when you perform, if you have time, by all means do warm up. But don't give your best performance in the dressing room. Relax before going on stage; try meditation, deep breathing, and relaxation techniques. Try to imagine what you are going to do, and what the experience will be like. If you've prepared properly, yet are still anxious and fear a memory lapse, try counting the rhythm in your mind as you play, or try to just simply listen to the piece as you play it, as if you were in the audience; or, sing the lines in your mind as you play. Each of these things can help to maintain concentration. Be sure to breathe deeply—don't hold your breath during difficult passages. Before starting a piece, take a deep breath, try to

relax, and hear the opening measures of the piece in your mind. Get "in the mood of the piece," as Oscar Ghiglia used to say. Try starting with an easy piece that you know well, especially if you haven't had time to warm up. Take the tempo a little slower than normal if you feel anxious. Use the "planting technique" whenever possible to help steady shaky hands. Lubricate the right hand fingertips if they feel like they are dragging on the strings. Realize that the audience is on your side; they have come to hear something beautiful and they are supportive. If you do make a mistake, don't dwell on it; move right on as if nothing bad has happened, don't make a face if you've made a mistake—chances are few listeners will even notice it. A wrong note isn't the end of the world. Try to have fun and enjoy performing. You should want to do it. The music is living through you. Have conviction; believe in your interpretation. Manuel Barrueco has said: "When you give a lot of concerts, you can't be nervous for all of them." Performing does become routine, if you do enough of it. Finally, here are some books that address performance anxiety: *The Inner Game of Music*, by Barry Green; *Notes from the Green Room*, by P. Salmon & R. Meyer; *Conversations with Casals*, by J.M. Corredor, and the *Christopher Parkening Method, Vol. 2*. *Lance F. Gunderson*

* * *

For the next survey discuss your approach to learning a new piece of music. What steps do you take to master a piece?



*Please keep your responses brief —100 words or less!
Responses will be condensed if they exceed brevity.
Indicate whether you wish to include your name with your response or prefer to comment anonymously.
If you have suggestions for future surveys— send them along!*

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Music Reviews

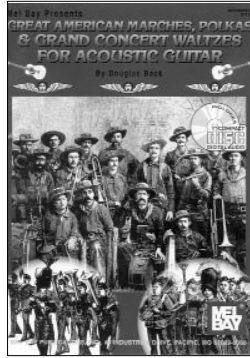
TITLE: Great American Marches, Polkas and Grand Concert Waltzes for Acoustic Guitar

BY: Douglas Back

PUBLISHER: Mel Bay Publications

COST: \$17.95

PAGES: 91



There are some among us classical guitarists who have secretly wished to be part of the pomp and circumstance of a marching band. However, the parade always seems to pass us by. And there may be still others who have wished to play along with the unmistakable sounds of a polka band. Well, this book was created to give our secret longings an outlet! These arrangements are quite good—they remind me of the arrangements by that truly amazing guitarist, Guy Van Duser. I am sure that, at the very least, this book will give you something both fun and satisfying to play through this Independence Day. Happy marching!

TITLE: Pumping Nylon Supplemental Repertoire

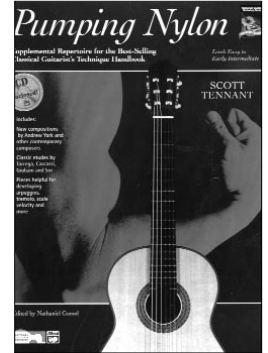
BY: Scott Tennant

PUBLISHER: Alfred Publishing Company

COST: \$8.50

PAGES: 63

BOOK & CD: \$18.50



First, there was the book. Then there was the video. Now, we have the supplement equipped with its own CD. Tennant is a great teacher. I learned a few new things just reading through this book. It's full of traditional study pieces and a few new ones. Each piece has its own study notes. I have already begun using this book with my own students

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Summary of the 7th Annual New England Student Guitar Competition

The 7th annual New England Student Guitar Competition took place on March 7 at the Boston Conservatory— despite the heavy blanket of snow that descended upon New England the night before! The competition was presided over by Bill Buonocore. Peter Clemente, John Muratore and Armand Qualliotine served as judges for the 12 contestants.

The high school division first prize went to **Sensen Li** who performed *Prelude No. 1* by H. Villa-Lobos and *El Negrito* by A. Lauro. Sensen, who attends Cambridge Rindge and Latin and studies guitar with both Glorianne Collver-Jacobson and Robert Ward, says he might consider competing in the GFA international competition in a few years time.

Second prize was awarded to **Conor Mulroy**, a senior at Swampscott High School and a student of Silvio José dos Santos. Conor performed *Etude No. 11* by H. Villa-Lobos and the 4th movement of *Koyunbaba* by C. Domeniconi.

First prize in the college division went to **David Wade** who played *Elegy* by J.K. Mertz and the *Allegro* from *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro* by J. S. Bach. David, who has been playing guitar for 10 years, is currently at the New England Conservatory under the tutelage of David Leisner. This June, David Wade will travel to Louisville, Kentucky to participate in a benefit concert for hurricane relief in the Dominican Republic.

Alexander Henry took second-place in the college division performing the first movement of M. Ponce's *Sonata III* and L. Brouwer's *Hika: In Memoriam Toru Takemitsu*. Alexander, a former first-place winner in the high school division, has been playing the guitar for 9 years and is currently at Yale, studying with Ben Verdery and Rene Izquierdo. He hopes to play professionally in the future.

Mike Benninger, a student at Keene State College who studies guitar with Ben Verdery and Ted Mann, was awarded third place for his performance of *Saudade No. 3* by R. Dyens and *Gigue* from the first Lute Suite by J. S. Bach.

This year's winners received substantial cash prizes thanks to the generosity of the following individuals: Glorianne Collver-Jacobson, Tony Mason, Karen Parsons, Emanuel Soucek, Berit Strong, Robert Sullivan, Steve Terry, Frank Wallace and Robert Ward, as well as the Boston Conservatory. Frank Wallace deserves a special thanks for spearheading the fundraising campaign for the competition. The prize monies were awarded as follows: for the high school division the first prize was \$300, second, \$125; and for the college division, the first prize was \$500, second \$250, and third \$125.

In addition to the cash prizes, David Wade and Sensen Li were invited to perform in a concert sponsored by BCGS at the Brookline Music School on April 25.

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Letters *(Continued)*

source of inspiration. It was very gratifying to see the high level of playing by those who participated in the competition and I would like to applaud everyone for their accomplishments. I would like to extend a special thanks to Frank Wallace, whose efforts made this competition possible, and to the Boston Conservatory, Bill Buonocore, and the judges for their participation and support. Congratulations to Sensen Li and David Wade, who won first place honors in the competition and gave an excellent recital at the Brookline Music School. (Thanks also to Mrs. Li for providing all the goodies after the recital.)

As this '98-'99 season draws to a close, I want to thank all the BCGS volunteers who contributed their time, and talents, and helped make this season a special one.

Glorianne Collver-Jacobson
Artistic Director, BCGS

Performance Party Hosted by Bob Phillipps



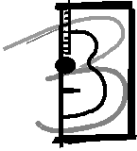
Left to Right
Top - Charlie Carrano, Will Riley, Oscar Azaret,
 Will Riley and Lance Gunderson
Middle - Ray Poissant, Isaac Bustos,
 Bob Phillipps & Linda Rossman
Bottom right - Gloria Vachino, Larry Spencer

photos by John Visser



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