

newsletter

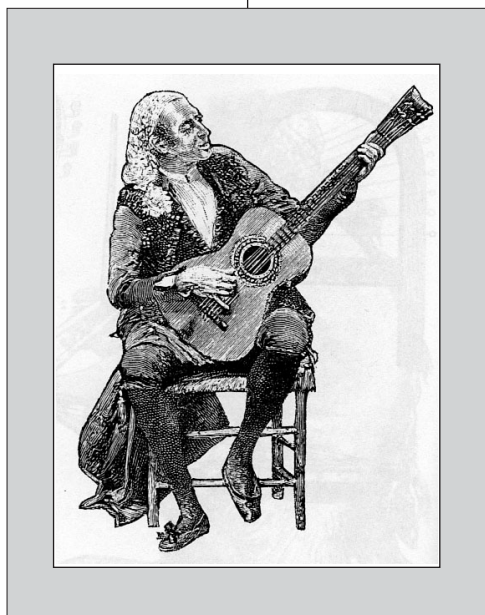
Letter to Members

When I look back at this season in years to come, I'm sure that my most vivid memory will be of crawling around on the floor at Logan Airport with Eleftheria Kotzia, searching for one precious sliver of thumbnail that, upon coming unglued, seized the opportunity to liberate itself from the guitar world. It could be anywhere by now. The Caribbean perhaps.

Ellie, and her Romanillos, survived the trauma like true professionals and presented Boston with an outstanding performance and masterclass.

This has been a good season for the BCGS. Our membership increased, we received two grants and expanded our advertising revenue to help us meet our financial goals. Several members also showed their support by contributing an extra few dollars along with their dues.

We are ending this season with enough money in reserve for us to begin a modest endowment by investing some of it in a cer-



tificate of deposit. We hope to be able to add a little more each year as we continue to grow. Many thanks to treasurer Rick Oja for his dedication to our financial success.

I have received many compliments about recent issues of the newsletter. The BCGS got very lucky last fall with not one, but two new volunteers who took over the newsletter. George Ward, a long time member and a desktop publishing professional, has donated much of his time and expertise as technical editor. In addition to doing the graphic design and layout, George has found ways to reproduce the newsletters more economically and with better quality.

Gloria Vachino assumed the role of managing editor in the fall, but her contribution to the BCGS defies any title.

She has conducted interviews, secured commitments for articles, added new features and advertisers to give real substance to the newsletter and made sure that all gets done on schedule. In addition, Gloria has taken on many administrative duties such as collecting advertising revenues, coordinating meetings and performance parties and too many other things to mention. We all owe Gloria our gratitude for her tireless efforts on behalf of the society.

We are facing some exciting challenges in the coming 20th season of the BCGS. The Mini-Fest will be moving to a new location. We will also begin producing concerts in some of Boston's surrounding communities with the hope of spreading the word about the guitar society and increasing membership. I thank all members for their continuing support and look forward to the '97-'98 season being the best yet.

Steve Terry

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Treasurer's Report for 1996

Compiled by Rick Oja

Income

Advertising	2, 188.00
Charitable	2, 405.00
Concert	3, 570.75
Interest Income	44.14
Membership	2, 060.00
Other Income	<u>110.00</u>
Total Income	10,377.89

Expenses

Bank Charge	12.16
Concert Expenses	
Misc.	456.38
Performer Fee	1,720.56
Programs	152.25
Publicity	806.89
Rent Paid	<u>775.00</u>
Total Concert Expense	3,911.08
Newsletter	803.67
Postage	875.05
Publicity	35.00
Taxes:	
State Tax	<u>35.00</u>
Total Tax	<u>35.00</u>
Total Expenses:	5,671.96

Total Income/Expense: 4,705.93

BCGS Board

Steve Terry, President	617/983-9588
Rick Oja, Treasurer	603/883-3258
Berit Strong, Spiritual Consultant	508/263-3418

BCGS Volunteers

Gloria Vachino, Editor	617/224-4203
George Ward, Layout	617/545-7863
Silvio dos Santos, Layout	617/536-7247
Alan Carruth, Calendar	617/326-0786
Tom Knatt, Calendar	617/894-4292

Many Thanks to the Newsletter Staff!!

With this last newsletter of the 1996-1997 season, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed this past year. This was my first experience ever, as managing editor of a newsletter, and I am deeply indebted to those BCGS members who worked with me throughout the past year.

A very, very special thanks goes first of all to **Steve Terry** who patiently answered the multitude of questions I had; thank heavens for email—right Steve? Thanks also to luthiers **Tom Knatt** and **Alan Carruth** for scouring the Boston classical guitar scene and keeping on top of performers to find listings for the extensive calendar that appears in each issue. **Tom Knatt** also served as a skillful, diligent proofreader for each newsletter, and cannot be thanked enough for this effort. Thanks also to **Silvio José dos Santos** who worked with me to put together the very first issue last Fall and who has since prepared many of the BCGS concert programs. I don't think either Silvio or I will ever forget our many spur-of-the-moment outdoor meetings in Harvard Square last summer as we puzzled over the best way to get things done!

I thank also all the people who worked to write articles or provide information for publication and am grateful for the support of our advertisers. Without those individuals, this newsletter would simply not have happened.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank **George Ward** for the superb job he has done with the design and layout of a first class newsletter. I have received from BCGS members and others outside our organization, so many positive comments on the 'look' of our newsletter. All of this praise deservedly goes to George. A graphic designer by profession, with a dedication to quality, George also possesses other desirable traits including patience and a sense of humor.... necessary when, at the 11th hour, he is forwarded yet another article, accompanied by a plea to fit it in!

Along with Steve Terry, I look forward to another successful season!

Gloria Vachino



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Contemporary European Guitar Music Featured This Summer in Greece

Written by Gloria Vachino, based on a recorded conversation with Apostolos Paraskevas

This coming July 7-14, the IV International Guitar Congress-Festival will take place on the island of Corfu, Greece. In keeping with the tradition of previous Congresses, contemporary music will be featured throughout the week-long festivities of recitals, masterclasses and competitions.

The theme for this year's Congress-Festival is The European Musical Scene. During most of the 20th century, European music has been eclipsed by the abundance of music from South America, but at this upcoming festival, attendees can expect to hear many new compositions (some commissioned specifically for this festival) and a diversity of styles from different parts of Europe. Furthermore, many of the performances will break tradition with the guitar as a solo instrument, and will instead feature the guitar in accompaniment with other instruments or in concerto with an orchestra.

Interspersed with the festival's musical events, will be theme-oriented lectures and seminars. The expansive topic of contemporary European music selected for this year's Congress has drawn interest from individuals and groups with assorted expertise. Participants will therefore, not only have the chance to hear diverse types of music from around Europe, but will also learn about different schools and opportunities for guitarists, evaluate various approaches and methods of teaching, and debate and qualify the origins of distinct musical and compositional styles. 'It's like a school', says artistic director, Apostolos Paraskevas who emphasizes that all guitarists can benefit from these seminars as they provide a forum for consolidating information that is otherwise difficult and/or time-consuming to access. It is hoped that this upcoming Congress will increase the visibility, accessibility and acceptance of the European repertoire of classical guitar music.

Among the composers, teachers and performers in attendance at the IV Congress-Festival will be Jorge Morel, David Starobin, Roland Dyens, Hubert Kappel, Theodore Antoniou, E. Assimakopoulos, Graham Wade, Gordon Crosskey, Antigoni Goni, Kevin Gallagher, Robert Ward, Voislav Ivanovic, George Zarb, Michael LeFevre and many others. In addition, a number of associations from different countries in Europe will be represented including the Music 2000 Composers Association in Italy, The Greek Association of Composers and the European Guitar Teachers Association (EGTA).

Applications are still being accepted for the guitar performance competition. The choice of program for the competition is open; provided the pieces are selected from 20th century repertoire. Cash prizes and an invitation to the 1999 Festival will be awarded to the winners. In addition, Harold Alan Chapman will present a guitar valued at \$4,000 to the first place winner.

This year's Congress-Festival is under the auspices of several institutions and organizations including the Ionian University, the Greek Ministry of Culture, the Greek Composers' Association, the Municipality of Corfu and the Hellenic Music Association. Apostolos Paraskevas, a BCGS member and doctoral student at Boston University is the Congress-Festival's Artistic Director and Leonidas Kanaris, its chairman. The IV Guitar Congress-Festival is also a recipient of a grant from the D'Addario Foundation.

Although the week will be filled with guitar-related activities, there will be ample time to enjoy the beauty of the island of Corfu, which is steeped in history. Located in the Ionian Sea, Corfu has been invaded and occupied by many civilizations throughout history. The town of old Corfu where the festival is held, was at one time a fortress-state whose inhabitants lived within its walls. The Old Fort, built on the foundations of an earlier Byzantine castle was reinforced and expanded by the Venetians in 1546 and today is the largest "living" medieval town preserved in Greece with winding streets, cobblestone alleyways and graceful churches.

Graham Wade reviewing the III Congress-Festival for Classical Guitar Magazine commented on the 'sheer beauty of the landscape' and described the Festival as 'splendidly varied' and 'an unforgettable and inspiring occasion'.

For all of those interested in experiencing this unique event, contact Apostolos Paraskevas by phone/FAX: (617) 393-0105 or by email: appar@acs.bu.edu

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BCGS Volunteer Opportunities



BCGS is constantly on the look-out for new volunteers!

If you have thought about helping out, but think you do not have the skills or the time...you do and you can! All of the current volunteer staff work full time jobs and yet all of us find that the benefits of helping out compensate for the time expended. Volunteering is a great way to meet other members and to feel more connected with BCGS.

There are a number of volunteer opportunities and all help is welcomed, whether it be on a temporary or long-term basis.

Some activities require only minimal effort. These include:

Postcard mailings

Prior to BCGS-sponsored events, postcards are sent out to members. Volunteers are needed to affix mailing labels and stamps to the postcards and deposit them in a mail box.

Posting concert flyers

In order to notify communities of BCGS-sponsored events, flyers announcing events need to be posted in music stores and other locales (libraries, schools, etc.)

Helping at concerts

Help is always needed at the admissions table, selling tickets, handing out programs, signing up new members, etc.

Volunteers receive free concert admission!

Some tasks consume more time (and require a computer), but happen only intermittently throughout the year. Among these are:

Preparing concert flyers, postcards, programs

Maintaining the membership list.

This list includes peoples' names, home and email addresses, phone numbers and membership status.

Other projects for which people are needed include grant writing and fund raising, but require some expertise. Anyone having these skills would be of immense value to the society.

Newsletter articles

To ensure the continued success of our newsletter, articles relating to the classical guitar are needed on a regular basis. All of you who subscribe by email to the classical guitar mailing list have seen the variety of topics of interest to players. These include commentaries on composers, learning and playing methods, memorization techniques, what to be aware of when purchasing a new guitar, and the list goes on. Articles from BCGS members with knowledge and expertise on these and other subjects would diversify and enhance the newsletter. In addition, reviews of new CDs, local guitar concerts, emerging performers, etc., would be welcomed.

If you would like to find out more about any of the above activities, come to a BCGS monthly meeting! See the calendar for more details or call Steve Terry (617) 983-9588 or Gloria Vachino (617) 224-4203.



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Eleftheria Kotzia in Concert at The Boston Conservatory

by Bill Glenn



For melodic delicacy and sweetness there is no match for a woman guitarist. Eleftheria Kotzia's strong rhythm and soft yet clear tones balanced well on her Romanillos guitar. Her program featured music not often heard from Greece and South America. *Serões e Batucada* by Brazilian Isaías Sávio began the evening's suave performance. Her rather hypnotic interpretation and smooth glissandi were

astounding. The *South American Suite* by Argentine composer Hector Ayala featured six pieces, each in a style originating from a South American nation. *Four Traditional Greek Dances* had a strong Mediterranean pulse and intricate melodies ranging from plain to exotic with bouzouki-like flourishes. Mikis Theodorakis' *Four Epitaphs* were inspired by the Greek poet Yannis Ritsos musically depicting civil struggle and death in early 20th century Greece. The first two lighter hearted movements led to a more deeply tragic epitaph followed by a rousing and sentimental concluding movement. A change in the program from Rodrigo's *Invocation y Danza* to some relatively new music by the Puerto Rican composer Ernesto Cordero was interesting. His *Tres Piezas Negras* might be described as Brouwer-like, with crossed upper string percussive effects and golpe with a real Caribbean beat. *The Sound of Bells* by Pernambuco had a quick and refreshing tempo; very cleanly played. *The Tangos Verano Porteño* by Astor Piazzolla, creator of the *Nuevo Tango in Paris*, and *Tango en Skai* by Roland Dyens maintained a relaxed and mellow feel despite the great technical demands of these works. Eleftheria Kotzia brought out the haunting lyricism of *Se Ela Perguntar* by Dilermando Reis for an encore.

The third of the BCGS' triumvirate of Greek women guitarists this season, it was clear why Eleftheria's calmly involved and sophisticated guitar style has won her many prizes internationally.



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Concert Review: Igor Golger and Hiroko Kajimoto

by John Morgan



With such a rich, well-blended musical sound, it was obvious that Hiroko Kajimoto and Igor Golger had spent significant time preparing their program.

Kajimoto, a flutist, and Golger, a guitarist, played for a receptive audience of twenty-two people at The Luthier's Workshop ("Sympathy Hall") on Saturday evening, April 19, 1997. The duo began with Gershwin's *Piano Preludes*, a piece towards which

I had always felt indifferent until hearing this rendition, and followed with Astor Piazzolla's *History of Tango*, a difficult piece performed skillfully.

Golger, who was performing on a guitar he made himself, proved his power of concentration when a member of the audience mistook a pause before Agustin Barrios' *La Catedral* as an intermission and caused a mild ruckus.

After telling the audience, "Don't be scared!" Kajimoto performed *Voice for Solo Flute* by Toru Takemitsu, a piece of many different colors. With a montage of madness, this is a difficult piece that only a live performance can make one appreciate. And, yes, I was scared!

One of the pieces, *Dances in the Madhouse* by David Leisner, I found a bit boring. However, as Golger said later, "It may be one of those pieces that is more interesting for the performers than the audience!"

The last two pieces of the evening restored my interest and entertainment—Yoko Sugihara's *Contours de la Nuit* and *Paçoca (Chôro)* by Celso Machado. The Brazilian dance piece *Paçoca* was well suited for this instrumental combination and was by far my favorite piece of the night.

Following the concert, I caught up with the performers. Rather than dwell on their individual presentations, they each stressed what they learned from each other. "We had fun—I learned how to breathe from Hiroko," said Golger. Kajimoto remarked, "Igor taught me so much about musicality."

In this day, it is refreshing to find performers putting each other before themselves.

Hiroko Kajimoto is principal flute with The Boston Conservatory Orchestra. She is currently a Graduate Performance Certificate candidate at The Boston Conservatory and studies with Marianne Gedigian. A 1996 graduate of The Boston Conservatory, Igor Golger builds guitars and has studied with William Buonocore and Olav Chris Henriksen.

B C G S C a l e n d a r

BCGS SPRING/SUMMER 1997 CALENDAR EVENTS:

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 2:00 P.M.

BCGS Open Board Meetings

186 Arborway, Jamaica Plain. Call Steve Terry at (617) 983-9588 for more information.

All members and interested parties are invited to attend!!

PERFORMANCE PARTIES:

SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 3:00 P.M.

Berit Strong, 271 School St., Acton.

Call (508) 263-3418 for more information.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 13, 2:00 P.M.

The Luthier's Workshop,

Call Tom Knatt at (617) 894-4292 for more information.

NEW ENGLAND AREA CALENDAR EVENTS:

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 11:00 A.M.

Duo Live Oak with **Frank Wallace** (baritone, 19th century guitar) and **Nancy Knowles** (soprano) perform *Schubert's Serenade* with music by Schubert, Mertz and Regondi at the Boston Center for Adult Education, 5 Commonwealth Ave., Boston. This concert is a concurrent event of the Boston Early Music Festival. Call (603) 588-6121 for more information.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 12:00 NOON

Duo Maresienne: Carol Lewis (treble and bass viola da gamba) and **Olav Chris Henriksen** (lute and theorbo) perform *Le Tresor d'Orphée*: French Renaissance and Baroque instrumental music with works by Guédron, Du Caurroy, de Visée, Marais, Forqueray, and others in the Concert Room at The Boston Conservatory, 8 The Fenway, Boston. This concert is a concurrent event of the Boston Early Music Festival. (617) 776-8688. Admission: \$10/\$7.

SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 12:00 NOON

Duo Live Oak with **Frank Wallace** and **Nancy Knowles** (voices, flute, gittern, oud, saz) and **Mary Graham** (Gothic harp) perform *Pilgrimages, Songs of Medieval Spain* at Lindsey Chapel, Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury St., Boston. This concert is a concurrent event of the Boston Early Music Festival. Call (603) 588-6121 for more information.

TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 12:15 P.M.

Glorianne Collver-Jacobson plays *Danças Brasileiras - Chôros, Samba e Valsas*, a program of Brazilian guitar music featuring works by Villa Lobos, Garoto, Savio, Powell, and Reis at King's Chapel, 58 Tremont Street, (corner of Tremont & School Streets, opposite the Parker House, midway between the Park Street & Government Center MBTA Stations). Suggested donation: \$2; all contributions given directly to the musicians. For further information, please call (617) 227-2155.

TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 8:00 P.M.

Duo Maresienne: Carol Lewis (treble and bass viola da gamba) and **Olav Chris Henriksen** (lute and theorbo) perform *Le Tresor d'Orphée* (see program 6/11/97) at St. Peter's Church, Weston. (617) 625-1898. Admission: \$12/\$8.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 8:00 P.M.

Duo Maresienne: Carol Lewis (treble and bass viola da gamba) and **Olav Chris Henriksen** (lute and theorbo) perform *Le Tresor d'Orphée* (see program 6/11/97) at Pilgrim Church, North Weymouth. (617) 625-1898. Admission: \$12/\$8.

THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 8:00 P.M.

Duo Maresienne: Carol Lewis (treble and bass viola da gamba) and **Olav Chris Henriksen** (lute and theorbo) perform *Le Tresor d'Orphée* (see program 6/11/97) at Lindsey Chapel, Emmanuel Church, Boston. (617) 625-1898. Admission: \$12/\$8.

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 7:30 P.M. AND MONDAY, JUNE 23, 8:00 P.M.

Caetano Veloso (voice, guitar) and group perform *Fine Estampa*; reworkings of classic Pan-American songs at Jordan Hall. For more information contact: Marlon Catao, Producer, Duodecimo Performances, MBC Productions (617) 262-9997) or email 102172.414@compuserve.com For tickets call (617) 536-2412. Admission: \$40/\$35/\$30.

TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2 P.M.

Robert Ward with Music at Eden's Edge. Music by Seiber (Four Medieval French Songs), Paganini (Quartet No. 2 Op.4), Tarrago (Canciones Populares Españolas) and others at First Parish Unitarian Church, 225 Cabot St., Beverly. For more information call (617) 489-7176 or (508) 768-6229.

FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 8 P.M.

Robert Ward with Music at Eden's Edge, (see program 6/24/97) at Hammond Castle Museum, 80 Hesperus Ave., Gloucester. For more information call (508) 283-7673.

SUNDAY, JUNE 29, 5 P.M.

Robert Ward with Music at Eden's Edge, (see program 6/24/97) at St. Paul's Church, 166 High St., Newburyport (Rte. 1A). For more information call (617) 489-7176 or (508) 768-6229.

FRIDAY, JULY 18, 8:00 P.M.

Jose Lezcano and Berit Strong play guitar duos and solos at Harvey Wheeler Community Center, 1276 Main Street, West Concord, Mass. Call (603) 352-4397 for more information.

FRIDAY, JULY 25, 8:00 P.M.

Jose Lezcano, performs a solo guitar recital featuring the music of Brouwer, Pazmino, Murcia, and Zarate, at First Congregational Church of Stockbridge, Stockbridge, MA. Call (603) 352-4397 for more information.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 8:00 P.M.

Jose Lezcano and Berit Strong play guitar duos and solos at Horace Mann Auditorium, Bridgewater State College, 131 Summer Street, Bridgewater, Mass. Call (508) 263-3418 for more information.

Upcoming Guitar Festivals/Competitions/Masterclasses

MAY 12-JUNE 11

Flamenco Dance and Music Workshop 1997 with artistic director, Omayra Amaya of Flamenco sin Limites and music director Chuscales, in Boston at the Park Plaza Hotel and the Boston Conservatory. Call (617) 666-8888 for more information.

JUNE 1-5

Masterclass with Manuel Barrueco at the Peabody Conservatory, 1 East Mount Vernon Place, Baltimore, MD. Call (410) 252-1776 for more information.

JUNE 6-11

The Stetson International Guitar Workshop featuring masterclasses, seminars and guitar ensembles with Stephen Robinson, Benjamin Verdery, Ricardo Cobo and others at Stetson University, DeLand, FL. Call: (904) 822-8962 or visit the website at: www.stetson.edu/~srobinso/guitar

JUNE 10-15

Boston Early Music Festival and Exhibition

The 9th biennial BEMF will present concerts, masterclasses, and exhibits by makers of early music instruments. All events, including the concerts listed below, will be held at various venues in downtown Boston. For prices and detailed information, call (617) 894-1333 or (617) 894-1444.

JUNE 10-14, 7:00 P.M.

L'Orfeo by Luigi Rossi featuring **Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs** (lute and theorbo).

THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 8:00 P.M.

The Parley meets the Noyse featuring four lutes and theorboes.

THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 11:00 P.M.

Il Divino featuring **Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs** (lute and theorbo).

SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 11:00 P.M.

Tragicomedia: Festa Italiana featuring **Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs** (lute, guitar and chitarrone).

JUNE 22-29

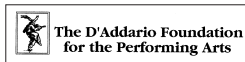
Summer Guitar Building Course. An 8-day, intensive course for students wishing to build a guitar from boxed materials or from a kit at The Luthier's Workshop, 99 Moody St., Waltham, MA 02154. (See back page for feature article). Call Tom Knatt at (617) 894-4292 for more information.

JULY 7-14

The IV Guitar Congress-Festival will take place on the island of **Corfu, Greece**. The theme of this year's Congress is **The European Musical Scene**. The guitar competition is still open.

(See page 3 for feature article). For more information contact Apostolos Paraskevas at (617) 393-0105 or email: appar@bu.edu

The IV Guitar Congress-Festival is a recipient of a grant from the D'Addario Foundation.



JULY 22-26

NGSW classical guitar seminar and competition,

Connecticut campus. Masterclasses with Manuel Barrueco and Benjamin Verdery. Call (800) 234-6479 or (860) 567-3736 x101 or email ngsw@esslink.com

AUGUST 23-31

4^e Stage International de Guitare. Roland Dyens is teaching a week long class on composition, music interpretation and improvisation at Château de Martigny in the Bourgogne region of France. Write: Stage de Guitare Roland Dyens, 21, avenue des Cèdres, 92410 Ville D'Avray, France.

SEPTEMBER 26

First International Competition of Classical Guitar

Composition "Michele Pittaluga", The topic of the competition is the composition of a piece for solo guitar (not previously published or performed in concert) of 9-15 minutes in length. Location: Piazza Garibaldi, 16, 15100 Alessandria, Italy. Telephone: +39.131.25.12.07; FAX + 39.131.23.55.07; email: pittalug@email.alessandria.alpcom.it

OCTOBER 13-19

Guitar Foundation of America International Guitar

Convention and Competition in La Jolla, CA. The theme is **The European Tradition** and will feature performances, classes and lectures by members of the Romero family. For more information write: Randy Pile, 1997 GFA Convention Director, 290 Playa del Sur #9, La Jolla, CA 92037.

* * *

Advertising in the Calendar is free of charge. Send your listings to:

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tknatt@ziplink.net

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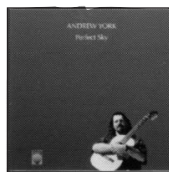
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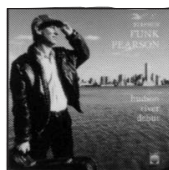
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The Luthier's Page



This column features articles written by Luthiers (and other knowledgeable persons) on the construction, repair or purchase of a guitar. Members are invited to send in requests for articles on specific topics.

Finishing Touches

by Aaron Green

Like almost every aspect of guitar construction, the varieties of finishes that can be used are subject to frequent debate. Which is the best? Every finish devised so far has its positive and negative attributes and, therefore, its supporters and detractors. The finishes I have worked with most often are lacquers, varnishes, and shellac or French polish. These are the finishes most commonly seen on higher quality, handmade guitars.

The purpose of a finish is to seal, protect, and beautify the woods used in constructing the guitar and to slow down the exchange of moisture between the instrument and the environment. Regardless of the finish used, it should be as thin as possible to minimize acoustical damping while serving the purposes described above. In contrast to the violin-making world, it is rare to hear a guitar maker attribute "magical" acoustical qualities to the finish used on their instrument.

There are many varieties of finishes that fall under the category of lacquers. The most popular of these is known as nitrocellulose lacquer. It is made up of nitrocellulose resin dissolved in a highly volatile solvent such as xylene and methyl-isobutylketone. While this finish is used almost universally on high-end steel string and arch-top guitars, a large number of classical guitar luthiers use it as well. Nitrocellulose lacquer is a very hard, clear, and durable finish and requires minimal care by the guitarist to maintain that "new-guitar" shine. Although I have seen many fine guitars with this finish, I have also seen many that suffered acoustically from applications of nitrocellulose lacquer - particularly due to damping of the top. In addition, if they are ever in need of repair, it can be very difficult to accomplish without a noticeable blemish.

The most common varnish for guitars is an oil-based varnish that can consist of a wide variety of hard and soft gum resins dissolved in a solvent with an oxidizing oil added. It tends to be softer than lacquer, and due to the oil, can take a long time to fully cure. Varnish is more environmentally "friendly" than lacquer, but requires more care by the guitarist to keep it looking its best. Again, there are many excellent guitars with a varnish finish, but I have found too many that did not meet their full potential. Although my use of different varnishes as finishes is limited, I have found that they contain too much oil to be

durable enough to not react to perspiration. It is also difficult to apply a coat that will not damp the sound of the guitar while still providing the protection and durability needed. However, to be objective, I recently saw a guitar finished by luthier Alan Carruth using a new brand of oil varnish. It had a thin finish, a very beautiful deep shine, and the guitar sounded quite good.

French polish is often referred to as a type of finish, but is also the term used for applying a shellac-based finish. Shellac is a secretion of the lac bug that is collected off the trees where the bug is found, separated and sometimes refined, and finally dissolved in pure grain alcohol for use. The basic technique for applying shellac is to use a pad to simultaneously deposit and level the finish. The result is an extremely thin finish and, when done well, it has a very deep and beautiful luster that really shows off the wood. Shellac has very little acoustical damping, partially due to its being so thin, and it is easily repaired and restored to its original beauty. It does require a good deal of care to maintain its shine, at least when new. Shellac reacts easily with water, alcohol, and oil from the player's hands, so I advise my clients to wipe their instrument down each time it is played. As it ages, a shellac finish becomes more impervious to damaging elements. Nevertheless, it still requires more care than lacquer and varnish finishes.

Of the finishes I have discussed here, my preference is French polish, and it is the finish I use exclusively. As an alternative, a luthier could consider a combination of finishes such as a French polish on the top and lacquer or varnish for the rest of the guitar. This approach allows for flexibility in pleasing a customer's particular preferences while taking advantage of the positive qualities to be found in all three finishes. However, the finish is just one of the multiple variables to be considered when building a fine guitar. The luthier's experience and knowledge are what finally determine how the elements will be brought together to produce an instrument that plays well, sounds good, and is a pleasure to own.

Luthier Aaron Green constructs classical and flamenco guitars in his shop at 681 Main St., Waltham, MA 02154, which he shares with luthier Stephen Connor. Call (617) 647-9920 for more information.

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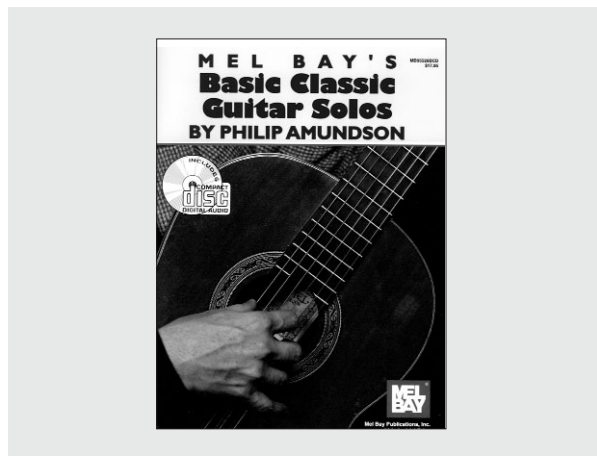
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This book contains seventeen original short pieces in both musical notation and tablature. One in particular, *Solo Guitar Study*, is a wonderful piece with an ethnic flavor. Unfortunately, it is the only piece in the collection that is both challenging and musically rewarding. As a teacher, I have seen this all too often—you find a collection with one or two pieces that you would like to use with your students, but because the collection contains many other pieces, it is too expensive to purchase for yourself or your students. This collection would be more successful if it were published as separate pieces. *Solo Guitar Study* is a nice piece—too bad it is surrounded by mediocrity.

Thomas Knatt

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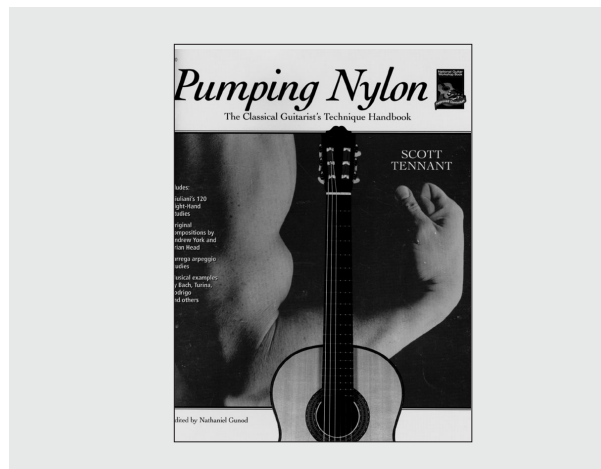
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Pumping Nylon

by Scott Tennant
 Publisher: Alfred Publishing Company
 95 Pages,
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This book is the “bee’s knees!” It’s the most exciting thing to happen to guitarists since sandpaper and ping pong balls. This book acts as a supplement for all of our technical problems.

Pumping Nylon includes chapters on the left hand in which Tennant discusses slurs, the Barre, pressure and release. He addresses the right hand as well—free and rest strokes, tone production and arpeggios, and the book breaks down Giuliani’s 120 right hand studies into groups. He talks about full and sequential planting, and has five pages on nail care alone.

Continuing with flamenco techniques, daily warm-up, tremolo and scales, Tennant has a wonderful sense of humor and includes inspirational quotes from Shakespeare to Yoda. Any time I don’t feel like practicing (which is most of the time), a few paragraphs full of the wit and wisdom from this crazy guy in California helps get me motivated again. This book may not be the answer to your problems, but it is a step in the right direction.

If you can only afford one book this year, make it *Pumping Nylon*.

* * *

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Summer Guitar Building Course in Boston

This summer from June 22-29, an intensive, guitar building course will be offered by luthier Thomas Knatt at The Luthier's Workshop in Waltham.

Students will be allowed to build a guitar from boxed materials or from a kit. The instrument may be either a classical guitar of varying design or a steel-string (000, OM or Dreadnought-style) guitar. As part of the course, talks will be given on shop practice and safety, the nature and selection of wood for instruments, acoustical theory and practice, instrument set-up and finish work.

Although no prior wood-working experience will be assumed, a reasonable degree of manual skill will be necessary. Students should arrive with the required tools in good shape and be prepared to work!

The shop will be open each day from 9 a.m.- 7 p.m. with instructors available at all times. Students will work at their own pace on their chosen projects. Those who do not finish during this period, will have the option of completing their guitar during the regular weekly course offered on Tuesday or Thursday evenings.

The Luthier's Workshop is located in downtown Waltham, next to the commuter rail line from downtown Boston and near several bus routes connecting to Boston, Cambridge and Newton.

There is plenty of free parking within walking distance and a variety of stores and restaurants nearby. Students will be responsible for their own room and board. For more information write to Thomas Knatt at The Luthier's Workshop, 99 Moody St., Waltham, MA 02154 or email tknatt@ziplink.net or call (617) 894-4292.

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BCGS Open Board Meeting

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 2:00 P.M.

186 Arborway, Jamaica Plain. Call Steve Terry at (617) 983-9588 for more information.

All members and interested parties are invited to attend!!

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