



BCGS

newsletter



Volume 24, No. 1 – PDF Newsletter

Contents

Letter to Members	2
Leisner Book Review	4
BCGS Photographs	5, 6
Calendar	7

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BOSTON CLASSICAL GUITAR SOCIETY

ARTIST SERIES

2019–2020



Manuel Barrueco

September 28



Brasil Guitar Duo

November 8



Matt Palmer

February 8, 2020



David Russell

April 25, 2020



Irina Kulikova
World Premiere Music by
Nikita Koshkin (NEGEF)

Saturday & Sunday
February 22–23, 2020
Longy School of Music of Bard College



Frank Wallace
Tribute

Friday
October 25, 2019

All Concerts 7:30 p.m.

The First Lutheran Church
of Boston
299 Berkeley Street, Boston

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

— Online Tickets —
www.bostonguitar.org
Information – 617/420-2247
director@bostonguitar.org



Matt Palmer in Concert February 8, 2020
7:30 p.m. The First Lutheran Church of Boston, 299 Berkeley Street, Boston

Irina Kulikova, (NEGEF) February 22–23, 2020
Longy School of Music of Bard College, 27 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA

Information and tickets at www.bostonguitar.org



Letter to Members



It was a great pleasure chatting with many of you during our various fall events, and we were delighted by your strong support of our BCGS activities. On behalf of everyone on the board I would like to wish all of you a most joyous and prosperous year 2020.

It is fitting to start a year such as 2020 with a clear vision. At our November Board meeting we ratified a change to the wording of our mission statement to put people first. We all love the classical guitar, and our Society advocates for the classical guitar, but the question is why. Our new mission statement is – "...to enrich lives and build community through sharing the art of the classical guitar." This simple unifying statement aims to pull together the great diversity of relationships which each of us have to the art of the classical guitar.

This past fall of 2019 we were in full swing with our Boston Artist Series, the Boston Guitar Orchestra, our Community Series in Hingham, Portsmouth, and Westford, and our performance parties throughout the New England landscape. Maestro Manuel Barrueco kicked off the Artist Series with an intriguing program of music, from, about, or foretelling Cuba and its relationship to the "Motherland" Spain. In these perfectly executed personal arrangements Manuel brought to life the heritage of his homeland – Cuba. Echoes of Cuba came back with the Brasil Duo's stunning performance of Leo Brouwer's masterpiece – "Sonata de Los Viajeros." In this musical journey, Brouwer

takes us through a timeless mystical existence through the land of the frozen, the land of wonders, a surreal visit with Bach, and then finally a return to the Caribbean Sea. Only a superbly technically and emotionally synchronized duo such as Joao Luiz and Douglas Lora could convincingly harness the magic of Brouwer's Einsteinian imaginings. And they did.

Our Society was honored to host a very special evening with our dear friend Frank Wallace, his family, and his music. The breadth of Frank's work was in full display as seven artists performed solo and ensemble works from the Wallace repertoire culminating with the "New England Sextets". Robert Ward, Christopher Ladd, David William Ross, Asa Gudjonsdottir, Alexander Dunn, Nick Cutroneo, and Daniel Acsadi collaborated to synthesize a magical evening. Many old friends from near and far were reunited that evening in which the visions of Frank's work laid the foundation for a palpable exploration of the human existence. Our society is very grateful to all the performing artists, and to Robert Ward for his leadership on this event.

Of course, all our Artist series events are gracefully prefaced by our increasingly talented Boston Guitar Orchestra under the leadership of Robert Bekkers. The BGO continues to innovate in composition and program with such treats as the addition of a vocalist for the Barrueco event. The BGO extends beyond the Artist Series with performances in community events in Jamaica Plains, Dorchester, and others. Members seeking a fun, engaging, and educational ensemble experience are encouraged to consider the BGO.

The performance party format was the genesis of the BCGS back in the mid 1970's. These casual unstructured events continue to grow in popularity and serve members in many ways. Not only are they opportunities to "try out" personal repertoire at all levels, but they have been the source of several small ensembles and many musical collaborations, and perhaps most importantly – meeting new friends. One of the relatively new formats for parties has been to hold them at senior residence communities. These communities typically have wonderful venue spaces, and the participation of a most friendly and appreciative audience adds a very special touch to the afternoon's events.

Finally, our community series events in Hingham, Portsmouth, and Westford serve to spread the magic of the





classical guitar to the wider New England area and provide an opportunity for many of our local artist to reach new audiences. No fewer than 18 such events have been scheduled for our 2019-20 series.

In the attached photo gallery, check out some of the highlights from these events.

Looking Ahead

Members are encouraged to check out the BCGS website for all the remaining 2020 events. Our artist series is bringing emerging and established masters to our stage in Boston with the debut of Matt Palmer on February 8, and the return of David Russell on April 25. We are all familiar with the deep influence of Russell on the world of the classical guitar. He continues to circumnavigate the globe mesmerizing audiences with his mastery of the art, and we are fortunate to have him with us in April. Our society strives to find the best in the new generation of talent, and Matt Palmer represents such an artist. The new generation pushes the limits of the art, and Matt's technical innovation and emotional interpretation is guaranteed to thrill the audience. Do not miss these events!

The BCGS is excited to present the 2020 New England Guitar Ensemble Festival. During a full weekend program on February 22-23rd at the Longy School of Music of Bard College, we welcome area guitar ensembles, aficionados, and general audiences for concerts, classes, and workshops. This year's featured artist will be guitar virtuoso Irina Kulikova, who will play a recital at 4pm on Sunday. Every year NEGEF commissions a new work from a prominent composer, and we are delighted that the

incomparable Nikita Koshkin has written a fantastic new piece to be premiered before Irina's performance. Anyone who plays guitar is welcome to participate in the workshops and classes. We hope to see you there. Additionally, during this event a performance party is scheduled preceding the Kulikova concert. Check out our calendar for all of the event logistics.

Looking toward next season. Our Artistic Director – Charles Ewing is already busy searching the globe and communicating with artists to set up yet another fabulous artist series for 2020-21!

New Things

Over the next few weeks we will be introducing some new enhancements for our members. We will be adding a "Member's Journal Page" to our website which allows members to publish small articles they want to share with any visitor to our web page. This capability will provide members with a forum to share their love of the guitar and everything about it. We will also be introducing web based capabilities for managing personal membership to the society making it easy to know individual membership status.

Finally, as earlier communicated, we are now an authorized non-profit with *Amazon Smile* (<https://smile.amazon.com>). Anyone can select the *Boston Classical Guitar Charitable Trust* as their supporting charity, and shop on *Amazon Smile*. Remember, these are the same products, prices, and services of Amazon except that Amazon will give a small percentage of the purchase price to the selected charity. It makes one feel a little better about shopping, and with increased participation, will greatly help our society.

A Note of Thanks

As always none of this would be possible without the tireless work of our Board of Directors and volunteers, and the gracious support of you our members. I thank you for this.

J. Oscar Azaret
Executive Director, BCGS



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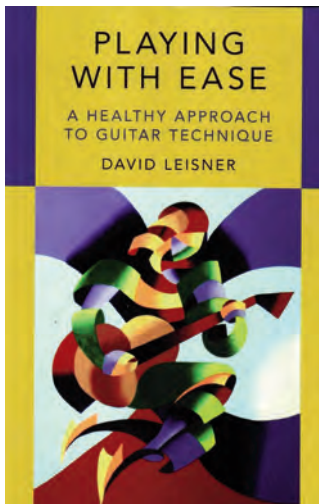
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Leisner Book Review

by Mark Small



Playing with Ease: A Healthy Approach to Guitar Technique, David Leisner, Oxford University Press, 2018. 155 pages

After decades of playing, I began to experience wrist and shoulder pain for the first time a year ago. I came across a review of David Leisner's book *Playing with Ease* in the fall 2019 issue of *Soundboard*, read it, and found its principles to be just the impetus I needed to get off the path toward a

performance injury. Leisner knows whereof he speaks having overcome focal dystonia. While his performing career was derailed for many years, he undertook a careful study of muscle and skeletal anatomy and examined the movements guitarists make while playing to get to the root of his problems. He shares his findings in an effort to help others avoid problems and in general, gain more satisfaction in their playing.

I first became aware of the deleterious effects of built-up tension in the body via Lee Ryan's book *The Natural Classical Guitar: Principles of Effortless Playing* (1984) and checked out video and print presentations on the problem. But I never seriously scrutinized my playing until problems started arising.

Since Carcassi's guitar method book came out in 1836, countless others have written tomes offering their personal takes on the complex and still-evolving area of classical guitar mastery. Athletes always stress the importance of continually returning to fundamentals. I suspect I'm not unlike many who started focusing more on learning repertoire and giving less practice time to the fundamentals of technique. That's how bad habits develop, you accept tension in the body, and ultimately it gets in the way of clean, expressive playing.

What I appreciate most about Leisner's book is that he exhaustively analyzes areas where tension builds and offers instruction on how to release it. He presents a range of sans-instrument exercises, guidance on healthy



David Leisner

alignment, and the mechanics of how each hand should work. While most players think it's all about training their hands, Leisner posits that the involvement of large muscle groups in the arms, shoulders, back, and elsewhere must be understood to achieve healthy, effortless playing. The book gives its buyers access to related

online videos where Leisner demonstrates his principles.

I began practicing in front of a large mirror and spotted troubles with my posture and areas where tension was building. For instance, Leisner lists seven aspects of a relaxed face: a slightly open mouth, flat tongue (not pressing against the teeth), hanging jaw, loose upper lip, loose ends of the mouth, loose cheeks, relaxed forehead, eyebrows, and gaze. Implementing his recommendations produced instant results.

Our instrument's pedagogy is young when compared to those for piano or violin, and there isn't consensus on some basic aspects of guitar technique. I had a few lessons with an esteemed guitar virtuoso and educator who told me with a grin that he wanted his gravestone to read: "He was a great family man and father, and prepared every note he played." Leisner has a different idea about planting or preparing the right-hand finger on the string before a stroke. "Planting tends to encourage the engagement of your smaller muscles and should therefore generally be avoided, at least until a time when the large muscles are engaged automatically," he writes. "Even then, planting should be rarely used, in my opinion."

Even if you take issue with a couple of Leisner's viewpoints, this book contains much that will meet you where you are in your progress and improve your playing.





BCGS Artist Series and Performance Parties



Manuel Barrueco kicks off the Artist Series



Our Fearless Volunteers at our Artist Series - Maurice, Dylan, Edison, Clara



Frank Wallace at the October 25 Concert



Bob Ward, Nick Cutroneo, David William Ross, Dan Acsadi, Alex Dunn, Chris Ladd perform at the Frank Wallace Tribute Concert



Bob Ward, Alex Dunn, Chris Ladd, Asa Gudjonsdottir at the Frank Wallace Tribute Concert.



Members of the BGO with guest Alex Dunn at the Jamaica Plain Porch Festival – Director Robert Bekkers on the right.



BCGS Performance Party at the Birch Hill Residences in Manchester, NH, hosted by member Jim Chaney. Performers, left to right, are Bill Godwin, Mitch Shuldman, Terence Hegarty, Larry Spencer, Jeff Aach, Joanne Harriman, Bill Harriman, Doug Danforth, Oscar Azaret, Steve Rapson.





BCGS Library Performances



John Muratore at the Hingham Library



The Boston Guitar Orchestra at the Hingham Library, Robert Bekkers Conductor



Jose Lezcano at the Hingham Library



David Newsam and Margaret Herlehy, Oboe at the Hingham Library and Westford PCA



Hot Club de Boston at the Hingham Library
Adam McOwen, Steve Marchena, Joe Papandrea



Russ Grazier, An Tran, Mitch Shuldman at the Portsmouth, NH Public Library



Michael Bester / Frank Papineau Duo in Hingham



Dan Acsadi & Meghan Jacoby Duo in Hingham



Calendar

BCGS events are in **red**. Members may enter their own events by contacting us at director@bostonguitar.org for permission and instructions. For much more information and updates go to: www.bostonguitar.org/calendar

Sunday, January 19, 3:00–4:00pm

Electica Trio - Hingham Sunday Sounds Special

Where: Hingham Public Library, 66 Leavitt Street, Hingham, MA Free admission, donations recommended www.hinghamlibrary.org

Friday, February 7, 8:00pm

¡Con Fuego! Classical Spanish Music & Flamenco Dance Ensemble

Where: Regent Theatre, 7 Medford St, Arlington, MA 02474 Trio of Dance, Voice, Guitar, and Cello, **Tickets &**

Information: http://regenttheatre.com/details/con_fuego_classical_spanish_music_flamenco_dance

Saturday, February 8, 7:30–9:30pm

BCGS Artist Series: Matt Palmer

Where: First Lutheran Church, 299 Berkeley St, Boston, MA **Tickets & Information:** www.bostonguitar.org

Sunday, February 16, 3:00–4:00pm

Olson/De Cari Duo - Voice & Guitar, Hingham Sunday Sounds Special

Where: Hingham Public Library, 66 Leavitt St., Hingham, MA. Free admission, donations recommended, www.hinghamlibrary.org

Saturday, February 22, 6:00–9:00pm

Dave McLellan with Tracy Kraus at Harvard General Store

Where: Harvard General Store, 1 Still River Rd, Harvard, MA **Ticket Information:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/winter-dinner-concert-with-dave-mclemelan-tracy-kraus-tickets-82302718647>.

Saturday & Sunday, February 22–23, 2020

NEGEF – New England Guitar Ensembles Festival

Where: The BCGS presents the New England Guitar Ensembles Festival at Longy School of Music.

Information: <https://bostonguitar.org/concert/negef2020/>

Sunday, February 23, 1:00–3:30pm

BCGS Performance Party at NEGEF

Where: Longy School of Music of Bard College, 27 Garden St., Cambridge, MA. Being held as part of the NEGEF Festival, and will be followed by Irina Kulikova's concert at 4:00pm.

Sunday, March 8, 3:00pm

William Ross, Classical Guitar

Where: PMAC (Portsmouth Music and Arts Center) 973 Islington Street, Portsmouth, NH, 603-431-4278

Sunday, March 22, 3:00–4:00pm

Skinger McKenna Duo, Guitar & Flute, Hingham Sunday Sounds Special

Where: Hingham Public Library, 66 Leavitt Street, Hingham, MA, Free admission, donations recommended, www.hinghamlibrary.org

Sunday, April 5, 3:00pm

Bokyun Byun, Classical Guitar

Where: Portsmouth Public Library, 175 Parrott Ave, Portsmouth, NH <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/library>

Sunday, April 11, 2:00pm

BCGS Performance Party

Where: 137 Plain St, Norton, MA, Performance Party at the home of Lin and Anni Hymel. 508-285-4055

Sunday, April 19, 4:00–5:00pm

The Great Necks Trio - Westford PCA

Where: Westford Parish Center for the Arts, 10 Lincoln St, Westford, MA, The Great Necks Trio - Classical Guitar Selected works by Scott Borg, Adam Levin, and Matthew Rohde <https://westford.org/pca/concerts/classical/>

Saturday, April 25, 7:30–9:30pm

BCGS Artist Series: David Russell

Where: First Lutheran Church, 299 Berkeley St, Boston, MA **Tickets and Information:** www.bostonguitar.org

Saturday, April 25, 8:00pm

Berklee Contemporary Symphony Orchestra Premier Mark Small's Composition *Unforeseen Destinations* with Guitarist Peter Clemente

Where: Northeastern's Fenway Center, 77 Saint Stephen St., Boston, MA.

Ticket Information: will be posted at marksmallguitar.com as the date gets closer.

Sunday, April 26, 3:00–4:30pm

Aaron Larget-Caplan in Concert

Where: Reading Room at the Robbins Library, 700 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476, Free Admission Music by Bach, Cage, and Fujii **Information:** (781) 316-3200

Sunday, April 26, 3:00–4:00pm

Providence Mandolin Orchestra - Hingham Sunday Sounds

Where: Hingham Public Library, 66 Leavitt Street, Hingham, MA **Information:** Selected orchestral works for mandolin. Free admission, donation recommended. www.hinghamlibrary.org

Saturday, May 16, 2:00–6:00pm

BCGS Performance Party

Where: 87 Dartmouth St. Fitchburg, MA. Performance Party at the home of Larry and Karen Spencer. 508-361-0951

Sunday, May 31, 3:00–4:00pm

Thatcher Harrison - Hingham Sunday Sounds Special

Where: Hingham Public Library, 66 Leavitt Street, Hingham, MA **Information:** Selected Works for Classical Guitar Free admission, donation recommended.

Sunday, May 31, 3:00pm

The Hampton Trio, Classical Guitar/Mandolin/Mandola

Where: PMAC (Portsmouth Music and Arts Center) 973 Islington Street, Portsmouth, NH, 603-431-4278

Sunday, June 28, 2020, 3:00–4:00pm

Hot Club de Boston - Hingham Sunday Sounds Special

Where: Hingham Public Library, 66 Leavitt Street, Hingham, MA **Information:** Gypsy Jazz & Swing Trio, Free, donation recommended, www.hinghamlibrary.org