

CGSUNY Newsletter

Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York www.cgsuny.org

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President's Message

I am so pleased to have been involved, for the first time, in the planning of our 11th CGSUNY Classical Guitar Fall Festival! Hard economic times that have resulted in a diminution of community arts services in so many areas of our country and, most recently, the natural disasters that have befallen our region have personally affected many of our members and board members and yet, despite this, here we are. I am pleased to report that due to the diligence and generosity of many of our board of directors and our members, our 11th annual Festival showed a profit for only the fourth time in our history! Thank you! I encourage you to read the reviews of the weekend's events in this edition of our newsletter. Below is a review of some of our accomplishments throughout the year and plans for the upcoming year.

While our annual Fall Festival is our "jewel in the crown", the CGSUNY is involved throughout the year in expanding the awareness and enjoyment of the instrument we love in regions that encompass Central New York, the Capital District, the Upper Susquehanna River Valley including Binghamton and elsewhere. Some of the events that our members have been involved with throughout the past year include educational outreach to school children, monthly "Guitar Soirées," (informal get-togethers giving members of all abilities an opportunity to play in an informal, supportive atmosphere) and performances at local community events and coffee shops. CGSUNY members also sponsored and performed in a formal benefit concert that raised over \$3000 for a Capital Region health clinic. All of these have expanded the Society's visibility.

Despite hard economic times, our membership has increased over the past year by about 10%, our newsletter has gone paperless, and our website now offers visitors the ability to join on line as well as purchase tickets, etc. through our PayPal account (remember, you *don't* need to have a PayPal account to use this service).

The growth of these festivals and our Society overall can only be attributed to our members, the board of directors, staff, friends and sponsors who have dedicated themselves to seeing our organization thrive.

Plans for the up-coming year include further expansion of our web site to provide additional services to our members and the public. This will include developing a teacher and performer "clearing house" where members will have an opportunity to list the services they provide, and where the public will have a place to go to "shop" for a guitar teacher or a performer. In the past year, through our web site, *without* this service, we have received several inquiries for performers and teachers. I estimate that the potential income generated for our professional members over the

year from these inquiries to have been around \$3000. As a non-profit organization whose visibility I hope we can continue to expand, this potential income for our members will only increase. Watch your email for survey of interest and consider including your information if you would like to utilize this professional clearinghouse.

In addition to continuing our monthly Guitar Soirées held in the Capital District, we hope to expand our role as a presenter by sponsoring additional performance opportunities for regional and visiting artists, both directly and by forging relationships with other regional arts presenters.

While many of these activities are sustainable, and new goals obtainable through the hard work of our dedicated members, ultimately financial stability (and sustainability) is paramount to our continued success. This year one of our major funding sources from an international corporation decided to change their support of our organization from a monetary grant to “in-kind” services. This change would result in the actual negotiable value from which we would benefit to drop significantly. In the eleventh hour before the festival we were able to obtain, through the hard work of one of our members, a grant that helped immensely. We will continue to cultivate further funding sources throughout the upcoming year. Here’s a theme that I always return to - the Society is only as strong as its members. In addition to your annual membership fees (which the Board wishes to keep low in order to maintain rates that are affordable to as many people as possible), I would like you to consider making a donation to the Society. Or maybe you could purchase a membership for someone you know who would enjoy being a part of our organization. Remember, increasing our membership base not only broadens the influence of the classical guitar within our community, but also increases our funding; directly through a greater number of fee-paying members, but arguably more importantly, by demonstrating to grants organizations our ability to provide a needed service to the community despite a tenuous economy. If there are other ways you feel that you can contribute we welcome your input.

We wish to welcome our new board members, Harry Pellegrin, Bill Winans, and Maria Zemantauski. A very big thank you goes to Carolyn Rifenbach, who after several years of dedicated service to the society, wearing the double hat of secretary *and* treasurer, has passed the “keys to the vault” to our new treasurer and current board member Bob Burnside. Carolyn will continue in her capacity as secretary of the Society.

Finally, *Thank You* for supporting the Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York! Here’s to a prosperous, music-filled year!

Fred

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The Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization and Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

CGSUNY Members' Recital 2011

I should start with a very short disclaimer: Don Witter usually writes the articles that cover the Fall Festival. Due to a conflict with the date, he was unable to attend this year. I'll do my best to carry on in his stead. You will see some photos from the 2011 Fall Festival in this edition of the newsletter. You can find a more complete set on the CGSUNY website at www.cgsuny.org

One of the truly inspiring events of each Fall Festival is the Members' Recital. It is here where the love of the guitar and the joy of performing bring the music alive. It was an absolute treat to start the morning with **RAY ANDREWS** who shared with us the angelic quality of the Baroque Guitar. He performed five pieces by Gaspar Sanz. Sanz' compositions provide us with some of the most important examples of Spanish Baroque music for the guitar. Ray has a wonderful touch and technique that allows that beautiful instrument to expressively sing the great songs from another age! He was also able to create the energy of the familiar *Canarios*. It was especially interesting to hear *Canarios* played in the original voicing on the Baroque Guitar. Also worth mentioning was Ray's explanation of what he called the 'handbell' (campenelas) effect that is caused by playing the melody on adjacent strings. What a pleasure it was to hear him! Ray also performed at Hartwick again on October 28th. Great Job Ray!

DAVE RICHMAN then presented music of the Paraguayan composer Augustin Barrios Mangore. The music of Barrios is written in the late Romantic style. Many of his works are also adaptations of, or are influenced by, South American and Central American folk music. Many of them are of a virtuosic nature. Dave was able to create a very lyrical melodic performance of the *Madrigal* and interesting changes of timbre in the more dance-like *Mazurka* and a fine execution of the more intricate bravura passages found in the *Vals*. Thanks for a fine performance of this wonderful music!

THE CAPITAL GUITAR ENSEMBLE, a group of seven guitarists under the direction of Paul Quigley took the stage to conclude our morning session. The ensemble was founded in the 2005-2006 season. They opened their program with '*Four Romanian Miniatures*' by contemporary composer Adrian Andrei. A transcription of '*Claire de Lune*' by Debussy followed. This work requires great expressiveness and thoughtful phrasing through a wide range of dynamic panels. They concluded their program with '*Villanesca and Minueto*' by Granados. There is a lot of intricate play among the voices in the Granados piece and the ensemble handled it well. Thanks for a fine performance !

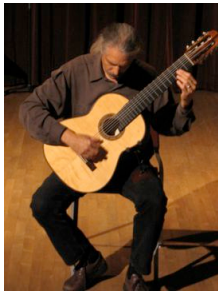
The break for lunch provided me with an opportunity to meet one of the Luthiers – **Eric Marczak**. Eric builds guitars and also sells vintage instruments. He is also a dealer in Native American Flutes. Each of the guitars he brought has a descriptive name. 'Lily' was a rosewood model that had a brighter sound than 'Blue', which possessed a more mellow but full-bodied sound. 'Sherwood' was made of yew. Again the sound was very distinctive. All of them played easily and sounded very consistent throughout the fingerboard. These instruments were in the \$1100- \$1200 price range. His shop is located in Delanson, NY. His email is epm03@hotmail.com

Later in the afternoon, I got a chance to meet **Dave Laplante**, another fine Luthier. Dave builds custom instruments tailored for the repertoire, desired sound and playing skills of the customer. He also took me through the various steps in the process of how he designs instruments for each customer. I had the opportunity to play and listen to both of the instruments he brought. Each guitar had a distinctive voice that sounded and played evenly. Each player also seemed to bring out a different quality in the instruments. His instruments are in the \$4000 price range. His shop is in Selkirk, NY. His email is www.guitarsbydavidlaplante.com

If you are looking for a quality instrument or are thinking about an upgrade, consider giving them a look.

The afternoon session of the Members' Recital began with a guitar and flute duo called '**Spiral Tango**,' otherwise know as **William Simcoe and Elizabeth Williams**. Bill originally was associated with 'Spiral Music.' He was playing at a dance gig and that was where he met Elizabeth - thus the duo's unique name. They opened their program with Bill's arrangement of '*Gymnopedies 1,2 & 3*' by Erik Satie. They closed their set with a '*Pavanne*' (Op. 50) by Faure, which was arranged by Terry Herald. Elizabeth used an Alto Flute for this performance of the Pavanne. These works have a wonderful simplicity and intimacy that works well for these two instruments. Their artistry really brought these familiar pieces alive. Great Job !

We were then treated to wonderful Brazilian music played by **Eugenio Reis**. The first was a tender, melodic piece called '*Viagem*' by João de Aquino that was arranged for solo guitar by Baden Powell. '*Flor das Aguas*' by Marco Pereira had a joyful jazz type feel and Eugenio moved effortlessly through the many florid passages found in this work. We were given an interesting insight into the rhythmic elements that form the basis of Helio Delmiro's '*Emotiva # 3.*' He closed his program with a Baden Powell selection, '*O Astronauta*' which showcases lyrical and dance elements. These arrangements are concert repertoire requiring advanced technique and interpretation skills. Of course, Eugenio has all of the above. Great Job Eugenio



Our Vice President, **Paul Sweeny**, performed '*Seven Jazz Studies*' by Alexander Vinitzky for us. Each of these studies captures the essence of the jazz style for which it is named. Whether allowing the melody to sing atop the walking bass, chords in the 'Slow Swing' pieces, taking advantage of the subtle changes in timbre that are possible on the guitar or effortlessly moving through all of the intricacies found in the more dance like selections, Paul's artistry really shines. Thanks for bringing us this wonderful music. Paul was also instrumental in setting up and coordinating the Collegiate Honors Recital as well. Great Job Paul!

Robert Donahoe opened his set with a wonderful piece that really showcases the many timbres and expressive possibilities of the guitar, '*Madroños*' by Torroba. '*Danza Brasileira*' by Gnattali is a real powerhouse piece. Robert was able create a wonderful performance, adeptly moving through the astounding variety of technical and expressive elements that make this composition a real showpiece. Great Job Robert !

CGSUNY President Fred Hellwitz closed the afternoon Member's Recital. He began with the '*Prelude from the Fourth Lute Suite*' (BWV 1006a) by Bach. This bravura work is a truly formidable undertaking for any guitarist. It requires great technical facility and accuracy and Fred handled it beautifully. '*Julia Florida*', written by Augustin Barrios is a work that requires elegant shaping of the melody throughout. That coupled with thoughtful, beautifully developed phrasing provided a contrast with the Bach. He also presented an encore selection, the famous '*Una Limosna por el Amor de Dios*' by Barrios. Fred's very musical playing was a great way to cap the Members' Recital.



The afternoon closed with an opportunity for some ensemble playing. Pictured here is one of them. Pictured here are members of the Albany Guitar Ensemble, Paul Sweeny and Robert Burnside.



Presti – In Concert

First I want you to imagine performers that can play with power, elegance & grace. Now mix that with great technical skill, artistic sensitivity and a command of touch & timbre in all dynamic panels. Now add a profound understanding of the ideals that each historical period and composer demands. When you put all that together, wonderful music and magical things happen onstage. That is what we experienced from **Presti**. They are **Olga Amelkina-Vera, Valerie Hartzell** and **Lynn McGrath**. Each of these women is first and foremost an

accomplished performer. They are also wonderful ensemble players. Olga is the composer and arranger for the group. Olga masterfully arranged the melodious *Pavin* and more dance-like *Fancie*, both written for three viols by Alfonso Ferrabosco the Younger. They were great examples of the counterpoint that is so characteristic of Renaissance music. Here there were indeed three equal voices where each voice just sings its line beautifully. The interplay between the parts was simply breathtaking. Then came the *Ciacona* by S. L. Weiss. This composition was arranged by Eythor Thorlaksson. You will find a wealth of public domain arrangements, studies, methods and etudes at his website, www.classicalguitarschool.net/en/eythor.aspx. This piece contained a beautiful melody that seemed to float effortlessly on the accompaniment. Although this piece is often done as a solo, it works really well as a trio and they played it beautifully. The 20th century Spanish pianist and composer Joaquin Turina's *Gypsy Dances (Op. 55)* each showcased the many facets of the guitar. These compositions are full of song-like melodies, beautiful duets, changes in timbre and dynamic panels along with brilliant runs all of which were handled masterfully. Each of the movements in this suite represents different aspects of Spanish life including dances for rituals, courting and those sounds that evoke visions of beautiful Spanish castles and fountains.

After intermission we were treated to a transcription for guitars of one of my favorite keyboard pieces, the *Capriccio on the Departure of a Beloved Brother (BWB 992)* by Johann Sebastian Bach. It was originally written for harpsichord and is the only known piece of program music (music that was based on an already existing idea or story line) written by Bach. Arranged by Robert Xavier Rodriguez, it consists of six movements and tells the story of one of Bach's brothers who has decided to leave his family home in Thuringia and seek his fortune. The melodic *Arioso* tells the listener of the brother's decision. In the *Andante* his friends then try to dissuade him by telling him of the dangers that await him. In the elegiac *Adagio* they are of course deeply saddened by his decision to leave. The fourth movement, also an *Andante*, is based on the realization that their attempts to dissuade him are in vain, so they come to say goodbye. The *Poco Allegro* shares the anticipation of news from their friend. The call of the post horn signals the final movement, an *Allegro (Fugue)*, which brings the long awaited letters. This arrangement really works well for a guitar trio and Presti performed it brilliantly.

Merida by Mark Anthony Cruz is inspired by the music of the amazing guitarists and cultural life in Merida, the largest city in the state of Yucatan. The term *Prism* is often used to describe a concert or music that contains a wide range of timbres, styles and compositional devices. This work by Cruz

was no exception and it really allowed the ensemble to show the many different styles, colors and dynamic range that make guitar music so exciting to perform. Then came an original composition Olga wrote for Presti, the *Toccata*. This piece starts with a very clever theme that becomes the subject of the variations. I guarantee that you will be hearing that theme weeks later. The variations themselves displayed the many aural possibilities of the guitar and the artistry of each performer. They were a delight and I'm sure this composition will become a mainstay of concert repertoire. As an encore they presented a spirited performance of an arrangement of *Rafaga*, by Turina. Presti is a truly gifted ensemble and their performance was a pleasure to experience.



REVIEW OF MASTERCLASS CONDUCTED BY PRESTI

By Dennis Turechek

It is always interesting to see how a master class by committee is going to unfold. The first group up was a quartet made up of Crane students from David Rubio's studio at SUNY Potsdam. Andrew Marino, Jordan Marinacce Ben Rybolt, and Jaroslav Lozhko were the performers playing 'Introduction and Fandango' from Boccherini's Quintet. They did a very workman like job on a piece that takes much time and patience to put together.

Valery Hartzell was first out of her chair asking, "How quiet can you play?" She recommended alternating fingers two and three on the left hand for long trills. She is particularly adept at that technique and demonstrated it for the group. She asked for more aggressive playing and visualizing movement in rasgueados. "Play less British!" Get low music stands and keep poker faces no matter what happens. She mentioned their nice voicing within the ensemble.

Lynn McGrath complimented them on a good job in such a short time. She asked them to try for extremes and direction. She suggested opening up ears for better ensemble and singing parts to get direction. In putting bass and treble together the bass notes take longer to sound. She encouraged them to work on the Introduction.

Olga Amelkina-Vera stressed the passion of the Fandango citing the fact that Casanova was said to have blushed at the sensuality of the dance. In the Introduction, the arpeggios are the timekeepers. She suggested that they introduce some staccato in the bass line. The dynamic range of four guitars is four times that of one! She also suggested listening to the Soler Duo for articulation.

Mike Caporizzo and Mathew Gillan are from the studio of Pablo Cohen in Ithaca. They performed the second movement from the *Suite Retratos* by Gnattali and dedicated to Ernesto Nazareth. They played well together with just three weeks to prepare an intricate piece such as this.

Valery recommended a more angled seating to give visual cues. She thought they should clip the string ends to avoid potential buzzing. "Tune separately from performance." She suggested consolidating music to fit one stand and felt the music needed more contrast.

Lynn discerned tension in the player's bodies and got up to physically move them side-to-side and forward and backward to address this issue. "Swaying in 3/4." She offered they didn't know each other well enough yet.

Olga complimented them on a nice job with just three weeks together. She believes duos should play from memory. She had them replay part of the piece from memory. This resulted in

remarkable improvement. Mellow trebles and more ponticello in the basses was suggested. Don't make faces if something goes wrong. "Audiences respond to feeling, not precision."

Joey Grimaldi, a student at Hartwick performed the *Prelude and Presto* from the Third Lute Suite (BWM 995) of J.S. Bach in a very ardent performance. Lynn was up first this time with a question. "Are you a shredder?" She described his performance as naïve yet enthusiastic. She asked him what three things he felt he needed to improve on. He offered reading, consistency, and practice. He needs to understand styles as well as volume and tone quality. 'Blissfully ignorant' was how she described him. He appears to be a natural performer with considerable ability.

Valery asked him what his long-term goals were. He responded by saying his goal was "To get a masters." Valery noted that "Mechanics don't start with a Ferrari or a Lamborghini. She recommended Carcassi, Sor, and Pumping Nylon." She also suggested a lot of analysis for playing Bach. These will provide the focus he needs to get to the next level.

Olga gave a general consensus as time ran out.

This was a very good lesson on how to administer a collaborative master class. Each brought their own area of expertise to bear on various issues without stepping on the other's toes. Much like the front line of a Dixieland jazz band collectively improvising on an out chorus.

Dennis Turechek
September 30, 2011

The Collegiate Honors Recital

The Sunday events were held at the Unitarian Universalist Society Church in Oneonta. This program began with students from the studio of Pablo Cohen from Ithaca College. Terence Marciano began the concert with the *Minuet and Rondo* by Fernando Sor. He was able to create the dance-like spirit and energy of the minuet. The careful shaping of the phrases, changes in timbre and wonderful touch really allowed the melody to sing even in the softer dynamic panels. The passages that echo in the spirited Rondo were delightful. The clarity of the rapid scale passages was beautifully done. Congratulations on a very musical performance !

Matt Gillen introduced us to *All in Twilight*, a set of four pieces for guitar by Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu. The work was inspired by a Paul Klee painting and was written in 1987 for Julian Bream. Matt played the first movement and was able to capture the many sonic possibilities in the dissonant chords and beautiful atonal sounds found in the melody. He was certainly able to create the dreamscape intended by this 20th century composer. He was joined by Michael Caporizzo for *Movements 2 (Valse) and 3 (Schottische)* of the *Suite Retratos* by Gnattali. Their performance allowed the melody to float effortlessly over the accompaniment. The transitions between tempos of the lyrical and energetic sections were beautifully done. There was a wonderful interplay between the two, even in the bravura passages where articulation must be precise. In preparing this work, there was a lot of listening and careful attention to detail. The sensitive, energetic and thoughtful musicianship were superb. Great Job Guys !

Beautiful touch and control marked Emma Markham's performance of the *Homage to Debussy* by Manuel DaFalla. The pensive sounds and themes on display here are wonderful examples of the impressionist style. There is an interesting contradiction in this piece between the more elegiac

elements and the almost dance-like figures. Emma handled them beautifully. She also performed the *En Los Trigales* by Joaquin Rodrigo. What a lovely contrast in pairing this more bravura number with the earlier Homage. Her performance demonstrated an energetic beautiful control in skillfully moving through the contrasting sections of this piece. The technical and expressive elements were really well played and the phrasing was just superb. Well Done Emma !

We were then treated to students of the Doug Rubio studio from SUNY Potsdam. The Crane Guitar Quartet consisted of Jaroslav Lozhko, Andrew Marino, Jordan Romanacce and Benjamin Rybolt. You can almost feel the city waking and progressing through the day as each new element is added to the texture of *East L.A. Phase* by Wayne Siegel. This composition requires incredible technique and coordination through many dynamic panels and tempos and the Crane Guitar Quartet really played it masterfully. They closed their set with Boccherini's *Introduction and Fandango*. The big opening chords, beautiful dynamics and lovely melodies in thirds and the intricate interplay between the performers was just wonderful. They had played the Boccherini piece for the master class just hours before and were able absorb and implement much of the advice given by Presti. Great Performance Guys !

As an encore presentation, Presti performed the '*Toccata for Guitar Trio*' by Olga Amelkina-Vera. And yes, I'm still hearing that theme some three weeks later.

It is always a special treat to hear great music. It is especially true when it comes from our collegiate performers. Remember all the names mentioned here. You'll hear and read a lot about them in the years to come. Special thanks to Dr. Pablo Cohen, associate Professor of Music at Ithaca College and Dr. Douglas Rubio, Professor of Music at Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam and to Presti for their participation in the Collegiate Honors Concert.



Maria Zemantauski

The final event of the afternoon was an absolutely spectacular hour of flamenco guitar music by Capital Region guitarist Maria Zemantauski. Maria's programs are a dynamic blend of artistic freedom, innovation and tradition. Maria is first and foremost a wonderful guitarist. She masterfully guided us through the flamenco style, carefully illustrating different playing and compositional techniques and sharing some history along the way. She possesses great technique and artistry that allows the bass notes to roar while the treble passages and percussive passages (golpes) just fly. It is truly extraordinary to watch all of this happen live. She is equally at home in the lyrical world of the classical guitar or the many high-energy styles that make up the Flamenco. Her music is imbued with great energy and she has the unique ability to transmit the emotion and power that each piece generates to her audience. She closed her set with *Rhumba Del Rio*. What a great way to end our 2011 Fall Festival! See you next year.