

newsletter

Upcoming Events

Saturday, June 28, 7:30 p.m.

Sharon Wayne, guitar and Bridget Kazukiewicz, flute, piccolo, and alto flute. N. Falmouth Congregational Church.

Thursday, July 17, 7:30 p.m.

The Back Bay Guitar Trio and soprano Marlies Kehler perform at Tower Hill Botanic Garden, in Boylston, MA.

Sunday, July 27, 4:00 p.m.

Classical guitarist Jeffry Hamilton Steele in recital at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1123 Washington St, Gloucester.

See Calendar Section for Details

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Letters to Members

Dear Members,

Greetings everyone, and welcome to the summer '03 issue of the BCGS newsletter! You may have noticed that our newsletters have become a little thicker lately. This is attributed to the many members who donate their very-much-appreciated time and effort to submit fascinating articles about the classical guitar. We fully support these contributions and welcome more. In this issue, please take special note of the articles by David Leisner, George Ward, and Bob Margo. Their subject matter is important, relevant, educational, and interesting. We are also proud to present an exclusive interview with Eliot Fisk, conducted by the Society's new NEC liaison, Evan Marcus.

It is with great enthusiasm that I announce that the BCGS recently voted in a new Artistic Director: Sharon Wayne. We are quite confident Sharon will lead the BCGS in an outstanding way, and we warmly welcome her to the new position.

Before coming to the Boston area a little over a year ago, Sharon earned two degrees in guitar performance at the University of Southern California. She was a co-founding member of the San Francisco Guitar Quartet, and has produced several diverse CDs of her solo and chamber music. She has placed highly in many prestigious competitions, and has taught at numerous musical institutions in California and Massachusetts. Sharon has been doing excellent work as Publicity Coordinator for the BCGS for about a year now. We are very excited to see what she has in store for us in the near future! Best of luck, Sharon!

That said, and although I am quite sad to leave Boston this summer, I will cherish the time I have spent in this town and

with the Boston Classical Guitar Society. It has been a pleasure to work with the outstanding BCGS staff, meet members at concerts, and think of ways to invite interest in the classical guitar.

I wish you great health, success, love, peace, and music.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Ciraldo
Artistic Director

Dear Members,

Greetings! It is with great pleasure that I accept the reigns of this organization from the hands of outgoing Artistic Director, Nicholas Ciraldo. Since my relatively recent arrival here in Boston, I have seen this guitar society flourish under Nick's extremely capable leadership, and the outstanding group of people who staff the BCGS, and I feel honored to be entrusted with the responsibility of guiding the further development of the Society.

We are currently in the process of sifting through the materials sent to us by a large number of world-class guitarists in order to select performers for the '03-'04 season. Though the decisions have not been finalized at the time of this writing, I can promise you it will be an exciting lineup, featuring top musicians from all over the globe, so stay tuned!

If you're looking for a way to share your unique talents with the BCGS, or would simply like to acquaint yourself with the inner workings of this wonderful

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

Letters to Members

organization, I invite and strongly encourage you to attend one or more of our summer board meetings. We will be meeting more frequently than usual over the summer months to plan and organize events for the upcoming BCGS year, and we're looking for enthusiastic and committed BCGS members to volunteer to help with concert details, project development, and an array of other responsibilities. Also, as I take over the position of Artistic Director, we need a new volunteer to step into the position of Publicity Coordinator. If you would like to be apprised of our board meeting dates and times, please email me at sharon@sharonwayne.net, or contact me by phone at 508-626-0209 and I will make sure you are "in the loop!"

Best wishes for a wonderful, music-filled summer.

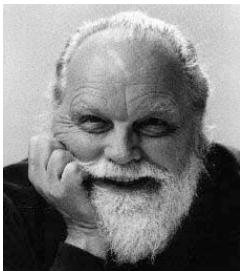
Sincerely,



Sharon Wayne
Artistic Director

An Obituary for Lou Harrison

By David Leisner



Lou Harrison, one of America's great composers, is dead at age 85. He passed away in early February, apparently of a heart attack, while *en route* to attend a festival at Ohio State University which celebrated his music and his life. At the very same time, in New York, there was a festival at Juilliard that also centered on his music, which he could not attend

because of this happy conflict. Unquestionably, he went out on a high note. This great man, underrated in music circles for decades, finally found an increasing popularity and attention paid to his work in the final 10-15 years of his life.

Anyone who met Lou felt, within seconds of meeting him, his galvanizing personal and creative power, his unbounded joy in all things new, and a feeling for Life that gushed from him as from a fountain. The man had seemingly limitless energy, right to the end of his life. This force supported him on his long life-journey through many different endeavors. Besides being a composer, at different times in his life, he was a florist, record clerk, animal hospital assistant, poet, dancer, dance critic, music copyist and playwright.

As composer, Lou wrote in all mediums, from opera to dance music to symphonies to concertos to chamber music. His symphonic catalog is especially significant and will surely not fade from the repertoire. He was nothing if not an eclectic composer. A student of Arnold Schoenberg, he often wrote in the twelve-tone idiom, but would juxtapose it with perfectly tonal, tuneful, folk-like music, closer to the approach of his other major teacher, Henry Cowell. His dominant musical influence, however, was the music of non-Western cultures, especially Javanese and Korean. He wrote a good deal of music for the gamelan, the Indonesian percussion and string orchestra, and organized and played in quite a few himself. Amongst American composers of the time, he was practically alone in this pursuit, and his music did not gain the recognition it deserved for a long time partly because of this.

Lou was also a pioneer in the homosexual movement. As one of the few openly gay public figures early in his life, he quietly helped advance the struggle for tolerance and equality. His opera, *Young Caesar*, composed in the early 1970's, was probably the first opera with an openly gay subject. His partner for 33 years, William Colvig, also collaborated with Lou on building gamelan instruments and on many other projects.

Guitarists are fortunate to have a number of works by Lou Harrison, either written for the instrument or arranged with his approval. These are: the little *Serenade*, the bigger *Serenade* for guitar and percussion, a number of arrangements of short pieces by David Tanenbaum (published as the "Lou Harrison Guitar Book") and John Schneider, *Canticle No. 2* for guitar, ocarina and percussion, and the last piece he wrote (for David Tanenbaum) called *Nek Chand* for, of all things, a specially constructed just-intoned Hawaiian slack guitar.

Rest in peace, dear sweet prince. ☼

Warm Thanks!

The BCGS would like to thank its membership and all who support the society by volunteering their time and/or donating funds to ensure our future success.



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“The Generous Musician”

Eliot Fisk Interview, April 24, 2003

by Evan Marcus

Q: At what point did you decide to make a career out of the guitar?

Eliot Fisk: I didn't decide to make a career out of the guitar. I think it kind of decided itself. I guess I got to a certain point in my life where I just basically couldn't live without music, and the guitar was my instrument. So one thing kind of led to another. I was really sort of groping about in an almost blind sort of fashion. I started playing the guitar when I was seven because my only brother has Down's Syndrome and my mother had thought we, as a family, could sing songs with him to the accompaniment of a guitar. When after 3 months of teaching myself from a very primitive folk guitar method consisting of a book and some demo LPs, my parents offered me lessons. A member of our Quaker meeting in Philadelphia was the first double bass player in the Philadelphia Orchestra. He said I should study classical guitar because from that point of departure I'd be able to do any other style (of course this is not true, but it convinced us all). Peter Colonna, a former member of Segovia's Siena class was duly located, and he became my first guitar teacher. Still I never practiced at all until I was around eleven.

Q: What changed for you at age eleven?

Eliot Fisk:

Well, when I was that age my parents went to Sweden for one year. My father was a college professor and he had an exchange sabbatical year with a Swedish colleague of his, so I went to elementary school in Lund in the south of Sweden. I didn't speak any Swedish at the start of the year. Naturally that entailed a certain amount of loneliness. Swedish TV was absolutely atrocious as far as I was concerned. Many hours of the day were without any programming whatsoever and when there was broadcasting it was, of course, in Swedish and so I still couldn't really follow it. Anyway, when I was growing up my mother refused to have a TV in the house so I didn't really miss TV too much anyway. So, being so out of my element, I started to practice. I got very interested in the guitar that year. For the first time I grew nails. When we came back from Sweden a year later, I was fluent in Swedish and I had also improved on the guitar.

Q: When you came back to the U.S., did you find a guitar teacher?

Eliot Fisk: The only serious guitar teacher I ever had in my life on a regular basis was William Viola of Philadelphia, with whom I started to work at that time. He was not a professional

guitarist at all. He was an engineer at IBM. He was a very smart man. He only taught guitar on weekends but he was a profound influence on my later development.

Q: That seems like a very unorthodox approach to learning a classical instrument.

Eliot Fisk: But you can't imagine what the guitar was like back then. Basically there was just Segovia, who was this huge phenomenon of practically religious proportions. Virgil Thompson has it right when he wrote, "There is no guitar but the Spanish guitar and Andres Segovia is its prophet." Bream and Williams were just starting out. Bream was sort of like forbidden fruit and Williams was setting new standards for excellence in his own way. But we basically had so little real musicological or even technical information about the guitar. We just had Segovia's records. I listened to those recordings millions of times and tried to imitate what I heard. My teacher did the same, taking many changes off the records and teaching me to do the same. Bill Viola was very demanding. He insisted on absolute clarity, on reliable editions (meaning mostly Segovia's) and he also insisted that I maintain a big repertoire. He had me make a list of all my pieces and at the end of each lesson he would go down the entire list making a check at random in front of five pieces which I was to play at the next lesson a week later. The pieces were typically challenging: many studies of Sor, Villa-Lobos, Turina, Moreno Torroba, Ponce, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Sor's Mozart Variations, Bach's Suite BWV 996 (this in Bream's edition) also the Prelude, Fugue and Allegro, BWV 998. All of these I was playing as best I could by the time my family moved away from Philadelphia when I was 14. Nowadays this would be no big deal, but back then it was kind of unusual. Again, you can't imagine how little we knew.

Q: Did you continue to study this way throughout high school?

Eliot Fisk: Yes all the way through high school I had this sort of double life. I went to a normal American high school and did all the normal school subjects. I never did any music courses although we were lucky to have a wonderful chorus director and a wonderful band director, both of whom are still in the Syracuse area doing great things. But at the time I never really participated in the official school run musical activities.



On my own initiative, I would force myself to wake up every morning at 5:00 a.m. That's when my alarm went off, and by 5:15 I was practicing. My poor father forbade me to practice *Leyenda* at that hour because the loud chords born upstairs via the air ducts of the heating system would jar him out of his sleep on the second floor. I used to close the ducts in the winter so I wouldn't bother him. In this fashion I was doing three and a half hours a day of practice during school days and five hours on weekends all through high school. This was all my idea, you have to understand: I was trying to prove to Bill Viola that I was worth something. My parents, especially my father, were actually trying to get me to work a little less hard.

Q: And after high school?

Eliot Fisk: When I got to be college age, I went to Yale. Again, I hadn't had any guitar teacher for a while because when we had moved from Philadelphia to Syracuse when I was 14, there had been no teacher for me in the Upstate New York area. I had no regular lessons but studied in the summer at the Aspen Music School with Oscar Ghiglia, who was a truly profound influence. I also took one 2 week class with Alirio Diaz at the Banff Center for Arts. I met Andres Segovia through Rose Augustine when I was 19 years old and worked privately with him for some years thereafter.

My main teacher at Yale was Ralph Kirkpatrick, a very great harpsichordist and authority on Baroque music. Most of my major teachers, even on the guitar, never spoke to me about technique. Ghiglia, Diaz and Segovia almost never spoke of technique. At most they would suggest occasional fingerings. Kirkpatrick wasn't a guitarist. So I was always forced to figure out by myself how to translate abstract musical conceptions into sound on the guitar.

But I always had this great overpowering love for music. I think this is one thing that distinguishes my career and my personal life. One thing I can say is that I do have an unquenchable love for music, and I felt this, maybe even more strongly, in my early years. For me music has always had a nearly religious function. People speak of a "calling." This is the idea behind the German word *Beruf*, which means "profession" but derives from the word meaning "to call." And that is how I felt about making a life in music.

Q: So it seems you always knew you wanted to make your career in music.

Eliot Fisk: Well if you're talking about making a living playing the guitar, that again also kind of evolved. I got through college and grad school at Yale in a five year program. During my senior year as an undergraduate I had just been kicked out of a bunch of high level guitar competitions. The judges didn't like my playing. Of course, there was plenty to criticize, but I am afraid that it wasn't that which was genuinely in need of

improvement, but the very qualities that have since enabled me to make a career, that offended them: spontaneity, risk taking, originality and passion. At that time in the guitar world there was a great fear of all of these qualities amongst the people sitting on guitar juries. Some say this is still the case, that too often the person who ends up winning a big contest isn't the person who is most interesting or who offers the most promise for the future but the one who plays it safest, and who offends the fewest judges.

When I was 22 years old, I basically had almost nowhere to turn. I had no clue how to start my career. But Rose Augustine had not ceased to believe in me. She sponsored a big debut concert for me at Alice Tully Hall at New York's Lincoln Center. Afterwards, due to a terrific *New York Times* review, I was approached by management agencies and so I began, little by little, to play in public for money.

Q: Do you find being a classical guitarist to be a difficult "calling?"

Eliot Fisk: There's been a lot to battle: taxis, airlines, bad food, anonymous hotels, jetlag, people who still don't accept the guitar as a worthy instrument make up a short list. It wasn't and still isn't an easy road. But there are so many wonderful friends who help so much and whose affection and support make it all worth while. But this also imposes a great responsibility. I still have the same ideals I had when I started out all those years ago, and I hope I still stand for something.

Q: Do you think there's a huge difference in entering the classical guitar world today, compared to when you started?

Eliot Fisk: I was just getting to that. There's a huge difference, a tidal wave change. I don't think just classical guitar as we have known it, but even art music in general is under attack. My childhood was formed by the 1960's, by the great idealism of the '60's. America had finally begun to address a lot of great evils: the McCarthy era, racism, militarism, the war in Vietnam, environmental degradation and later Watergate. Despite a lot of hypocritical posturing in some of the reformist circles, the country was sincerely grappling with a lot of fundamental issues. Right now a lot of these issues are again coming to the fore and we have occasion once again to remember that it was a great general, Dwight Eisenhower, who in his final address as President warned of the danger of the "military-industrial complex."

We artists, at the bottom of the societal food chain, last hired and first fired in economic downswings, are among the endangered. So we need to have a whole new set of ways of trying to convince other members of the society, particularly non-musician members of the society, that what we do is worth doing and worth supporting.

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Calendar

Performance Parties

Sunday, June 8, 2:00 p.m.

Alex Dillon hosts a performance party at 29 Forest St., Apt. 1, in Somerville. Call 617-349-3540 or email dillon@fas.harvard.edu for more information.

Public transportation directions:

Take the Red Line to the Porter Square "T" station and walk southeast along Somerville Ave. Take first right onto Beacon St. (on a short bridge over the train tracks). At the fork in the road, bear left (staying on Beacon St.). Make next right, onto Forest St. Our house, no. 29, is the second house on the right, a burgundy triple-decker. Ring buzzer for apartment 1.

Driving directions:

From Massachusetts Av. (route 2A) turn onto Forest St., just a few blocks south of Porter Square. (If heading south, from Porter Square, it's a left onto Forest St., if heading North, from Harvard Square, it's a right.) Take Forest street down, past the traffic light. After the road curves left, you'll see number 29, a burgundy triple-decker on the left. Ring buzzer for apartment 1.

For information about hosting a performance party, contact Charles Carrano by email (c.carrano@att.net) or regular mail (BCGS Newsletter Editor, 70 George St., Norwood, MA 02062).

New England Area Events

Thursday, June 12, 2:00 p.m.

Scott Lemire & Seth Warner, lutes, will present a concurrent concert with the Boston Early Music Festival of English lute duets by Dowland, Ferrabosco, Johnson and Robinson. Church of St John the Evangelist, 35 Bowdion Street, Boston, MA 02114. Tickets are \$10; \$6 for students, seniors, EMA, LSA or BCGS members. For more information call (207) 883-7115.

Saturday, June 28, 7:30 p.m.

Sharon Wayne, guitar and Bridget Kazukiewicz, flute, piccolo, and alto flute present works by Piazzolla, Beaser, Takemitsu, Shankar, and Poulenc. North Falmouth Congregational Church, 155 Old Main Road, North Falmouth, MA 02556. Tickets are \$10 and can be put on reserve by calling (508) 563-2177.

Sunday, July 13, 4:00 p.m.

Classical guitarist Jeffry Hamilton Steele in recital at St Paul Lutheran Church, 1123 Washington St, Gloucester. The first concert in the five-part "Guitar Odyssey" series, it is titled "Segovia in Paris." Music by Milan, Purcell, Ponce, Scarlatti,

Bach, Aguado, Sor, Duarte, Villa-Lobos, Mompou and Tansman. Admission \$10 (\$8 students/seniors, \$5 children 12 and under). Series ticket (purchased at the door): Five recitals for \$40 (\$32/\$20). For information call (978) 282-3106 or, for directions and full program, visit jeffrysteele.com.

Thursday, July 17, 7:30 p.m.

The Back Bay Guitar Trio and soprano Marlies Kehler perform at Tower Hill Botanic Garden, in Boylston, MA. Opens at 6:30 p.m. for cocktails and picknicking on the grounds. The concert begins at 7:30pm in the Orangerie. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$16 for members of Tower Hill, and \$12 for student/youth. For more information visit www.towerhillbg.org.

Sunday, July 20, 4:00 p.m.

Classical guitarist Jeffry Hamilton Steele in recital at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1123 Washington St, Gloucester. The second concert in the five-part "Guitar Odyssey" series, it is titled "From France to Latin America." Music by Couperin, Debussy, Stravinsky, Chopin, Jobim, Bonfá, Villa-Lobos, Rodriguez, Guardabarranco, Barrios, Steele and Lauro. Admission \$10 (\$8 students/seniors, \$5 children 12 and under). For information call (978) 282-3106 or, for directions and full program, visit jeffrysteele.com.

Saturday, July 26, 8:00 p.m.

Robert Ward, guitar, and Francine Trester, violin, will present an evening of music for violin and guitar at the New School of Music in Cambridge. The program will include Francine Trester's "Sonata for Violin and Guitar," "Duo Concertante," by Mario Giuliani, "Suite Espagnole," by Joaquin Nin, and "History of the Tango," by Astor Piazzolla. Tickets are \$12 (general) and \$10 (students, seniors, and BCGS members). Call (617) 492-8105 or visit www.bostonguitar.org for more info.

Sunday, July 27, 4:00 p.m.

Classical guitarist Jeffry Hamilton Steele in recital at St Paul Lutheran Church, 1123 Washington St, Gloucester. The third concert in the five-part "Guitar Odyssey" series, it is titled "J. S. plays BACH." Featured J. S. Bach works are the Third Cello Suite and the Second Violin Partita. Admission \$10 (\$8 students/seniors, \$5 children 12 and under). For information call (978) 282-3106 or, for directions and full program, visit jeffrysteele.com.

Sunday, August 3, 4:00 p.m.

Classical guitarist Jeffry Hamilton Steele in recital at St Paul Lutheran Church, 1123 Washington St, Gloucester. The fourth concert in the five-part "Guitar Odyssey" series, it is titled "Recuerdos Españoles." Music by Narvaez, Carcassi, Tarrega, Albeniz, Rodrigo (Aranjuez Adagio), Sor, Steele, de Falla and

Llobet. Admission \$10 (\$8 students/seniors, \$5 children 12 and under). For information call (978) 282-3106 or, for directions and full program, visit jeffrysteele.com.

Wednesday, August 6, 7:30 p.m.

The Back Bay Guitar Trio perform at Gore Place in Waltham, MA. Admission is \$15. For more information and directions call (781) 894-2798 or visit www.goreplace.org.

Thursday, August 7, 6:00 p.m.

The Back Bay Guitar Trio perform at the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, NH. Admission is \$5. For more information and directions visit www.currier.org.

Friday, August 8, 7:30 p.m.

Sharon Wayne, guitar and Bridget Kazukiewicz, flute, piccolo, and alto flute present works by Piazzolla, Beaser, Takemitsu, Shankar, and Poulenc. Pilgrim Congregational Church, 27 Church Street, Merrimac, MA 01860. Sponsored by Merrimac Cultural Council. Part of Merrimac Old Home Days. Ticket prices to be announced. For more info, call Kendra Bowker at (978) 346-8025.

Sunday, August 10, 4:00 p.m.

Classical guitarist Jeffry Hamilton Steele in recital at St Paul Lutheran Church, 1123 Washington St, Gloucester. The fifth concert in the five-part "Guitar Odyssey" series, it is titled "Renaissance: Past & Present." Music by Newsidler, Narvaez, Milan, da Milano (and other Italian lutenists), Dowland, Hadar and Steele. Admission \$10 (\$8 students/seniors, \$5 children 12 and under). For information call (978) 282-3106 or, for directions and full program, visit jeffrysteele.com.

Thursday, September 4, noon

The Small Torres Duo performs as part of the WCRB Copley Square Concert series. The concert is outdoors in Copley Square and is free.

Festivals & Workshops

June 15-20, 2003: Hartt School International Guitar Fest.

Scheduled to perform are: Oscar Ghiglia, the Goldspiel/Provost Duo, Christopher Ladd (finalist in the 2001/2002 GFA), and the Alturas Duo (guitar and viola/charango). There will be performances, master classes, lectures, and various other activities. For more information call Richard Provost at (860) 768-4800 or e-mail rprovost@mail.hartford.edu. For more detailed information visit www.hartford.edu/hartt.

**June 7-21, 2003: 4th Edition of
Seminari e Festival di Primavera**

The Club Diciotto Cento presents the 4th Edition of Seminari e Festival di Primavera "ChitarrImperia" - International Courses and Master Class of Music Interpretation, dedicated to guitar and Chamber Music in Imperia, Italy, June 7-21, 2003. Courses and master classes for guitar, lute, mandolin, violino, viola, violoncello and contrabbasso. Teachers from around the world and recitals in the most beautiful venues of Imperia given by Alirio Diaz, Roland Dyens, Nuovo Quartetto Italiano, Benjamin Verdery, Eliot Fisk and others. A collateral event will be the exhibition June 13-15 of lutherie "Tra Corde ed Archi." For more info visit the Club Diciotto Cento web site: www.chitarraimperia.it, email clubdiciottocento@hotmail.com or phone +39 329 2136622.

**June 22 - July 18, 2003: Classic Guitar Workshop at
Killington Music Festival**

The Killington Music Festival announces its second annual classical guitar workshop. Distinguished guitarist and teacher Gerald Klickstein will direct four weeks of intensive study from June 22 to July 18, 2003 at the beautiful Vermont resort of Killington. Lessons and classes will cover all aspects of guitar performance including musical interpretation, technique, practice methods, performance preparation, career development and more. Students enjoy abundant performing opportunities and also attend numerous faculty, student and guest artist recitals. For more information and an application, please log on to www.killingtonmusicfestival.org.

July 22 - 26, 2003: National Guitar Workshop

The National Guitar Workshop residential classical guitar summit's classical guitar week takes place in New Milford, CT. (Although the NGSW runs all summer, the week of July 22-26 is devoted to classical guitar, with 4 evening concerts and all-day classes.) This year, Pepe Romero will give a concert and a master class, and Thomas Humphrey will give evening lectures on guitar construction. Check out www.guitarworkshop.com.

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Society Speaks

Compiled by Bob Healey

"FREE STRINGS! While supplies last, get a free set of D'Addario XL strings just for responding to this survey. Thank you D'Addario!"

Whose guitar(s) are you playing? What do you like about them? And if you could buy a new one today what would it be and why?

Thanks to all of you who responded to this survey! 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. Please note that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the BCGS.

Currently I am playing on four different guitars, depending on the playing situation and my mood. I use a Ruck Negra for classical, flamenco and jazz situations where volume is required; it's a very loud guitar, and it plays easily and is less tiring to play for several hours. It has a quality feel, is pretty, and valuable. For classical only situations I usually play my trusty '69 Ramirez 1A cedar/Brazilian; it's clean, loud enough, and I'm very familiar with it after so many years now. I also have a Ramirez 1A blanca that I dearly love and always enjoy playing because it plays so easily (easier than the Ruck) and has tremendous sustain, a quality I value highly. It is not a loud guitar though; it's at its best in small rooms. I also sometimes play my Asturias "Renaissance S," the top of the line from Asturias. It's spruce/Indian, very well set up straight from the factory, easy to play, durable, and beautiful sounding to my ears. I use it for rough gigs where an expensive guitar would make me too nervous in case it got damaged. Asturias are excellent instruments. I could be happy with just this one guitar if I had no other choices. It compares very well to the more expensive Ruck. However, I still search for my perfect guitar; I have no idea what it will be if indeed I ever do find it. *-Lance Gunderson*

I play a 2001 Tezanos Perez Maestro model, Cedar-Brazilian Rosewood. The workmanship is superb! The feel of the instrument is great and the sound is wonderful. The guitar is capable of reacting to whatever touch I command—from the softest dark sonorities to explosive loud passages. It's an instrument that I will enjoy playing for many years to come. *-Ben Arditi*

I play a Ramirez R4 (1998), a Taylor 422 (1995), and a Harmony mahogany Roy Smeck ukulele. I like the bass and size of the Ramirez and the neck and action of the Taylor. I would probably buy, if I had extra money, a Ramirez 1A and a Santa Cruz 00. *-Lewis Shepard*

Rameriz 1A—its sound is unbelievable! RICH in harmonics! Sounds like Segovia! A Humphrey or any guitar that is as loud and beautiful as my 1A but is EASIER to play *-Steve Marchena*

The next survey topic is as follows:

Have you tried alternate methods of playing, i.e., standing, using knee supports, cello style, amplified?

Please keep your responses brief—50 words or less! Responses may 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!

Send responses to Bob Healey, bob@bobhealey.net, by August 1.

The BCGS would like to acknowledge its appreciation to the D'Addario company, who graciously donated a set of its strings to each contributing author of this issue's Society Speaks column.

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(continued from page 7)

Calendar

July 14-18, 2003: St. Joseph International Guitar Festival

This newly founded festival will include a guitar builder's show, masterclasses, and seminars geared toward career development such as legal contracting for musicians, using the internet to expand your career, cross-careers in music (recording studio work, press, radio work, publishing, working overseas, etc.). Also classes in Yoga for musicians, winning at billiards, cooking for musicians, etc. More details at www.mwsc.edu/guitarfestival/.

August 3-10, 2003: 12th International Guitar Symposium in Iserlohn, Germany

The festival offers 12 concerts, more than 600 individual lessons, classes, ensemble playing, 4 lectures, and exhibitions by 25 guitar makers from 12 countries and is one of the biggest classical guitar festivals in the world. The deadline for applications is July 15th, 2003 but last year's festival was already booked out in April. Contact Amadeus Guitar Duo, Oestricher Strasse 39b, D-58638 Iserlohn – Germany, Tel./Fax: -49/2371/560707, Mobil: -49/173/20-95-685, E-Mail: info@amadeusduo.de, Online booking and more information: www.guitarsymposium.de.

August 20-27, 2003: VII International Guitar Congress/Festival of Corfu

Location: Corfu, Greece. Concerts, master-classes and lectures, composition competition and guitar performance competition: David Tanenbaum, Adam Holzman, Theodore Antoniou, Apostolos Paraskevas, Leonidas Kanaris, Anthony De Ritis, Joseph Urshalmi, Alan Chapman, Erika Tordeus Paraskevas, G. Gousios, Argyris Mpatiskinis, Michael Economou, George Zarb, Dimitris Kasfikis, Jazz, Flamenco and Ethnic Music nights, The Athens Chamber Orchestra Players, and many others. Subjects: New trends in the Guitar Chamber Music repertoire and style, Ethnic Music around the World and American Guitar Music and Musicians. For information: Dr. Apostolos Paraskevas, Att: Corfu Festival, FB 136, Berklee College of Music, 1140 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02215-3693. Email: aparaskevas@berklee.edu, or appar@bu.edu, Tel: 617 747-281. Web page: www.lookfor.gr/appar/guitar/.

🎵 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. For more information call (617) 730-8002.

Saturday evenings 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Alan Lee Wilson performs the classical repertoire as well as some modern and ragtime guitar at The Original Weathervane Restaurant, Route 17 (ten miles north of Augusta, Maine).

Every other Saturday evening

Paul Abbot plays classical guitar at the Zeitgeist Gallery's "Subconscious Cafe," 1353 Cambridge Street (Inman Square). Log onto www.mp3.com/paul_abbot and click on live events for more details.

Sunday brunch, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lance Gunderson performs at Ciento, a Spanish tapas bar at 100 Market St. in Portsmouth, N.H. Flamenco and classical guitar. All welcome. For more information, contact Lance at lgunder@att.global.net.

Sunday brunch, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Alan Lee Wilson performs classical and modern guitar at Lauria's Restaurant on the River in Augusta, Maine. (53 Water Street.)

***** Advertising in the Calendar is free of charge *****

Send your listings to Larry Spencer at lspencer777@hotmail.com, or mail them to: Larry Spencer, BCGS Webmaster/Calendar Coordinator, 1200 Concord Rd., Marlborough, MA 01752.

Deadline for the September-November issue is August 1.
Listings submitted after the deadline will be posted on the BCGS Web site: www.bostonguitar.org



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(continued from page 5)

Eliot Fisk Interview

Q: How can we do that?

Eliot Fisk: I think that the whole morality of classical musicians needs to change. The old model of the traveling musicians of the touring virtuoso of the *Veni, vidi vici* type ("I came, I saw, I conquered" attributed to the Roman emperor Julius Caesar) is today a dinosaur, an irrelevance. A better model for today is the kind of hero suggested by Martin Luther King, in one of his great late sermons entitled, "The Drum Major Instinct." In this sermon, King points out the natural egotism that all of us have. We all want to be the drum major out front leading the parade. We all want to be number one, he says. In fact, he says that the big question of human life is how we marshal the drum major instinct. "You want to be number one?" he asks. "That's great, but be number one in love; be number one in generosity."

Q: So ideally, musicians should strive to be more generous?

Eliot Fisk: I think this is the kind of person one needs to try to be in these days. I think that in his time Segovia was that kind of person. When I met him at age 19, he was already 81. He had no need to open himself up to another young player; he already had plenty of superb students. And still he let me into his life, even answering letters personally. The same was true of Ralph Kirkpatrick or, in a very different way, of Victoria de los Angeles or Ruggiero Ricci. These were all people who gave and gave and gave.

Q: Is it unrealistic to expect musicians now to give of themselves in the way you just described?

Eliot Fisk: But nowadays it is a different kind of giving that's necessary. One of the reasons I devote so much energy to teaching is my great concern for young people of our day who are brave enough to still want to do music as a profession. I've written letters to the administrations of the two major schools where I teach, the New England Conservatory and the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, saying that I think we must do better by our students. It's not enough to just put a diploma in their hands and say, OK, now what are you going to do?" Rather we need to be constantly challenging and helping our students to think about the economic realities they're going to face when they graduate. We need to help them to start to build an infrastructure that can support musical activity once they graduate.

All of us in the international family of art lovers need to be thinking about how we can contribute to creating new economic venues for artistic expression. Audiences for art music in many places are dwindling. It's not that people don't like art music; they don't even know what it is. In too many places it is not even a blip on the popular radar screen. It doesn't help that the economy is down right now. However, if we look back in history we see that the arts flourished in the Great Depression. There

is no reason that bad times have to mean the end of the arts, quite the contrary in fact.

But this will require artists to become missionaries, to become "drum majors for righteousness" as Martin Luther King described it. Young people need to be encouraged to go out and explore hundreds of different possibilities in performing in unconventional venues, in teaching, in outreach work.

Q: At this point in your career, is your idea of "reaching out" something that you feel is extremely important?

Eliot Fisk: We no longer have the luxury of only trying to make good art. We also have to take on the Promethean task of trying to pass on the fire. In Greek mythology Prometheus gave fire to mankind. For this Zeus had him bound to a rock and great birds of prey came and ate his entrails. Certainly this is not what we wish for our young people! Still the Promethean task of passing the fire on is something I try to do in my teaching. I hope my students feel that they should do this too. I have so many wonderful students, young people I've worked with all over the world who are doing so many great things. I'm terribly proud of them, and of course have learned a lot more from them than they from me. ☺



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(continued from page 10)

Nail Break!

Place an ordinary teaspoon over the tip of the finger and under the hooked nail. Hold the spoon in place with the remaining fingers of that hand. This will protect the fingertip from a second spoon which is slightly heated (not red-hot) over a flame.

The heated spoon is then carefully placed under the hooked nail, bottom side up, and against the cold spoon protecting the fingertip. Apply a gentle upward pressure and the nail should straighten out, taking on the curvature of the spoon. Do not apply too much pressure as it may bend the nail skyward in the wrong direction. Practice this with cold spoons till you have it right. Then use a little heat at first so as to not damage your fingernail. If the nail does not respond, heat the spoon up a little more and repeat. After the nail is straight, moisturize it with cream and then shape with a file.

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

Basic strategies for healthier fingernails

First and foremost—be aware of your hands and the situations that can lead to broken nails. This sounds simple but remember that you will almost always lead with your favored hand, the one bearing the playing nails! So if you are doing work with your hands, wear gloves. Don't use your fingernails as tools, and try to get used to using the opposite hand more.

Next, drink lots of water. Not a dixie cup full every now and again—I mean real hydration from within, especially during the

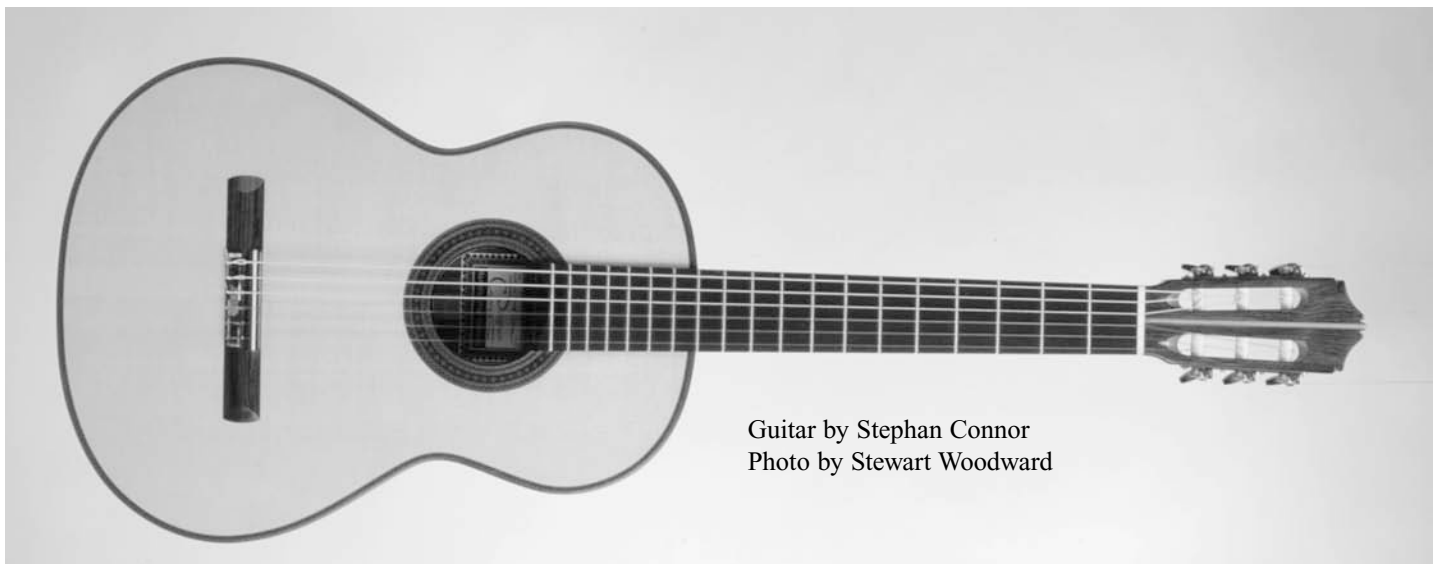
drier winter months. It's a healthy thing to do and necessary if you drink caffeinated or alcoholic beverages, which are diuretics. They eliminate water from your system. Keep a water bottle handy, in your car, at the office, and around the house. Drink several pints (sounds like a lot) per day and you will notice a marked improvement in your hair, nails, horns, and hooves. Your skin will also be less dry and you may even drop a couple of pounds. Quenching your thirst will suppress your appetite.

Keep your hands and fingertips moisturized with a high quality hand cream. Professional hand models use vitamin E oil on their fingertips every night. This will soften the cuticle and surrounding tissue and will reduce the instances of hang nails. Buy good quality creams that are absorbed into the skin readily and don't leave a greasy, waxy residue. If possible, avoid creams with alcohol. Rub a small amount into your fingertips a few times per day, especially after washing your hands, and definitely before going to bed. When rubbing in the cream, start on the nail plate then push back the cuticle. Note: do not play the instrument until the creams have been totally absorbed into your skin as this will diminish the life of your guitar strings and stain the fretboard.

In conclusion, this article was written with somewhat normal nails in mind and does not address all problems. Sometimes modifying your diet may be of help, or supplementing it with vitamin B12. Severe problems should be addressed by a physician.

I hope that this information has been helpful. If you have any comments or a magic formula that you'd care to share, let me know!

Now, will someone please open that can of soda for me? ☺



Guitar by Stephan Connor
Photo by Stewart Woodward

Music Review

Chasing the Chaconne

By Robert A. Margo

At some point in their musical lives, most aspiring professional guitarists, and quite a few amateurs, study the Bach "Chaconne." The Chaconne is one of the unquestioned masterpieces of European classical music, and it has long been a cornerstone of the guitar repertoire. Well played, its effect on an audience is both dramatic and deeply profound.

The difficulties in performing the Chaconne on guitar are several. First, the piece is quite long by guitar standards, with many changes of mood. Stamina, therefore, is an issue, and this is not usually the case on the guitar. Second, the piece requires an extremely secure technique, especially with scales and arpeggios. Third, its musical architecture is supremely complex. Expressing this structure to the fullest requires very high levels of musical artistry.

As a guitar piece, the Chaconne was long associated with Segovia, who triumphantly premiered his version in the early 1930's. Published by Schott at about the same time, the Segovia transcription is probably where most guitarists begin their journey with the Chaconne. Extensively fingered, Segovia kept the original key, D minor, but added bass (and other) notes freely to suit his tastes, drawing heavily (it is believed) on the version for piano by Busoni.

Most subsequent guitar transcriptions of the Chaconne have followed Segovia's choice of key signature. One such version, by the Japanese guitarist Yamashita, eliminates some of the notes added by Segovia but is otherwise similar. The transcription by Carlevaro is fingered in accordance with this maestro's teachings, but is also similar to Segovia's.

Another transcription in D-minor worth considering is by Boston-area guitarist Jeffrey Steele. Steele's transcription may be downloaded from his website for a nominal fee (www.jeff-frysteele.com). Steele adds fewer notes than Segovia and, in many other ways, sticks closer to the original violin score. The fingering is also quite logical and the whole sounds uncluttered and fresh. I highly recommend this version.

To my knowledge, there are two transcriptions of the Chaconne in E-minor. One of these, by Antonio Sinopoli, predates Segovia's transcription by a decade and a half. The Sinopoli has long been out of print. Another transcription in E-minor is by the Israeli guitarist Moshe Levy. This version was published in the March 2001 issue of *Classical Guitar Magazine*. As Levy points out in his accompanying article, E-minor has some technical advantages over D-minor. First, E-minor facilitates proper voice-leading in bar 2 unlike in D-minor. Second, in E-

minor it is possible to use the open B-string as a drone in bars 228-239. Although I prefer the sound of D-minor, the Levy transcription is excellent and worth a careful look.

Another way to go is to make your own transcription. One can, in fact, play the violin score more or less as written on guitar, if one is willing to tolerate some extreme stretches in the left hand and some (very) awkward left hand shifting. But the guitar is not the violin. Bach's own transcriptions show that he freely adapted a piece to suit the instrument. Perhaps the best approach is to start with the violin score and consider carefully the choices made by other guitarists, as well as Bach's own transcription process. Whichever version one learns, the rewards will be great.

There have been innumerable recordings of the Chaconne, far too many to list here. My favorites on guitar include those of Segovia, Williams, and (especially) Barrueco. I also recommend listening to one of the many excellent recordings on violin, such as Nathan Millstein's (modern violin) or Rachel Podger's (baroque violin). ☺



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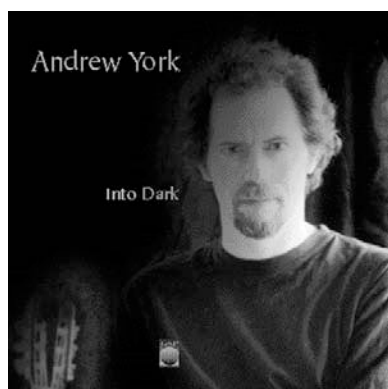
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John Muratore in Concert

By Nicholas Ciraldo



Guitarist John Muratore gave a full solo recital on Tuesday, March 18th, in the Tsai Performance Center at Boston University. Muratore's performance exuded an extremely high level of grace, elegance, and expression.

Starting with Pujol's three character pieces, "*Trois Morceaux Espagnols*," Muratore won the audience over immediately with his technical control and relaxed

concert presence. The following work, J.S. Bach's "Prelude, Fugue, and Allegro," with its relentlessly difficult Fugue and finger-tying Allegro, showed Muratore's deep understanding of the composer's truly profound music. The "*Cinco piezas*" by Piazzolla were next, performed with a slick wit and sensual flare.

Muratore then performed a new work by composer Larry Bell, entitled "Celestial Refrain." With a musical language unique to the rest of the program, the work presented an interesting mirror-like structure. The guitarist showcased this new piece most successfully, not deterred by the demanding score from which he read on stage.

Next, Muratore performed the charming short work by Francis Poulenc, "*Sarabande*." This work, ending with a slow, soft strum of all six open strings, gave a quiet forecast of the next and final work, the "Five Bagatelles," by William Walton. This was when Muratore really came alive, riding through the extreme highs and lows of the playful work with great ease.

Muratore presented the concert as a faculty member of Boston University's College of Fine Arts (he also teaches at Dartmouth College). Arguably one of the finest classical guitarists in the Boston area, his future concerts should not be missed. ☼

Call For Players—Hingham Library Guitar Series

Volunteer players are wanted for the Hingham Library Fall Series, *Sunday Sounds Special* program starting in October.

Take the summer to touch-up your repertoire and schedule a Sunday afternoon from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Several musicians from the previous series are already interested, so don't delay.

Requirements: Intermediate or above soloist, student, or ensemble with a minimum of two 25 minute sets of music. Average audience size is 25-30. Contact George Ward at: (781) 545-7863 evenings or email: g.ward@comap.com.



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The deadline for the next newsletter is August 1.



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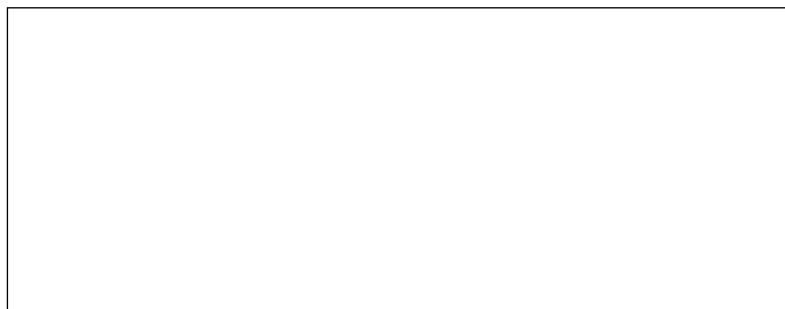
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**"The Generous
Musician"**
Eliot Fisk Interview
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Perspectives

Nail Break!

by George Ward

Natural guitar picks, fingernails, are constantly growing and require regular attention to produce a rich sound. That's why they are a regular subject of conversation among guitarists. For some, maintenance is routine and presents no particular problem. If you're one of these people, this article is not for you. It's intended for the players who have high maintenance nails that split or break regularly.

When it's time to play or practice, a missing nail is devastating. Nothing feels or sounds right when there's a hole in every arpeggio. Three nails are in plectrum heaven while the missing nail finger just swings in the breeze. Even when compensating the finger height over the strings, the muted sound of a fleshy fingertip is not consistent. I envy the steel string players. Broken nail? Just slide on a metal finger pic!

I've been dealing with this issue from the first day I picked up the guitar. Length, shape, longevity, maintenance, repair, you name it, I've considered it! The following information is from my own experience and includes maintenance techniques with some options for dealing with a break. You may or may not be familiar with these techniques, some may not work for you, and some may totally revolt you!

Nail shape and length issues are personal matters and not within the scope of this article. Each of us has a particular nail type along with preferences for length and shape. Articles abound on the web and almost every guitar technique book addresses the subject. My favorite is Scott Tennant's article in *Pumping Nylon*. In it he illustrates several fingernail shapes and how to get the best tone from what you've got. He also recommends, interestingly enough, short nails! Maybe the simplest option is to just keep them shorter?

In setting out to resolve nail break problems, the single most important thing I had to develop was the awareness of my fingers in everyday situations, and to simply be careful when doing small jobs around the house, handling tools, and yard work. It was also very important to stop using the fingernails as tools. You know, things like pressing the thumbnail into the plastic wrap of a CD then prying open the jewel case, ouch! Popping open a can of soda, or jamming your fingers against the door handle of a car. The next time you get into your car, take a close look at the recessed area around car door handle. See those scratches in the hard enamel paint? It's your fingernails in action, protecting the tips and often cracking or splitting in the process, and how many days till your next gig?

OVERVIEW

To better understand the subject, take a look at **Figure A**. It shows the outside structure of a healthy fingernail. Its component parts are: the nail plate, nail fold (under the cuticle), cuticle, and lunula, the pale half moon. A normal fingernail grows at a rate of about 1/10 of a millimeter per day.

Figure B, an internal view of the finger, shows the nail matrix that produces the keratin nail plate. The American Heritage Dictionary describes keratin as a tough protein substance that is a structural constituent of hair, nails, horns, and hooves. Our mythological connection to Pan?

The matrix is the engine that extrudes the nail plate toward the tip and lies under the nail plate and proximal nail fold. The nail plate is our natural guitar pick and protects the finger in the event of a mild impact. But if the matrix is damaged or traumatized severely enough it will affect the nail where it is created, under the cuticle, **Figure C**. So it follows that if you whack your thumb or finger at the cuticle it will create a dent (or worse, a split) in the nail plate, **Figure D**. This could take a month (depending on the length of the nail) to grow out, and when it finally reaches the tip, it will create an uneven edge against a guitar string until it finally grows past the tip to be trimmed off.

Other problems like splitting and cracking can be caused by bumping the edge of a brittle nail against an object, or flaws in the grain of the nail plate from a permanently damaged matrix. Sometimes the tip of the nail will sustain a bang or bump and the force absorbed will split the nail across the grain, **Figure F**. This injury can be painful and may result in the split widening across the nail. Time for some help.

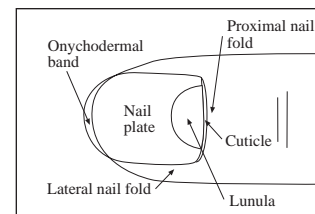


Figure A

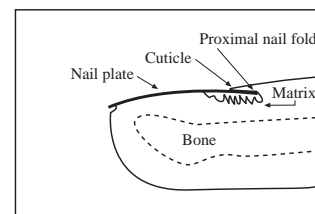


Figure B

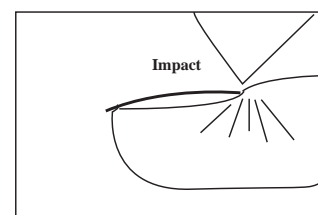


Figure C

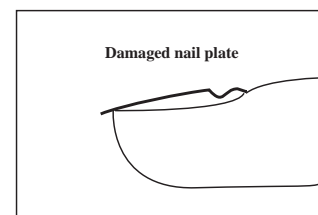


Figure D

MINOR REPAIRS

If you have developed a crack or split there are several options (including doing nothing) for repairing a broken nail. Here are a few suggestions.

Glue-on plastic nails

I know a guitarist or two who rely on temporary plastic nails in an emergency. When you've broken a nail and you have to play a gig, it can be a lifesaver. My reservation is to use them only when absolutely necessary, and remove them as soon as possible. If they're left on too long, fungus can develop between the plastic and the natural nail, and the glues and acetone used will severely weaken your real nails, forcing you to be more dependent on the plastics. This can turn into a vicious cycle. With this in mind, the product is available through music catalogs, pharmacy stores, and fashion nail shops.

Nailene, Fix a Nail—Clear, brush on superglue

This product is marketed specifically for broken nails and I recommend using it over a regular tube of household superglue. It can be purchased at any Walgreen's or CVS pharmacy. I use this on small vertical nail splits or cracks. Sometimes this product comes with vitamin E added but I don't understand how that can be of any benefit when combined with the super glue chemicals. First, snap or press the nail back into place. This will prevent the uneven glued surfaces from creating a lump or ridge in the nail plate. Apply the adhesive sparingly with the applicator brush, **Figure E**, making sure that the glue makes its way into the split. Wait till it dries (a minute or two) then apply a second light coat. Once the glue has cured, use a 500 grit sandpaper to smooth out the repair. This is delicate work; if you make a mistake, use fingernail polish remover to remove the glue and start over. These are fierce chemicals on your nails, so be careful, follow the directions, use sparingly, and understand that even though you've repaired the split in the nail it will be less flexible than before.

Kwik-Aid Nail Saver Kits

This kit is available in pharmacies and catalogs, and provides a thin silk membrane or other adhesive fabric material that can be applied over a particularly bad break. This can be very effective for horizontal, side splits, see **Figure F**.



Before applying, remove the shine on the broken nail with fine grit sandpaper, realign the nail plate, and wipe with alcohol to temporarily remove moisture. Apply a little bonding glue and let dry.

Apply the patch, being careful not to handle it with your fingers since body oil will ruin its adhesive quality. When applied, burish with a wooden stick, usually supplied, to form a tight bond over the split, **Figure G**. Finally, apply another light coat of bonding glue over the patch. If properly applied it will prevent the split from growing and buy you the time needed to grow it out.

Both of these gluing techniques should be done sparingly. Lots of glue on the nail will create a sticky mess and take a long time to dry.

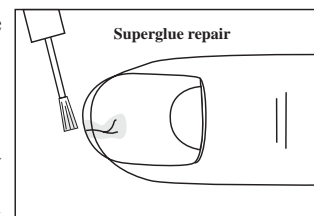


Figure E

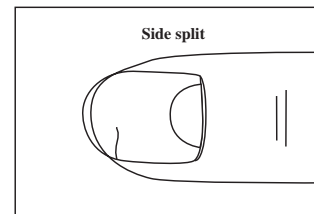


Figure F

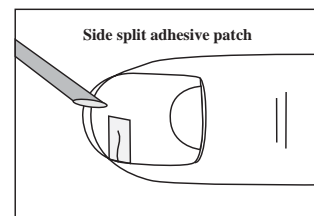


Figure G

STRANGE, EXOTIC REPAIRS

Ping pong ball method (necessity is the mother of invention)

This is similar to the plastic glue-ons but is unique in that the plastic nail you fashion is glued to the underside of your existing nail to extend its length.

Plastic ping-pong balls have a thickness and curvature that emulate fingernails very well. The procedure for creating nails from them is to cut the ball into small crescent-shaped pieces that are the same width as your nails. Be sure that the edge to be glued has the same curve as your nail. There must be enough length to your fingernail to allow the plastic piece to be superglued to the underside. When the plastic piece is secured with glue, shape it with a file and fine grit sandpaper for a smooth finish. White is the preferable color. Florescent orange or yellow will look a little strange.

When it's time to remove them, use a small drop of nail polish remover to break the bond and clean off the superglue. Be careful that the acetone doesn't dissolve the plastic.

Hot spoon technique, not for the faint of heart.

Disclaimer: I heard about this at a recent master class. It's a technique for straightening out hooked natural nails and requires heat that could burn you or damage the nail beyond repair if you are not careful. This is for informational purposes only, so proceed at your own risk!

(continued on page 13)