



BCGS newsletter



Volume 22, No. 1



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BOSTON CLASSICAL GUITAR SOCIETY 2015-16

ARTIST SERIES

SEPTEMBER 25
Kazuhito Yamashita
First Lutheran Church

NOVEMBER 13
Gaëlle Solal
First Lutheran Church

FEBRUARY 19
SoloDuo
First Lutheran Church

MARCH 19-20, All day
Dusan Bogdanovic & NEGEF
Longy School of Music

APRIL 8
Yamandu Costa
First Lutheran Church

Concerts 7:30 pm
First Lutheran Church of Boston
299 Berkeley Street, Boston

Dusan Bogdanovic & NEGEF
New England Guitar Ensembles Festival
Longy School of Music of Bard College
27 & 33 Garden Street, Cambridge

On-Line Tickets
www.bostonguitar.org

Information
617/420-2247
director@bostonguitar.org

www.bostonguitar.org

Boston Back Bay at Sunset: By walkinboston (Flickr: Boston Sunset) [CC BY 2.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0)], via Wikimedia Commons.

Series Opener
Kazuhito Yamashita
September 25, 2015. 7:30 pm
www.bostonguitar.org

Letter to Members



Dear Members,

It is hard to believe that another sweltering Boston summer is galloping to a finish. I hope you had a happy and healthy last few months, filled with fun adventures (big or small) and good music. The Boston

Classical Guitar Society is excited to announce its 2015-16 Artist Series, a program like no other before it. Each performer is a true master of the instrument, wielding a full range of artistic expression and technical virtuosity. This season is made truly special by the gloriously unique perspectives they present: at times heartwarming beautiful, breathtakingly acrobatic, unceasingly precise, uncompromisingly challenging, and exuberantly joyful. In my opinion they are prime examples why there is never a truly adequate substitute for live music.

Thanks to an endorsement by Carlo Domeniconi, who gifted us such a wonderful guitar orchestra composition last spring, we are given a rare opportunity to present Kazuhito Yamashita for our first concert on September 25th. Mr. Yamashita is the most exciting, adventurous, and greatest risk-taking classical guitarist in the world (matched only by Boston's own Eliot Fisk). Following bold victories in several prestigious competitions at a very young age, Mr. Yamashita quickly became celebrated all over the world for jaw dropping arrangements of pieces previously thought unplayable on solo guitar, such as Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Dvorák's *Symphony from the New World*. But even when interpreting works more frequently played on guitar, such as Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *Capriccio Diabolico* and Bach's violin sonatas, his wizardry is accompanied by a dramatic variety of tone colors, gravity-defying *legato*, and attention to large-scale musical lines that are often so hard to realize on a plucked instrument. His local debut in Boston Symphony Hall received effusive praise from the Boston Globe, which conceded that he completely stole the show from his flutist duo partner - Sir James Galway!

On November 13th, we are honored to present the charming French guitarist Gaëlle Solal. A rising star of the guitar world, Gaëlle is a prolific concertizer on the international stage, and moves uncommonly well across genres and stylistic demarcations. She is passionate for classical, but also popular and Brazilian pieces, and integrates them seamlessly into her program. Gaëlle's tone colors display gentle introspective warmth when playing Roland Dyens' *Songe capricorne*, feathery lightness on Regondi's *Rêverie*, op. 19, and confident

angles on the Turkish-inspired *Drama Koprusü*. Gaëlle Solal's recital will surely showcase the guitar at its most culturally diverse.

SoloDuo has been one of the guitar world's best-kept secrets. Italians Matteo Mela and Lorenzo Micheli are quickly becoming acquainted with large and very appreciated audiences the world over while critics uniformly calling them one of the best guitar duos in the world. Their recent Carnegie Hall recital was a "remarkable blend" of "sublime artistry" and "impeccable technique" (Anthony Aibel). Their repertoire presents impressive breadth and depth, from 17-18th century Italian music to 20th-century masterpieces, as can be heard on a dozen recordings. Their February 19th concert will inject much needed energy and artistry to quell our midwinter blues.

For 2016, we are moving the New England Guitar Ensembles Festival to March 19-20 and will expand it to two full days. We are delighted to present the festival at the Longy School of Music of Bard College in Cambridge. Our recitals will be in beautiful Pickman Hall and we will have increased space and resources to welcome guitar ensembles from the region and beyond. Renowned composer/guitarist Dusan Bogdanovic will be our featured artist. Mr. Bogdanovic's music has been presented at many of our previous concerts so it is wonderful that we can hear him playing his own music and contributing a new work for our festival. Born in Serbia, his compositional style organically synthesizes classical, jazz, and folk music while developing a unique personal voice.

To those of you who are passionate about Brazilian and South American guitar music, Yamandu Costa needs no introduction. While still very young, his career has greatly flourished in recent years as he has become one of the most authentic and vivacious interpreters and composers of South American styles, including chorinho, bossa nova, milonga, tango, samba, and chamamé. His fourteen recordings showcase his vivacious touch and his live performance at First Lutheran Church on April 8th will certainly prompt our hearts and feet to dance.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our concerts and other activities!

Sincerely,

Dan Acsadi
Director, BCGS

On Necks and Strings, and Saddles and Nuts

by Juan Oscar Azaret

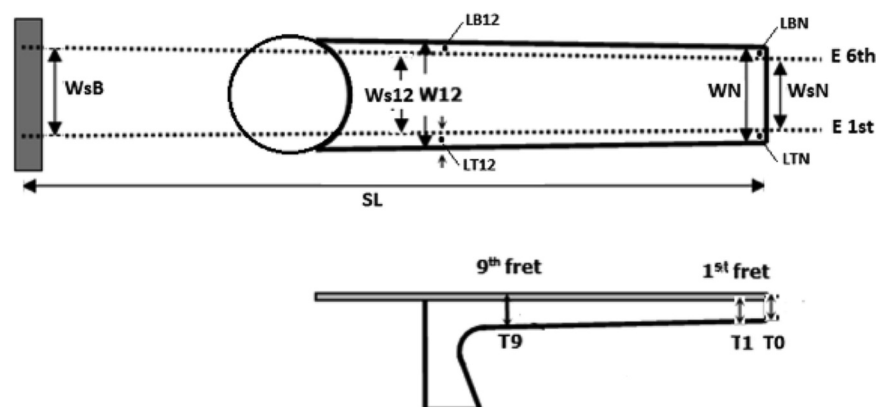
Recently I was asked to reproduce the neck and string spacing of an existing guitar on a customer's new guitar. The existing guitar was a crossover classical/amplified guitar and the neck was just outside the norm for classical guitars, so I thought I would do a little research to see just what's out there. Luckily there are some wonderful books which list dimensions of many great "collectible" type guitars of varying vintages, so I thought I would tabulate those, and then look at the resulting salient parameters.

When we think of a guitar neck, we tend to first have a sense of its "girth", then perhaps the roundness or flatness of the contour, and finally the width at the nut. Of course, when we think more deeply on the matter we might then be concerned with the string spacing at the nut, the treble and bass ledge – distance from the 1st and 6th string to the edges of the fingerboard, the thickness of the neck near the nut and near the 12th fret, any curvature of the fretboard, and finally, if we think

really hard, the string spacing at the bridge, and the ledge differential between the nut and the 12th fret. Well, of course, there's the action, but that's a different matter, dependent on neck angle and bridge height, not neck dimensions. The figure below helps us visualize some of these parameters.

Our hands and fingers are indeed unique personal instruments with which we approach the guitar, and it is no surprise that individuals respond differently to all the above parameters. This having been said, the variations for a classical guitar are not great, and we certainly don't see classical guitarists using instruments with say, a Stratocaster or D-18 type neck. The demands of the classical technique have promoted the evolution of certain neck dimensions, very different from those required for playing chordal singing accompaniments, or rock riffs – not too many classical guitarists wrap their thumbs around to fret the bass strings.

Below is a table of dimensions from various established luthiers. This data was derived from source measurements published in two wonderful books: Roy Courttnall, "Making Master Guitars ISBN 0-7090-4809-2, and Sheldon, Urlik "A Collection of Fine Spanish Guitars", ISBN 0-9660771-0-5.



Instrument	scale	Thickness			Nut			12th Fret			Bridge	Splay	
All measurements in mm.	SL	T0/T1	T9	WN	WsN	LN	W12	Ws12	L12	WsB	Neck Splay	String Splay	
Antonie De Torres 1864	650	24	27	49	42.5	3.25	60.5	49.25	5.63	56.0	3.54%	2.08%	
Hermann Hauser I 1931	650	22	27.5	52.5	43.5	4.5	63	51.25	5.88	59.0	3.23%	2.38%	
Santos Hernandez Flamenco 1933	650	23.5	25.5	50	41	4.5	61	49.5	5.75	58.0	3.38%	2.62%	
Robert Bouchet 1963	650	22.8	23.5	50.5	44	3.25	61	50.25	5.38	56.5	3.23%	1.92%	
M. Hernandez & V. Aguado 1963	650	21.7	23	52.5	45	3.75	62.5	52	5.25	59.0	3.08%	2.15%	
Ignacio Fleta 1968	650	21.2	26	52.5	43.5	4.5	62.5	51.25	5.63	59.0	3.08%	2.38%	
Daniel Friederich	650	21.6	21.7	51.5	42.5	4.5	61.5	50	5.75	57.5	3.08%	2.31%	
Jose Romanillos	650	20.5	25	52.5	43.5	4.5	62.5	51.25	5.63	59.0	3.08%	2.38%	
Jose Ramirez III 1960	664	21	24.5	50.5	na	na	60	na	na	56.5	2.86%	na	
Masaru Kono 1963	650	21.5	23	50	na	na	60	na	na	58.0	3.08%	na	
Robert Ruck 1981	655	21.5	23.5	51	na	na	61	na	na	56.5	3.05%	na	
Thomas Humphrey 1990	650	21.5	24	53	na	na	63	na	na	56.0	3.08%	na	
Miguel Rodriguez Flamenco 1960	655	24	26.5	52	na	na	61	na	na	56.5	2.75%	na	
Paulino Bernabe 1971	660	22	23	53	na	na	63	na	na	57.5	3.03%	na	
Greg Smallman 1987	650	23	24	51	na	na	63	na	na	59.0	3.69%	na	
John Gilbert 1985	650	22	24	53.5	na	na	62.5	na	na	58.5	2.77%	na	
One that I like	650	22	23	52	42.5	4.75	61	50.75	5.13	59.0	2.77%	2.54%	

We can first note the range of widths, but then we need to think about the desired string spacing, and the resulting ledges which prevent us from pulling (or pushing) the string off the fretboard when executing fast scales or legatos on the 1st and 6th strings, and yes, if one has perfect technique, this should not be an issue, but The ledges given assume that the nut is designed such that the strings are centered symmetrically on the fretboard. In fact, it is typical to offset the strings at the nut such that the treble string has an extra millimeter or so of ledge margin at the expense of the bass string having one less millimeter. This is a simple modification which can be done at any time. Changing the string spacing at the saddle would be a bigger undertaking. Luckily, this has a much smaller effect since the distance of the bridge from the majority of the playing positions greatly attenuates the effects of dimensional changes. Finally, in the table below, the “splay” is a measure of how much the string separation and neck widen as a function of scale length. Note that the neck must widen at a higher, or at least, equal rate for the strings to stay over the fretboard.

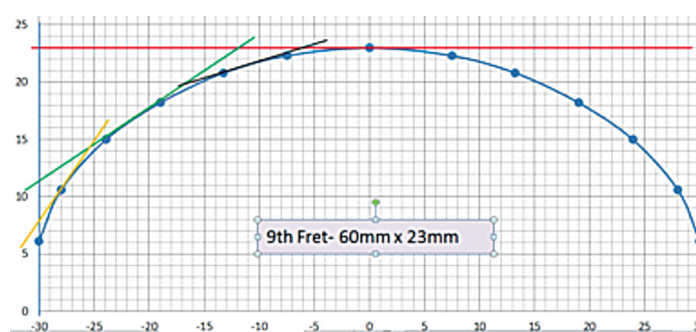
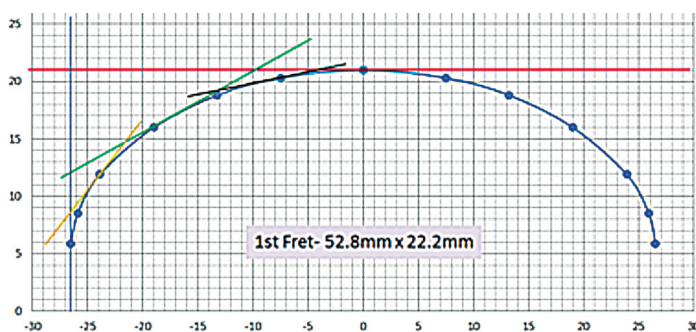
Let’s look at some examples – if you were playing the 1963 Hernandez & Aguado with a neck width of 52.5mm and string separation at the nut of 45mm you might feel like your fingers are always having to stretch a bit too much. Not necessarily because of the neck width, but because the string separation yields a distance of 9mm between string centers, which is on the high side. Note that as a result, this leaves you with only a 3.75mm ledge. You lose about 1mm of that due to the fret end bevel, so this guitar would demand really good technique. Luckily, if you wanted to change this, all that would need to be done is to fashion a new nut with string spacing of say, 43mm. This would now give you ledges of 4.75mm, and if you prefer, the notches could be offset to give a ledge of 5.25mm on the treble, and 4.25 of the bass. On the other hand, the 1864 Torres has a nominal string separation, but very narrow ledges, because the neck width at the nut is only 49mm. Also, note that on this vintage instrument the neck is quite thick at 24mm in the 1st fret and 27mm in the 9th fret. However, since the

neck widths are on the narrow side, the thicker neck may in fact compensate, but if this guitar still feels a bit uncomfortable to play, no problem, I’ll gladly trade you a couple of mine for it. On this list, the instrument which might feel as having the most girth is the 1931 Hauser with fairly ample neck widths and the neck thickness increasing quickly from the 1st to the higher frets – 27.5mm on fret 9. Finally, looking at the 1933 Santos Flamenco, we note a tight string separation at the nut, with the neck widths being a bit on the lean side while thickness a bit on the heavy side; and this may be exactly what you want. The last entry shown is one which I like. It’s a moderate thickness at the 1st fret, but thickness increases only by 1mm in moving to the 9th fret. The widths and string spacings are also moderate, and selected to keep the ledge very nearly the same in moving from the nut to the 12th fret.

So we see the interrelatedness of all these dimensions. The variations are not great, but alas, as classical guitarists we train to sense the smallest minutiae. We should also remember that we can adapt quite well, and if something is different from our present norm, it may in fact turn out to be strange at first, but better in the long run.

In closing, we’ll open a whole new topic, but only introduce it at this time to keep this lengthy briefing from becoming a brief headache. The curvature of the back of the neck can have limitless variation, and even change in profile as we move from the low to the high positions. We can think of the extremes being a pure semicircle and, on the other end, a pure flat neck with steep rounded shoulders. On some narrow neck steel string acoustic or electric guitars the neck is fashioned as a “soft V” with some peaking at the apex. These are good for fretting with the thumb over the neck..... ah, Jimmy. Below are a couple of profiles which I like, and you can start to see that the possibilities are endless.

Finally, we have not talked about curvature of the fretboard, I guess we’ll have to leave that one to be – as Paul Harvey used to say – “the rest of the story.”



Kazuhito Yamashita



Kazuhito Yamashita began to study the guitar at the age of eight with his father, Toru Yamashita. In 1972, aged eleven, he won the Kyushu Guitar Competition. Four years later, he was awarded First Prize in the All Japan Guitar Competition. In 1977, he won three important international competitions - the Ramirez in Spain, the Alessandria in Italy and Paris Radio France Competition,

being the youngest winner ever recorded.

In 1978, Yamashita made his debut in Japan and, in the following year, traveled to Europe. While still in his twenties, he made his first appearances in Canada's Toronto International Guitar Festival and gave a solo recital in the Musikverein (Grosser Saal) in Vienna, he also performed in the US and UK. He gave solo recitals in concert halls around the world such as the Lincoln Center and has performed with a variety of orchestras and conductors in Europe, North America and Asia. In 1989, the Casals Hall in Tokyo, considered to be one of the finest auditoriums in the world, presented a series called The World of Kazuhito Yamashita, comprising seven concerts in 12 months. The high point of the concerts was Castelnuovo-Tedesco's 24 Caprichos de Goya in a single performance. The series concluded with Bach's six sonatas and partitas over two consecutive nights; a recital series was continued in 1994 and 1999.



Classifieds

Classifieds are \$15 per issue of the BCGS newsletter for a 32-word ad, and \$0.25 for each additional word. The fee includes posting on the BCGS webpage for three months. Email director@bostonguitar.org with inquiries. Please send checks to BCGS, P.O. Box 470665, Brookline, MA 02447, or pay online.

Guitars for Sale

Paul Jacobson, 1987. Spruce top, Brazilian Rosewood back & sides. Rogers tuners, 650mm scale, includes HSC. Currently on consignment at the Music Emporium. www.themusicemporium.com or email: heaton.matt@gmail.com

Ovation Classical Electric Guitar \$700. Model 1763 with case. Near Mint Condition. Factory OP24 pickup with 3 band EQ and volume control. Rounded cutaway. Call (617) 694-1973 or email musicbypaula@gmail.com

Ángel Benítez Aguado (Madrid). \$5,500. Please call: (617) 522-4994.

Allan Harold Chapman, 1995. "Lattice Brace Prototype." Indian rosewood back and sides, Sitka spruce top, mahogany neck with rear weighted head, Gilbert tuners, beautiful rosette. Recent setup by Jim Mouradian. Excellent tone and projection. \$1,800 OBO. Includes Harptone hard shell case in very good condition. (617) 835-3621, or email: ronaldkgold@gmail.com

2001 Paul Fisher (taut model) Excellent condition, Spruce top, Brazilian back and sides, Roger tuners. 781-956-1296

Luthiers and Dealers

HANDCRAFTED GUITARS BY THOMAS KNATT – \$1,500-\$3,000. Inexpensive guitars for serious students \$400-\$700. La Bella, Hannabach, D'Addario and other strings and accessories – Repairs and Guitarmaking class. 687 Townsend Road, Groton, MA 01450, (978) 448-9663, email: luthiers@alum.mit.edu, website: www.newenglandluthiers.org

Miscellaneous

75 BACK ISSUES OF CLASSICAL GUITAR MAGAZINE, FREE: 2004 April-December (9), 2005-2009 January-December (12 each year, 60 total), 2010 January-June (6). Pick up in Arlington. email: lori.gayle@verizon.net

Thomas Knatt	Luthier
 Luthier's Workshop Classical & Flamenco Guitars 	
www.thomasknatt.com	
1-978-448-9663 thomasknatt@yahoo.com luthiers@alum.mit.edu	687 Townsend Road Groton MA 01450 Guitarmaking Instruction

Calendar

BCGS events are in red, member events in grey. Please visit the BCGS website (www.bostonguitar.org) to see further information including a link to maps and directions. Members may enter their own events by contacting the BCGS for permission and instructions.

Saturday, September 19

2:00-6:00pm

BCGS Performance Party

20 Clyde Street, Somerville, MA

Performance party at the home of Miriam Ben-Ur in Somerville

Sunday, September 20

3:00-4:00pm

Steve Rapson, Sunday Sounds Special Concert

Hingham Public Library, 66 Leavitt St., Hingham

www.hinghamlibrary.org

Friday, September 25

7:30pm

BCGS Artist Series Recital

Kazuhito Yamashita, guitar

First Lutheran Church, 299 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116

Saturday, October 10

2:00-6:00pm

BCGS Performance Party

300 Mill Glen Pond North, Winchendon, MA

Performance party at the lake home of Steve and Rosemary Rapson phone: 617-877-2745

Sunday, November 8

3:00-4:00pm

Mark & Beverly Davis, Sunday Sounds Special Concert

Hingham Public Library, 66 Leavitt St., Hingham
www.hinghamlibrary.org

Friday, November 13

7:30pm

BCGS Artist Series Recital

Gaëlle Solal, guitar

First Lutheran Church, 299 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116

Sunday, December 6

3:00-4:00pm

John Muratore, Sunday Sounds Special Concert

Hingham Public Library, 66 Leavitt St., Hingham

www.hinghamlibrary.org

Friday, February 19

7:30pm

BCGS Artist Series Recital

SoloDuo

First Lutheran Church, 299 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116

Saturday/Sunday

All Day

March 19-20

New England Guitar Ensembles Festival

Hosted by Longy School of Music of Bard

College, 27 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA

Details TBA



P.O. Box 470665, Brookline, MA, 02447
(Address Correction Requested)



SEPTEMBER 25
Kazuhito Yamashita
First Lutheran Church,
Boston

www.bostonguitar.org

