



# BCGS

## newsletter



Volume 22, No. 2



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## Artist Series 2016 Upcoming Performances



**March 19-20**  
**Dusan Bogdanovic**  
**& NEGEF**  
**Longy School of Music**

**April 8**  
**Yamandu Costa**  
**First Lutheran Church**



**On-Line Tickets & Information**  
**[www.bostonguitar.org](http://www.bostonguitar.org)**

## Letter to Members



Dear Members,

With springtime hopefully approaching our region, the BCGS will again organize the annual New England Guitar Ensembles Festival. We are fortunate to be expanding the event to two days on March 19-20 and moving it across the

river to the Longy School of Music of Bard College in Cambridge. Guitar groups large and small will join us for workshops, technique sessions, and concerts. Our featured composer/coach/performer is Dusan Bogdanovic, who will conduct the world premiere of his BCGS commissioned composition, *Naokolo*, followed by his solo recital at 4pm on Sunday. We will present the annual Members Concert on Saturday afternoon (openings to play are still available). Zaira Meneses will direct a Latin American guitar technique workshop. A special Saturday night performance will bring together ensemble directors, and local faculty, to perform Frank Wallace's *As It Could Be* and Jose Lezcano's *Sonata for Cello and Guitar*. Look for more details via our email newsletter.

The Artist Series season will close with Yamandu Costa, one of the most dazzling and uniquely gifted guitarists on the planet. His joyful, energetic, original interpretations of Brazilian music are a must hear for any guitar fan and player. See you there!

Dan Acsadi,  
Director BCGS

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## Tenacious Timber

by Juan Oscar Azaret

There was much to inspire awe and wonder on our recent hiking trip to the Canadian Rockies. As the pieces were put together (and perhaps because us aficionados of the guitar can relate just about anything to our beloved instrument) a fascinating picture began to emerge. A picture linking together one of our prized soundboard woods, the qualities we seek, the sensations we enjoy, and the evolution of nature. So here we talk about strange things such as moraines, the Mini-Ice Age, lichens, Young's modulus, velocity of sound, wood run-out, and others.

The geography discussed here is in the regions of Yoho National Park, Jasper, Lake Louise, and the Columbia ice fields in the border between British Columbia and Alberta, Canada. A typical hiking day might start in a lush moist forest near a lake. As the day progresses, the incline and altitude lead to crisper air, smaller trees, alpine vegetation, then rocks, rocks and more rocks, ice, snow, and ancient glaciers.

On this last topic we first learned that the glaciers in the Canadian Rockies, in modern time, were at their peak only about 150 years ago, the end of the "Mini Ice Age" which is attributed to a timeframe spanning the 14th to 19th century. As far as the rangers in this area are concerned, global warming started about 150 years ago, but we are more recently speeding up the process. So glaciers have been doing two things in recent time, creeping down the slopes, as they always do, and melting, therefore receding. The Athabasca glacier in the Columbia Ice Fields currently loses about 15 ft. of depth per year, and thereby recedes between 30 and 75 ft. per year, despite the fact that it also creeps downhill. It is a frozen river, and as it creeps with its tremendous mass of ice it scrapes, crushes, and piles up huge hills of rocks called moraines. The rocks in the Canadian Rockies are primarily sedimentary, not igneous as we have here in our neighboring Granite State. So these moonscape piles – moraines – are after time, colonized by a symbiotic organism we call lichens. Lichens are two different organisms living together as one – algae and fungus. The algae provides the nutrients via photosynthesis and the fungus provides the housing and moisture for the algae, and together they help tear down the



On the Athabasca Glacier – jump in to become a fossil



Lateral moraines at the base of the mountain cliffs giving way to a forest of spruce





*Left: Lichens colonize as soon as they can, and help to erode the rocks.*

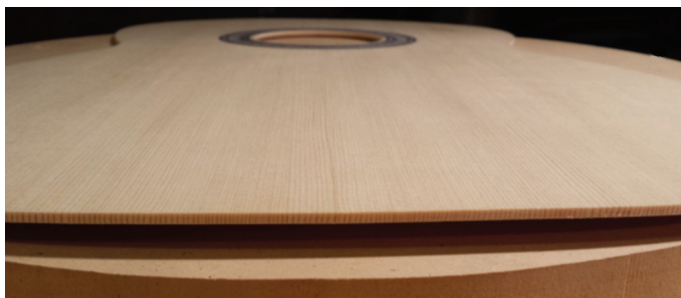
*Right: Pioneering Spruce – taking foothold*

rocks via organic acids and create soil. Soil which leads to vegetation, which ultimately leads to trees.

As it turns out, many of the forests in these regions have heavy concentration of Engelmann Spruce (*Picea engelmannii*). This is one of the favored tonewoods for classical guitar soundboards; others

being various European spruces, western redcedar, and California redwood. All these share the imperative attributes of good tonewood which are high stiffness to weight ratio and low damping. We impart precious little energy onto the plucked string and want from that a full explosion of sound, so the first requirement is to overcome inertia; hence the wood must be light, but it also needs to be strong (stiff) to counteract the pull of the strings and to provide fast vibrational radiation. Lastly we don't want the wood to soak up all the energy in internal damping; we rather want it to release the energy to the air as sound. We characterize the "weight" of the wood by measuring its density (mass/volume), its stiffness using a parameter we call Young's modulus (stress/strain), and damping with a measure of logarithmic decrement (how fast the oscillations decay.)

Engelmann spruce is among the lightest and stiffest of the spruces, often being as light as western redcedar. It should be said here that equally important with the species is the manner in which the wood is cut and prepared for the soundboard – the goal being minimal cross-grain runout (quarter sawn), and long-grain runout (face to grain parallelism). Without getting into the biology of trees, it is interesting to note that our light strong tonewood trees come from mountainous, cold, temperate regions, while the woods we use for the body of the guitar often come from warm, lush tropical regions. The latter also being stiff low damping woods, but much higher density. Indeed we can imagine that the soundboard wood which we want to be so agile and responsive, yet enduring, has reached our hands after many centuries of hard geological and biological evolution. As we struggle to get just the right tone from our instrument, it is some comfort to know that the wood which we call to service, has already worked infinitely harder.



*Nicely quarter sawn Engelmann spruce soundboard – maybe 200 years of growth!*

## "A Direct Hit on Music"

*Bono, on the Paris terrorist attacks, quoted on CNN November 15, 2015*

*By Donna Ricci*

If you are an American who was at least of the age of reason on September 11, 2001, you can quickly recall where you were that morning when our country was attacked. You remember the moment you heard the news that Patriots Day in 2013 when two men decided placing bombs at the finishing line of the Boston Marathon was somehow going to advance a religious cause. And to this day, when attacks similar to that which we witnessed in the US happen across the globe, many of us not only recall those moments, but we feel the moments deep within our being. We tap into the pulse of humanity and feel its now too all familiar quickening tempo.

At 5:30PM on Friday November 13th, I was driving into Boston to perform with the Boston Guitar Orchestra. We were opening for French classical guitarist Gaelle Solal. And I was incredibly excited. I always look forward to hearing the amazing musicians who grace the stage as part of the Boston Classical Guitar Society Artist Series. But I was particularly excited to hear Gaelle Solal. Several years ago I heard a YouTube performance of her playing Garoto's *Lamendo do morro* and I was spellbound. Her recorded playing spoke to me. I could only imagine how exciting it would be to sit a few feet away from her and hear play Bach, Villa-Lobos and Garoto. Being given the gift of a love of music, the opportunity to learn an instrument, the chance to play that instrument for others as part of an orchestra and to be inspired by the extremely talented is a dream come true for many of us. It doesn't get any better than this I thought—a perfect evening in the making.

On my drive in I was listening to NPR on the radio as the events that took place in France were unfolding. Multiple terrorist attacks were in progress. People sitting in cafes on a beautiful autumn evening were being gunned down. And music lovers were being held hostage in a concert hall in Paris. I arrived at our concert venue, a church, early, and sat in my car listening to the events as they were happening. The irony was not lost on me. I was about to head into a concert venue to have an amazing musical evening that I could speak about for years to come with an awareness that others, several thousand miles away, had walked into their music hall with the same intent as mine just a few short hours earlier, and they were not going to be walking out of that hall. With these thoughts in mind, I headed in.

As the orchestra performed I caught a glimpse of Ms. Solal in the doorway watching us, smiling. And as we left the stage she was standing there complementing us on our playing. She had been told of the events occurring in her country of birth just an hour prior to the concert. Yet, all I saw in her was a love of music and a desire to share that with others. And share she did.

*(Continued on next page)*

She immediately engaged the audience with descriptions of the pieces she would be performing, their history and why she chose them. She reminded me of her French countryman, Roland Dyens who performed for us a few years ago. When he walked on stage any notion of performer and audience as being separate evaporated. He was there to be there with you, sharing music.

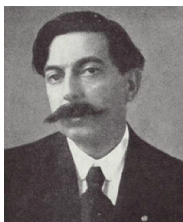
Ms. Solal brought elements of that to her playing as well, looking around at the audience, connecting on a personal level with many of us with her generous warmth and her impish facial expressions. At one point in the Bach Violin Partita she hit a wrong note. She looked up at us, with a childlike wonder as if to say, “Oh my, wasn’t that interesting! And fun.” And then preceded to flawlessly complete the set. I sat enraptured with her version of Egberto Gismonti’s *Aqua y Vinho*. And when she played the *Garoto* I sat enthralled.

But as I listened I was aware that I take this for granted. I take for granted that I can walk into a musical venue, contribute to, and receive from this vast collective of the universal musical spirit that lives in most of us. I wrote to Roland Dyens that week-end to send healing thoughts to him and his countrymen. His response. “Merci aux USA for their incredible support. So moving.” So moving indeed. As is music. As is life.

I was able to leave my concert hall that evening and arrive safely at my home with beautiful sounds lingering in my ears. I will never take that for granted again. Music may have taken a hit. Musicians, music lovers, lovers of life, may have taken a hit. But we are not down. A few weeks after the attacks U2 played their cancelled Paris concerts and invited the band performing the night of the attacks to join them on stage. Bono said, “These are our brothers, our fellow troubadours and they were robbed of their stage three weeks ago, and we would like to offer them ours tonight.” The music does live on.



## Granados, Goya, and the Soul of Spain



Enrique Granados

by Adrienne Smith

March 24, 2016 marks one hundred years since the beloved composer, Enrique Granados, died at sea. Most guitarists can easily list their favorite pieces, but probably don’t know why his biggest influence, Francisco Goya, was so important to him, or why Granados was so important to Spain. In celebration of his

life and legacy, here’s the story.

Granados was born July 27, 1867, in Lérida, Spain. He was trained as a pianist in Barcelona and Paris. His international career took off in 1890 when, at the young age of 23, he

composed his *Twelve Spanish dances*.

Between the *Spanish dances* and his death, Granados was incredibly prolific: he wrote dozens of solo piano pieces, orchestral and chamber works, operas, symphonic poems and songs for voice. He collaborated with greats such as Isaac Albéniz and Pablo Casals. He was a dedicated teacher and founded a music academy.

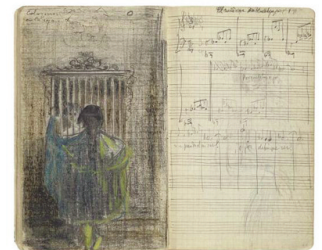
The later part of his career is marked by numerous works inspired by the Spanish painter Francisco Goya. Guitarists are probably most familiar with *La maja de Goya*, from his *Tonadillas*, and the *Intermezzo*, from the *Goyescas* opera. These represent just a small portion of his Goya-inspired pieces. And had he lived longer, he probably would have written more.

So why the fascination?

Goya lived from 1746 to 1828. He spent the early part of his career as a painter to the Royal Court, first under King Charles III and then Charles IV. At this time, a phenomenon called ‘majismo’ was the rage. The Spanish upper crust, and Goya himself, were obsessed with Spain’s *majos* and *majas*, bohemian street-wise peasants known for their distinctive dress.

Perhaps nobility found court-life to be dull, but Goya was commissioned time and time again to paint the rich dressed up like the peasants they found so exciting. For the men, this meant wearing wigs, capes, velvet vests, silk stockings, sashes and ties—the *majos* were the prototype for the modern day bullfighter. The women wore low-necked embroidered bodices, shawls, and full skirts. They carried fans in their hands and knives in their garters.

Goya also created 63 tapestry cartoons (1775-1791), commissioned to hang in the Kings’ palaces. They feature the *majos* and *majas* in every-day life, dancing, playing cards, smoking, flying kites, and even buying oranges.



Granados’ sketchbook

It was this period in Goya’s career that captivated Granados. The inspiration for *La maja de Goya* is thought to be a twin set of paintings, *La maja vestida* and *La maja desnuda* (c. 1797-1800), depicting a reclining woman in the same pose, clothed and nude. The nude version was scandalous; it was one of the first



*La Maja desnuda* (F. Goya)

times in western art that a full frontal nude female had been portrayed as neither an angel nor a prostitute. In 1808, the paintings were seized during the Spanish Inquisition and Goya was brought before inquisitors on charges of moral depravity. He somehow talked his way out. The rest of his career is

marked by the darker paintings for which he is famous, such as *Saturn devouring his son* and his *Disasters of war* series.

Flash forward about a century, and Spain was experiencing a cultural identity crisis. The national psyche had been crushed in 1898, when Spain lost the Spanish-American War and the Spanish Empire dissolved.

A group of artists and intellectuals called the Generation of '98 led efforts to "rebrand" Spain. They looked to great cultural figures of Spain's past for inspiration. Goya was a natural choice—they saw him as a heroic spirit, a rebel, and proof of Spain's artistic greatness.

A "majismo Renaissance" followed as artists saw the potential in the *majo* and *maja* characters to embody the "essence" of Spain. They were both traditional and modern; they appealed to the rich and poor alike. They were legend. Artists fantasized of the Spanish glory days when the *majos* and *majas* swaggered down the streets freely. And Goya had been their prime "photographer."

Granados' own passion for the subject can be traced to a sketchbook from the early 1900s called *Apuntes y temas para mis obras* (Notes and themes for my work). The book contains musical ideas and drawings based on Goya's tapestry cartoons and paintings. The sketches laid the groundwork for the *Goyescas* (1911) and several *Tonadillas* (1910).

In describing Goya's influence, Granados told the Parisian press in 1914, "Goya's greatest works immortalize and exalt our national life. I subordinate my inspiration to that of the man who so perfectly conveyed the characteristic actions and history of the Spanish people."

The public, in turn, adored Granados for capturing the heart of Spain. One music critic said, "No one has made me feel the musical soul of Spain like Granados. [*Goyescas* is] like a mixture of the three arts of painting, music, and poetry, confronting the same model: Spain, the eternal '*maja*.'"

After the success of the *Goyescas*, Granados was encouraged to push the theme further. He followed up with the *Goyescas* opera. WWI prevented him from premiering the opera in Europe. Instead, putting aside a lifelong crippling fear of water, he travelled overseas to New York, where the opera premiered on January 28, 1916. It was well received and President Woodrow Wilson invited Granados to perform at the White House.

Granados' side-trip to D.C. cost him his life. He missed his boat back to Spain, and travelled via England instead. While crossing the English Channel, his boat was torpedoed by a German U-Boat. Granados jumped out of his lifeboat to save his wife's life. They both drowned. He was 49.

Soon before his death, Granados wrote a friend, "I have a whole world of ideas. I am only now starting my work." That quote best sums up the loss: although he left the world an abundance of beautiful music, he was just beginning to tell his story of an immortal Spain.

## 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](mailto:director@bostonguitar.org) with inquiries. Please send checks to BCGS, P.O. Box 470665, Brookline, MA 02447, or pay online.*

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**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](mailto: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](mailto:ronaldkgold@gmail.com)

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**Four Exercises for the Classical Guitar by Andrew LeClaire**

Volume 1 Major and Melodic Minor Keys

Volume 2 Natural, Harmonic, and Real Melodic Keys



# Calendar

*BCGS events are in red, member events in grey. Please visit the BCGS website ([www.bostonguitar.org](http://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.*

**Friday, February 19**

7:30pm, BCGS Artist Series: SoloDuo, guitars

**Sunday, February 21**

3:00pm, Kim Perlak - Solo Guitar - Hingham Sunday Sounds Concert

**Friday, February 26**

7:30pm, Jerome Mouffe performs Romancero Gitano by Castenuovo-Tedesco

**Saturday, February 27**

2:00pm, BCGS Performance Party

**Tuesday, March 1**

12:30pm, Aaron Larget-Caplan at UMass Boston – Free

**Sunday, March 6**

3:00pm, Boston Guitar Orchestra with Scott Borg - Hingham Sunday Sounds Concert

**Wednesday, March 9**

6:30pm, The Art and Science of the Classical Guitar

**Thursday, March 10**

7:00pm, Thomas Schuttenhelm at UMass Boston

**Saturday, March 19**

New England Guitar Ensembles Festival – Longy School of Music of Bard College

**Sunday, March 20**

New England Guitar Ensembles Festival - Longy School of Music of Bard College

4:00pm, Dusan Bogdanovic and NEGEF Festival Orchestra in concert

**Friday, April 8**

7:30pm, BCGS Artist Series: Yamandu Costa, guitar

**Saturday, April 9**

7:00pm, Aaron Larget-Caplan at Providence College, Solo Recital

**Saturday, April 16**

2:00pm, BCGS Performance Party

7:00pm, FW concert for Guitarra Series, Eric Carle Museum

**Sunday, April 17**

9:30am, FW workshop for Guitarra Series, Eric Carle Museum

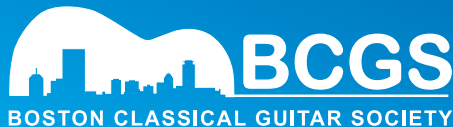
3:00pm, Robert Margo, Mandolin - Hingham Sunday Sounds Concert

**Thursday, April 28**

6:30pm, Aaron Larget-Caplan in Southbridge, Mass (south of Worcester)

**Sunday, May 1**

3:00pm, David Newsam & Margaret Herlehy, Guitar and Oboe - Hingham Sunday Sounds Concert



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



**New England Guitar Ensembles  
Festival. A two day event  
March 19-20**

[www.bostonguitar.org](http://www.bostonguitar.org)

