

# CGSUNY Newsletter

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

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## ***President's Message***

Greetings one and all,

I am very pleased to announce that it is now official that our featured soloist at this year's (our 17<sup>th</sup>!) Fall Festival will be Gohar Vardanyan. Anyone interested in her, her playing, or her teaching can see several helpful lessonettes at the Strings By Mail website. I am very excited. I recently recalled a silly but actually helpful scene in a Hollywood movie. In *Runaway Bride* there is a scene where one of the Julia Roberts character's jilted fiancés, a major Grateful Dead fan, upon finding out that her devotion to him (and to the Dead) was not what he thought, asked: "What would Jerry (Garcia) do?" The answer came back: "Play". As we watch trouble of all kinds all around the world we should play- for ourselves and for others- and we should listen. Sharing music truly helps dispel the darkness.

*Paul Sweeny, CGSUNY President*

## ***2016 Headline Concert and Masterclass Review***

2016 CGSUNY Fall Festival Concert and Masterclass with Celil Refik Kaya  
by Giancarlo Sidoli

This year's featured performer, Celil Refik Kaya presented a phenomenal concert. Beginning with brilliant performances of Mauro Giuliani's Sonata Eroica op. 150, two well-arranged sets of keyboard transcriptions of J. S. Bach's Goldberg Variations and Enrique Granados' Valses Poeticos. The second half consisted of Celil's own Sonatina, Rodrigo's Toccata, the Eighteenth Caprichoso de Goya by Castelnuovo-Tedesco and ending with an amazing encore-a Turkish piece in which one could almost hear the oud and rebab's instrumental influence! Celil, a student of 2014 featured performer Adam Holzman, is currently pursuing his DMA at the Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin. Before he left I was sure to ask him about his dissertation and what it was to be about and as it turns out he discussed that it is about the transcription of Turkish music to the guitar.

Not only a brilliant performer, Celil's teaching was quite effective to the three performing groups in his Sunday Morning Masterclass. Performing first was The College of New Jersey guitar trio consisting of Eric Vanderzee, Ryan Wickham, and Chris King.

I believe this group guitarists are all taught and coached by Michael Newman. They performed their own arrangement of Valse Miniature by Sergei Koussevitsky. Truly the piece was quite a charming divertissement and though the group had been rehearsing just about a month and a half they performed quite well. Celil much like Adam divided the masterclass between approaching technical as well as musical issues. On the technical side he discussed right hand nail shape to achieve good tone and left hand placement and stability while executing vibrato. His discussion on vibrato was quite illuminating as Celil approaches vibrato from not so much a hand and arm lateral motion but from more of a finger's lateral motion. In addition to the technical side of vibrato, Celil also mentioned that vibrato must reflect the tempo of the piece. In other words a fast vibrato in a slow or moderate piece may seem out of place. Regarding musicality one of the finest pieces of advice was that exaggerated intention is never too much. He had the students work on the introduction of the piece to truly make it sound like an introduction. Overall this group had a fine start to their semester and I personally look forward to hearing more from them!

Next up was CGSUNY Board Member and student of Harry Pellegrin, Francis Wilkin. Francis performed the gorgeous bacarola, Julia Florida by Agustin Barrios-Mangore. Like with the previous group. Celil focused on Francis' technique. Beginning with the left hand, Celil quoted his grandfather's wisdom "The greatest players will play close to the fingerboard. Seeing that Francis's fingers sometimes pointed upward as opposed to into the fingerboard, he employed a nice left hand "walking" exercise to help Francis focus on the tips of the fingers pointing into the fingerboard. Additionally he gave Francis quite sage wisdom of knowing each and every note, position, and finger placement of a piece. He offered the following advice: tune the strings so that they are out of tune and see if you can visualize the piece on the fingerboard. In this regard the guitarist will focus on the movements of the left hand and be able to isolate the spatial learning of the piece.

The last group was Matthew Kingsley and Cory Tyson from Syracuse University. Both studied under this year's regional performer's (Kenneth Meyer) tutelage. They performed Enrique Granados' Danza Espanola no. 2 "Oriental". The performance was really quite good and Celil enjoyed their performance and perhaps to balance out the masterclass in contrast to Francis' lesson, their lesson was focusing mostly on chamber music interpretation. Given the highly French influence on this Spanish composition, Celil wanted to hear a bit more rubato and freedom as well as a bit closer coordination between the players during embellishments. He had each player play their parts alone to develop their own intentions for the transcription (which happened to be simply the piano score with some minor alterations). Some nice comments from Celil was to take some time before beginning the piece to hear the opening in your head that then play it. Overall it was quite an informative class and it really showed that Celil looked beyond the guitar and approached the psychology of learning as well as humbly stating many pieces of advice from his own mentors, which clearly has influenced this phenomenal performer.

THANK YOU CELIL! THIS ONE WAS DEFINITELY ONE FOR THE BOOKS!!

## ***Ken Meyer Concert***

The final event of the festival was the Carolyn Rifenbark Memorial Concert. This concert has been named in honor of Carolyn Rifenbark. She was one of our founding members. She also served CGSUNY as Secretary and Treasurer for a number of years. This concert will feature our Regional Performer.

This year's performer was Dr. Ken Meyer. A remarkable teacher and a wonderful performer, he is currently the director of a thriving guitar program at the Setnor School of Music of Syracuse University. He opened his program with a set of Renaissance pieces followed by Bach's Prelude Fuga and Allegro (BMW 998) that were beautifully done. He also introduced us to two contemporary works. The first, *Ricordanza*, was written in 2012 by Jesse Jones. Written for guitarist Kenneth Meyer, *Ricordanza* is a reflection on the nature of musical memory. This work was followed by Gregory Mertl's stunning composition, *A Seeker's Song*. He closed his program with *Valses Venezolanos*, a set of pieces by Antonio Lauro. His program highlighted the many expressive possibilities of the classical guitar. It was also a performance that combined superb technique and expressive artistry. - **G**

## ***Masterclass with Ken Meyer***

My Masterclass Experience  
- By Marc Hecker

For me, this Master Class was very worthwhile and actually quite fun. Acknowledging that I do not play at the professional level of most everyone else there, being almost entirely self-taught at least as far as classical guitar is concerned, I was given very detailed and particular attention on posture, how to hold the instrument properly, specific tips on fingering the fretboard and right hand technique, and foot stance. I disagree that my chosen selection, Bach's Bouree, is too advanced for me, as I was a little nervous when I played it and made errors, which did not happen during practice. But I always appreciate the chance to work with an accomplished professional who can set me straight on this stuff and give me useful advice. **MSH**

## ***2016 Fall Festival Presentations***

During the Members' Recital, we were treated to two lecture/demonstrations. As I watched both presentations, many of the attendees had guitar and notepad in hand. There was also an interesting conversation between the presenters and the audience. The first was a presentation on Right Hand Tone Production and the second was on Carulli, Carlevaro and Giuliani. Both gave those in attendance sound, practical suggestions on how the technical information that was included in the presentation might be used in the development of guitar technique. I've asked the presenters to give some additional information on their topic. - **G**

## ***Right Hand Tone Production by Matt Downey***

The right hand class that I taught was based Kitharologos by Ricardo Iznaola. The first thing I mentioned was the three knuckles of the hand and how we must as guitarists utilize full range of motion and power from the first knuckle of each finger. The idea is to isolate the right hand and concentrate on tone production and body awareness when doing exercises. Each exercise was written in a way to either isolate fingers OR create finger-pattern relationships to develop consistent and efficient tone production. The exercises started with open strings being played by each finger of the right hand: I M A and P. We used a very low metronome mark (50bpm) and did each exercise with repeats to help build proper technique and watchful eyes. We then started to intermingle fingers by doing combinations like: I and M, M and A, A, and I and P and I (to name a very few). Each exercise got progressively more engaging and difficult. The main thing I wanted to get across is that poor tone production is a product of lazy eyes and ears. During each exercise, the player must watch his right hand and listen to the tone he and or she produces. By using open strings, specific string combinations, slow metronome, watchful eyes, and exaggerating knuckle movement; one can achieve beautiful and consistent tone. I also included tips on nail care

## ***Carulli, Carlevaro and Giuliani – Harry George Pellegrin***

It has been stated by many fine performers – Dale Kavanagh comes to mind—that too often we separate left hand technique from right hand technique. When one thinks about it, the production of music on the guitar requires both hands to work in concert to produce the desired effect. In short, one cannot divorce the two hands from each other and expect to produce music. With that said, pedagogues have often generated exercise to improve right hand technique by simply focusing all efforts towards that particular hand. “Simply” may not be the accurate way to describe these pedagogue’s work—some of their regimens are both exhaustive and highly effective. Still, they could better address the disciplines needed to master our instrument. During this presentation I shall discuss the pros and cons of his right hand treatise. I believe that for most of us Mauro Giuliani’s 120 Right Hand Etudes were what we cut our teeth on when first learning classical guitar. Of course, my experiences were gleaned in the early 1970’s—things are probably different in these more modern times. Giuliani himself was a very interesting character.

**Mauro Giuseppe Sergio Pantaleo Giuliani (27 July 1781 – 8 May 1829)** was an Italian guitarist, cellist, singer, and composer. He was a leading guitar virtuoso of the early 19th century. In Vienna he became acquainted with the classical instrumental style. In 1807 Giuliani began to publish compositions in the classical style. His concert tours took him all over Europe. Everywhere he went he was acclaimed for his virtuosity and musical taste. He achieved great success and became a musical celebrity, equal to the best of the many instrumentalists and composers who were active in the Austrian capital city at the beginning of the 19th century. Giuliani defined a new role for the guitar in the context of European music. He was acquainted with the highest figures of Austrian society and with notable composers such as Rossini and Beethoven, and cooperated with the best active concert musicians in Vienna.

**Abel Carlevaro** (16 December 1916 – 17 July 2001) was a virtuoso performer, classical guitar composer and teacher born in Montevideo, Uruguay. He established a new school of instrumental technique, incorporating a fresh approach to seating and playing the guitar, based on anatomical principles. He had a successful career as a concert artist and gained the admiration of musicians such as Heitor Villa-Lobos and Andrés Segovia. His performances in the important music centers of Europe, Latin America and the United States were met with high acclaim by the public and critics alike.

### **The Carlevaro Technique & Carlevaro Guitar**

A profound and dedicated teacher, Carlevaro was the creator of a new school of instrumental technique which was revolutionary in its understanding of posture, sound development, and general philosophy of music. This important contribution to the evolution of the guitar is expounded in his didactic series (the "Cuadernos"), "Escuela de la Guitarra Exposición de la Teoría Instrumental" (School of Guitar Exposition of Instrumental Theory) as well as in the "Carlevaro Masterclass" series.

An indefatigable researcher, Carlevaro has also invented a new guitar (Concert-Guitar Model "Carlevaro"), the conception and design of which break away from traditional guitar making. This special model of guitar was first built in 1983 by the Spanish Luthier Manuel Contreras (father) in Madrid. The upper part of the sound box (on which the guitarists arm rests) was straight, while the bottom (that rests on the guitarist's leg) is curved as usual. The resulting soundboard resembled the shape of a grand piano. Carlevaro said that this shape improved the vibration of the lower notes. This new guitar also had the normal round sound hole closed, having instead a thin "slot" (a sound-slot instead of a sound-hole) all around the curvature of top: The top is actually separated from the sides - the top is quasi-floating, and is held in place only by wooden pins from the sides. Thus the guitar consists of 2 quasi-disjoint parts (held together only by the wooden pins): a) the back and sides b) the top. Today the Model "Carlevaro Guitar" is made by Eberhard Kreul (from Erlbach, Germany; where there are many great luthiers).

When traveling abroad, Carlevaro was often invited to teach *Master Classes*, where in the course of a few consecutive days, students of all levels brought him their inquiries about technique, fingering, expression, or the like. Carlevaro invited participants to play the piece or section in question, and listened attentively. After the student's performance was over, he gave his opinion (most of the times an encouraging one) and his advice. On most occasions he also asked to try the guitar, examined it, tuned it, and then played the same piece or passage again to the appreciation of participants and audience. Carlevaro continued teaching and performing until his last days.

**Ferdinando Maria Meinrado Francesco Pascale Rosario Carulli (Naples, 9 February 1770 – Paris, 17 February 1841)** was an Italian composer for classical guitar and the author of the influential *Méthode complète pour guitare ou lyre*, op. 27 (1810), which contains music still used by student guitarists today. He wrote a variety of works for classical guitar, including numerous solo and chamber works and several concertos. He was an extremely prolific writer, composing over 400 works for the instrument.

Like many of his contemporaries, he was taught musical theory by a priest who was also an amateur musician. Carulli's first instrument was the cello, but when he was twenty he discovered the guitar and devoted his life to the study and advancement of the guitar. As there were no professional guitar teachers in Naples at the time, Carulli developed his own style of playing.

Carulli was a gifted performer. His concerts in Naples were so popular that he soon began touring Europe. Around 1801 Carulli married a French woman, Marie-Josephine Boyer, and had a son with her. A few years later Carulli started to compose in Milan, where he contributed to local publications. After a highly successful Paris tour, Carulli moved there.

It was also in Paris that the majority of his works were published. Later in his life he became a self-publisher and, in addition to his own music, published the works of other prominent guitarists including Filippo Gragnani whom he befriended and who later dedicated three guitar duets to Carulli. Carulli also began to experiment with instrument making toward the end of his life and, in collaboration with the Parisian luthier René Lacôte, developed a 10-string instrument, the *Decacorde*. Carulli died in Paris on February 17, 1841, aged 71.

## **Upcoming Classical Guitar Events**

**GFA Winner Thibault Garcia Concert at  
College of Saint Rose – April 2, 2017**