

# CGSUNY Newsletter

Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York [www.cgsuny.org](http://www.cgsuny.org)

Phone: 607-865-8775 Address: 8 Banta Place, Stamford NY 12167



## *President's Letter*

March 16, 2014

Hello CGSUNY Members,

### **Lots of news to report!**

Firstly, our membership is increasing! We have grown over 50% in the past few years, *thanks to you!*

In this issue of our newsletter, you will find a review of our very successful **2013 Fall Festival**, our thirteenth, including a review by lutenist and tenor Ric Chrislip of Paul O'Dette's exquisite performance and a review of the Members' Recital by Harry George Pellegrin.

Other recent events include a very successful **benefit recital** held by CGSUNY members in Unadilla, NY. The concert raised a substantial amount for the **Unadilla Food Pantry**. Thanks to secretary George Lesh who organized this event, and to all the performers who dedicated their time to helping this worthy organization. Let's continue to support our communities, especially those in need.

Last November CGSUNY members performed at **Tierra Roasters Coffeehouse** in Albany for their **Friday Night Show**. The performance resulted in a full house further getting the word out about our organization, adding a bit of money to our coffers, and whose success resulted in an invitation to return. Watch my emails or web site for notification of future appearances there.

Our monthly **Soirées** continue to be well-attended, both in my home, as well as in local venues across the Capital District including **Albany Tierra Roasters** in the Pine Hills Neighborhood, **The Daily Grind** in Troy, and a new addition, **Tesoros Cafe** in Schenectady (thanks to our lovely host, Gloria, and CGSUNY member Francis Wilkin for arranging for this welcoming venue!).

**April** proves to be an event-filled month! I am happy to tell you that for the second year CGSUNY will join the **College of Saint Rose's Premiere Performances Series** in sponsoring the **Guitar Foundation of American International Classical Guitar Competition winner**. This year we will be hosting the 2012 winner, **Rovshan Mamedkuliev**, at the Massry Center for the Arts, Saturday, April 5, 2014 at 7:30 pm. CGSUNY members are afforded a discounted ticket price of \$10. See more information elsewhere in the newsletter.

**Two benefit concerts** will take place to help raise funds for the CGSUNY in April, both co-sponsored by regional community theaters; **Sand Lake Center for the Arts (April 13)** and **Steamer No. 10 Theatre (April 26)**. I hope you will encourage your friends and family to come out to hear some of

the great variety of music that is presented by many of our professional members, which in turn will help CGSUNY and our co-sponsors continue to contribute to our community's vibrant arts scene! See details in this Newsletter.

This year's **Fall Festival** will again be hosted by the Music Department at SUNY Oneonta and I'm happy to report that the event will be headlined by an exemplary performer, **Adam Holzman**. Mr. Holzman is Director of the Guitar Department at the University of Austin, a Naxos recording artist, and an international performing artist. More news on this year's festival to follow...

**Our most pressing current issue is our need to generate funds!** While our increase in membership helps, unfortunately membership fees only represent a small fraction of our annual expenses. Our membership fees, as well as Festival fees are kept low in order to remain affordable to as wide a range of the community as possible. But this comes at a cost. If we wish to remain a viable arts presenting organization we need to further insure our financial success as well as our artistic success. In discussion with members of our board, I believe our biggest untapped source of revenue could be realized through successful application of any number of arts grants that are available to organizations like ours. While we have had some success in the past through the efforts of current and past board members we are currently limited in this area and therefore we are seeking someone to assist the Society by providing **grant-writing services**. If you or someone you know has experience in this area or is willing to devote some time to learning about, and executing how non-profit arts organizations utilize the many grants that are available to them, please contact me, or our secretary, George Lesh.

Additionally, the **Silent Auction** continues to be a popular component of our Fall Festival and one that contributes in three very important ways to the success of our organization, not the least of which is fund raising:

1. By canvassing both local businesses in the Oneonta region, as well as guitar-related businesses regionally and across the country via their internet presence, we make our presence known to the wider community;
2. Through the income generated we help to keep CGSUNY solvent
3. The event provides our members (and other Festival attendees) guitar-related and general goods and services at a reduced cost.

In 2012 our coordinator had to relinquish his responsibilities with this event and while we were quite successful in 2013 due to a combined effort, we are looking for a **volunteer to coordinate the Silent Auction** in 2014 and beyond. Much of the groundwork has been laid, but in addition to helping to reach out to the community, we need someone who can manage the event during the Festival. If you feel you could help out, please contact our secretary George Lesh or me.

Speaking of the Silent Auction, one of our largest supporters of the silent auction (an excellent student level classical guitar, and a bag full of useful accessories) the **Albany Guitar Center** also offered **discount certificates** to our members for a **15% discount on any one-time purchase at Albany Guitar Center - NO \$ LIMIT!** George will be mailing them out shortly - watch your mail boxes...

As always, I am open to your suggestion as to how we can better serve our members. If you have any ideas you wish to contribute please feel free to contact me.

Finally, I wish to thank our officers and board of directors who continue to devote their time to our humble organization!

Sincerely,



Frederic Hellwitz  
President,  
Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York  
[fhellwitz@cgsuny.org](mailto:fhellwitz@cgsuny.org)

***Paul O'Dette's Solo Recital***  
***October 19, 2013***  
***By Ric Chrislip***

Dennis Turechek asked me to review Paul O'Dette's solo recital. First I will offer some information about how the lute differs from the guitar:

***ABOUT THE LUTE***

The strings of the lute are doubled (like a twelve-string guitar) except for the highest sounding string, which is single. A pair of strings is called a course--thus an eight-course lute (as Paul was playing) has seven pairs of strings plus a single first string. Some of the bass strings are octave pairs, while the higher pairs are at unison. Strings are either gut or nylon. String tension is less than on the guitar.

Lutes are much less standardized than guitars. Through most of the 1500's, lutes had six courses. Toward the end of the century they typically expanded to seven or eight courses and then ten. Lutes became even more varied in the 1600's, and the tuning changed.

The frets are strands of gut tied around the neck, which provides the ability to move the frets slightly to adjust intonation. Strings are tuned by wooden pegs like those of a violin, but smaller. The neck of a Renaissance lute is shorter than that of a modern guitar.

A guitarist uses the thumb of the right hand primarily for bass notes. On the lute, the thumb is used not only for bass notes but also for melody notes, typically alternating with the index finger for quicker notes. Until around 1600, most lutenists played with the thumb tucked below the fingers rather than extended to the left of the hand. The little finger of the right hand rests on the belly of the lute, helping to keep the hand stable.

Because of the shape of the body, the lute is a little more troublesome to hold securely than is the guitar. Paul rested the lute on his right thigh (on a non-slip material), with his right foot on a guitar footstool, and he also used a strap.

## ***PAUL O'DETTE'S RECITAL***



I have heard Paul several times over the years and also attended several master classes, which he has taught. Paul is remarkable for his encyclopedic knowledge and immense repertoire as well as for the high quality of his playing.

He began the recital with a group of anonymous pieces that were published in northern Italy in the 1590's. (*Arie antiche e danze* -- Ancient Airs and Dances -- was intended as the title of this group of pieces, not the title of the entire program.) Many performers would begin a recital with a less

demanding piece, giving oneself a chance to warm up, but Paul started right in with very quick finger work.

He pointed out that these pieces could be played in a simple manner by amateurs or in more elaborate versions by virtuosos, and he said that he was following the latter tradition by improvising ornaments to decorate the tunes.

The second group was made up of five pieces by Simone Molinaro. Paul said that these are extremely well crafted pieces, in his opinion the height of sixteenth century lute composition. Molinaro wrote counterpoint in four voices, unlike his contemporaries who wrote in two or three voices.

Next was a group of four very different lute pieces by Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger. Despite the German last name, Kapsberger lived in Rome throughout his life. These were exploratory compositions, which experimented with extreme contrasts and occasional chromaticism.

The last group before intermission consisted of pieces by Giovanni Antonio Terzi, whom Paul called a kind of "Paganini of the lute." These are virtuoso pieces which probably only the composer could play and which sometimes asked for more notes than can be played at once.

After intermission Paul played a group of English folk song settings for the lute. Similar to the group at the beginning of the recital, these are pieces that could be played in either simple or complex versions. He played highly decorated variations, some of which were from the period, and others that he created.

The final pieces on the program were composed by the great English lutenist John Dowland. In Dowland's "Farewell," Paul showed the expressive side of his playing. In others such as Lady Laiton's *Almaine*, The King of Denmark's *Galliard*, and the *Fantasie*, Paul's virtuosity was on display.

After a standing ovation, Paul returned to play a *Passacaglia* by the Italian lutenist Alessandro Piccinini. Paul suggested that the audience notice the similarities to Bach's famous *Chaconne* from about a hundred years later.

Paul's playing is characterized not only by virtuosic speed but also precise, energetic rhythms that give his playing authority. He does not often play from memory, but he never loses the audience, because he passionately projects the music to them.

### ***Members' Recital 2013*** ***By Harry George Pellegrin***

One of my favorite features of the CGSUNY Fall Festival is the Members' Recital, a time when the average member can get up on stage and perform for his or her peers. This year's members' recital was a lovely *mélange* of styles, periods and genres and was a total joy for both performers and auditors—many were in both categories!

Due to the large number of participants, there were a few schedule/program changes. John Ferrara and Chris Polak opened the event—a difficult position to fill from both the perspectives of the early hour (for musicians) as well as the unenviable task of kicking off a festival! Despite these distractions, their Granados *Valses Poeticos* selections were performed with all the gentle and introspective sweetness they demand. Such good performances of these pieces have made them firm favorites with me and I was enthralled. Moving forward, although back in time, their reading of Scarlatti's sonata K.33 was articulate and well-crafted. The duo ended their performance with a lovely arrangement of *The Lass of Pattie's Mill*. The only word that sums up this Ed Flower arrangement is dreamy.

George Seror took the stage next and gave us a Spanish set. His rendition of Tárrega's *Capricho Arabé* contained some fresh interpretive ideas—always a good thing when one is performing such a well-known and well-loved piece. He then played *Lágrima* and *Adelita* which were also well thought out and soulful. Next was Llobet's *El Testament de Amelia*, a piece for which George gave the back story and performed with characteristic aplomb.

Bill Simcoe and Ray Andrews treated us to a glimpse of a new and exciting departure for them. Ray, well known for his Baroque guitar prowess, has turned his talents to the Peruvian charango. Their two traditional Peruvian pieces opened their set of opposing emotions. The first, *Flor de Sancayo*, was very lively and thoroughly engaging. *Ojos Azules* was both melancholy as well as stunning. Bill Simcoe's solo, *Consolacoa* by Baden Powell was highly evocative and a wonderful performance. The duo finished with *Rosita de Pica*, a tuneful South American-flavored piece. These two gentlemen are fine players and their program added a delightful new flavor to the festival.

James Horan performed next. His playing was emotionally expressive and I feel his tone is one of his outstanding assets. His program covered a wide range of stylistic periods from Giuliani to Bach, Barrios and Tárrega. Bach's BWV998 Prelude is a delight to my ears at all times as is Barrios' *Julia Florida*. Both were performed well. *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* finished set and was very well received.

Giancarlo Sidoli was not listed on the program, but time was found at this point in the schedule for him to perform. His interpretive style for Giuliani's *Rossiniane* was spot-on. He possesses a lovely tonal variety and uses this to fully exploit the emotional content of the piece. I, for one, was very glad the room was made on the program for Giancarlo to perform.

Eugenio Reis presented a beautiful *Samba* by Baden Powell. His playing is always tasteful, beautifully crafted and a joy to hear. Today was no exception. Garoto's *Naqueles Velhos Tempos* captured a 1940's flavor of a sidewalk café in a South American haven—I was thinking Montevideo during the second world war. Eugene said the harmonies were quite modern, but I found the flavor was perfect to create the desired atmosphere. His rendition of *Santa Claus is coming to Town* got a great laugh and stole the show.

Francis Wilkin took the stage next—a tough spot, following Eugene, I know as I have filled that unenviable position myself! While having been playing classical only about a year, Francis displayed subtle and deep emotion in Montes' *Milonguita*. Francis mixed genre to keep his program flowing and entertaining. Two Carcassi studies as well as a Sor study covered the classical epoch, while Leo Brouwer brought us well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. I, as his teacher, was very proud of his hard efforts.

Matthew Downey closed out the morning session and left me mesmerized with Barbosa-Lima's arrangement of Debussy's *Golliwog's Cakewalk*. He displayed both a facile technique and a depth of feeling not often found in one so young. Towner's *Juggler's Etude* flowed well and displayed Downey's ability to color and nuance a line.

After a brief lunch break Marc Hecker gave us some Sor, Carulli and Bach. Alas, I missed a portion of his and Dave Richman's performance of BWV 999 and BWV 1000 as I had to warm up for my coming minutes in the spotlight.

Next then was me. I played Alexandre Tansman's *Cavatina* as originally written. Segovia had requested a fifth movement after the *Cavatina's* completion which Tansman (possibly grudgingly) supplied, but I have always liked the slightly off-kilter feel of four movements and definitely prefer the progression of emotion and tempo Tansman initially envisioned for this work.

Ric Chrislip performed next presenting Dowland songs which he sang in a rich and beautiful tenor voice. I find it hard enough to play the lute let alone sing along! He did this very well. He also played guitar for Britten's setting of *The Bonnie Earl o' Moray*—a very multi faceted musician indeed!

Paul Sweeney, our CGSUNY Vice President, laments the lack of recital hall representation of true classical period guitar music and took us back the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century with brilliant performances of Sor and Carulli. As always, Paul's playing demonstrated his musical prowess as well as his love for these pieces.

Fred Hellwitz, our esteemed President, performed last (and I was glad I played before him and Paul!) Fred charmed us with very lovely readings of the prelude and allemande from J.S. Bach's third lute suite. As always, Fred demonstrates what few guitarists seem to do—he lets us clearly hear the interplay between all the voices in Bach's rich counterpoint; each melody stands out and all is shaded dynamically as Fred hears it in his soul. And that sums up Fred's playing—intelligent yet soulful.

All in all, we had a wonderful member's recital this year. I anticipate great things from and with the CGSUNY in coming years.

The College of Saint Rose  
Premier Performances Series

in conjunction with

The Classical Guitar Society  
of Upstate New York

*Present*

GFA International Competition Winner

# Rovshan Mamedkuliev



Saturday, April 5, 2014  
7:30 p.m.

The  
College  
of Saint  
Rose

Massry Center for the Arts  
1002 Madison Ave.  
Albany, NY 12203

Tickets: \$20  
CGSUNY Members \$10  
Students: \$5

Tickets and Information (518) 337-4871  
[www.Massrycenter.org](http://www.Massrycenter.org)  
[www.cgsuny.org](http://www.cgsuny.org)



Classical Guitar Society of  
Upstate New York

# Benefit Concert

to jointly benefit CGSUNY and Steamer No 10

Saturday April 26, 8:00



**Eugene Reis, Brazilian guitar;  
Harry George Pellegrin, original compositions;  
Andrew Rutherford, lute;  
George Seror III, classical guitar;  
Dennis Turechek, The American Songbook;  
Fred Hellwitz, classical guitar;**

**Steamer No, 10 Theatre**  
500 Western Avenue  
Albany, NY 12203  
518-483-5503

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

[www.steamer10theatre.org](http://www.steamer10theatre.org)



Classical Guitar Society of  
Upstate New York

# Benefit Concert

to jointly benefit CGSUNY and SLCA

Sunday April 13, 2:00 pm

**slca** Sand Lake Center  
for the Arts

**The Finger Lakes Guitar Quartet;  
Maria Zemantauski, flamenco guitar;  
Spiral Tango, flute and guitar;  
Andrew Rutherford, lute;  
Eugene Reis, Brazilian guitar;  
George Seror III, classical guitar;  
Dennis Turechek, The American Songbook;  
Fred Hellwitz, classical guitar;**

Sand Lake Center for the Arts  
2880 NY Rt 43  
Averill Park, NY 12018  
518-674-2007

<http://slca-ctp.org/Events.htm>

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