



# newsletter

Volume 12, Number 1, Sept./Nov. 2004

## Upcoming Events

### Wednesday, September 22, 7:00 p.m.

Olav Chris Henriksen, performance and lecture as part of the MFA Guitar History Series at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The Early Guitar-Part I: Baroque Ancestors.

### Wednesday, October 13, 7:00 p.m.

Olav Chris Henriksen at the MFA. The Early Guitar-Part II: Hybrid Fads.

### Wednesday, November 17, 7:00 p.m.

Olav Chris Henriksen at the MFA. The Early Guitar-Part III: Romantic Developments.

### Wednesday, December 8, 7:00 p.m.

Olav Chris Henriksen at the MFA. The Early Guitar-Part IV: American Traditions.

See the Calendar section for details

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## Letter to Members

Dear Members,

As many of you know, I took a little time off from my duties as Artistic Director of BCGS this spring to make the transition into my new identity: I am now called "Benjamin's Mommy." At the ripe old age of nearly-four-months, our little veteran concert-goer is beginning to allow me to practice again, in short but fervent spurts. As he lies on his play mat at my feet, he encourages me by enthusiastically (and loudly) singing along, and shows me how deeply rooted, how fundamental and exalting to the human condition, music is.

With this new aspect to my life, I find myself with a little less free time than I used to have and thus, regretfully, must give up the Executive Director part of my BCGS responsibilities. We are looking for a dedicated individual with good organizational abilities and a love of the guitar to join our team and help BCGS continue to reach its goals. Please contact me if you are interested in this position.

This season BCGS has been offered the opportunity to collaborate with the MFA in presenting guitarist and lutenist Olav Chris Henrikson in a series of four unique informational concerts over four months starting in September. Mr. Henrikson, an early music expert, is responsible for maintaining the well-being of the instruments in the MFA's fine instrument collection, and so enjoys the privilege of playing on these rare beauties. Each of his four, themed concerts will feature music performed on the instruments it would have been played on in its day and region. Don't miss the chance to hear these magnificent guitars in the hands of a true artist, in a beautiful and intimate setting. Please see inside this issue of the newsletter for dates and concert details.

November brings our annual Guitar Festival once again. The theme of this year's festival will be The Guitar in Chamber Music, and will feature concerts and classes by both local and internationally acclaimed artists. Please log on to the BCGS website, **www.bostonguitar.org**, to learn more as event details unfold.

In addition, we continue our concert series at the Hingham Library, thanks to the continued organizational efforts of George Ward.

I hope to see you at these events and wish you a happy and peaceful fall season.

Sincerely,

Sharon Wayne  
Artistic Director

## MFA Features Guitar Collection in Performance-Lectures

By Darcy Kuronen

The diverse collection of musical instruments at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts is perhaps one of that esteemed institution's least-known treasures. With over 1000 instruments from throughout the world and pieces dating as far back as 500 B.C., it is one of only a handful of encyclopedic collections of such material in North America. What may be even less known, however, is that during the past five years or so, this collection has come to include an outstanding group of guitars that predate 1850. This came about in large part because of the critically acclaimed exhibition that opened at the Museum in November of 2000, titled *Dangerous Curves: Art of the Guitar*. This unique display included nearly 130 guitars, ranging from a five-course Portuguese instrument from about 1590 (one of the earliest surviving examples) to innovative electric guitars manufactured only months before the show opened. Attended by 140,000 visitors, the exhibition celebrated the diverse and iconic role of the guitar during the past four centuries, examining how changes in fashion, technology, and musical tastes have influenced the look of what is arguably the world's most popular instrument. A handsome and profusely illustrated book of the same name was pub-

lished for the exhibition, and is still available at the Museum's bookstore and through its website ([www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org)).

Prior to the planning of *Dangerous Curves*, the MFA's instrument collection was surprisingly weak in terms of representation from the guitar family. But as plans progressed for this breakthrough event, a number of fine and important guitars were identified that were available for purchase and would make logical additions to the exhibition. Many of these were acquired by the Museum prior to the show's actual opening, but several others have been accessioned in the few years since. The MFA instrument collection may never possess an outstanding group of old European violins, but the quality and range of its early guitars is now worthy of bragging rights.

Additionally, the great majority of these guitars have survived in (or been recently restored to) a condition that allows them to be played under controlled circumstances. By "controlled circumstances," I mean typically within the walls of the Museum itself, where a climate-control system limits fluctuations of humidity and temperature to a narrow range. Likewise, these instruments are never kept at full string tension any longer than necessary for a given demonstration, although they are usually tuned up a few days ahead of time to allow them to stabilize. And finally, it is key to have a sensitive (and sensible) player involved. In this respect, the Museum is extremely fortunate to work with Olav Chris Henriksen, a local musician who specializes in the lute and early guitar. Chris is also very familiar with the stringing practices for old instruments, and has a business selling gut strings to early music performers throughout the country. With the addition of each new guitar to the MFA's collection, Chris and I have carefully examined them to determine whether they are sturdy enough to allow a string tension that produces a representative tone. With Chris's knowledge of appropriate string gauges, we have been able to fit new strings to most of these instruments, and have been very pleasantly surprised by the results in nearly every case.

Henriksen has presented several lecture-demonstrations and one solo concert at the MFA using its early guitars, and also made brief recordings on five of them for use in the audio guide that visitors listened to when viewing *Dangerous Curves*. In 2000, the Museum also produced a commercial recording with Chris performing on two of its early five-course French guitars. Titled *La Guitarre Royale*, this CD can be ordered from the MFA's bookstore by calling 617-369-3576. Of greatest note to present readers, though, is that this fall Chris will be presenting a four-part series of performance-lectures at the MFA, which will feature live demonstrations of nearly twenty different historical instruments, dating from the early 1600s to the late 1800s. This is an extraordinarily rare opportunity to hear the actual sounds of a wide range of original instruments that are seldom heard today in concert or even on recordings. The event is cosponsored by the Boston Classical Guitar Society, so members can attend any of these programs at a cost of only \$10, or purchase the series for \$40. Non-members are also most welcome, at \$15 per



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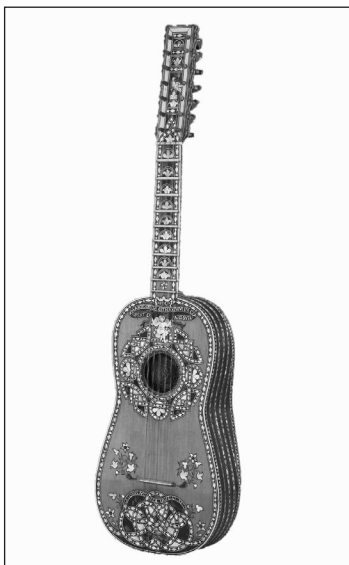
program or \$50 for the series. All of the programs will take place at 7 p.m. on Wednesday evenings in the Museum's musical instrument gallery (near the Huntington Entrance), on September 22, October 13, November 17, and December 8. Admission to the MFA is voluntary on Wednesdays after 4 p.m., so no additional charges apply.

This fascinating trip through guitar history will be presented chronologically, and Henriksen will discuss the music, societal roles, tunings, and other technical features of each instrument. The four programs are titled, respectively, *Baroque Ancestors*, *Hybrid Fads*, *Romantic Developments*, and *American Traditions*. The first will feature five instruments from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, beginning with a guitar dated



Guitar, Jacopo Checchucci, Livorno, 1628;  
photo courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

1628, made in Livorno by a little-known luthier named Jacopo Checchucci. Like so many other Italian guitars of this period, it is extraordinarily decorated, with an ebony back and neck intricately inlaid with scrolling ivory designs. The sound is equally sumptuous, though, and it is almost unbelievable to find oneself hearing a guitar of this age, as so many surviving examples from the period have either deteriorated, been badly modified, or been placed off-limits by museum curators. When the MFA purchased this instrument in 2001, we felt we had reached a new pinnacle in terms of rarity and beauty for a musical acquisition. We were pleasantly shocked last year, however, when we were able to acquire another early Italian instrument, dated 1725, that nearly matches the Checchucci in terms of visual splendor. Made in Perugia by Jacopo Mosca Cavelli, it is a so-called *chitarra battente* that is designed to be played with wire strings rather than ones of gut. The sound is somewhat reminiscent to that of a Neapolitan mandolin, an instrument to which it seems to be vaguely related. The decoration is not quite as refined as that on the earlier



Guitar, Jacopo Mosca Cavelli, 1725;  
photo courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

1628 Italian guitar, but is equally exuberant, its belly encrusted with interlaced patterns of pearl and a rather chubby cherub inlaid just below the fingerboard. These two exceptional Italian instruments will be countered by two of Parisian origin, which were featured on the recording *Guitarre Royale*. The earlier, dated 1680, is by Alexandre Voboam, a maker whose family counted members of the French royal court among their clientele, including Louis XIV himself. The well-known music of composers such as Corbetta and de Visée is a wonder to hear on a five-course, gut-strung guitar like this, which is the type for which they wrote. The late eighteenth-century French repertoire will be heard on another five-course instrument made by Jean-Baptiste Champion, dated about 1790, though Chris will play this guitar with single rather than double courses, a practice recommended in tutors of the time in order to provide a cleaner sound. An additional element of this program will be a performance on a remarkable ivory lute made in 1699. This handsome instrument was made by Andreas Berr of Vienna, and is the type of lute suited to the music of Bach, Weiss, and their contemporaries.

The second program, *Hybrid Fads* (October 13), may be the most fun, as Chris will demonstrate five unusual and rather

(continued on page 4)

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Lyre guitar, Pons fils, Paris, 1810; photo courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

short-lived types of instruments popular during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The most stylish of these is a lyre guitar, which has six strings like a modern guitar, but has arms extending upward from the body to a yoke that crosses the headstock. The appearance resembles an ancient Greek lyre, and such instruments were enjoyed mostly by female amateurs who were following the neo-classical style that was in fashion at the time. Like the majority of surviving lyre guitars, the MFA's example is French, made by Pons fils and dated

1810. A number of other curious guitar-like instruments were also marketed around this time, some of which had hyphenated names, and many of which had chordal tunings derived from the so-called English guitar. During this period, the name English guitar was bestowed on a type of metal-strung cittern to distinguish it from the more normal "Spanish guitar," which is the parent of our modern classical guitar. Using a late-eighteenth-century specimen from his own collection, Chris will perform music written for the once popular English guitar and discuss its relationship to various other novel instruments that were developed in its wake. The MFA has two such instruments in playable condition, an English harp-lute-guitar from about 1810, invented by Edward Light, and a French *guitarre-harp*, made by Mordaunt Levien about 1825. Both bear decorative elements that again hearken to the neo-classical style and would have appealed to buyers perhaps more interested in having a pretty instrument displayed in their drawing room than one on which to perform challenging music. The repertoire for these rather transitory instruments is light in spirit, but they nonetheless possess a unique sound that is enlightening to modern ears.

The third program, *Romantic Developments* (November 17), will include repertoire that should be recognizable to most modern classical guitarists, including works by Sor, Giuliani, and Coste. Though small by comparison to modern classical guitars, the instruments featured in this presentation are direct predecessors to those made by Antonio Torres, who developed the guitar's current form in the 1850s. Chris will show off four outstanding instruments in this program, two from England and two from France. Guitars by London's Panormo family are not exceptionally rare or even very costly, but the Museum's example made by Louis Panormo about 1830 is certainly a fine-sounding instrument. Surprisingly, it is one of the firm's lesser models, without the fan bracing that was so celebrated in their guitars, but the sound is nonetheless particularly free and clear.

Fernando Sor provided insightful advice about guitar making to the Panormo family, so it will be fitting to hear one of his well-known Etudes on this instrument. From considerably later is an undeniably cute octave guitar, probably made in London about 1870 by D. & A. Roudhloff. Called the Bambina model, it was intended for small children, and the MFA's instrument was originally owned by Catherina Josepha Pelzer, who later went by Mrs. Sidney Pratten. A child prodigy herself, Pratten had the Bambina model manufactured for use by her young students, many of whom came from England's upper class families. Chris will perform a charming character piece on this guitar, titled "Puck" and written by Pratten herself. If the Panormos were the best guitar manufacturers in England during the nineteenth century, then René François Lacôte was the most celebrated maker in France. Among his patrons was virtuoso Napoleon Coste, who often requested instruments with additional bass strings. Lying off the fingerboard, these extra diapason strings were tuned to notes below the lowest E to provide some wonderfully sonorous tones in the low register, which are called for in some of Coste's compositions and will be demonstrated by Henriksen. The MFA's nine-string Lacôte, which once belonged to one of Coste's students, has three of these diapasons and a distinctly-shaped wide headstock to accommodate them. Lacôte worked in Paris, but the town of Mirecourt (in the province of Vosges) was another large center for string-instrument making, where countless artisans and their families have plied their trade for centuries. Little is known about the Mirecourt luthier Antoine Anciaume, but his surname is printed on the label of a magnificently decorated guitar probably made in 1840, perhaps for a trade exhibition. Its profuse ornamentation honors the transfer of the remains of Napoleon Bonaparte from his grave on the island of St. Helena into Paris, the so-called *retour des cendres* (return of the ashes). The belly, fingerboard, and headstock are encrusted with emblems and scenes celebrating the emperor's military career, all executed in engraved pieces of pearl and iridescent abalone. The sound is pleasant, though not remarkable, perhaps encumbered somewhat by the rather excessive inlay.

The fourth and final program, *American Traditions* (December 8) examines the early history of guitar playing in the United States, with works by John Coupa, Frederick Buckley, and Carrie Hayden. The abundance of nineteenth-century American guitar music has been largely ignored by modern performers, but this repertoire contains many musical gems that are worthy of resurrection. Three marvelous American instruments will be featured in this program, including an exceptionally fine guitar made by Martin and Coupa in 1840. Steel-string guitars by Martin are justly famous among contemporary performers of rock, blues, country, and folk, but this generations-old company dominated American's market for gut-strung "classical" style instruments from its founding in 1833 until the end of the century. The MFA's recently acquired example is a high-end instrument, its beautiful rosewood back and sides complemented by a

*Continued on page 8*

# Performer Spotlight



## MFA GUITAR HISTORY SERIES

*Performances and lectures by  
Olav Chris Henriksen  
at the*

*Musical Instrument Gallery of the  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*

Ticket prices: Members/Non-Members \$10/15 per performance, \$40/\$50 for the series.

Call 617-369-3306 or 617-369-3341 for more information. Seating is limited.

Advanced ticketing is recommended.

Co-sponsored by  
the Boston Classical Guitar Society.

### ~ Program & Schedule ~

**September 22 at 7:00 p.m. - The Early Guitar-Part 1: Baroque Ancestors**

*Rare French and Italian guitars of the 17th and 18th centuries, with music from Granata, Corbetta, de Visée, and Porro.*

**October 13 at 7:00 p.m. - The Early Guitar-Part 2: Hybrid Fads**

*Unusual lyre guitars, harp-guitars, and citterns of the late 1700s and early 1800s, with music from Straube, Carcassi, Levien, and Light.*

**November 17 at 7:00 p.m. - The Early Guitar-Part 3: Romantic Developments**

*Remarkable French, English, and German guitars of the 19th century, with music from Sor, Giuliani, Coste, and Pratten.*

**December 8 at 7:00 p.m. - The Early Guitar-Part 4: American Traditions**

*Seminal American guitars by Scherr, Martin, and Ashborn, with music from John Coupa, Frederick Buckley, and Carrie Hayden.*

### ~ Biography ~

**Olav Chris Henriksen** has been acclaimed throughout Europe and North America as a soloist on lutes, theorbo and early guitars. He is a much sought-after ensemble player, performing and recording with the **Boston Camerata**, **Handel and Haydn Society**, **Waverly Consort**, **Boston Baroque**, **Emmanuel Music**, **Four Nations Ensemble**, **Les Idées Heureuses**, and **Chanticleer**, among others. Upcoming performances include a Midwest tour with **Ensemble Chaconne** and a concert with the **Boston Camerata** at the Théâtre de la Ville (Paris). His solo recording, *La Guitarre Royale: French Baroque and Classical Guitar Music*, on the Museum Music label, was released in October 2000; his recording of music by Francis Pilkington (with tenor Bruce Fithian), on the Centaur label, was released in April 2003, and he has also recorded for Nonesuch, Erato, Pro Musica, Telarc and Decca. He has lectured at Harvard University, Cambridge; Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City; Musikhschoolen, Oslo; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Aston Magna Academy, Rutgers University; and Lincoln Center Institute, New York. He teaches at the Boston Conservatory and the University of Southern Maine. The **Boston Herald** praised his playing of Dowland and Kapsberger, saying, "Henriksen was able to dazzle with his virtuosity in the fantastical figurations of John Dowland's solo *Fantasy* for lute and Kapsberger's similarly brilliant *Toccata prima*."



# Calendar

## 🎵 Performance Parties

### Saturday, September 18 at 2:00 p.m.

Kyung Yoo hosts a performance party at 20 Maskwonicut St., Sharon, MA. Directions: From Boston, take I-95 S towards Providence RI. Get off at I-95 S exit 10, Coney St., towards Sharon/Walpole. Take a left at the end of the ramp. Coney St. (0.1mi) becomes Norwood St; stay on Norwood St. (1.2mi). Take a left onto Maskwonicut St. (0.7mi). Number 20 is on the right hand side, at the corner of Greenwood Rd. A Grey Cape house with stone wall on the corner. Park on Greenwood Rd. and enter through the back yard. No parking on Maskwonicut.

*For information about hosting a performance party, contact Ben Arditi (barditi@comcast.net).*

## 🎵 BCGS Sponsored Events

### Wednesday, September 22, 7:00 p.m.

Olav Chris Henriksen, as part of the MFA Guitar History Series co-sponsored by the Boston Classical Guitar Society, presents The Early Guitar-Part I: Baroque Ancestors. The performance and lecture will feature rare French and Italian guitars of the 17th and 18th century, with music from Granata, Corbetta, de Visée, and Porro. The series continues on October 13. \$10/15, \$40/\$50 for series. Musical Instrument Gallery, MFA. (617) 369-3306 or (617) 369-3341.

### Wednesday, October 13, 7:00 p.m.

Olav Chris Henriksen, as part of the MFA Guitar History Series co-sponsored by the Boston Classical Guitar Society, presents The Early Guitar-Part II: Hybrid Fads, featuring unusual lyre guitars, harp-guitars, and citterns of the late 1700s and early 1800s, with music from Straube, Carcassi, Levien, and Light. The series continues on November 17. \$10/15, \$40/\$50 for series. Musical Instrument Gallery, MFA. (617) 369-3306 or (617) 369-3341.

### Wednesday, November 17, 7:00 p.m.

Olav Chris Henriksen, as part of the MFA Guitar History Series co-sponsored by the Boston Classical Guitar Society, presents The Early Guitar-Part III: Romantic Developments, featuring remarkable French, English, and German guitars of the 19th century, with music from Sor, Giuliani, Coste, and Pratten. The series continues on December 8. \$10/15, \$40/\$50 for series. Musical Instrument Gallery, MFA. (617) 369-3306 or (617) 369-3341.

### Wednesday, December 8, 7:00 p.m.

Olav Chris Henriksen, as part of the MFA Guitar History Series co-sponsored by the Boston Classical Guitar Society, presents

The Early Guitar-Part IV: American Traditions, featuring seminal American guitars by Scherr, Martin, and Ashborn, with music from John Coupa, Frederick Buckley, and Carrie Hayden. \$10/15, \$40/\$50 for series. Musical Instrument Gallery, MFA. (617) 369-3306 or (617) 369-3341.

## 🎵 New England Area Events

### Tuesday, September 28, 8:00 p.m.

The New England Conservatory of Music, Jordan Hall, presents music by faculty member Daniel Pinkham. Featured ensembles and soloists include woodwind quartet; harp; piano; voice and guitar; and choir with soprano soloist. The program will include Woodwind Quartet, Streams, Irenicon, Preludes for Piano, Book II, The Green Wall, Little Marble Boy, and Magnificat. Artists include The Arcadian Winds; Franziska Huhn, harp; William Wrzesien, of the Faculty, clarinet; Ida Bryhn, viola; Sally Pinkas, piano; Joe Dan Harper, tenor; Aaron Larget-Caplan, guitar; Musica Sacra Carole Haber, soprano; Mary Beekman, conductor. Admission is free.

### Sunday, October 3, 5:15 p.m.

Berit Strong with Flutist Janet Polvino in recital. They will also present Open Studios from 12-5 p.m. in Berit's "ArtSpace of Maynard." The program will include NFA Composition Winner Piece by Lee Heritage (set to Poems of Emily Dickinson) and two selections of Grammy-nominated "Mountain Songs" by Robert Beaser. ArtSpace Art Gallery, 62 Summer St. Maynard, Mass. Admission is free. Please come early and view artwork of 72 artists on display.

### Sunday, October 10, 3:30 p.m.

Sharon Wayne performs as part of the Hingham Public Library's "Sunday Sounds Special" Concert Series. 66 Leavitt St., Hingham, MA. Call (781) 741-1407 for information. Free admission.



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**Saturday, November 6, 2:00 p.m. or 3:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m. or 8:00 p.m.**

Aaron Larget-Caplan and guest Flamenco Dancer, Ines Arrubla perform at the Concerts on the Hill Concert Series at St. John's Episcopal Church, Portsmouth, NH. A Family Program will take place at 2 or 3 pm (check bostonguitar.org for concert times). This program will be an interactive introduction to Spanish music. At 7 or 8 pm (check bostonguitar.org for concert times), a Formal Program will include solo works by Bach, Torroba, Takemitsu, and more; dance works by Albeniz, Barrios, Lucia, and others; and the world premiere of *Tracing a Wheel on Water* by Kevin Seigfried. Ticket price to be announced. 101 Chapel St., Portsmouth, NH 03801. (603) 436-8283 Contact Abbey Siegfried: music\_director@stjohnsnh.org.

**Sunday, November 7, 3:00 p.m.**

Berit Strong performs Paco de Lucia's "Entre Dos Aguas" with a jazz trio featuring Greg Passler, guitar, Matthew Persing, congas, and Manuel Kaufman, Bass. Roy Raz Band will also perform Ethnic/jazz music. Indian Hill Music Center, Blackman Auditorium, 36 King St. Littleton, Mass. For tix please call (978) 486-0540.

**Saturday, November 13, 8:00 p.m.**

Benjamin Verdery and William Coulter in concert at the Wakefield Music Company. Tickets are: \$20 at door, \$18 in advance, \$17 for BCGS members. Wakefield Music Co., 58 Main Street, South Kingstown, Rhode Island. Contact (401) 783-5390, Wakefield Music Company, or Gami Simonds.

**Sunday, November 14, 3:00 p.m.**

Berit Strong and flutist Janet Polvino perform works by New England poets and composers. Works by Heritage, Beaser, Bach, and Rodrigo. Wistariahurst Museum, 238 Cabot St., Rt. 202, Holyoke Mass. Tickets are \$6/\$3 seniors. Students free. Call (413) 322-5660.

**Sunday, November 14, 3:30 p.m.**

Transcontinental Duo, Igor Golger & Hiroko Kajimoto, perform at the Hingham Public Library's "Sunday Sounds Special" Concert Series. 66 Leavitt St., Hingham, MA. Call (781) 741-1407 for information. Free admission.

**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 Comm. Ave, Boston, MA. Free valet parking, no cover charge. (617) 730-8002.

**Friday evenings 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.**

Alan Lee Wilson plays regularly at the Original Weathervane in Readfield, Maine on beautiful Lake Maranacook on Rt. 17, approximately ten miles north-west of Augusta, Maine. His schedule for August is as follows: Friday, August 1st 6:00-9:00

pm; Friday, August 15th 6:00-9:00 pm; Friday, August 29th 6:00-9:00 pm. For more information go to store.mixon.com/alaneewilsonsguitarist or call (207) 774-1374.

**Every other Saturday evening**

Paul Abbot plays classical guitar at the Zeitgeist Gallery's "Sub-conscious Cafe," 1353 Cambridge St. (Inman Square). Log onto www.mp3.com/paul\_abbot and click on live events for 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, ME. (53 Water St.)

\*\*\* 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 November 1.**

**Listings submitted after the deadline will be posted on the BCGS Web site.**

**Thank You!**

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. This fall we would like to offer our special thanks to donor Lori Gayle.

**Congratulations Issac!**

The 2004 St. Joseph International Guitar Festival & Competition, (July 14-18) sponsored by the Department of Music at Missouri Western State College (St. Joseph, Missouri, USA) is pleased to announce the winners of the annual classical guitar competition: 1st Prize: Isaac Bustos (Nicaragua) 2nd Prize: Munhk-Orgil Turbold (Mongolia) 3rd Prize: Nenad Savic (Serbia).

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## MFA Performance-Lectures (*continued*)



Martin and Coupa, 1840; photo courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

solid ivory fingerboard and bridge. With a sideways scrolled headstock and a neck that adjusts with a mechanism in the heel, it is modeled after guitars made by the Viennese maker Johann Georg Stauffer, under whom Christian Frederick Martin studied before coming to the United States. Although much plainer in design, the MFA also has a very well-preserved guitar made in Connecticut about 1865 by James Ashborn, who was Martin's only real rival in America during this period. It will be interesting to hear a side-by-side comparison of two period

instruments from these competitors. The Museum's earliest American guitar is also its most unusual. Made about 1835 in Philadelphia, it is a design patented in 1831 by Danish immigrant Emlus N. Scherr. Called a harp-guitar, its outline might best be described as spoon-shaped, with a long, narrow extension that extends to the floor. Scherr apparently surmised that by supporting the bottom end of the guitar on the floor, the instrument could be placed further away from the player's body and ideally create less muffling to the tone. This six-string instrument is strung in traditional fashion, however, and the sound, while somewhat unique in color, is not far off that of other period guitars.

Although all of the above mentioned guitars are regrettably not on view at the Museum at all times, this series of programs provides an exceptionally rare opportunity to see them up close, hear the repertoire that was written for them, and learn about the rich history that has made the guitar one of the most popular instruments of our time.

**For further information about these programs, call the Museum's department of musical instruments at 617-369-3341. To order tickets, call the Museum's box office at 617-369-3306.**



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*Classifieds are \$10 per issue for a 32 word ad (\$0.25 for each additional word). The fee includes posting on [www.bostonguitar.org](http://www.bostonguitar.org). Send inquiries to Charles Carrano, BCGS Editor; by email ([c.carrano@comcast.net](mailto:c.carrano@comcast.net)).*



# Society Speaks

Compiled by Bob Healey

## Would you like to play on or hear a BCGS CD? Tracks may be either original compositions or public domain.

*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 editor.*

\*\*\*

I could offer a track from one of my already-recorded CDs.

*Jeffrey Steele*

\*\*\*

I'd be very interested in the CD. I don't know if I'm good enough to be a recording artist, though. Could be fun.

*Johnathan Fiske*

\*\*\*

Yes, I'd love to play on a BCGS CD! Just let me know the details.

*Steve Marchena*

\*\*\*

Yes, I would be interested in hearing and or playing on a BCGS CD. In the past year or so I have been "re-inventing" myself musically. My repertoire these days is largely based on my own arrangements of jazz standards. I'm not sure if this is wanted on the CD, but I would be interested.

*BJerry*

*Johnston*

\*\*\*

Yes, I would like to play on a BCGS CD. I have two original compositions being published by MelBay in a book of modern classical guitar compositions due out shortly. I could use one of them.

*Jeff Wyman*

\*\*\*

I think the idea of a BCGS CD is a wonderful idea. I particularly like the idea of original works if they are works which originate from members or were specifically composed for a member. I for one would enjoy the opportunity of playing an original piece, even if just in the initial selection process.

*Bob Booth*

\*\*\*

I am interested in recording an original work that is already finished. What are the arrangements and timeline for the recording?

*Mark Small*

\*\*\*

What's this about a BCGS CD? Are you guys considering making a CD for the society?

*Nick Ciraldo*

Yes I think it would be a great new service BCGS could provide for the membership. The BCGS has used the Newsletter to great effect over the years to create a sense of unity to the lovers of the guitar. Now it is available on-line too. With the new possibilities of the internet, we might also contemplate offering a new forum for aspiring players, to exhibit their playing, or just promote a favorite new piece, by showcasing an audio recording to Internet Browsers. These could be mp3 files linked to a site maintained by BCGS, in which we might, for example, keep the 10 best current recordings, with a brief description. In order to avoid the difficulties of uncontrolled editing, one of us could offer to invite players to a recording facility and create the mp3's ourselves for posting. Such a facility would augment in an interesting new way our existing performance party series.

\*\*\*

I think this is a great idea about the CD. There is a lot of wonderful local talent. It would be a kind of time capsule to future BCGS members.

*Jimmy Lanzillotta*

\*\*\*

*Editor's note: since this is such a popular idea, the BCGS is currently discussing how a CD project might be realized. Stay tuned for details!*

### The next survey topic is as follows:

**To all our experienced players, how about a bit of advice for the new players, students or performers?**

*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!*

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# Perspectives

## Enriching the schools

By Aaron Larget-Caplan

I am often asked if I know how to increase interest in music and the classical guitar. I regularly read articles on the subject that list a multitude of reasons for the lack of interest in music from ticket prices and bad programming, to lack of understanding of the audience who really wants the music to have a visual effect. At the same time I read about the other side, that this is not really a problem, because throughout its history music (classical) has been supported by a minority, as well as being more of a symbol of class division than popular unity. Obviously the latter writers forget that over 10,000 people filed through at Beethoven's funeral, or that most cell phones have a theme by a classical composer (is this a good thing?). While in Rome, I met a man who could not read a note of music but sang, beautifully I might add, the whole part of *Leporello* in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*! The class divisions are there but do not need to be and are very much in our control.

With the advent of cable and video games, the push for the sports and extra-curricular activities, and a general lack of funding and outside support, learning and listening (not as background) to music has taken a back seat in the lives of kids and adults. It is not surprising, though, when a kid can buy a computer program that allows him to make the *sounds* of instruments without any prior knowledge or study of music. This is interesting and also scary to me, for the art of a musician is not just in the performance, but also the love and the challenge of the daily discipline, self-criticism, and learning that allows for the joy and success of performance; the process. Technology can be a great tool that I believe can have an exciting effect on music, but like pizzicato, it cannot replace the sound of flesh and nail on strings. I do not know the perfect answer to lighting the desire for classical music and especially the fire of the classical guitar, but I do know that once a student hears some of the music they want more. In my humble opinion, we caress one of the most beautiful, soulful and popular instruments ever played that at one time is intimidating by its technique and power, and then addictive and inviting in its sound. Since I was 19 I have worked to bring this instrument to students, schools and other places that might not have the exposure (which leaves a lot of opportunity). This article looks at what a school show is and its make-up, why it is important, and the benefits of it to the musician.

### What is a school show?

Some artists call them *art in educational programs*, *cultural programs*, *Informances* (thank you Berit Strong), and *assembly shows*, etc. Whichever title you prefer, a performance for students is a concert that should be challenging and interactive, entertaining and educational, and most of all not boring. The artists who perform in schools range from storytellers and dancers, to puppeteers and string quartets or anything else you can imagine. (I once saw a man play a Didgeridoo from Australia in a school show!) Some

shows are more entertaining and others more educational. Most importantly it should be a wonderful experience for both audience and performer(s), and should be seen as an opportunity to share the arts and make a living. The spiritual and the mundane, the Yin and Yang, the balance for a perfect harmony and balance as we see it is always about music: the greatest harmony.

### Show Break-down:

Most of the breakdown varies greatly from each performance's group, for each can change in regards to group size, materials (drums, etc), space needed (dancers, brass ensembles), etc. For this article I will present some suggestions for a single guitarist.

- Time: 45-55 min./show, arrive 20 min. early for setup & warm-up.
- Audience of 10-150 students (I keep it small because it is hard to keep the attention if someone cannot see what is going on. Always have a teacher on hand (this is not babysitting).
- Visual aid (map, posters, etc), 60% music and 40% talking: stories, questions, rhythm and technique games, etc.
- Usually set in gym, cafeteria, library, or even outside.
- Amplifier. Lots of times I do not use it, but if I do not have it and I need it, it can be very bad and painful for everyone.
- Musical choices that, at one time, do not exceed 3-4 min. For longer pieces I play sections and then put them together.

The program need not be full of kids' music. Actually, I find the more challenging, exciting, and just interesting the music, the more engaged the students are. I had a conversation with David Starobin about this, for I found Apostolos Paraskevas's *The Chase Dance*, which Starobin recorded, to be quite successful in certain school shows, and he whole-heartedly agreed. Elliott Carter's *Shard* is another perfect piece. It is exciting, visually fun to watch, and a challenge to the listener whether or not you mention Metric Modulation (for most I would not).

### Show Requirements

**Be creative:** It can be a formal concert, but I advise against it. This is not just a concert but an opportunity to teach using sound, stories, games and anything else you can to inspire the students.

**Talk to the students:** It is probably a guarantee that you know more than them, but that does not matter. Invite them in and teach as a person in love with a vision who wants to share it.

**Have a Theme:** If it is animals, a story, or Mexico, love it and find the music to support it. Or find the theme to support your music!

**Diverse program:** Not all the students will love fast pieces—diversify. Know your pieces well enough that you can edit, for not everything works all the time. Listen to Pete Seeger's children's concerts: he could change on a dime.

**Have fun:** If you know you do not like uncomfortable situations, not always receptive audiences, or younger kids, don't put yourself through this! If you do, love it!! They will sense it and want to understand why you do and join in.

**Spirit of Spain:** . I, Torroba; *Flamenco piece; Cancion de Cuna, Brouwer; Asturias (part I), Albeniz; La Primavera w/guest narrator (Platero Y Yo), Castelnuovo-Tedesco; other works Sevillana, Turina; Canarios, Sanz.*

### Is this important?

I approach school shows from the idea that if I can connect my music with something students already have an idea about, then I can entice them to listen to something they might not have cared about. This is a lesson for all concerts. A concert that does not connect with a soul or push any buttons is a failure even with technical perfections, for a computer could do it. Students are sponges that want to see what is possible in life, and through your stories and questions the students get ideas about you *and* music. I did not know it was possible to play the classical guitar until I saw and heard Segovia play *Asturias* in a video we watched in my sophomore Spanish class. I thought The Doors wrote the theme!

There is an electricity in a live performance that is created by both audience and performer. This communication that inhabits a higher goal is what, I believe, makes music addictive and will inspire others to listen and maybe even partake in study. Every culture is based in sound. Writing and symbols always came later. Whether it is the Indian esthetic of *Rasa* (music inhabits a place between the gods and Earth), or Plato's idea of a rounded education, life without hearing and understanding is like a dish without salt—it will feed you but it will miss the salt of life: *Le sel de la vie! Le je ne sais quoi?* What is lacking? This is bad for music and more importantly for society.

### Education – theme

The educational aspects of the shows are the most important, for the students are there to learn about the guitar, you, and your theme of choice. Pick a goal of what you want the students to learn with each piece of music. You can have something musical about the instrument and another about your theme. This creates the bridge to entice them to the guitar. Example: Mov. I of the Sonatina by Torroba:

Musical goals: Introduce rhythms and the musical stories in music

Education Goals: Introduce Spain's geography and landscapes of castles and predominance of the horse.

One theme I have used recently is, *The Spirit of Spain*. This theme allows me to teach about history, literature, cultures and identity, and play some great music. I enjoy cultural themes, because it is well suited for the instrument, students may not know much about it, and once students have a bit of understanding and taste of another culture they can then bring their compassion and curiosity to that culture, creating relations that go beyond money and cultural intolerance, but towards sharing, individualism, and listening. For the *Spirit of Spain*, I use the thick and colorful poetry of Lorca, the tripping of Don Quixote (many students know him), the castles and horse of Andalusia, the cultural juxtaposition of Jew, Muslim, Christian, and more. All of this creates a picture that is seasoned to another level. The music can stand alone, but understanding sometimes does not.

### Benefits as a musician

At the New England Conservatory, Eliot Fisk always encouraged his students to perform as much as possible and in settings that are not always conducive to it. My favorite being, if you want to play *Asturias*, go to the subway and play all day long and one will play it better by the end of the day. Both David Leisner and Fisk performed musical stays in places where people did not have a fine musical background. This was both a challenge to the audience in that they did not know the music, but more so to the performers who needed to work a bit extra to create programs that can stand with audiences that do not have the background. It made them stronger performers.

Students will not wait to tell you they are bored. Younger students might start fidgeting, older students start talking. Teachers are there to help focus, but the performer has the most weight: don't give them a chance to be bored. Another benefit that often goes unsaid in public is Money. As often as schools do not have money for books or new computers they are often (not all) allocated money for enrichment programs.

When bills are paid, music played and students satisfied, it really comes down to the greater goal of: are the people who need to hear, feel and experience this music hearing it? Though performances in school venues at least one part of this greater goal is coming true.

### Author

Aaron Larget-Caplan has performed in schools shows as a soloist and with the Borromeo String Qt., singers, flamenco dancers, and cellists. A former roster artist with Young Audiences of Massachusetts, he received select recognition for his Artist in Residence at Holland Elementary School from NEC. Teachers include David Leisner and Eliot Fisk, and Dima Goryachev. Read more at his web site: [www.alarget-caplan.org](http://www.alarget-caplan.org).

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