

CGSUNY Newsletter

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

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President's Message

Hello CGSUNY Members:

As we approach summer, our Fall Festival is shaping up to be another exciting event for us. This year, the Fall Festival will be on Saturday, October 13th and Sunday, October 14th. Through the hard work of CGSUNY President Fred Hellwitz, Past President Dennis Turecheck and SUNY Oneonta Music Department Chairman Dr. Orlando Legname, this year's Saturday events will take place in a state-of-the-art Rehearsal & Concert Hall in the Fine Arts building on the campus of SUNY Oneonta. I'm sure Dr. Legname's commitment to the Festival will be a great asset to our Guitar Society.

Here's a short overview of the weekend: The festival will begin with registration starting at 10 a.m. Registration will be followed by two sessions of recitals by CGSUNY members. The morning session will run from 10 a.m. to Noon. The afternoon session starts at 12:30 and runs to 1:30. There will be an opportunity for Ensemble playing starting at 1:45.

We are very pleased to announce that Saturday evening's headline performer is guitarist **David Starobin**. Mr. Starobin will also present a Masterclass in the 3 to 5 time slot on Saturday afternoon. The Saturday concert begins at 7:30 p.m. There will also be a silent auction at the Saturday evening concert and a reception following the concert. I encourage you to check out some of his performances on YouTube.

Sunday events will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Oneonta. They include a Collegiate Honors Recital that begins at 1 p.m. that features outstanding guitarists from colleges in New York State. The Sunday Concert will begin at 3 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Oneonta. Our Sunday performer this year will be **Paul Quigley**, a fine accomplished musician from the capital district. As of this writing, plans are in the works to have Paul offer a Masterclass on Sunday. Future newsletter editions will provide updates on 2012 Fall Festival events.

On another note, we hope to continue our Guitar Soirees throughout the summer. See future CGSUNY mailings for details.

Through the efforts of Bob Burnside, CGSUNY was able to sponsor a March 25th performance by the Georgia Guitar Quartet. The program was held at the Mirador Events Chapel in Vestal, NY. The Quartet performed a wide variety of original compositions and arrangements of guitar literature from all of the historical periods. Their performance was superb.

I'm very excited to be able to announce that as part of our mission to expose classical guitar to the general public, we will be co-sponsoring Guitar Foundation of America's 2011 International Competition winner. We will be partnering with Albany's College of St. Rose to present this world-class performer, Vladimir Gorbach (<http://www.vladimirgorbach.com>). Mr. Gorbach will appear as part of the college's Premier Performances recital series during their 2012-13 season. This world-class series takes place at the beautiful Kathleen McManus Picotte Recital Hall at the new Massry Center for the Arts; a beautiful venue for chamber music in general and for classical guitar in particular.

In closing, this June I'll be making a road trip to Charlotte, NC to go guitar crazy at the 2012 GFA festival - watch this space for photos!

Best Regards,

Fred

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David Starobin to Headline Saturday Evening Concert



David Starobin (born September 27, 1951 in New York City) is an American classical guitarist, record producer, and film director. Starobin started playing the guitar at the age of seven, studying first with Manuel Gayol, then Albert Valdes Blain, and at the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore) with Aaron Shearer. While at Peabody he became Shearer's assistant, directing Peabody's chamber music program for guitarists (1971–73). During this period Starobin worked closely with pianist Leon Fleisher, becoming a member of Fleisher's Theater Chamber Players of The John F. Kennedy Center (Washington D.C.).

David Starobin has toured in the USA as a recitalist, chamber player and orchestral soloist performing at festivals including Marlboro, Aspen, Santa Fe Chamber, and Tanglewood, and with orchestras and ensembles including the New York Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, and the Emerson and Guarneri String Quartets as well as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Since 1978 he has made annual solo tours in Europe, performing at festivals and making radio and television broadcasts. Starobin is a member of the new music ensemble Speculum Musicae, with whom he has performed and recorded as guitarist and conductor. He also recorded and toured since 1969 with baritone, Patrick Mason. With the percussionist Daniel Druckman, Mason and Starobin have performed and recorded as the trio, "Crazy Jane".

Starobin has chaired guitar departments at Brooklyn College, Bennington College, the North Carolina School of the Arts, the State University of New York at Purchase, and, from 1993 to 2004, the Manhattan School of Music. He remains on the faculty at Manhattan School of Music. In September 2010, Starobin was appointed to the newly created "Fondation Charidu Chair in Guitar Studies" at the Curtis Institute of Music. Starobin joined guitarist Jason Vieaux to create the school's guitar program, beginning in September 2011. Starobin was the first guitarist to have been awarded Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Career Grant (1988); was honored by Peabody Conservatory with its "Distinguished Alumni Award" (1999); and was given with his wife, Becky Starobin, ASCAP's 'Deems Taylor Award' for their work with Bridge Records (2007). In 2011, Starobin was inducted into the Guitar Foundation of America's "Hall of Fame" and was given the GFA's "Artistic Achievement Award", becoming, at age 59, the youngest recipient of this honor.

Paul Quigley Sunday Afternoon Concert



Our Sunday afternoon performer is Paul Quigley. Paul first started playing guitar at age 12. Self taught in popular music, he began his study of classical guitar with Tony Sano and Joel Brown at Schenectady County Community College. Upon completion of the requirements for the A.S. degree in performing arts/music, he moved

to New York City to study at the Manhattan School of Music with Norbert Kraft and later Mark Delpriora.

Paul has performed as a soloist at the Troy Music Hall, Troy NY, the Spanish Institute in NYC, Myers Recital Hall NYC, Pforzheimer Hall NYC, Hubbard Hall NYC, Lang Concert Hall at Hunter College in NYC, and Begley Hall at Schenectady County Community College. Recently he performed with Mark Delpriora in a concert of guitar chamber music on the Interfaith Concert Series in NYC as well as the SUNY Cobleskill Chamber Music Series. Paul has performed in master classes for David Russell, Eliot Fisk, David Starobin Magnus Anderson , and Luis Zea. He was a finalist in the Artists International auditions for a 2000-2001 debut at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall.

Most recently, he received a scholarship to attend the Bowdoin Summer Chamber Music Festival at Bowdoin College ME. Paul's classical guitar experience is now providing him with all the tools he needs to really crank out the electric guitar with the Nite Train band!! Paul's great guitar-work really helps the Nite Train roll on down the track!!

Teaching Classical Discipline in the X-Box Era

By Harry G. Pellegrin

It is the human condition to wish that one could achieve a given result with the minimum effort and within the shortest span of time. Since the dawn of mankind this has been the situation and I believe it always will be. Every technological advance one can mention is directly related to either the saving of time, the minimizing of physical effort, or both. The twentieth century generated the most dramatic and compressed period of development in technology to date and this technology will generate even more rapid technological leaps here in the twenty first century. Every task commonly performed by mankind will take less and less time, consume less and less energy; 'things' will appear almost instantaneously. It will be expected.

I typically tell my students that they will hear certain concepts repeatedly put forth by me that they will come to refer to as my *mantras*. In other words, I tend to reiterate a number of thoughts and principles to my students so that, through this repetition, they become totally ingrained. One of my favorites is this: 'No matter what a student does, he or she will become the best guitarist they can become!' What does this mean? If a student works hard and practices diligently for six hours a day, he or she will become the best guitarist they can become. If, on the other hand, the student never takes the instrument out of its case, comes to lessons sporadically and doesn't 'make the investment' he or she will also become the best guitarist they can. The deciding factor as to what that term 'best' construes is directly related to the time and effort they wish to spend mastering the instrument. You will always be as good as the effort you put into it!

To master a musical instrument, one must invest. It is an investment of mental energy, an investment of physical input and—an investment that is inextricably linked to these others—one of time. A famous jazz musician was once asked how he achieved his level of prowess. He replied, "Fifty thousand hours of practice, and you can do it too!" It sounds a bit overboard until you do the math. It comes down to twenty-two years and roughly six months of six-hours-a-day practice. I know, that still sounds overboard. Well, I heard a very well-known and technically perfect guitarist declare that it took him ten years of seven hour practice days to learn the technique and another ten years of seven hour practice days to become musical—to correctly transmit his emotions to the listener through the instrument. This works out to seventy three thousand hours. Fifty thousand hours now seems a small price!

So now we have the student, one who downloads music and movies, travels by jet aircraft, uses cell phones, text messaging, credit cards and computers to ensure that his or her life is sustained and pushed forward by instant gratification, now facing the prospect of fifty thousand hours to gain a certain result. Their minds rebel! Sadly, more and more people decide that they will remain listeners rather than make the investment to become creators. Sadder still, I do not see this trend becoming anything other than more

pronounced. So how does one motivate and inspire a student to pay the price to become a competent player? One can accomplish this with a mixture of diplomacy and inspiration.

First, the diplomacy. Avoid negativity. Most new students will attempt the most simple of musical passages and find it difficult to perform—if they can get through it at all—and then will say something to the effect “I can’t do this, it’s too hard!” They hang their heads and look forlorn. I try to avoid phrases like “Yeah *that* was totally lame!” That does nothing but destroy the student’s self-worth. Am I saying we as teachers must compliment even the worst performance? NO! This builds the wrong type of self-worth; one that tacitly declares that no matter how horrid the rendition, it must be great because *they* produced it. I once heard a teacher say this to a student: “No matter how painful it is, you must listen to yourself when you play!” The student was crushed. We must find a middle ground where the student does not feel like they are the worst, least talented dilettante on the planet while still enforcing the fact they should strive to and indeed can do better. I’ll often say, after a terrible reading, “Well, it sounded just about that way the first time I did it too. With a little work, I learned to play it and with a little work you can too!” Note I did not use the fifty thousand hour reference here! The journey of fifty thousand hours begins with the first hour, and if the student can get through one hour and sees a modicum of result, chances are he or she will proceed to the second hour. It is best to clear one small hurdle at a time.

Inspiration comes in a number of forms. I find watching John Williams videos to be inspirational for myself. He is one of my favorite guitarists to listen to and instead of feeling like ‘I could never do that’, I always come away feeling that a standard has been set and I must try to emulate a master and live up to that standard. Whether one lifetime will be enough for me... For the student, watching other students who have been working a bit longer can often be inspirational. I organize student recitals every so often so that the new folks can hear the students one or two years (or more) advanced from their current position and see that mere mortals can accomplish something. Seeing someone who is on the same road—and still in sight, so to speak—will motivate the student as he or she sees that *it can be done!*

For the student to wish to invest time there must be a series of rewards or ‘candy’ along the way. Once a student has gotten through the rudimentary exercises required to accomplish anything whatsoever with the instrument, I begin to add repertoire to their diet. Man does not live by etudes alone! The repertoire pieces are selected by me to reinforce a technical skill learned recently and/or to develop a certain skill or skill set. An example would be assigning *El Sueño de la Muñeca* by Agustin Barrios after the student has successfully completed Matteo Carcassi’s *Opus 60 Number 16*. Number 16’s greatest lesson is that it demonstrates to the student the concept of a melody, a chordal accompaniment and a bass line played simultaneously—the melody has to be predominant with the accompaniment and bass line subordinate. The student learns to balance volume and dynamics across these ‘parts’. *El Sueño* enforces this concept and adds a new technique—artificial harmonics—so that the student learns a new skill while honing another one learned previously. Why is this ‘candy’? There is a sense of familiarity as well as one of accomplishment. The familiarity lets the student know that he or she has *acquired* something. The accomplishment? The student is working on a ‘real’ piece.

Another *piece of candy* is to assign a repertoire piece that is at or slightly below the student’s ability level. This bolsters the student’s confidence by giving them just a bit of instant gratification that is so important to the majority of society in the twenty-first century. The piece is learned in a rather shorter period of time than a piece slightly above the student’s achievement level. It’s a *feel good* option that should be used only occasionally, as we do want students to progress and not stagnate, after all.

Lastly, and probably controversially, I believe that student can benefit from working on a piece still a good number of steps above his or her ability level—but only if the student loves the piece and has a great desire to play it. Case in point: When I had been playing about three years I fell in love with the J.S. Bach’s d minor Chaconne from the second violin partita. I asked my teacher if we could work on it and he told me that it was too difficult for me and that it would be a waste of time. Well, he was right; it was too difficult for me and it would have been foolish to squander lesson time on an extended agony. Sure, I couldn’t waste his time, but I could certainly buy the score and look through it on *my own* time! So I did. Yes, the piece was a tough read-through for a sixteen-year-old kid with limited experience—both technically and emotionally! I loved

that music and I beat myself with it. Within a year I could play it technically. (I believe it took the experiences of the death of a loved one and a divorce to allow me to play it with some level of the emotion Bach wrote into this work.) One day I showed up at my lesson and instead of my usual warm-up, I launched into the Chaconne. Throughout, my teacher sat silent. "Bravo!" he exclaimed at its completion, and then he smiled turning to the lesson piece I was working on.

When my students express an interest in a piece that is beyond their ability and I can see the fire in their eyes when they mention it, I give them the latitude to work on it 'on their own time' and will help them with it—when lesson materials have been covered to my satisfaction. This results in two benefits—first, they get their lesson material learned as quickly as possible and second, they are working towards a goal of their own making. They work harder!

Does this mean that I have found the secret to teaching people for whom a positive experience with 'Guitar Hero' has led them to believe they possess an understanding of music and need not exert themselves any further? No. It *does* mean that by a bit of creative coercion we can still motivate someone to forget the need for instant gratification and become a disciple—a *disciplined* one—of the classical guitar.

Classical Guitar at the Dryden Café

By Robert Burnside

On this eve of December 2, 2011 the Dryden Community Café and The Classical Guitar Society of Upstate NY (CGSUNY), that's us, hosted a Classical Guitar concert featuring seven promising young guitarists from the Classical Guitar Program of Prof. Pablo Cohen at Ithaca College. In addition to the student performers, some of whom were preparing for their senior recitals, a few local performers also take the stage.

To kick off the evening, Dave Richman hit the stage sporting a stylish CGSUNY T-shirt (order yours today for only \$10.00) and told of the Classical Guitar Society of Upstate NY and how important it is to become a member so that more events like this one will continue in the future (thanks for the plug Dave). Mr. Richman is a former student of The Classical Guitar Society of Upstate NY's co-founder and past president Dennis Turechek and he MC's and runs sound for this same event at the Dryden Café every December as well as a similar one every Spring at the Blue Frog in Cortland NY. Dave performed a Gershwin jazz number and also a few selections by Agustin Barrios Mangoré of Paraguay. The Barrios portion of Dave's set included *Madrigal (Gavota)*, *Mazurka Apasionata*, and *Vals (Opus.8 No. 4)*. The *Madrigal (Gavota)*, just as the title suggests, is a fusion of two types of music from two different periods. This piece contains a very memorable melody like that of a Madrigal from the Renaissance period and it is played in the form of a Gavotte from the Baroque. Dave let the melody sing beautifully above the accompaniment and kept the tempo right where it should be (slightly slower than a bourree). In the *Mazurka Apasionata*, Mr. Richman managed to make this wonderful guitar piece sound as if it were being played on a piano. Thick and resonant like a piano at times but also with beautifully humming harmonics that can only be achieved by a guitar. Very enjoyable!

Dave closed his Barrios set with the very popular *Vals (Opus.8 No. 4)*. I always find this piece very enjoyable. Mr. Richman played the majority of the tune at a very moderate tempo and then really soared during the campanella section. A nice artistic touch. Thanks for a great set and great performances on these Dave. A great way to kick off the show!

The first of the Ithaca college students to perform was Harry Decimo. Harry began with *Study No. 5* from op. 35 by the great Spanish composer and virtuoso of the early 19th century, Fernando Sor. The piece follows ABA form beginning and ending in the key of G with an e minor middle section. Harry played the piece very cleanly with the full harmonies heard clearly throughout. Harry possesses a sensitive awareness to the details involved in interpreting this piece from the true "classical guitar" era. Next he performed *Corcovado* by Antonio Carlos Jobim. This piece has a very Latin/Bossa Nova feel to it, very characteristic of Jobim and Harry further demonstrated the true style of the piece by abandoning the traditional "classical guitar position" of holding the guitar on your elevated left leg and switched the instrument to rest on his right leg that allowed

him to embrace the native performance style of the piece. The lush sound of the rolled chords this piece features sounded great on Harry's gypsy style guitar. Great job Harry!

Next Meaghan Quinn played two waltzes by none other than the "Venezuelan waltz king", Antonio Lauro. The first of the two waltzes was *Venezuelan Waltz No. 2 (Andreina)*. Here Meaghan moved through it at a perfect pace and effortlessly chimed out the piece's series of 12th fret harmonics all ringing with great resonance. She then very smoothly played *Venezuelan Waltz No. 3 (Natalia)*. This great piece sounds as though it would be very difficult for a young player given all its relatively tough pinky stretches, quick grace notes, and barred fret board movement but it sounds as if second nature to Meaghan. This set of waltzes is a great treat for me as I just finished listening to Adam Holzman playing Lauro's *Venezuelan Waltzes for Guitar* on the drive up and found myself wanting more. Great 6/8 Meaghan!

Continuing on, Emma Markham took the stage along with her striking bright orange guitar and performed *En Los Trigales* by Joaquin Rodrigo. *Concierto de Aranjuez* by the same composer was one of the first works for classical guitar that I ever heard and I believe it's what got me hooked. I had never heard any other music by this great Spanish composer so this performance was very exciting. Emma demonstrated great control over the dynamics and the imaginative variety of tone color this piece apparently involves. One section of the piece involves a quick progression of right hand harmonics all played by the pinky that Emma made ring beautifully. She also demonstrated a nice range in volume from one thumbnail strum to the next. Thanks Emma!

Peter Hawley came up on stage with his Manuel Rodriguez guitar. He appropriately graced us with music especially suited for his Spanish-made guitar. The two pieces Mr. Hawley played are *Preludes No. 3 and No. 5* by the great Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos. On *Prelude No.3* he played the melodic variations that precede the minor chords slightly detached. I never had heard this nuanced phrasing but it turned out to be a very nice touch. Mr. Hawley handled the 5- and 6-note rolled chords very well. He improvised by softly thumb strumming the chords. Villa-Lobos did not always write for guitar within the traditional guidelines of four-finger right-hand technique so I feel Peter's remedy worked well. William Kanengiser says that it wasn't until after he mastered *Prelude No. 5* that he felt worthy to perform in public. Peter's interpretation might not quite be Mr. Kanengiser's but it's close. Mr. Hawley demonstrated very reserved use of Vibrato throughout which many performers have a hard time refraining from while performing this piece. Way to go Pete!

Dave Richman "air conducted" with his coffee stirrer off and on throughout Mr. Hawley's performance obviously enjoying himself. I've heard of people playing "air guitar" before but "coffee stirrer air conducting" is a new one for me. I'll have to try it sometime.

Terence Marciano's performance began with a work by J.S. Bach. It is simply not a real classical guitar concert until you hear some Bach, as all roads do lead to him, you know. It has always amazed me that so much of Bach's music transcribes easily to guitar. It seems as though Bach must have had the guitar in mind as he was writing all his great works for violin and cello but simply had to settle. Terence performed this guitar arrangement of the Prelude to *Cello Suite No 1 BWV 1007* with complete ease and total control. It is so great to hear someone perform Bach who obviously really likes Bach. His interpretation was very musical rather than mathematical which is the way Bach's music is sometimes interpreted. Mr. Marciano performed very cleanly and artistically throughout and seemed very happy to be here. We were happy to have you Terence. Thanks!

Next we heard two movements from Ralph Towner's *Suite for Guitar*. Towner is probably more known for his contributions to the Jazz world but a lot of his work is written for nylon string guitar.

Russ Kniffin played from memory both of these very complicated etudes which bookend the suite. The first of the etudes, titled *Mevlana Etude* involves a lot of great thumb rest strokes and repeating right hand pattern arpeggios. The second etude, titled *Juggler's Etude* makes use of many quick and abrupt index finger rest strokes that occur amidst everything else going on. Russ ended by getting increasingly pianissimo until the sound thins into glorious nothingness to close the piece. Absolutely great musicianship!

Mike Caporizzo gave us a set of full of Spanish/Latin music covering almost every territory. To open, Mr. Caporizzo played a movement from *Sonata Romantica* by Mexican composer Manuel Ponce. With this piece the 20th century composer reminds us of music from the late classical/early romantic period. His playing and interpretation was definitely sensitive to the artistic ideals of the time period. Next Mike reached for his copy of the Max Eschig edition of the *Complete Solo Guitar Music of Heitor Villa-Lobos*, a book that many young guitarists hold sacred. Though Mike didn't actually perform from the book, he chose to leave it open and off to the side as if it were a trusty companion. Mr. Caporizzo performed three of the twelve studies by the famous Brazilian composer. The first is *Etude No. 2*, a lightning fast arpeggio study beginning and ending in A Major that Mike performed very cleanly and at a very impressive pace for a young guitarist. *Etude No.3* is a study consisting of many various elements found on a guitarist's sound pallet. There are quick scale runs, repeating right hand patterns, pizzicato, glissandi, trills, grace notes, and more. A very broad range well of developed techniques are needed to pull off this piece and Mr. Caporizzo did so with ease. There is a section in this piece that requires a run of constant bar chords moving up and down the neck where I usually hear an abundance of string squeak by performers. Mike had great control and awareness of this and gave us just the harmony and rhythm. Thanks Mike, your artistry and technique was very much appreciated. The last of the Villa-Lobos etudes Mike performed is another fast one. It is *Etude No. 10* and it seems clear that this one is his favorite as his performance was very animated throughout. He handled the slur section wonderfully and ended this suite of etudes with a nice loud finale! Mr. Caporizzo concluded his set with two pieces by Spain's famous composer, Isaac Albéniz. The first, *Torre Bermeja* is new to my ears and will be one I look forward to hearing in concert programs to come. The piece has instances where a series of notes are above the 12th fret, not very sweet territory on a classical guitar but Mike projected them nicely. The wind chime like harmonic passage beats all though. Lastly, Mr. Caporizzo played the very popular *Sevilla* by Albéniz. His interpretation ranked right up there with the best of them. He also gave the audience some brief insight into the piece. That is a great thing to do and I wish more performers would. He explained that Albéniz wrote this music on the piano with the guitar in mind but some years later it was transcribed for the guitar and therefore had finally come full circle. Great performance Mike!

Bringing the evening to a close we had a guest appearance by the local classical guitarist Matthew Ocone. A very unusual thing it is to have classical guitarists wander in off the street. Dryden is definitely my kind of place. It turns out that Matthew is a 2009 graduate of the Eastman School of Music and has been teaching and playing classical guitar locally around the Ithaca and Trumansburg area ever since. Mr. Ocone explained that he has been focusing mainly on popular Brazilian music in the recent years and that is exactly the kind of music he gave us. Matthew even had a CD out there for sale titled "*Saudosa Violão.*" The CD features popular guitar music of Brazil covering many Brazilian works that are in the public domain, some of which we heard tonight. It's always nice to take away more from a concert than the program and your memories! The first piece was a moderate tempo waltz titled *Uma Valsa e Dois Amores* by Dilermando Reis. This piece left me feeling very nostalgic as if trying to reminisce about something. It featured one of the most beautiful melodies that I heard all night and maybe ever. Mr. Ocone included a very nice performance of the popular *Sons de Carrilhoes (Sound of Bells)* by João Pernambuco before launching into the final number of the night, an arrangement by Raphael Rabello of Jobim's *Samba do Aviao*. This particular arrangement of the piece includes two separate tremolo sections. One is just a quick burst of tremolo simply adding more color to the rhythm. The other is the more traditional incorporation of tremolo that is intended to carry and project the upper melody making it more fluid. This was the first and only piece of the night to make use of this amazing eyebrow raising guitar technique. Thanks for a great performance Matthew!