



newsletter

Volume 5, Number 1

September/October '97

Letter to Members

I hope everyone had a pleasant summer and is in the mood for an outstanding season of appreciation for our favorite instrument.

This will be the twentieth season that the BCGS has been operating as an all volunteer organization and, in spite of the comings and goings of directors and members, the BCGS has remained a remarkably stable organization. As near as I can tell from old issues of the newsletter, there have been six directors with an average tenure of just over three years apiece.

Of the dozens of concerts produced, a few of the more outstanding names from before I became a member include; Sergio Abreu, Manuel Barrueco, David Tannenbaum, Eliot Fisk, Ben Verdery, Paul Henry, Lily Afshar, Jorge Morel, Ivan Rijos, William Kanengiser and Scott Tennant. Since I joined the BCGS in 1990, several of these artists have returned for repeat performances. In addition, I have had the pleasure of seeing Dennis Koster, Paulo Bellinati, Juan Martín and many other great artists.

As great as the performances are, I have come to enjoy the masterclasses even more. It is interesting that in the early days of the BCGS, masterclasses generated more revenue than either membership dues or concert tickets.

This season also marks the first time that the BCGS has full responsibility for the Mini-Fest. Our former cosponsor, The Boston Conservatory, will continue to host the New England Guitar Competition in November, but the Mini-Fest has moved to Northeastern University. With more space and easier parking, the fourth annual Mini-Fest will be bigger, better and more enjoyable than ever. Many thanks are due to David Sonnenschein, Chairman of the Music Department at NEU, and to Bob Ward, director of NEU's guitar program for making this year's Mini-Fest possible.

I look forward to seeing everyone on October 4th.

Regards,

Mark your Calendars for Boston Guitar Mini-Fest 1997!!!

The BCGS is proud to present the 4th annual guitar Mini-Fest on Saturday, October 4. The Mini-Fest is the only classical guitar festival that takes place in Boston and this year's event promises to be exciting and inspiring!

The Music Department at Northeastern University has generously donated space for this year's festival. David Starobin, renowned for his interpretations of 19th and 20th Century guitar music, will teach a masterclass and perform an evening concert, which will be his first solo appearance in Boston. The concert will include works by Romantic composer Giulio Regondi and several world premieres by local composers. Internationally acclaimed Spanish classical and flamenco guitarist Virginia Luque will present a solo afternoon recital. In addition, several workshops will be held in the afternoon by Richard Provost on *The Art and Technique of Practice*, by Jeffrey Steele on *Making a Guitar CD*, and by John Muratore on *Breathing with the Left Hand*. Both Jeffrey Steele and John Muratore are local performers and teachers, as well as BCGS members. A Vendor Fair will be open throughout the day with exhibits by local luthiers, guitar dealers and sheet music vendors. Applications for participation in the Masterclass are being accepted until September 15th. See the insert page for details on the day's events and pages 2 and 3 for biographical profiles of the featured artists.


Renew Your Membership at the Mini-Fest...and receive an additional \$5 off the admission fee!!

Annual membership fees are now due. Members who pay their dues at the Mini-Fest will receive a discount on the festival admission fee. Individuals unable to attend the Mini-Fest can renew their membership via mail by filling out the form on page 11.

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Profiles of Performers and Speakers Featured at Mini-Fest 1997



David Starobin

David Starobin began playing the guitar at age 7, learning standard repertoire from Manuel Gayol. In his teens however, David Starobin began to gravitate towards contemporary music and became involved with composition students at the Peabody Conservatory. His professional life began, not as a solo performer, but as part of an ensemble, when at age 20

he became the guitarist for the Theatre Chamber Players of the Kennedy Center. His ability to negotiate even the thorniest of contemporary scores made him first pick of the New York Philharmonic, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the new music ensemble Speculum Musicae.

Since that time, more than 250 compositions —solo, chamber, and concerto—have been dedicated to Starobin by an international array of composers including Elliott Carter, George Crumb, Lukas Foss, Gunther Schuller, and others. He has been called by The New York Times “This country’s pre-eminent interpreter of contemporary guitar works”. Mr. Starobin is the only guitarist ever to have been awarded Lincoln Center’s *Avery Fisher Career Prize* and he has also been honored with Harvard University’s Fromm Foundation Award. Dr. John Schneider, writing for *Guitar Review*, compares David Starobin’s contributions of repertoire, technique and musicality to those of Andrés Segovia, the father of the 20th Century guitar.

A path-breaking performer on early guitars, Mr. Starobin’s concerts as well as his numerous award-winning recordings have

presented a markedly different approach to the instrument—often featuring music by the 19th Century virtuoso Giulio Regondi.

Currently, David Starobin is Chairman of the Guitar Department at the Manhattan School of Music where he holds the Andrés Segovia Chair.

At the Mini-Fest in his first solo performance here in Boston, David Starobin will play several world premieres by composers Tod Machover, Paul Lansky, Elliott Carter and Bryan Johanson.



Virginia Luque

Virginia Luque is becoming known for her use of rubato and expressive playing on classical guitar, and a fiery, charismatic presence with her flamenco style. A native of Spain, Virginia Luque was a young student and protégé of Maestro Andrés Segovia. Ms. Luque holds masters degrees from the Superior Conservatory of Music and School of Dramatic Arts, Spain, and

The Juilliard School of Music in New York City. She has toured the States, Korea, Germany, and Spain. She won first prizes in the Manuel de Falla International Competition for Classical Guitar in Spain and the International Competition of Puerto Rico. In January 1996, Ms. Luque received unanimous acclaim from the audience in a sold-out concert entitled *Women and their Guitars* for the Connecticut Classical Guitar Society. She was subsequently invited back for a solo recital the same season. This September, Virginia Luque will be performing a concerto she composed herself entitled *Fantasia Flamenca* with the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra in Alexandria, VA.



Richard Provost

Baroque and Classical guitarist Richard Provost received his degree from the Hartt School at the University of Hartford. Since that time he has concertized throughout North America and in Europe. He made his London debut in 1972 at Wigmore Hall and went on to perform over 100 concerts throughout England.

Mr. Provost has performed and conducted workshops at major festivals, including the Zeven Guitar Festival in West Germany, the National Guitar Summer Workshop, the California Summer Arts Festival and numerous festivals sponsored by the Guitar Foundation of America and the American String Teacher's Association. He is currently Professor of Guitar at the Hartt School of Music.

Regarding his workshop at the Mini-Fest on *The Art and Technique of Practice*, Mr. Provost writes: "Are you happy with what you produce from your practice? Do you feel motivated to practice? Do your performances live up to your expectations? This workshop will examine ways to get the most from your practice, make it more enjoyable, and help you reach a higher level of performance. Bring your guitar to the workshop."

Attendees are encouraged to purchase *The Art and Technique of Practice* prior to the Mini-Fest. The book can be ordered from GSP Publications at (415) 896-1144.

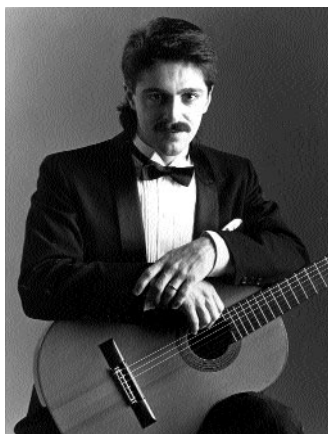


Jeffrey Steele

Guitarist Jeffrey Steele has been performing around New England and has just recorded, at home, his first CD (*Guitara Illuminata: The Music of Josquin des Prés*) for Centaur Records. The hope of sparing others some of the costly and time-consuming lessons he has learned through this project, has motivated him to share his experience with recording technology.

Jeffrey Steele summarizes his lecture/demonstration at the Mini-Fest entitled *Making a Guitar CD* as follows: "Capturing your sound as well as your spirit. From digital recording, to editing & mastering, covering: recording environments; choice and placement of microphones; use of a hard-disk recorder and signal processors; multi-tracking; automated mixing; and how to nail it without killing it."

To demonstrate these concepts, participants are invited to bring guitars and be recorded.



John Muratore

John Muratore performs regularly as a soloist and chamber musician, and as a concerto soloist throughout the USA, Canada, Europe, and the former Soviet Union. He has appeared with numerous leading ensembles including Boston Musica Viva, Alea 3, and the Boston Composers String Quartet and has premiered many new works by composers Dan Pinkham, Scott

Wheeler and Jon Appleton. Mr. Muratore has been featured soloist at the Académie Festival des Arts, the Aspen Music Festival and the Atelier International Concert Series in Paris, and in 1996 he was awarded first prize in the Alpha Delta Kappa Foundation's National Competition for String Players. He has recorded for Arabesque Records and is often heard on WGBH's *Classical Performances*.

John Muratore is senior lecturer in classical guitar at Dartmouth College and is on the faculty at the All Newton Music School.

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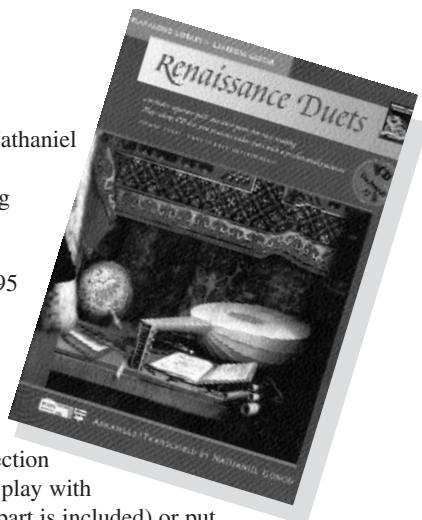
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Music Reviews

by John Morgan

Renaissance Duets

Arranged/transcribed by: Nathaniel Gunod
 Publisher: Alfred Publishing Company
 31 pages
 Cost: \$9.95 with book; \$9.95 CD; \$19.90 book/CD



This is a great idea. As guitarists, we spend most of our time alone, either practicing or playing. This collection is designed so that you can play with another guitarist (a second part is included) or put in the CD and play along. Each part is equal in difficulty. The pieces are simple to early intermediate. There are a few impossible page turns (a problem which is encountered all too frequently). Still, this provides a great opportunity for young players to interact with another musician. Use this book as a reward for all your practice.

Renaissance for Guitar

Compiled by: Howard Wallach
 Publisher: Alfred Publishing Company
 47 pages
 Cost: \$7.50



This attractive collection contains music originally written for the lute and vihuela. The pieces appear in both standard notation and in tablature. The pieces range from simple to intermediate and each has its own introduction. I really enjoy reading about a piece before playing through it. I was very happy to find a collection whose arrangements are simple, yet the music is not compromised.

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Perspectives

Thoughts on Writing for Classical Guitar within Mixed Ensembles

by Frank E. Warren

Classical guitar is a marvel of music. In solo performance few instruments can match its versatility, character, or variety of sounds. Unfortunately, in combination with other instruments, it is often overshadowed. This is sometimes due to the composer's perception of the guitar, yet very often is due to the nature of the instrument itself. With all of its wonderful qualities, one characteristic that the guitar does not share with other instruments is loud volume. This article will address questions and present some *thoughts on writing for classical guitar within mixed ensembles*. The ideas presented are useful to composer and performer within the realm of achieving a greater appreciation for chamber music. The writing of this article was initiated by a composition for the Azerbaijani ensemble SoNoR. What makes this particular commission interesting is the combination of instruments (classical guitar, piano, bass clarinet) and the number of issues that require resolution before writing begins.

What are the problems and their solutions? This is one question for which everyone will find their own answer(s). The important thing to remember is that there is no hard and fast rule. Each solution, by any composer, will deal specifically with that person's own vocabulary and agenda as an artist. How they write, how they understand the instrument—and the instruments in combination, will all factor into the final composition. The instrument itself has much to do with what is available on the composer's "palette," as composer and performer must interpret each new composition with fresh ears and ideas.

For non-guitarists, the first question will probably be: *how does one actually write for guitar?* I began by talking with friend and guitarsmith, Richard Stanley, who helped distinguish between the various types of guitars, strings and performance styles. I asked him specific questions about left and right-hand technique, barre technique, and guitar notation. After looking through a number of scores, listening to different guitarists and varied styles of performing, it was time to consider special effects. For me, this was the foundation for solving many of the inherent difficulties of writing effectively for this ensemble.

With a group of this nature (as opposed to a string quartet), it is most important that each individual instrument, or "voice," has the opportunity to express its own personality. The guitar "effects" alone cannot provide a workable solution for any composition. Yet, a firm understanding of these collective sounds, combined with prudent decisions of their use, will help to identify the guitar so it may be heard as an equal partner (Solution No.1).

The second question: *how will this music take shape?* The only

parameter set by the ensemble (beyond instrumentation) was to write a piece between five and ten minutes in duration. This is too short a time frame for a typical format in three or more movements, and balancing a two movement work presents a completely new set of issues. For reasons primarily created by the (im)balance of the instruments, none of the more traditional forms seemed appropriate for this composition. The solution (Solution No. 2) came to me in the form of a title: **Twenty-three Flights of Fancy: for Guitar, Bass Clarinet and Piano**. Wow, that sounds great! But, if three movements are too long, how are twenty-three going to work? In essence, the music is a "stream of consciousness" fantasia: an idea in transformation with twenty-one steps between the opening and finale. All are connected to form one movement.

The final question: *how to address the issue of balance between such diverse and uncomplimentary instruments?* Volume, dynamic range and fluctuation, attack, decay (sustaining quality), timbre, and the ability of the instruments to blend, all impact on the balance of an ensemble. Discussion here will be limited to these variables. The unique combination of instruments that comprise the ensemble SoNoR provides a chance to hear music in a new way, making it possible to create a system of writing (and performing) that will accommodate these new perceptions. In this case, the guitar becomes the focal point of the creation.

Even in the hands of the strongest players, classical guitar is not capable of matching the greater volume of the piano or bass clarinet. The rapid decay of the guitar sound further complicates this situation. While the contrast and variety of tone between a plucked string and a hammered string (piano) and/or a single-reed instrument does not allow for "sympathetic" entrances at simultaneous points of attack, creating a well balanced sound is possible. In writing (or performing) for most ensembles, the goal is to work toward an even blend of all parts. When working with such a diverse, yet intimate ensemble as SoNoR, it is imperative that we appreciate fully the distinct and individual contributions of each instrument. Blending in the traditional sense is less of a viable option. Instead, what becomes a "Third Solution" is the creation of a work that will highlight individuals, developing a "balanced," rather than "blended" ensemble. This apparent conflict in conceptual philosophy becomes the cornerstone for what promises to be an exciting collaboration.

Available space on this page does not allow for further discussion of my specific choices in special effects. After all, any solution (by a composer or performer) will deal specifically with that individual's agenda as an artist. Béla Bartók titled one of his compositions, *Contrasts for Clarinet, Violin and Piano* - perhaps a piece written for SoNoR (or any similar ensemble) could be called **Even More Contrasts!**

Frank E. Warren is a publisher and award winning composer living in West Newton, MA. He has also served as adjudicator on several panels.

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

BCGS FALL 1997 CALENDAR EVENTS:

BCGS Open Board Meeting

SUNDAY, SEPT. 21, 2:00 P.M.

196 Broadway, Wakefield. Call Gloria Vachino at (617) 224-4203. The upcoming Mini-Fest will be the major topic of discussion. All members and interested parties are invited to attend!

PERFORMANCE PARTIES:

SUNDAY, SEPT. 14, 3:00 P.M.

Tom Knatt's home at 83 Riverside Av., Concord. Call (508) 369-7912 for more information. Please note: this location and date are different from the listing in the May-Summer issue.

SATURDAY, OCT. 25, 2:00 P.M.

Alan Carruth-Luthier. 553 High St., Dedham, 2 p.m. Call (617) 329-9484 for directions.

BCGS-SPONSORED EVENTS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 9:00 A.M.

Mini-Fest '97 will feature a concert and masterclass with David Starobin, a recital with Virginia Luque and workshops with Richard Provost, Jeffry Steele and John Muratore, plus a Vendor Fair. **See pages 2 and 3 and the Insert Page for all the details!**

NEW ENGLAND AREA CALENDAR EVENTS:

SUNDAY, SEPT. 7, 8:00 P.M.

Thomas Noren (guitar) and **Cristi Catt** (soprano) perform love songs of Dowland, Villa-Lobos, and Leisner as part of the Longy September Fest. Free admission.

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

José 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.

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

Jeffry Steele (guitar) performs in the program *Baroque & Beyond* with music either from the Baroque period or inspired by it including Bach's Chaconne and Third Cello Suite; works by Stravinsky, Ponce, Mompou, Purcell and Couperin. Independent Christian Church, Unitarian-Universalist, Church & Middle Streets, Gloucester. For further information call (508) 282-3106. Admission: \$10.

SEPT. 21- SEPT. 31

Pedro Cortes will be teaching a flamenco guitar workshop the last two weeks of September. Exact place and time TBA. Pedro Cortes is a gypsy guitarist, who studied with Sabcas and is working with Omayra Amaya until December. Cost: \$160. (617) 666-8888.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 26, 8:00 P.M.

John Zaradin performs works of Franz Lehár and music from Brazil at LIVE AT THE LUTHIERS. Call (617) 894-4292. Admission: \$7.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 27, 1:00 P.M.

John Zaradin is planning to teach a **masterclass** on Franz Lehár and music from Brazil at LIVE AT THE LUTHIERS. Call (617) 894-4292 for more information or email John Zaradin at 101662.557@compuserve.com.

SUNDAY, OCT. 5, 3:00 P.M.

Somerville Museum Concert I. **Peter Lehman, Olav Chris Henriksen** (lutes) and **Carol Lewis** (viola da gamba): perform *Il Divino: Musical Masterpieces of the Renaissance*. Works by Josquín, Francesco da Milano, Ortiz, others at the Somerville Museum, Central St. at Westwood Road, Somerville. (617) 666-9810 Admission: \$9/\$6.

FRIDAY, OCT. 10, 8 P.M.

John Muratore performs Romancero Gitano by Castelnuovo-Tedesco with the Vermont Symphony Chorus in the Stowe Community Church, Stowe VT. (802) 864-5741.

FRIDAY, OCT. 11, 8 P.M.

John Muratore performs Romancero Gitano by Castelnuovo-Tedesco with the Vermont Symphony Chorus at the Norwich North Congregational Church in Norwich VT.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 14

Eliot Fisk performs at the Dartmouth College NH, Hopkins Center, Spaulding Auditorium. (603) 646-2422.

FRIDAY, OCT. 24, 8:00 P.M.

Ronald Hutchinson and Carol Lewis (violins da gamba) and **Olav Chris Henriksen** (theorbo) perform *Music for Viols & Friends Concert 1: A Variety of Gamba Lessons* with music by Simpson, Marcello, Telemann, Ste. Colombe at Lindsay Chapel, First Church in Cambridge Congregational, 11 Garden St, Cambridge. (617)-776-8688. Admission: \$12/\$8.

SATURDAY, NOV. 9

6th Annual New England Guitar Competition at The Boston Conservatory. See Insert Page for more details.

MONDAY, NOV. 11

Frederic Hand and **Gene Bertoncini** perform solos and duos including jazz, classical, and improvisational works at the Dartmouth College NH, Hopkins Center, Spaulding Auditorium. (606) 646-2422.

FRIDAY, NOV. 14, 8:00 P.M.

David Leisner (guitar) and **Fenwick Smith** (flute) play Ned Rorem's *Romeo and Juliet* at Jordan Hall as part of the Boston Chamber Music series. Call (617) 349-0086 for more information.

SUNDAY, NOV. 16, 8:00 P.M.

David Leisner (guitar) and **Fenwick Smith** (flute) play Ned Rorem's *Romeo and Juliet* at Sander's theatre as part of the Boston Chamber Music series. Call (617) 349-0086 for more information.

SATURDAY, NOV. 22, 7:00 P.M.

Mark Small and Robert Torres Guitar Duo perform at the Court Street Concert Series in St. Pauls Church, 59 Court St., Dedham.

SUNDAY, NOV. 23, 3:00 P.M.

Somerville Museum Concert II. **Olav Chris Henriksen** (19th century guitar) performs *The American Parlor Guitar* with works by Gottschalk, Ferranti, Coupa, Jacobs, and others at the Somerville Museum, Central St. at Westwood Road, Somerville. (617) 666-9810. Admission: \$9/\$6.

TUESDAY, NOV. 25, 12:00 NOON

Mark Small and Robert Torres Guitar Duo perform at Kings Chapel at 58 Tremont Street, (corner of Tremont & School Streets, opposite the Parker House, midway between the Park Street & Government Center MBTA Stations).

TUESDAY, DEC. 9, 7:30 P.M.

Olav Chris Henriksen (lute, theorbo, archlute) presents a lecture/concert: *Il Liuto Italiano (The Italian Lute)* with works by Francesco da Milano, Galilei, Piccinini, others. Presented by the Center for Italian Culture at the Newton Free Library, 330 Homer St., Newton. (617) 332-1355. Admission by donation.

ONGOING EVENTS

THUR. 7:00 P.M.; FRI. & SAT. 7:00 & 10:00 P.M.; SUN. 3:00 P.M.

The **Omayra Amaya flamenco dance troupe** performs in the Terrace Room of the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. Tickets: \$20-\$40. (617) 666-8888.

Omayra Amaya teaches flamenco dance classes at her new studio; 343 Medford St., Somerville MA. Fee: \$12 per class. (800) 88AMAYA. Email: amaya@flamencodance.com. Website: <http://www.flamencodance.com/amaya>

1998 EVENTS (discounted for BCGS members)

FRIDAY, FEB. 27, 1998 8:00 P.M.

The Bank Boston Celebrity Series presents **Christopher Parkening** in *An Homage to Segovia* at Jordan Hall.

The BankBoston Celebrity Series will offer discounts on balcony seats to BCGS members. For full price tickets contact: Celebrity Charge at (617) 482-2595.

COMING TO WORCESTER IN FEBRUARY...

The Duo Assad - Music Worcester Inc. will discount tickets from \$22 to \$17 for BCGS members.

More information will be available in the next newsletter.

Upcoming Guitar Festivals and Competitions

SEPTEMBER 12-14

Rantucci Guitar Competition and Festival at Carnegie Arts Center in Tonawanda, NY featuring Steve Aron, The Buffalo Guitar Quartet and Stanley Yates. Write to The Buffalo Guitar Society at Box 204, Amherst, NY 14226, (716) 837-9398.

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 recitals, lectures, and masterclasses by members of the Romero family, Jorgé Morel, Roland Dyens, Scott Tennant, Bob Ward, Fabio Zanan, and others. For more information write: Randy Pile, 1997 GFA Convention Director, 290 Playa del Sur #9, La Jolla, CA 92037. To register for the convention by phone, call: (619) 459-3459.

Advertising in the Calendar is free of charge.

Send your listings to:

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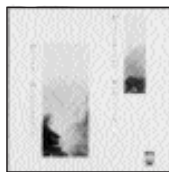
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Perfect Sky

*"Thank John Williams for recording the opening
"Skyline", this is by far the superior recording"
— John Schneider, Soundboard Magazine*



Stephen Funk Pearson
Hudson River Debut

*"A solo guitar with a feeling for whimsy and
very ironic... and a sensitive, unusual originality"
— Philadelphia Inquirer*



Dusan Bogdanovic
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— John Schneider, Soundboard Magazine*



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- Paulo Bellinati (rubenscia Salzman - vocals) - Afro Samba
- Raphael Rabello - Cry My Guitar
- Luis Bonfá - Moods

Also available...

- David Tausenbaum - Estudios
- Paulo Bellinati - The Guitar Works of Garoto
- Paulo Bellinati - Serenata
- Hubert Kappel - Virtuoso Guitar Transcriptions
- William Kanengiser - Ronde Alla Turca
- William Kanengiser - Echoes of The Old World
- Jeff Linky - Solo
- Andrew York - Dénoûcement
- John Stowell - Lines & Spaces
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Narciso Yepes- Memories of a Student

By Janet Marlow

I knew Narciso Yepes as a teacher and as a person from 1972 until 1981. I was saddened when I heard of his ill health two years ago with cancer. When he died May 3, 1997 it was a loss to the classical guitar world and prompted deep reflection of his influential years in my life.

Narciso Yepes was a quiet and reserved Spaniard with a keen wit and an acute intellect. He spoke five languages, pushed guitar technique into the 20th Century, was the father of three children and overcame legal blindness status with great elegance. I asked him once, how he traveled throughout the world without total vision. He said that with his photographic memory he would memorize signs, directions and routes when he first arrived in a strange city.

Because of Narciso Yepes' minimal eyesight, his hearing was highly acute. It occurred to him that in playing each half step on the E string, there were unequal sustained notes because of the lack of sympathetic resonance. This was the first reason for the inception of the ten string guitar. The four extra strings provided the necessary resonance, thus making the guitar a more physically completed instrument. The need for extra bass strings for the lute music of Bach and Weiss also gave the ten-string guitar another purpose. Fingering would be more facile and bass lines could be played more intact without having to be a lutenist as well. Third, the sustain and breadth of sound was greater in a concert hall, and fourth, it was a greater harmonic playground for contemporary composers. These were his ideas as I was told.

Narciso Yepes worked with José Ramirez to develop the 10-string guitar and in 1964 he premiered this instrument in a performance in Germany. The luthier, Paulino Bernabe, left Ramirez' shop after 24 years and opened his own down the road in Madrid. Bernabe started to develop a ten-string guitar with the observations and friendship of Narciso. Over time, Bernabe produced ten-string guitars on which Yepes performed during the years that I knew him.

In 1975, I decided to move from the six-string to the ten-string. Narciso never suggested this to me. We had spent our time on techniques and interpretation. I ordered a guitar from Bernabe through the go ahead from Narciso. In 1977, the guitar arrived in New York where I was living. I spent about a year being bewildered by it, but soon learned the thinking involved to tame the resonance and express its unique beauty. Narciso never heard me perform on the ten-string until the 1981 International Guitar Festival in Toronto. I performed for Narciso on stage, a work that I composed utilizing all the strings based on the Native American concept entitled *The Four Directions*. There were 500 guitarists listening in the audience. Bernabe was at that performance as well. I owe my technical concepts and sound totally to Narciso, which I gladly absorbed over a ten

year time frame. My path ventured artistically with less contact after 1981. I am, and will always be, deeply indebted to Narciso Yepes' generous teachings and friendship with me. There is no sadness here as all students must separate from their masters to become their own master.

I met Narciso Yepes for the first time in 1972, at Juan Orozco's Guitar shop on West 56th Street which was the center of the guitar world in New York at that time. I was practicing the Bach E major Lute Suite for my graduation recital from the Mannes College of Music. I asked him if he could help me with a difficult passage with awkward fingering. He offered advice quietly and graciously. His fingering solution was brilliant and solved my problematic passage. Right then and there I could see that his concepts were techniques that I wanted to learn.

I asked him if I could come to Spain to study with him and he said "Yes, come to Spain between the months of May and June". I was thrilled. I saved the money I needed and booked a flight to return in four months. I, of course, wrote to him saying that I would be arriving in May. However, I never heard from him, not knowing then that he didn't correspond to me because of difficulty with his eyesight. I trusted his words so much that I went anyway. The only person I knew was Sanlucar, the incredible flamenco guitarist, whom I had met in New York. As usual, I took my five years of French with me. After two days of phone calls to his house, he finally arrived off a tour from Yugoslavia. His first words were "I am so happy to hear your voice".

I followed Narciso's schedule vigorously for the next five years to Spain, Paris and New York getting lessons when I could. Always generous, always embracing and always leaving me with intellectual and philosophical questionings, he spurred me onward.

Today, I am one of the few well-known ten-string guitarists. I have recorded five albums, and as a composer and player, I have developed a career in the Jazz field. This was my fate, I believe. I play my ten-string at the Blue Note in New York and elsewhere with the honor of Narciso Yepes.

I believe that more than six-strings is the evolution of the guitar into the 21st Century. I believe that the ten-string is a glorious

(Continued on pg 12)

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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.

The Perception of Sound: Volume, Loudness, and Projection

by Alan Carruth

Most guitar players have simple needs; all they want is an instrument that has the warmth, intimacy, and variety of tone color that attracted them to the guitar in the first place, and that carries that same quality of sound all the way to the back of a large hall. The fact that they spend so much time looking for such an instrument, and are willing to pay quite a lot for one when they find it, is a hint that this is perhaps not so simple a task in practice. It has also become a major source of discussion among scientists, luthiers, and players. Just what is a 'loud' guitar anyway, and how does 'loudness' differ from 'projection'? Is there some way to measure these things objectively, so that a guitar buyer can have some assurance that they are leaving the shop with a usable instrument?

Certainly one can measure what I will call 'volume'; the absolute level of sound pressure that is present in a particular location. Scientists use the curiously mixed unit of watts/square centimeter to talk about how much energy a sound has. A person with good hearing can perceive a sound that delivers as little as .0000000000000001 watts/cm² (10⁻¹⁶ w/cm²), and can withstand a sound that is 100,000,000,000,000 times louder before it becomes painful. Rather than deal with such a wide range of numbers, scientists commonly use what is known as the 'Bel scale': they define the faintest sound that we can hear as 0 on the Bel 'A' scale, and call a sound that is ten times louder a '1 Bel' sound level. 2 Bel would be a sound that is 100 times as loud; 10 squared, and so forth. Thus, our hearing sensitivity covers a range of 14 Bel. This is often divided up into units of 1/10 bel, or 1 decibel, abbreviated dB. (dB alone refers to the relative strength of two signals, where dBA is an absolute measure).

As often happens in such cases, our perception of loudness doesn't really mirror the absolute sound pressure level. Increasing the pressure of a pure tone by 10 dB only sounds twice as loud as the original signal, and a 3 dB increase in level, which is about twice as much sound power, is only just perceptible as an increase in loudness close up. However, because of the way sound carries, that barely perceptible 3 dB difference will still be audible almost 1 1/2 times as far from the source, and the 10 dB increase will carry more than three times as far. So we can see already that the relationship between volume, loudness, and carrying power is not really simple, and it gets more complicated.

For one thing, we are much more sensitive to some frequencies than others. 0dB is defined at 1000 cycles/second (Hertz), which is around the eighth-fret 'c' on the high 'E' string. A pure tone at low 'E' would have to have about 10,000 times as much power to sound as loud, whereas the last fret 'a' can get by with about 1/100th the power. The reason we don't have to pluck the low 'E'

all that hard is, of course, that the string produces a lot of overtones along with the fundamental. Our ears automatically split the signal up when it comes in, measure the loudness of each component, and then add up all of those sounds that seem to be related to each other, either because they started at the same time or because they are harmonically related. So one way to make a guitar sound loud is just to see to it that it puts out a lot of high harmonics. There are several problems with this in practice.

One of these is related to the timbre of the instrument. When it breaks a sound into its different frequency components, the ear looks at the relative strengths of each one. If the frequency that is the least common denominator of the others (the 'fundamental') is not the strongest one in the mix, the sound will be 'nasal'. Indeed, the ear will even 'fill in' the fundamental if it is not there, and this is the sound that we often hear in the back of the hall at a guitar concert. The fundamental has fallen below the threshold of audibility, but the overtones have not because we are much more sensitive to them.

Secondly, the sound that has a lot of overtones in it will not always carry as far as we might think. The ear senses the fundamental and its overtones separately, and adds the perceived loudness of each to come up with the total. If you started with a barely-audible fundamental, and added three weaker, barely-audible overtones, the result would be a sound that would be four times as loud close up, but would only carry a little farther than the fundamental by itself, since each of the overtones would die out at much the same distance. Leaving off the third overtone, and adding the extra power to the fundamental instead would not sound as loud close-up, but could actually enable it to carry farther.

Another complicating factor is that the guitar body radiates sound differently depending on the frequency. Low frequency sounds, which have a wavelength that is long compared to the size of the instrument, tend to be sent out in all directions, whereas shorter-wave, high frequency sounds can be projected in one direction more easily. I have noticed that some of the 'radical' designs, such as the Kasha and Smallman pattern guitars, tend to focus their high-frequency sounds into a more narrow area in front of the guitar. This enables them to project better to the back of a large hall, but there is a down side. Sound that is projected to the front like that is hard for the player to hear. We tend to use high-frequency sound for a lot of our playing cues, such as pitch and timing, and their absence can be a bit disorienting.

There is a lot more we need to learn about this whole subject, but there are still several things that a guitar buyer can do to be certain they are getting the instrument they want. One is to bring a guitar-playing friend along whenever you are looking at instruments, and be sure that both of you get to both play and hear them. If possible, the listener should walk around to get a picture of how the guitar sounds from different directions and distances. Most builders will allow a customer to take a guitar home on trial for a few days, so they can try it out in a 'normal' setting. If you plan to play in a large hall by all means arrange to try the guitar out in one. But the most important is to be realistic in thinking about your needs and abilities. That 'cannon' that can fill the largest hall with sound, and can still be heard in the back row at *ppp*, could very well be a difficult and unpleasant instrument to play, both in terms of the effort involved and for it's sound.

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The BCGS Welcomes and Thanks You!!

Yepes *(Continued from pg 9)*

instrument and has a place along side the six-string. I have had wondrous reactions to it from audiences and guitar players and I have had extreme prejudicial comments about it as well. My final comment is that, in all, whether you are a blues player, a jazz guitarist or a classical enthusiast, it is the human spirit and beauty that we are all affected by. The vehicle through which it comes from is just a matter of choice. I feel that it will be the human spirit and great musical contribution that will be the legacy of Narciso Yepes. From one of your students Narciso Yepes, thank you!

Janet Marlow's mastery of the ten-string guitar has earned her appearances in clubs, concert halls and major venues in the USA and abroad.



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REMINDER OF UPCOMING BCGS-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES...



Boston Guitar Mini-Fest 1997

Proposed Itinerary:

- 9:00 a.m.** Registration begins
Vendor Fair opens with exhibits by luthiers,
guitar dealers, and sheet music vendors
- 10:00 a.m.** Masterclass with David Starobin
- 12:00 p.m.** Lunch/Vendor Fair
- Lectures/Forums
- 1:00-3:00** Richard Provost: *The Art and
Technique of Practice*
- 3:00-4:00** Jeffrey Steele*: *Making a Guitar CD*
- 3:00- 4:00** John Muratore*: *Breathing with the Left
Hand*
(* these two lectures will be held concurrently)
- 4:00 p.m.** Virginia Luque Recital
- 6:00 p.m.** Dinner
- 6:30 p.m.** Vendor Fair closes
- 8:00 p.m.** David Starobin Recital

All events will take place in Ryder Hall with the exception of the two recitals. These will be held in the Student Center.

Masterclass with David Starobin.

Applications for the masterclass will be accepted until September 15. Send cassette tapes to: Robert Ward, Northeastern University, Dept. of Music, 351 Ryder Hall, Boston, MA 02115.

Open Mike Performances for BCGS members!

Interested in performing at the Mini-Fest? BCGS would like to recruit members to play informally in the lobby of Ryder Hall. Students traffic through this area and several eateries are also located here. If you would like to gain some experience performing in public, this is your chance! Contact Steve Terry at (617) 983-9588.

Directions to Ryder Hall:

By MBTA:

Orange Line: Ruggles station.
Exiting the T station, Ryder Hall is the building on the left, set back from the street.
Green Line: Opera Place station. Walk west on Huntington Ave. Take a left onto Forsyth St. Ryder Hall is the last building on the right, set back from the street.
Bus Route 39; Forest Hills Sta.-Back Bay Sta. via Huntington Ave.

By car: (parking is free!)

From Huntington Ave. (Rt. 9) travelling east towards Boston, drive past the Museum of Fine Arts and take a right onto Forsyth St. and then a right onto Greenleaf St. Bear left and continue straight. The Field St. Parkings Lots are located to the right. Ryder Hall is the building on the left.

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Contacts for further information:

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Vals Criollo (Vals #3) by Antonio Lauro.

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The winner will receive a cash prize to be determined.

The application and tape must be received no later than October 27.

**For a complete set of rules and an application form, contact the
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