



BCGS

newsletter



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BOSTON CLASSICAL GUITAR SOCIETY

PROUDLY PRESENTS

FESTIVAL 21

FEATURING
DAVID LEISNER

EVENING CONCERT

APRIL 21, 2012
7:45 P.M.

DAYTIME EVENTS

OLD SOUTH CHURCH
645 BOYLSTON ST.
BOSTON, MA

EVENING CONCERT

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

See schedule for Festival 21

Download Leisner program featuring works by Del Tredici, Britten, Leisner,
and Carrillo at bostonguitar.org

Event and Concert Tickets at: www.itsmyseat.com/bcgs.html

Letter to Members

Dear Members,



Spring is a period of transition on many fronts, and the same is true for the BCGS concert series. Last month, Xuefei Yang treated us to a magnificent concert in front of an enthusiastic audience of 240. Her uncanny ability to balance grace and artistry with powerful projec-

tion and authoritative delivery shined on Rodrigo's *Invocation and Dance* and Regondi's *Variations on the Bellini opera, I Capuletti e I Montecchi*. Her visit to Boston created a lot of buzz in the community and exposed many new concertgoers to BCGS programs.

Our final event of the season is Festival 21, coming up on Saturday, April 21st. As in previous years, we are celebrating and promoting the present and future of the guitar. In addition, the all-day schedule will bring together area professionals, students, ensembles, and aficionados for a spectacularly diverse, interactive musical offering. We are delighted to have the generous support of the **Augustine Foundation** and **New England Foundation for the Arts**, whose contributions make Festival 21 possible.

The Festival 21 evening concert features David Leisner in a truly epic concert. He will open with a world premiere composition from Carlos Carrillo, titled *Mariluna*. In addition, David will perform the Boston premieres of David Del Tredici's *Facts of Life* and his own piece, *Labyrinths*. This is David Del Tredici's 75th birthday year and the composer will be in attendance. Also on the program is *Nocturnal* from Benjamin Britten, one of the great twentieth-century guitar masterpieces. David has numerous connections to Boston as a former faculty member at New England Conservatory, so it will be wonderful to welcome him back to the city.

Preceding David Leisner's concert will be the world premiere of a brand new guitar ensemble piece written by Anthony Paul De Ritis and commissioned by the BCGS. Tony is currently Professor and Chair of the Music Department at Northeastern University. He has received performances nationally and internationally, including at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall and UNESCO headquarters in Paris, where his *Melody for Peace* was premiered by the Prague Philharmonic. We are honored to have Tony's piece for Festival 21: his music is inventive and engaging, perfect for a performance by the Festival 21 joint guitar orchestra and an anticipated 60 players!

Following a guitar orchestra open rehearsal, Belgian virtuoso Jerome Mouffe will lead a technique workshop for anyone with a guitar, all levels and ages. Next, Festival 21 will host a

Conservatories Recital featuring talented guitar students nominated by esteemed faculty from area music departments, including NEC, Boston Conservatory, Longy, Keene State, Rhode Island, and Berklee.

The afternoon session will commence with the annual Members' Concert. We are delighted to have contributions from Jose Lezcano (with harpist Franziska Huhn), Robert Margo, Steve Rapson, Jeff Wyman, and George Attisano. After a recharging coffee break, the Guitar Ensembles Concert will showcase groups from the Providence Mandolin Orchestra, Keene State, Timberlane High School (NH), Rhode Island University, Wheeler School (RI), and our own Boston Guitar Orchestra, led by Scott Borg and Colin Thurmond.

As we approach the end of our season, I would like to thank all of you who have contributed to the society with your work, invaluable advice, enthusiasm, musical contributions, concert attendance, and financial support. I'm especially grateful to **George Ward**, pillar of the BCGS Board, curator of the Hingham Saturday Sounds Series, and Newsletter publisher; **Will Riley**, internet marketing coordinator and Newsletter editor; **Thuy Wagner**, treasurer, concert hospitality, and legal advice; **Scott Borg** and **Colin Thurmond** for guitar orchestra direction, management, and coaching; **Oscar Azaret** for expert performance party coordination; **Karen** and **Jon Parsons** as artist hosts; **Nancy Knowles** for season poster design; and **Frank Wallace**, Director Emeritus, webmaster, and consultant-at-large. Such a positive, engaging, and artistically rich community provides the foundation for many successful BCGS seasons to come.

Sincerely,

Dan Acsadi
Director, BCGS

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An Interview with David Leisner

By Will Riley

BCGS: Hello David - thank you for speaking with us. We are all very excited that you are headlining Festival 21 this year! Your program has several works that will be new to much of the Boston audience, including the world premiere of Mariluna by Carlos Carillo, and the Boston premiere of David del Tredici's Facts of Life (both works commissioned and dedicated to you). Could you describe what the process of working with these composers was like? Were scores sent back and forth with changes made by you, or did you get a finished piece that needed no change?

DL: I met Carlos Carillo quite a few years ago as a preliminary judge of the BMI Student Composer Awards, when Carlos won one of these prestigious prizes. I was very impressed with the sophistication of his technique and musicianship, as well as the emotional power of his work. Nothing has changed, except that he has matured and deepened with the intervening years. Back then I said to him that I hoped he'd write for the guitar someday. We kept in touch ever since, and Carlos never forgot my interest, and has been wanting to write for the guitar for a long time. So, when this program presented itself, and as I assembled the program, I saw this as an opportunity to ask Carlos to write a short, easy piece with which I could open this otherwise demanding program. He responded with these two beautiful short lullabies. Though of course not a guitarist himself, Carlos delivered a near-perfect piece of guitar writing. We got together one afternoon in New York, I played him the piece and made a number of suggestions for minor revisions, and voila, it was done!

David Del Tredici was the only person with whom I ever studied orchestration. I audited some of his orchestration classes at the City College of New York and then took private lessons when I wrote my two early works for orchestra. David is, in my view, not only one of the world's great orchestrators, but one of the world's best living composers. He is generally recognized as the father of Neo-Romantic music, and early in his career, Aaron Copland was a major supporter, saying, "I know of no other composer of his generation who composes music of freshness and daring, or with more personality". Del Tredici was most prominent in the 1970's and 80's, when he was writing huge works, in both length and instrumental forces, for voice and orchestra that were based on *Alice in Wonderland*. They were startlingly tonal and Romantic during a time when serialism and intellectual rigor held sway in the contemporary music world. His reputation has somewhat waned in recent years, really for no good reason, and I feel absolutely certain that history will regard him as one of the essential composers of our era.

When I asked him to write a solo work for the guitar, David was frightened and delighted at the same time. While he'd included the electric guitar, mandolin and banjo in some of his orchestral works and had a former student arrange the "Acrostic Song"

from *Final Alice* for guitar, he'd never actually written for it and, as a pianist, felt quite distant from it. But he likes me and always likes a challenge, so he accepted the commission, which I funded with the help of many people. I asked for a 10-15 minute work, and he wrote one that's about 30 minutes long! It's in 4 movements, and most of it is counterpoint. These aspects already establish its uniqueness in the guitar repertoire. When we discussed the commission in the beginning, I told him that I would be there for him whenever he wanted my help. Well, little did I know what I was getting into! For three months, we got together about twice a week, sometimes more, to go over in great detail passages he'd written. I would make a great deal of changes, sometimes even being naughty about making essential changes in the composition itself. David was a good sport about it, sometimes taking my advice and sometimes rejecting it, but always the prodding and the tossing-back-and-forth of ideas was stimulating for us both. Neither of us had ever experienced such an intensive process in the composition of a piece. It's a good thing that we like each other since we saw each other so much! In fact, the experience was extraordinary on every level, and David could not have been happier with the process and with the result. He told me after the premiere that it was one of the most exciting collaborations of his life. Can you imagine how good that made me feel? And I can tell you that the opportunity to watch the process of this genius

(continued on next page)



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composer at work close at hand was an extraordinary, irreplaceable, immensely inspiring lesson for me in composition. The commissioning of this masterpiece and bringing it to life in performance and recording has been one of the most important accomplishments of my musical life.

BCGS: For this recital you are also programming the Boston premiere of one of your own works, *Labyrinths*, which has wonderfully alliterative movement titles. Many of your compositions have very evocative titles - does a working title come to you as you compose, after the work is completed, or does it inspire the composition in the first place? Can you elaborate on this piece in particular?

DL: The titles just happened, after the fact. As they occurred to me, one by one, I realized an alliterative pattern was emerging, which suited the music, and then I realized that something that happens in the final movement related to it as well. It was just a lucky coincidence, or perhaps part of an unconscious plan from the beginning - I'll never know...

My composition style took a dramatic turn in the early part of the last decade, toward a more reductive (or dare I say, Minimalist?) approach. As life in general got faster and more complex, I found myself wanting to go slower and pay closer attention to the nuanced details of things. This began with observations in art and nature and soon worked its way into my music. *Labyrinths* for guitar (there's also been one for solo piano) was one of the earliest of these works. Each movement obsesses on a small amount of musical material, exploring and inspecting and expanding its nature and its possibilities in slowly shifting detail. I look forward to sharing this piece with the Boston audience.

BCGS: Do you have any new compositions in the works? Is there a medium you haven't written for before that intrigues you (a guitar concerto, perhaps)?

DL: I recently completed two vocal commissions, one for famous baritone Wolfgang Holzmair for baritone and solo cello, with German translations of Lao Tzu, and a set of songs for tenor and guitar to Mary Oliver poems for tenor William Ferguson. Next up is a big work for cello and guitar, for the cellist Zuill Bailey and me to play in our upcoming recitals next season and beyond.

Otherwise, you hit the nail on the head - I'm dying to write a guitar concerto. It seems like I'm a natural for this, with my orchestral writing experience. But it requires a decent amount of money for commission, as it's a time-consuming and costly project to undertake. So I hope that something of this nature comes along sometime. I'm also chomping at the bit to write a large-scale string quartet. I've written a short one, as well as a work for string quartet and guitar and another with baritone, so I'm ready to do the big piece for quartet.

BCGS: Thank you, David!

Society members can find more information about David Leisner at his website: <http://www.davidleisner.com>

BCGS Performance Parties

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

December 3, 2011

Hosted by Carl Kamp, Union Music, Worcester



Carl Kamp and Bob Sullivan



Jozsef Halajko



Michael Hurley



Mike Tomases

January 14, 2012

Hosted by Oscar & Leslie Azaret, North Andover



Bill and Joanne Harriman



Bob Margo



Cesar Varsa and Marco Endara



George P. Attisano and J. Oscar Azaret



Michael Hurley,
Steve Rapson, and
Robert Jackson

Calendar

Saturday, April 7, 3:00 pm

BCGS Saturday Sounds Special at the Hingham Public Library
Jose Lezcano, solo guitar

Saturday, April 14, 2:00-6:00 pm

BCGS Performance Party at Donna Ricci's home in
Newburyport

Sunday, April 15, 3:00 pm

Duo Diavolo- flute, guitar & Venezuelan cuatro
Orlando Cela, flute & Venezuelan cuatro Aaron Larget-Caplan,
guitar First Parish Church, Dorchester

Saturday, April 21

ALL DAY BCGS Festival 21 featuring David Leisner
Old South Church and First Lutheran Church of Boston

Saturday, April 28, 3:00 pm

BCGS Saturday Sounds Special at the Hingham Public Library
Robert Margo and Wendy Silverberg, voice & guitar

Saturday, May 5, 3:30 pm

BCGS Saturday Sounds Special at the Hingham Public Library
Boston Guitar Orchestra, Scott Borg conducting

Sunday, May 6, 2:30 pm

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

Saturday, May 19, 2:00 pm

BCGS Performance Party at Donald & Naoko Hague's Home in
Pepperell

Saturday, June 16, 2:00 pm

BCGS Performance Party TBA

June 20-24, Boston GuitarFest: Back to Bach.

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www.bostonguitarfest.org.

**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 [adbcs\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:adbcs[at]gmail.com); send checks to BCGS, P.O. Box 470665, Brookline, MA 02447, or PayPal the money to [bcgsemail\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:bcgsemail[at]gmail.com).

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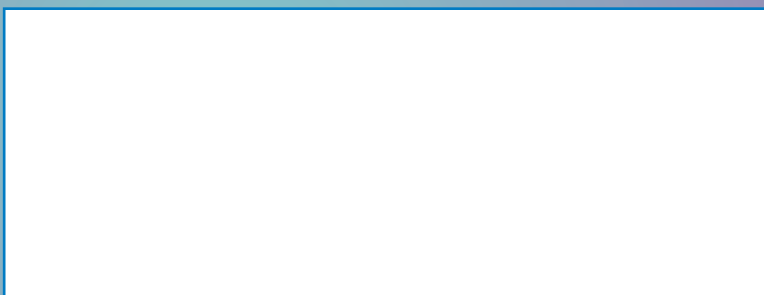
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FESTIVAL 21
April 21, 2012



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