



BOSTON CLASSICAL GUITAR SOCIETY

BCGS



newsletter

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BOSTON CLASSICAL GUITAR SOCIETY

PROUDLY PRESENTS

XUEFEI YANG

IN CONCERT

MARCH 9, 2012
7:45 P.M.

FIRST LUTHERAN
CHURCH OF BOSTON
299 BERKELEY ST.
BOSTON, MA



\$25 general, \$20 seniors/students, \$5 members discount
www.itsmyseat.com/bcgs.html

Letter to Members

Dear Members,



Over a month into 2012, I hope all of you are well and recovered from the disappointing Super Bowl loss with renewed enthusiasm for the guitar! We have reached the heart of the BCGS Artist Series. A few weeks ago, Hopkinson Smith delivered a

beautiful and nuanced concert of Renaissance lute repertoire (see included review). While listening to him, the thought struck me how lucky we are this season to hear artists and music of such incredible range. The Katona Twins introduced us to their fiery, fun renditions of classical and popular repertoire, while Hoppy showed us what incredible emotional power and virtuosity can be conjured from an instrument seemingly built for another time.

Looking ahead, the long-awaited concert from Chinese guitarist extraordinaire Xuefei Yang is just around the corner on March 9. Her playing combines elegance, grace, and technical brilliance that have endeared her to millions of listeners online and around the world. One of her biggest fans, of course, is the great John Williams, who discovered her on a visit to the Beijing conservatory in 1995. Fei has since given concerts in over forty countries around the world and is a major-label recording artist for EMI Classics. Highlights of her BCGS concert will be Bach's Violin Sonata No. 1, BWV 1001, and *España*, op. 165: Seis Hojas de Album by Isaac Albéniz. We hope you can join us for what will surely be a fantastic recital.

Only a few short months away waits Festival 21, appropriately scheduled for April 21 this year. We are delighted that Anthony De Ritis, acclaimed composer and chair of the Northeastern University music department, will write a brand new work for what is possibly the biggest guitar ensemble performance ever in Boston. Tony's music has been performed at Lincoln Center, Boston Celebrity Series, and even at UNESCO headquarters by the Prague Philharmonic. The evening recital headliner is David Leisner, award winning performer-composer-teacher, former New England Conservatory faculty, and Boston favorite. He will present a delightful and ambitious concert with some Boston premieres and Benjamin Britten's tour de force *Nocturnal*.

The Members' Concert has become a beloved tradition at each Festival 21. I would like to invite all members who are interested in performing up to a ten-minute set to please contact me at adbcbgs@gmail.com.

Thank you for a successful membership drive! If you haven't already renewed, you may still do so via mail or our secure online payment system at www.bostonguitar.info/members. Remember also that the BCGS Calendar is for all members: feel free to add events that are of interest to the Boston guitar community. To learn how, please contact me.

Best regards,

Dan Acsadi,
Director, BCGS

Eliot Fisk

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CONNOR GUITARS

BGO Performs Vivaldi Concerto with Berit Strong

The Boston Guitar Orchestra is one of the more recent additions to the BCGS activities, and so far it appears to be a very successful project. On January 26, the orchestra continued its tradition of opening each concert in the Artist Series, this time leading the way for the evening's featured artist, Hopkinson Smith. Now in its second season under the direction of Scott Borg, the BGO treated the audience to a performance of Vivaldi's Lute Concerto in D Major, RV 93 (arranged by Borg), featuring Berit Strong as the soloist. Berit Strong is a former Artistic Director of the BCGS and is on the faculty at Bridgewater State University and Indian Hill Music Center. She had a nice, big, warm tone, and projected well above the fifteen member orchestra. Scott Borg's arrangement worked nicely, maintaining clarity between the soloist and so many accompanying guitars. His enthusiastic conducting was infectious, and captured the spirit of the music very well. The orchestra sounded motivated and the players seemed to enjoy themselves. Having the orchestra perform as a prelude has brought a new level of energy to the concert series, and the society is looking

forward to upcoming performances from the BGO. The group has a solid core of players, but is always seeking new members, so let your guitar playing friends know about the BGO.

The Boston Guitar Orchestra is – Director: Scott Borg. Assistant Director: Colin Thurmond. Orchestra Members: Leo Carroll, Leah Ferjulian, Karen Godoy, Don Hague, Michael Hession, Mike Hurley, Lin Hymell, Bob Margo, Hernando Patino, Andy Robinson, Chris Ruth, Ivy Schram, Ben Torrey, and John Zevos.

BGO Rehearsal Schedule

- Monday February 27th:** Rehearsal. 6-9. NEC
- Thursday March 8th:** Rehearsal. 6-9. NEC
- Friday March 9th:** Performance BCGS - 7:45pm. Please arrive at 6:30pm for a run-through and setup, 1st Lutheran Church
- Monday, March 26th:** Rehearsal. 6-9. NEC
- Monday April 16th:** Rehearsal. 6-9. NEC
- Thursday April 19th:** Rehearsal. 6-9. NEC
- Friday April 20th:** Rehearsal. 6-9. NEC
- Saturday April 21th:** Performance Festival 21. Old South Church.(Rehearsals to be scheduled for GuitarFest)
- June 20-24th:** Boston Guitar Fest

BCGS Performance Party Nov. 19, 2011

Hosted by Jeff Wyman and Karen Caine in Concord MA.

If you are a BCGS member and not receiving "e-vites" contact Oscar Azaret at: joazaret@comcast.net



Don Hague, Doug Danforth, Bob Margo Elisa Pepe, Mike Tomases



Don Hague, James Lanzillotta, Mike Tomases



Chris Ruth, Michael Hurley



Jeff Wyman



Grant Hooper



George P. Attisano



Vladimir Jandejsek, J. Oscar Azaret

Calendar

Saturday, February 18, 2:00-6:00pm

BCGS Performance Party
Performance Party at the Home of Chris Ruth in Boxford

Saturday, February 18, 4:00pm

Augustin Castilla-Avila in concert
Marshall Hall at Boston University

Tuesday, February 28, 12:15pm

Dan Acsadi at King's Chapel
BCGS Artistic Director performs works by Brouwer and Torroba

Wednesday, March 7, 4:00-8:00pm

Flamenco Guitar Master Classes
Oscar Herrero (www.oscarherrero.com) will be teaching two Flamenco Guitar Master Classes this March in Boston. Classes are on March 7 (Technique) and 8 (Styles) from 4 to 8pm. The location is 36 Oxford St. in Cambridge. Register for the classes at: cursos@oscarherrero.com or www.oscarherrero.com/blog

Friday, March 9, 7:45pm

BCGS Artist Series: Xuefei Yang
First Lutheran Church of Boston

Saturday, March 17, 2:00pm

BCGS Performance Party
Performance Party at Jimmy Lanzillota's home in Wayland

Wednesday, Apr 11 7:30pm

Paco De Lucia
Boston Opera House

Saturday, April 14, 2:00pm

BCGS Performance Party
BCGS Performance Party at Donna Ricci's home in Newburyport

Saturday, April 21, all day festival, evening concert

BCGS Festival 21 featuring David Leisner
Full day festival at Old South Church and First Lutheran Church of Boston. Visit www.bostonguitar.org for more information.

Sunday, May 6, 2:30pm

Concierto de Aranjuez by Rodrigo, Aaron Larget-Caplan guitar soloist Merrimack Valley Philharmonic Orchestra

Please visit the BCGS website at www.bostonguitar.org for more information

Classifieds

Classifieds are \$10 per issue of the BCGS newsletter for a 32-word ad, and \$0.25 for each additional word. The fee includes posting on this webpage for three months. Send inquiries to [adbegs\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:adbegs[at]gmail.com); send checks to BCGS, P.O. Box 470665, Brookline, MA 02447, or PayPal the money to [bcgs-mail\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:bcgs-mail[at]gmail.com).

Guitars For Sale

2002 Tobias Braun Concert Guitar, after 1924 Miguel Hernandez. Gorgeous spruce top, rosewood sides/back. Very loud and bright, excellent for chamber music. Very good condition, lightweight. Photos available. \$5,500.
[dave.a.mclellan\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:dave.a.mclellan[at]gmail.com), 978-500-2546.

Ramirez, R4, 2001 Good condition. Indian rosewood back/sides. Cedar top (?) \$1700. joe.classical@yahoo.com (617)959-2712

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Concert Review: Hopkinson Smith

By Will Riley



Eager anticipation was palpable in First Lutheran Church of Boston on Thursday, January 26, for Hopkinson Smith's first performance in Boston in over ten years. An enthusiastic audience of about 80 gave the legendary lutenist a warm reception and he

responded with a performance that was both technically precise and musically sensitive, allowing the listener to slip easily into the delicate and nuanced sonic world of the lute.

Internationally recognized as a leading personality in the field of early music and one of the world's great lutenists, Hopkinson Smith has been performing and recording for over 40 years and was involved in the founding of the ensemble Hesperion XX in the 1970s. Since the mid 1980s he has focused principally on solo music for early plucked instruments, including Renaissance and Baroque lutes and guitars, vihuela, and theorbo.

The entire first half consisted of Roman music from the 15th and 16th centuries. Opening the program was a set by the Italian composer Francesco da Milano, whom Smith observed had one of the most prominent musical positions in Europe as lutenist to a series of popes. The rich harmonies da Milano constructs through counterpoint and the development of melodic lines make his compositions feel more akin to a contemporary of Dowland than music seventy-five years prior. Smith's depth of understanding of this repertoire allowed him to artistically bring out many of the mature and subtle qualities in da Milano's brilliant music.

Although Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger was originally from Germany, Smith informed the audience that the composer was the son of a German military attaché and spent most of his musical life in Venice and Rome. Two pieces were performed from Kapsberger's *Libro primo d'intavolatura di lauto*: the improvisatory *Toccata 7*, skillfully played by Smith, with effortless but unhurried scales and beautiful ornaments, and *Corrente 7*, in which the lutenist created a jubilant sense of forward momentum while maintaining the lyrical melody and dancelike quality of the form. Between sets, Smith joked that perhaps the composer had a short attention span, as the music often jumps quickly from one motive to another. Certainly one of the most memorable pieces of this set was the *Toccata Arpeggiata*. The work is propelled forward through harmonic rhythm, while repeated arpeggio figures spin out continuously suspended harmonies that could have been mistaken for Weiss or Kellner. *Toccata 6* made a nice contrast to the *Arpeggiata*, with searching melodic figures and a flexible rhythmic flow. Unfortunately, a loud cell phone went off in the middle of this piece (ironically in the same key as the music), and there was some traffic noise from outside, but Hopkinson Smith did not appear to be phased by the interruptions and kept the audiences' attention on the music through his own intense focus. In fact, another very memorable moment

happened in the final two chords of this piece, where Smith held the plagal cadence for what seemed an eternity before finally resolving it, creating a voluminous sense of space.

A final set of da Milano works completed the first half, including *Saltarello la Mantuanella*, a piece characterized by four repeated chords and a complex ornamental figure that varied with each appearance. Smith allowed ample time for the melodic lines to speak, but still maintained movement and spirit throughout the music. The first half concluded with *Fantasia (33) sopra mi-fa-mi*, which Smith inflected with a wonderful feeling of lift each time the title figure was sounded.

The program for the second half consisted of English lute music from the high Renaissance, featuring the works of Anthony Holborne and John Dowland. Six selections from the first composer were performed, beginning with *Mr. Holborne's Last Will and Testament*. This piece was filled with sudden and remote harmonic shifts and several melodic ideas which were repeated with variations, many with long scalar passages deftly executed by Smith. The other pieces by Holborne were simple binary forms with sweet and tuneful melodies, and most contained the characteristic rhythmic divisions that shift from duple to triple meter. Each had an interesting title: *The Fairy Round*, *My Selfe*, *Heigh Ho Holiday*, *Passion*, but the title of the last piece, *Mad Dog*, was given to the work by Hopkinson Smith himself, who thought the middle section had a barking-like quality to it!

The concert ended with two famous works by John Dowland: *Lachrimae Pavin* (also called *Flow My Tears*), and *Fantasia (#7)*. The *Lachrimae Pavin* was performed with a lovely sensation of sweet melancholy, with well-integrated ornaments in the repeats and heart wrenching suspensions. The *Fantasia (#7)* was given a stately but relaxed pace, and Smith showed excellent control of articulation in his treatment of the voices, giving the lines both separation and unity.

Most readers of this newsletter will know the old joke about lute players spending half their lives tuning, and the other half playing out of tune, but that was not the case with Hopkinson Smith. His tunings were interesting harmonic diversions, and the instrument maintained its intonation beautifully throughout the pieces. The sound of his lute filled the space and carried quite well through the hall and was easily heard in the last rows. Smith stated that an instrumentalist is always looking to define and refresh his voice, and the part played by the luthier in that process is quite amazing. It was a treat to learn that not only was Hopkinson Smith's lute made in New Hampshire, but the maker of the instrument, Joel van Lennep of Rindge, NH, was in the audience, and was gratefully acknowledged by the performer.

Overall it was a pleasure to hear Hopkinson Smith perform. His demeanor was gracious and poised, and his playing seemed both intellectually crafted and emotionally driven. Many of the works from the program are available on the series of over 20 solo recordings he has made, which can be found on his website at www.hopkinsonsmith.com.

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(Address Correction Requested)



XUEFEI YANG

March 9, 2012



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