



newsletter

Volume 8, Number 3

March/May 2001

Letter to Members

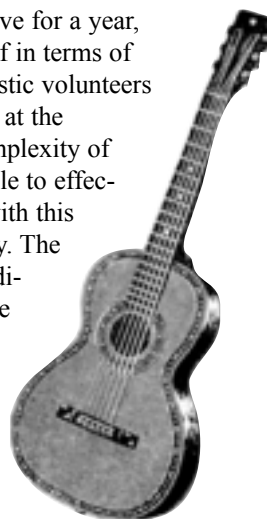
Dear Members,

It has been a great fall and winter for the guitar in Boston. The Northeastern University Guitar Festival in November, the "Dangerous Curves" exhibit and bimonthly concerts and lectures at the Museum of Fine Arts threw an intense, revealing light on our often obscured instrument. I loved Charlie Carrano's comment in the last issue of this newsletter; it was enough to make a guitar lover believe his ship was in. Museums teach and transform the soul. It is a wondrous and rare moment to have so many sublime guitars and performers all under one roof. Each time I left the museum I felt an increased measure of hope that the classical guitar will someday become a fully recognized member of mainstream America.

On a more practical matter, the BCGS Board is currently seeking committed volunteers. If you enjoy our newsletter and concert series, I hope you will consider taking a turn with one of the following small or medium sized jobs: Secretary (to record minutes of the meetings), Performance Party Coordinator (to schedule performance parties), Society Speaks Editor (to assemble the responses from our members to interesting questions as a column for the quarterly newsletter), and Discount Coordinator (to arrange BCGS discounts for guitar related events presented by other organizations). Most of us have come to volunteer with little or no experience. If you have questions about any jobs please don't hesitate to call me at (978) 263-3418.

With regrets I will be stepping down from my position as Artistic Director in the summer or fall. When the BCGS Board invited me to return I agreed to serve for a year, realizing that I would be stretching myself in terms of time commitment. But the many enthusiastic volunteers and the numerous guitar-related activities at the Museum of Fine Arts helped ease the complexity of this position. Next year I would not be able to effectively balance my other responsibilities with this job for the betterment of the guitar society. The Board will begin reviewing potential candidates for my position shortly, and we hope to have someone lined up by either summer or fall issue of this newsletter.

On April 21, the BCGS is sponsoring a master class with the Cleveland based guitarist Jason Vieaux at the



Longy School of Music. The class is for students of any level. Please don't shy away from signing up if you would like to play. Besides being a great guitarist, Jason is a warm and approachable person.

On June 2, the young Russian guitarist Grisha Goryachev returns to the stage after a year's break from concertizing. If you love Spanish flamenco music or seek inspiration on scale technique, he is the man to hear. Please arrive early; he loves to perform in intimate settings and I have a hunch his usual group of fans will quickly fill this room of 85 seats.

Sincerely yours,

Berit Strong, Artistic Director

Coming Events!

Saturday, April 21, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Masterclass with Jason Vieaux. New School of Music, 25 Lowell St. in Cambridge.

Sunday, April 22 at 3:00 p.m. Jason Vieaux, will perform a solo recital on at the Edward Pickman Concert Hall of the Longy School of Music

Saturday, June 2, 7:30 p.m. Grisha Goryachev in Concert Featuring guitar music by Carlo Domeniconi and the flamenco masters Sabicas and Manolo Sanlucar at the New School of Music, Cambridge

Thank You!

We have received, with much appreciation, donations from the following members: David Griskewich, Julie Vargas, Richard Lyon, and Gerald Johnston.

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~ BCGS Staff ~

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The gifted young guitarist, Jason Vieaux was the 1st Prize winner of the 1992 Guitar Foundation of America International Competition. Since then, he has enjoyed a busy and celebrated career as a solo artist. In 1996, he was a prizewinner at the Naumburg International Guitar Competition in New York. Jason concertizes throughout the world to rave reviews. He has three CDs to date, featuring the works of Bach, Ponce, Gegondi, Brouwer, Morel, Barrios, Pujol, Orbon, and Krouse. Jason currently teaches guitar at The Cleveland Institute of Music.

Arthur Hernandez's music has been called electrically charged, assured of lyric line (Herman Trotter), possessing a tremendous force of energy (David Felder), and exuberant and defiantly wierd (Donald Rosenberg). His music has been commissioned and/or performed by The Cleveland Orchestra, The Cavani String Quartet, and Jason Vieaux, among others. In 1997, his String Quartet No. 1 was given its premiere at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. Shepherd's Psalm, fantasy for solo guitar, was written for and dedicated to Jason Vieaux. Arthur is music director at Catholic Memorial in West Roxbury.

Jason Vieaux will also teach a masterclass sponsored by the BCGS on Saturday, April 21 at New School of Music in Cambridge. See the calendar section of this newsletter for details.

Jason Vieaux Performs Arthur Hernandez



The exciting young guitarist, Jason Vieaux, will perform a solo recital on Sunday, April 22 at 3:00 p.m. at the Edward Pickman Concert Hall of the Longy School of Music, 27 Garden Street, in Cambridge. Featured on this recital will be the world premiere of Shepherd's Psalm, fantasy for guitar, by Boston-area composer Arthur Hernandez. The recital is free and open to the public,

but tickets will be issued. Anybody wishing to attend should contact Arthur Hernandez at 508-376-1061 (sart90@otw.com), 243 Ridge Street, Millis, MA 02054, and request the number of tickets you would like. A reception will follow the recital. As of this writing, no pre-concert activity has been scheduled, but that is subject to change.



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Reflections on the Claudio Ragazzi and Aquiles Baez Concert

By Alex Lehar

The Claudio Ragazzi and Aquiles Baez concert at the Museum of Fine Arts Auditorium on December 6 was a treat. Both of these players were extraordinary musicians in their own right, and throughout the evening they alternated roles of lead and accompanist effortlessly. This was a stunning exhibition of inventive rhythmic technique. Most of the program was played with conventional six string Classical guitars. Aquiles played with his fingers, and Claudio changed from fingers to plectrum frequently. They began with "Suite Argentina" which was a compilation of Chakareda, Zamba, Milonga, and Farewell song. This led to "Achiles-La Pluma de la Kanthe," written for the movie "Pasquallea Bebeo," and "Buenos Aires Suite" which has also been played by the New World Guitar Trio. Then they played a Peruvian "Rhythm Lando," and finished the first section with a tune written by Claudio for his daughter, "Gabriella." For me this piece was the highlight of the concert, with its beautiful lyricism and a virtuoso exhibition of harmonics. At this point the duo played some unusual and rhythmic pieces on exotic South American instruments, including a Venezuelan "Quatro" (4 strings) and a Puerto Rican "Quatro Moderno" with 5 pairs of strings, and another curiosity, a Cuban instrument with 3 pairs of strings. We heard some interesting commentary on how the guitar was originally introduced into South America, and how it evolved in different directions in the different constituent countries. This rousing performance was greeted with enormous enthusiasm, and a standing ovation brought the players back for a finale by Astor Piazzola. It is not often that we see such a wonderfully matched pair of musicians playing with such vitality, and it was a particular pleasure to experience a complete program featuring the superb music of South America.



Claudio Ragazzi




Aquiles Baez

BCGS Thanks Treasurer Rick Oja

Berit Strong, Artistic Director

In 1992 when I was artistic director of this society, volunteer Rob Marino resigned as treasurer to accept a job in another city. I asked Cambridge based architect Rick Oja if he would consider serving as treasurer. "Sure" he replied without hesitation. Rick loved classical guitar and was keenly interested in seeing the BCGS increase its very modest monetary coffer and enjoy a more secure future. Steve Terry, Vice President and Secretary, and I had started the legal process in 1993 with some pro bono lawyers to regain BCGS' nonprofit status. In addition to acting as treasurer, Rick offered to manage this complex process and ensure that the ruling period for the society's newly filed charitable trust be maintained in strict accordance. Two years later the ruling period ended and Rick continued to complete the time consuming yearly filing to the Massachusetts Division of Public Charities. Steve Terry and I were most grateful that he took over this crucial task. For the past nine years our society has grown in membership and enjoyed greater financial comfort. Rick has been incredibly dedicated in the role of treasurer.

Rick Oja moved to Connecticut with his family this past month. The BCGS Board and membership thanks him for all his dedication and effort and wishes him all the best with his new life in Connecticut.



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Stetson International Guitar Workshop, June 8-13, 2001



Stetson University (DeLand, Florida) will host its eleventh annual international guitar workshop, June 8-13, 2001.

The week-long event invites classical guitarists of every level

to participate in daily master classes, seminars, and guitar ensembles. This year's workshop will present recitals and personal coaching by the following distinguished artists and faculty: Stephen Robinson, director of the guitar program and the International Guitar Workshop at Stetson University; Iranian Lily Afshar, professor of music and director of the guitar program at the University of Memphis; Brazilian legend Carlos Barbosa-Lima; Yugoslavian guitarist/composer Dusan Bogdanovic; Ron Borczone, professor of music therapy/guitar at California State University, Northridge; Michael Chapdelaine, professor of guitar at the University of New Mexico; legendary Italian guitarist Oscar Ghiglia, professor of guitar at the Basel Music-Akademie, Switzerland; Nicholas Goluses, professor of

music and director of Eastman School of Music's guitar program; Greek virtuoso Antigoni Goni, director of Columbia University's guitar program and New York's Juilliard School of Music precollege guitar program; Frank Koonce, professor of guitar at Arizona State University; Raphaëlla Smits, director of the guitar program at Belgium's Louvain Lemmens Institute; Steven Thachuk, faculty at the University of Toronto; and Brazilian virtuoso Fabio Zanon.

Participants will live and work with the faculty on Stetson's DeLand campus, situated between the two vacation areas of Daytona Beach and Orlando. Tuition for the workshop is \$380.00 including room and board, with a special fee for auditors. Because space is limited, early registration is suggested. Scholarship awards are available. For information and an application please contact:

Patrece Robinson, Administrative Director
The Stetson International Guitar Workshop
 421 North Woodland Blvd., Box 8399
 Stetson University
 DeLand, FL 32720
 904-822-8957 phone, 904-736-0723 fax
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Performer Spotlight



PETER CLEMENTE

Peter Clemente was the first prize winner in both the Guitar Foundation of America's International Solo Competition in 1986 and the Ovation Classical Guitar Competition in 1981. He also won second prize in the International Guitar Competition of Puerto Rico in 1985, and was chosen by Segovia as a finalist in the Segovia Fellowship Competition in 1984. Mr. Clemente has performed solo and chamber music throughout New England and has completed successful concert tours in California and the southwestern United States. He has been featured live in concert/interview radio broadcasts on WGBH, Boston and KPFK, Los Angeles. In 1990 he made his New York debut at Weil Hall with soprano Katherine Emory. Mr. Clemente has been a welcome guest soloist with many performing groups, including the Central Massachusetts Symphony, Symphony Pro Musica and the Meliora String Quartet. He was invited to record on the CD, *The Winner's Circle*, which was released by the Guitar Foundation of America in 1994.

A native of Massachusetts, Mr. Clemente studied the guitar with Richard Provost at the Hartt School of Music, where he

holds the distinction of being the only guitarist to receive the prestigious *Applied Music Award* for outstanding musical performance. Later training was with David Leisner at New England Conservatory and with Neil Anderson at the Boston Conservatory. Peter Clemente devotes considerable time to teaching, and currently is on the faculty of the School for the Arts at Boston University.

Calendar

PERFORMANCE PARTIES

Sunday, March 18, 2:00 p.m.

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

Saturday, April 14, 12:00 noon-5:00 p.m.

Joint performance party sponsored by the Providence Mandolin Orchestra and the Boston Classical Guitar Society at The Mediator Church, 50 Rounds Ave., Providence RI. The church has a small stage, seating for 30-40 people, and a kitchen. Feel free to bring snacks. Participants can play guitar, violin, mandolin, etc., alone or in combinations. A carpool from Boston will be arranged by Charles Carrano (c.carrano@att.net). Directions from Boston: Going south on I-95, take the exit for Routes 10 and 6 (two exits after Branch Avenue exit). The exit ramp forks; stay to the right onto Routes 10 and 6. Once on Rt. 10, stay in left lane (Route 10 south) the right two lanes follow Route 6 West. Stay on Route 10 for about a 1/2 mile. Take exit marked "Reservoir Avenue NORTH." Go right on Reservoir Avenue. Just past the first light, turn right and go BETWEEN "Friendly Liquors" and a sign company onto Rounds Avenue. The Church of the Mediator is a red house-like building about 3 blocks down, on the right. For more info, e-mail Scott Hacker (scott.hacker@citizensbank.com) or call him at 401-282-4354 (401-663-4736 the day of the party).

Sunday, June 10, 2 p.m.

Performance Party at Berit Strong's house. All BCGS members are welcome to play or listen and eat nachos quietly. From Boston and points East, take Route 2 West until you come to the first Rotary next to the prison in Concord. Take a ? turn and exit on to Commonwealth Avenue. Go to first stop sign and take a right onto Lawsbrook Road. Go 1? miles down and over a small bridge adjacent to wetlands. NO TURNS. Lawsbrook becomes School Street at Berit's white house #271. From points West, take Route 2 East, go past several exits in Acton, and look for huge cornfields on both sides of highway. Exit in the middle of this field onto School St. (not well marked) Our house is at first stop sign. Please bring drink or refreshment. 978-263-3418.

For information about hosting a performance party, contact Charles Carrano by email (c.carrano@att.net) or by mail (BCGS Editor, 8 Stonewood Avenue, Stoneham, MA 01280).

MEETINGS

Saturday, March 24th, 1:00 p.m.

BCGS Board Meeting. All members and new volunteers are welcome to attend. Bertucci's Restaurant at Alewife T Station in Cambridge. Topics on the Agenda include Vieaux masterclass, summer newsletter, Fundraising, Review of Conservatory Students Honorarium Form, Performance Contracts, and transition of Artistic Director and Treasurer. For directions to Bertucci's call (617) 876-2200. For questions about the meeting please call Berit Strong at (978)263-3418. Please park in designated Bertucci's spaces.

SPONSORED EVENTS

Saturday, March 3, 7:30 p.m.

The Boston Classical Guitar Society is proud to present a concert with guitarist Peter Clemente and flutist Tracy Funt Kraus at the New School of Music in Cambridge. The program will include "Prelude in the Style of Weiss" and "Sonata Classica" by Manuel Ponce, "Variations on a Chorale Tune" by Peter Clemente, "From Some Towns and Cities" by Benjamin Verderly, "From Mountain Songs" by Robert Beaser, "Piece En Forme de Habenera" by Maurice Ravel, and "Sonatina", Op. 205 by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. (TICKET PRICE/INFO?)

Saturday, March 3, 7:30 p.m.

The recital with Sulaiman Zai, previously scheduled to take place at this time, has been cancelled.

Saturday, April 21, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Masterclass with Jason Vieaux. New School of Music, 25 Lowell St. in Cambridge. 4 players are needed, any style of classical welcome. Sliding scale fee of \$40-\$60 for active participants. Auditors are free. If you are interested in performing please call Berit Strong at (978)362-3418. The New School is a 15 minute walk down Mt. Auburn St. from Harvard Square and located across from Mt. Auburn Hospital. Please note that Vieaux's concert will take place at Longy School of Music on 4/22.

Saturday, June 2, 7:30 p.m.

Grisha Goryachev in classical and flamenco guitar recital. The New School of Music, Cambridge, MA. Works by Carlo Domeniconi and flamenco masters such as Sabicas and Manolo Sanlucar. Tickets are \$13 for BCGS members, students and senior citizens. \$15 for the general public. Located directly across from Mt. Auburn Hospital. A 15 minute walk down Mt. Auburn from Harvard Square. For reservations call 978-263-3418.

Calendar (continued)

DISCOUNTED EVENTS

Wednesday, March 7, 8:00 p.m.

Pepe Romero performs Joaquin Rodrigo's Concierto de Aranjuez with the National Orchestra of Spain, conducted by Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos. Mechanics Hall, Worcester. Tickets \$37/\$34 and \$17 for students. BCGS members receive 15% discount (except on student price). Call Music Worcester at 508-754-3231 or visit musicworcester.org.

NEW ENGLAND AREA EVENTS

Thursday March 1, 12:00 noon

Guitarist Glorianne Collver-Jacobsen, Brazilian percussionist Sula daSilva and bassist Dave Zox present a special tribute to the late great Baden Powell. Music by Powell, Bellinati, and Bonfa. MIT Chapel. Free admission.

Friday, March 2, 8:00 p.m.

Sol y Canto perform as a quintet at the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA. For more information call 800-745-4054.

Friday, March 2, 8:00 p.m.

Seth Warner with Gary Beckman and Dan Murdock on Renaissance and Baroque lutes and Baroque guitar. Works for lute solo, duo and trio of Dowland, Francesco, Kapsberger and Weiss. Corthell Concert Hall, University of Southern Maine, Gorham, Maine. Free Admission. For more information call 207-883-7115 or e-mail SethWarner@looksmart.com.

Saturday, March 3, 7:30 p.m.

The Mark Small/Robert Torres Duo will play at the Unitarian Universalist Church Of Greater Lynn at 101 Forest Ave., Swampscott. Admission is a voluntary offering. Small and Torres will play music by Gnattali, Bach, De Falla, Petit, and their own settings of American hymn tunes. For more information, call (781) 595-8836 or visit smalltorresduo.com on the web.

Saturday, March 3, 7:30 p.m.

Seth Warner with Gary Beckman and Dan Murdock on Renaissance and Baroque Lutes and Baroque Guitar. Works for lute solo, duo and trio of Dowland, Francesco, Kapsberger and Weiss. The Pavillion, University of Maine, Orono, Maine. Tickets are \$5. For more information call 207-883-7115 or e-mail SethWarner@looksmart.com.

Tuesday, March 6, 8:30 p.m.

Double guitar recital by Emre Saboncuoglu and Santiago Diaz at New England Conservatory, St. Botolph Building, Room 118. Music of Villa-Lobos, Bach, Dyens and others. Free Admission.

Wednesday, March 7, 8:30 p.m.

Solo guitar recital by Nicholas Ciraldo at New England Conservatory, St. Botolph Building, Room 118. Music of Bach, Sor, Nobre and others. Free Admission.

Monday, March 12, TBA

Solo guitar recital by Will Riley at The University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. Free Admission.

Friday, March 23, 12:25 p.m.

Solo guitar recital by Luiz Mantovani at Old South Meeting House, Boston, MA. Music of Paladin, Bach, Sor, Albeniz, and others. Free Admission.

Friday, March 23, 8:00 p.m.

Flamenco Performance by students of Chica Mori, followed by the Flamenco Show by her company, "Corazón Flamenco." Music: Kai Narezo (Director of Music, flamenco guitar), Fernando de Málaga (cantaor), Daniel Fernández (flamenco guitar), Ramon Angel-Rey (percussion), Lorenzo Peris (violin). Dance: Chica Mori (Artistic director, choreographer) and her company "Corazón Flamenco." 536 Mass Ave., Cambridge. (Central Sq., Red line T stop). Tickets are \$15 (\$12 for seniors/students with ID). Wheelchair accessible.

Friday, March 30, 8:00 p.m.

Seth Warner with Gary Beckman and Dan Murdock on Renaissance and Baroque Lutes and Baroque Guitar. Works for lute solo, duo and trio of Dowland, Francesco, Kapsberger and Weiss. Portland, Maine. Location TBA. For more information call 207-883-7115 or e-mail SethWarner@looksmart.com.

Saturday, March 31, 8:00 p.m.

Seth Warner with Gary Beckman and Dan Murdock on Renaissance and Baroque Lutes and Baroque Guitar. Works for lute solo, duo and trio of Dowland, Francesco, Kapsberger and Weiss. The Paul Creative Arts Center, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH. Free Admission. Call 207-883-7115 or e-mail SethWarner@looksmart.com.

Thursday, April 5, 7:30 p.m.

"Two Guitar Blowout", Maurice Cahen and Eric Byers will perform jazz, latin and original compositions at the Powers Music School, Nahigan Hall, 380 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA, Free Admission. Call 617-484-4696 or 781-861-7851 for more information.

Saturday, April 7, 3:00 p.m.

Issac Bustos performs at the Lucus Beebe Memorial Library in Wakefield as part of the library's Music Month in April series. The library is located at the corner of Avon and Main Streets, Wakefield (approximately 1/2 mile of Route 128) Free Admission. Call 781-246-6334 for more information.

Thursday, April 12, 8:00 p.m.

Solo Guitar Recital by Aaron Caplan at New England Conservatory's Williams Hall. Music of Stravinsky, Martin, Torroba, Scarlatti and others. Free admission.

Sunday, April 22, 3:00 p.m.

Jason Vieaux performs a solo recital at the Edward Pickman Concert Hall at the Longy School of Music, 27 Garden Street, in Cambridge. Featured will be the world premiere of Shepherd's Psalm, fantasy for guitar, by Boston-area composer Arthur Hernandez. Free and open to the public, but tickets will be issued. Contact Arthur Hernandez at 508-376-1061, 243 Ridge Street, Millis, MA 02054, sart90@otw.com, to request the number of tickets you would like. A reception will follow the recital.

Sunday, April 22, 7:00 p.m.

Berit Strong classical guitar performing works by Cooperman, Coste, Bellinati and Panin. Putney School, Elm Lea Farm, Putney, Vermont. Free Admission. For information call 802-387-5566.

Monday, April 23, 8:00 p.m.

Luiz Mantovani, Solo Guitar Recital, New England Conservatory, Jordan Hall, Music of Paladin, Bach, Sor, Albeniz, and others. Free Admission.

Saturday, April 28, 8:00 p.m.

Roland Dyens, guitarist, performs at the Wallace Stevens Theater, the Hartford Life Insurance Company, Hartford, CT. Sponsored by The Connecticut Classical Guitar Society, 860-249-7041

Saturday, May 19, 8:00 p.m.

Frank Wallace will perform his own works for guitar solo as well as lute and voice in Grafton, VT. Compositions from his new CD as well as premiers of new works to be featured on his next CD. Two song cycles will receive their premiers: "Voices in the Dark", five songs for baritone and lute and "Pearly Everlasting", for soprano and 10 course lute. Dinner is included in ticket price. Call 800-843-1801, ask for Bill or visit gyremusic.com.

Saturday, May 19, 8:00 p.m.

Providence Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra presents New Music for Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra, including performances of "Voices" dedicated to Barnaby Evans (founder of Providence, "Waterfire") a composition by Will Ayton, featuring as soloist Alexey Shabolin, violin (of the Rhode Island Philharmonic) and compositions by Robert Martel, "Wrung from the Silence." Johnson and Wales University, Pepsi Forum, 8 Abbott Place Park, Providence, RI. Admission \$15/\$10 seniors students. Call 401-521-7766 or visit the orchestra's Web site at www.mandolin-orchestra.org. The Providence Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra are Artists in Residence at Johnson and Wales University.

Sunday, May 20, 2:00 p.m.

Sol y Canto (sextet) perform Afro-Latin, Caribbean, and flamenco music for the Latinos Unidos Benefit at Garr Park Haverhill, MA. Call 978-373-1126 ext. 6380, or visit <http://www.solycanto.com> for details.

ONGOING EVENTS**Thursday evenings 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.**

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

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, NH. Flamenco and classical guitar. All are welcome. lgunder@attglobal.net.

WORKSHOPS**June 8-13, 2001 Stetson International Guitar Workshop**

Concerts, Classes, Seminars at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida. Stephen Robinson, Artistic Director. Concerts and instruction by Lily Afshar, Carlos Barbosa-Lima, Dusan Bogdanovic, Ron Borczone, Michael Chapdelaine, Oscar Ghiglia, Nicholas Goluses, Antigoni Goni, Frank Koonce, Raphaella Smits, Steven Thachuck and Fabio Zanon. For more information contact: Patrice Robinson, Administrative Director, The Stetson International Guitar Workshop, 421 North Woodland Blvd., Box 8399, DeLand, Florida. 32720. Call 904-822-8957 or Fax 904-736-0723. Probinson@stetson.edu.

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* * *

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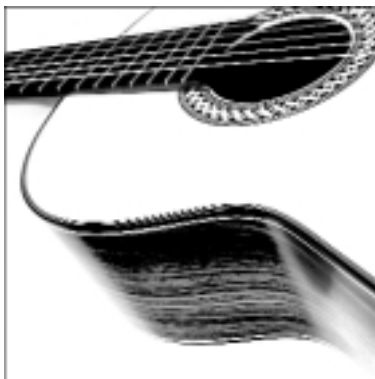
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Luthier's Page



If you are a New England luthier and would like to contribute to this column, contact Charles Carrano, BCGS Editor, by mail at 8 Stonewood Avenue, Stoneham, MA 01280 or by email (c.carrano@att.net).

On Balance

By Alan Carruth

One of the skills that a classical luthier must cultivate is that of balancing various desirable traits. There often seem to be trade-offs between “fullness” and “clarity,” “even tone” and “character,” “carrying power” and “sweetness,” and so forth. Any athlete or dancer knows that maintaining one’s balance allows for movement in any direction at will. An instrument that achieves a “proper” balance of all of its traits will allow for more expression and facility of play.

There are extra-musical considerations as well. It would be fairly easy to build an all-wood guitar that would last practically forever, but the top and bracing would be so heavy that it would barely be audible. Conversely, we have all seen instruments that were built with thin tops and inadequate (or no!) bracing to “bring out the bass” or “make it louder.” In some cases the guitars don’t outlast a set of strings.

In general, better grades and types of wood will enable the luthier to get more of everything, since better woods are usually stronger for a given weight (which lowers the mass the strings have to push, increasing volume) and have lower internal losses (which makes it easier to get “brightness” and “carrying power”). It’s much easier to “have it all” if your guitar is made out of Brazilian rosewood and Italian spruce than it is if the woods are mahogany and Sitka spruce. Even so, no matter what the woods, skill and understanding are needed to make it all work, and a skilled luthier can get a very good tone out of almost any wood.

I can perhaps illustrate with an example. I was recently called on to build a guitar for someone who wanted a “soft and sweet,” but still “clear” tone, but who also wanted a Red spruce top. Red spruce is a fine wood, very similar in its properties to the best European stock. However, it has the reputation of having a “forward” tone—sort of a “Broadway Belt.” So the problem was, how do I turn Ethyl Merman into an operatic mezzo soprano?

The path I chose (only one of many possible ways) was to use materials and construction features that would emphasize a “rich,” “full,” “warm” and “colorful” timbre, and trust the nat-

ural sound of the top wood to provide the “clarity” and “brightness” to balance the tone. A smaller soundhole moved up a little toward the neck would lower the main air resonance frequency, cutting down the “sharpness” of the attack (and still, on this design, leave enough frets!). A slightly deeper-than-normal body would have a similar effect. East Indian rosewood for the back and sides would give a “rich” timbre (Brazilian was out of the budget). Careful “tuning” of the top and back plates to balance the stiffness of the bracing and the plate (another type of balance) would also be important. This tuning would ensure both that the lower spectrum peaks would be broad, for a “full” tone, and that the guitar would be efficient, which would help make up for the slight drop in volume expected because of the deep body and small hole. Finally, a somewhat shorter than normal bridge was used, which also helps to bring out the low tones. The result was quite satisfactory to me, and, more importantly, to the customer.

One important point of this is that it is better to make a number of small changes that all tend to move the tone toward a new balance point rather than try to get the whole effect with one big change. Balance is best maintained by starting from a stable stance (in this case, a good design) and making small changes. Too small a soundhole would give a “covered” tone, and too deep a body would soften the attack of the notes too much; by combining a small change in each I got the “open” and “clean” tone I wanted. Also, the effects of various changes, although they may be similar, are never exactly the same, and making a lot of small changes allows for a good bit of fine tuning of the tone. This sort of understanding of the instrument comes, in part, through experience and grounding in tradition, and, these days, in part from a study of acoustics. Supplementing art with science is one of the many sorts of balance that makes for better lutherie.

Alan Carruth, builds guitars at his workshop, 553 High Street in Dedham Square, (781) 329-9484.

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Perspectives

My Experience Participating in Last Year's GFA Competition

By Issac Bustos

The Guitar Foundation of America Solo Guitar Competition is the most prestigious competition of its kind. It is many a guitarist's dream to win this competition and have the spotlight that we all so much desire and that this competition can provide. I was very lucky to participate this past year and become one of eleven semi-finalists. Even though I did not win or make it to the Finals, it was truly an amazing experience. I met a lot of people with long fingernails and who build beautiful instruments. I think the most valuable thing we can get out of this competition, if we do not win it that is, is all the exposure that it can provide. Some of the famous and important people I met were Carlos Barbosa-Lima, who was one of the judges at the Semi-finals, Ricardo Cobo, the charismatic Leo Brouwer, Sergio and Odair Assad (the latter still remembered me from a Masterclass he gave at The University Of New Hampshire), Lorenzo Michelli, Denis Azabagic (who gave a very informative lecture on competitions and how to prepare for them), Christopher Berg (who was also a judge at the Semi-finals and was kind enough to give me feedback on my performance), Bruce Holzman, who offered me a fellowship at Florida State University (hmm, WARM!) after hearing me play in his Hotel room (a meeting that Frank Wallace helped arrange—Thank you Frank). The list goes on and on. We also have to be prepared for all the "big headed" guitar players who are there to do I don't know what exactly but block our view at concerts. Beware of these people; more importantly, do not be one of these people.

The competition hosted sixty competitors from all over the world who were there to make their dreams come true. The Qualifying round took three days to complete. I played on the first day at 4:00 p.m.; I had been scheduled for later, but some of the competitors did not show up. I was relaxed for my performance and it went very well. However, prior to entering the room, I was a wreck. No, that's not it. I was neurotic, schizophrenic, almost a flat-liner. I was so nervous it is very hard to describe. This all changed once the person at the door gave me a room to practice which was basically the room where the air conditioning unit was. It looked more like a utility room than anything else. I pulled my guitar out of its case and played some shaky scales. I then thought to my self, "Isaac, why are you doing this to yourself? Just breathe." And so I did and it worked. The nerves wore off, and I got my pulse back. I was



still nervous but not flat-lined, and I had gotten a hold of myself. I was called in and entered the room with a sort of shy confidence that helped me deal with the judges. I was surprised how welcome and comfortable these judges made me feel. I hope it's the same way in the future. The room was a large,

cold classroom with mediocre acoustics. Luckily, my Chapman projected very well in this setting. I started with the required piece, the 2nd movement to the Sonata "Omaggio a Bocherinni" by Castelnuovo-Tedesco, and then I played the "Usher Waltz" by Koshkin. Everything came out just the way I wanted it to. When they announced the names of the eleven semi-finalists, my name was the last one to be called and my jaw dropped to the floor along with my heart, which was at the tip of my tongue. I picked up my mess and then yelled "YES!!" with extreme joy. My old guitar teacher Rene Gonzalez was there and shared the joy with

me. I was very excited. I went home that night and practiced all night long.

It was not over yet. The semi-finals presented an even greater challenge for me. I knew the expectations were going to be higher, and I knew that I had to be just as exceptional, if not better, as I had been in the Qualifying round. So, I practiced a lot and enjoyed the Festival to its fullest by attending one more concert, The Assads. On the day of the Semi-finals, all those feelings that would eventually get the best of me reappeared early this time. I was nervous all day long, not as severely as the previous time, but nervous enough. I hardly ate that day which was a big mistake because we need protein for our brain. Once again, I arrived at the event, which was now in a conference-room-looking theater with even worse acoustics. I went backstage to see if somebody would give me another utility room to practice. I eventually found someone and got a very nice room. I was at least an hour and a half early and had plenty of time to warm up and relax. However, when the knock on the door came and I was called to perform I got very nervous again and unable to shake it off. Jeff Cogan, the director of the festival, introduced me to the crowd and judges. I went on stage and smiled, but did not bow—that is how nervous I was. I sat down and began playing the Castelnuovo-Tedesco once again, which went rather well given all the turbulence going through my body. I then played the Gigue from Bach's 1st Lute Suite in E minor and it also went OK with a few buzzes. At this point the judges must select a piece or pieces from one's selected program. Carlos Barbosa-Lima, in a very soft voice, said, "Can you play the Passacaglia and Zapateado from Rodrigo's Three Spanish Pieces." I swallowed hard and said, "OK." The Passacaglia was not as clean as I would have liked and the

(Continue on page 14)

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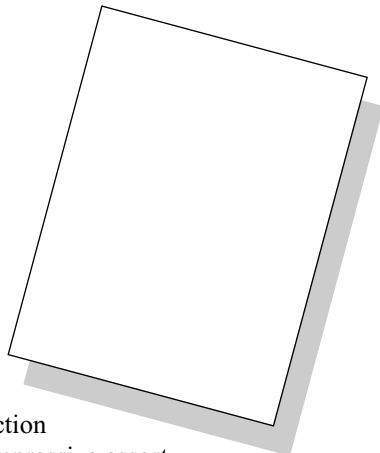
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Music Reviews

by John Morgan

Title: Isaac Albëñiz
Edited By: Stanley Yates
Publisher: Mel Bay Publications
Pages: 191
Book: \$24.95



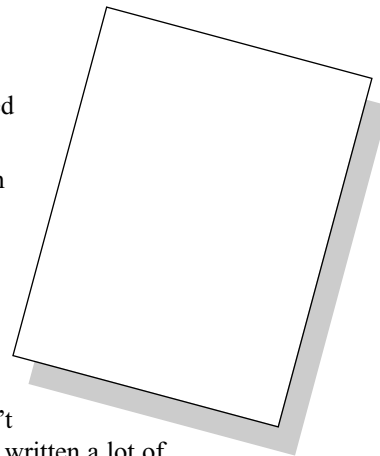
What you find in this collection of twenty-six pieces is an impressive assortment of Albëñiz arrangements, some of which I've never seen before. Certainly, many of the pieces may have been arranged many times before, however, what's nice about this collection is that each piece has study notes, helps with fingerings, interpretations and historical backgrounds. There's also an excellent short biography on Albëñiz, a section on his musical style and his association with the guitar.

My Experience *(Continued from page 12)*

same for the Zapateado. It was very disappointing to say the least. I knew right away that I would not be going on to the following round. I had not displayed the best Isaac Bustos and I was very discouraged. I got up, bowed, smiled at the applauding crowd and to the judges and left the stage.

It all sounds very depressing doesn't it? But it wasn't. Frank Wallace and his lovely wife Nancy Knowles were both outside and had seen my performance. They both tried to cheer me up by pointing out the positive things about my playing. Frank and Nancy, I love you guys. Carlos Molina, one of the judges from the qualifying round, was also very encouraging and I got a few compliments from other competitors and people attending the convention. It was a great learning experience and a truly amazing opportunity to meet a lot of people. I don't regret a single moment. I had an incredible time. I feel very lucky to have made it to the semi-finals and even to be at the GFA at all, because I know from my own experience that not many of us get the chance to be there. I encourage all young guitar players to take part in this amazing event, whether as a competitor or an audience member (if finances allow, of course) because it exposes us to very talented people and helps make us aware of those aspects of our own playing we need to improve. I am planning on attending this year once again, and after learning what I learned last year, I hope to give them hell.

Title: Johann Brahms Arranged for Guitar
Arranged By: Javier Calderón
Publisher: Mel Bay Publications
Pages: 63
Price: Book/CD \$17.95



Dead German composers aren't much fun. Although they have written a lot of beautiful music, unfortunately, very little of it was for the guitar. But that's okay, while their busy "decomposing,"¹ we have their body of works to do with as we please. Here we have sixteen waltzes in Opus 39 and an intermezzo Opus 117 for solo piano. The fifteenth piece in the Opus is one you'll recognize – it's one of those charming little pieces that you hear but don't often identify, one I have been meaning to arrange myself.

¹ References Monty Python's classic song, "Decomposing Composers."

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In Boston, Grisha has performed at the Regattabar in Cambridge, played on local cable television and radio stations, and performed at area clubs. He has just completed his freshman year at the New England Conservatory, and is studying guitar with Eliot Fisk. This concert should be an exciting performance by this rising young star.

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