

CGSUNY Newsletter

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

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David Starobin Evening Concert



David Starobin began his performance with two Sonatas for guitar by Niccolò Paganini. The first Sonata was an 'Allegro' in one movement (MS 85.) Paganini wrote this piece as a stand-alone composition. The other Sonata (MS 87) consisted of two movements, an 'Andante' and a 'Rondo: Allegro.' Although these works were not written together, they really worked well as a set. He then performed a work by Giulio Regondi, 'Etude No. 8 in G major.' It was a great example of Romantic era music for the guitar. Rounding out the

first half of the program was Starobin's own composition, 'Variations on a Theme by Carl Nielsen.' Nielsen is a Danish composer and the theme is based on his tune, 'Song Behind the Plow.' The variations showcase many standard compositional techniques. Among them were counterpoint, wonderful moving thirds, an almost formal chorale, harmonic variation, changes in meter and timbre along with brilliant bravura passages, soaring legato phrases, tender lyric passages and some majestic moments. After intermission, we heard 'Changes,' a piece that was written for Starobin by Elliott Carter. It was a groundbreaking work that was written while the composer was in his 70's. As the name implies, the work showcases dramatic changes in tempo, dynamics, consonance and dissonance, and dynamics. The score was quite a formidable thing in itself. It was mounted on two 3' x 3' panels. One of the intriguing moments in the piece came when Becky Starobin removed the first panel and David discovered that the second panel was upside down. He flips the panel so that it reads correctly and plays the rest of the work without missing a beat. Giulio Regondi, a very fine guitarist, later discovered the Concertina and wrote a 'Concertina Method.' 'Three Etudes and a Waltz' were concertina pieces from that method that were transcribed for guitar by Starobin. The etudes contained tremolo sections, beautiful counterpoint and a bright energetic waltz. The lyrical waltz also had some very humorous passages. The last two numbers on the program were written by Paul Lansky. 'Partly Pavan' from 'Semi-Suite' is an almost folk-like ballad that contained smooth legato lines, rich sonorous sounds that

were spiced with dissonance. 'Gigue,' a piece from a larger work titled 'Partita' had everything you would expect in a bravura concert closer. It was a fiery gigue where the fingers just fly and the plucked chords were full, rich and brilliant. Starobin played two encores: a 'Rondo' by Francesco Molino and Sor's 'Lesson #13.' Starobin's playing was masterful on so many levels. It was a remarkable evening.

Masterclass with David Starobin



The Masterclass was on Saturday afternoon this year. Terence Marciano from Ithaca College opened the session with 'An Malvina' by Mertz. David suggested a 'maestoso but piano' approach to the beginning. He felt that a very definite beat would create more energy and yet still remain within the framework of the introduction. He also suggested that 'the melody really needs to sing' in the main body of the piece. Using the crescendo and decrescendo markings to move slightly forward or backward in tempo will help 'telegraph'

what happens next to the listener.' Using each of the suggestions, Terence was able to make a significant difference in the sound that was apparent to both listener and performer.

Next came Matt Gillen from Ithaca College who performed Benjamin Britten's 'Nocturnal.' Mr. Starobin suggested 'less vibrato and more intensity in the sound' for the opening notes. 'Creating a full, rich sound also helps create beautiful phrasing.' He next focused on the pulse and rhythms. David suggested that 'keeping the eighth note steady would allow the other rhythms to play off of that pulse.' Once again there was a very noticeable difference in each passage as Matt worked through each suggestion.

Joey Grimaldi from Hartwick College was next and played 'Danza Negra' by Antonio Lauro. David noted that his playing was very musical and there was a great sense of rhythm. One suggestion was to work on creating a wider palette of colors. Towards that end, he worked with Joey on finding a playing position that would foster a fuller, richer sound. One of the common themes was the suggestion that each player 'listen carefully to each sound you produce.' He encouraged each participant to 'demand more of yourself because preparing to play really well is really hard work.'

Anthony LaLena from SUNY Fredonia played the opening movement of 'Sonata 3' by Manuel Ponce. Starobin worked with him in changing the position of the right hand. He also suggested that 'by waiting to feel the tension in the string just a little longer, you will be able to produce a better sound.' Those two small changes made it possible for Anthony to create a much fuller sound, even at the softer dynamic panels. David also worked with him on a lot of expressive elements that would allow his performance of this work to really be spectacular.

Joshua Herb from SUNY Fredonia was the final performer for the Masterclass. He played the 'Ushers Waltz' by Nikita Koshkin. David worked with him on finding a better position for the Left Hand Thumb. He also encouraged him to work on producing a full, rich sound. That would allow the expressive elements in this wonderful, bravura piece to shine.

The Member's Recital

This year we had sixteen participants for the Members' Recital. Kevin Chase began the morning session with a very musical performance of two selections by Leo Brouwer. The first was 'Un Dia de Noviembre' and the 'Berceuse (Canción de Cuna)' followed. He closed his set with 'Sons de Carrilhoes' by João Pernambuco. Francis Wilkin, a new member and frequent participant in our monthly Soireés performed a set of short pieces by Sor, Giuliani, Carulli and Carcassi. He also performed the 'Piece in C - For Amalia' that was written by his teacher, Harry Pellegrin. He has been studying guitar for about six months and performed admirably. 'Sei Pezzi', a suite of six contrasting pieces for two guitars composed by Luciano Zuccheri was performed by Bob Burnside and George Lesh. This suite work is based on Zuccheri's impressions while touring different places in Italy. The suite begins with a playful opening song 'Puppets', and includes a beautiful lyrical piece 'A view from the Corner', and closes with the energetic 'Dance with Tina.' No matter the style, the guys were terrific. Dave Richman performed a program that began with two tunes and improvisations from the popular standard songbook. Among them were Gershwin's 'Night and Day' and Louis Armstrong's 'Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans.' His playing really captured the jazz style of these works beautifully. He also handled the many formidable challenges presented in two works by Augustin Barrios, an 'Estudio' and a 'Gavotte.' Don Witter, up from NYC, took the stage next. He began his performance with a set of tunes by Jobim. Although these were originally written in the 60's folk style, they were performed in a guitar style reminiscent of the great Chet Atkins. He closed his set with two pieces by the Argentine composer Atahualpa Yupanqui that were just beautiful. The session concluded with a very musical performance of the Prelude and Fugue by Bach (BWV 997) performed by Joey Grimaldi, a student of Dennis Turechek at Hartwick College.

The afternoon session began with a duet that featured guitarist Matt Downey and Kyle Ohlsen on Flute and Saxophone. They performed a different set of tunes by Jobim. One of the highlights from their performance was a version of 'Somewhere over the Rainbow' set in the style of a Samba. Matt started his solo set with the 'Gavotte Choro' by Villa Lobos. Other pieces in the set included Satie's 'Gnossienne Number 1' and an Etude by Lee Ritenour, which Matt arranged. Whether the music required beautiful melodic playing, brilliant bravura passages or crisp, clean tremolos, Matt's playing was artistic and musical. Next to take the stage was Eugenio Reis. His set of four pieces featured music from his home country, Brazil. Whether the music in his program requires beautiful melodic playing or lightning fast technique, Eugenio's playing is always very musical, artistic and a real delight to see and hear. The next performance marked the return of guitarist Paul Sweeny and Barbara Kaufman on Recorder. They began with 'A Lincolnshire Folk Song Suite,' a work by Colin Hand.' Their set concluded with a magnificent theme and variations work by Jacob van Eyck titled 'Buffons.' Whether poignantly lyrical, playful or energetic, their playing was simply superb.

Harry George Pellegrin began his performance with a set of four Waltzes from his composition 'Folio for Guitar.' He remarked that each of the works in the 'Folio' was composed around specific technical problems every guitarist encounters. He closed his set with 'Snowfall,' a piece of program music from the same collection. His playing is just wonderful. George Seror III began his portion of the afternoon program with a Miguel Llobet's setting of a familiar carol, 'El Noi de la Mare.' That was followed by Fernando Sor's d minor and A major etudes. He ended his set with a setting of Bach's 'Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring.' It was an expressive program that was beautifully done. CGSUNY President Fred Hellwitz closed the afternoon session of the Members' Recital. His program featured compositions by Augustin Barrios. The first was 'Una Limosna por el Amor da Dios,' followed by 'La Catedral,' a work that many historians see as a tribute to Bach. The final composition in his set with the beautiful 'Julia Florida.' It was a very challenging program and Fred's performance was masterful.

One of the things that have always been a hallmark of performances in the Members' Recital is an obvious love of the classical guitar and of performance. This year was no exception. Make sure you check out the CGSUNY website for pictures from many of the performances from all the sessions.

The 2012 Fall Festival also marked our first year at SUNY Oneonta. The performances were in a new section of the Fine Arts building. The recital hall was a venue that was very well suited for a classical guitar program. Our profound thanks to Dr. Orlando Legname, Kay Gale and the support staff at SUNY Oneonta for all their work in helping us perform in a wonderful venue. We look forward to working with you again.

Collegiate Honors Recital

CGSUNY is very grateful to James Piorkowski and Evan Drummond from SUNY Fredonia, Douglas Rubio from SUNY Potsdam, Jeremy Harting (filling in for Pablo Cohen who is on sabbatical) from Ithaca College and Laura Oltman and Michael Newman from Mannes College of Music for their support of the Collegiate Honors Recital. Thanks so much for encouraging your students to perform here !

The Sunday afternoon session was a showcase of some of the finest collegiate guitar students from New York State. These folks are wonderful musicians and they can play - really, really well. Not only do you get to hear great musical artistry from gifted musicians but you can also see and hear how they grow as musicians over the years. That's a real treat not only for those in attendance, but for me as a former educator. You will hear a lot from and about these folks in years to come.

Anthony LaLena from SUNY Fredonia started the program with a Fugue from a Bach Lute Suite (BWV 997). The voices in the fugue soared and the counterpoint was beautifully done. He also performed the first movement (Allegro Moderato) from Sonata III by Manuel Ponce. I am always amazed how these gifted musicians can implement the suggestions from a Masterclass overnight. Many of the chords he worked on with Mr. Starobin had become rich, full sounds. A very fine performance – Keep up the great work Anthony.

Joshua Herb, another SUNY Fredonia student performed the 'Ushers Waltz' by Nikita Koshkin. Joshua also played this piece in the Masterclass and again the results were amazing. The introduction set up the main theme beautifully. There was fine, nuanced control of the dynamic panels and the transitions were really well done. Once again, congrats on a fine performance Joshua.

The Crane Guitar Quartet from SUNY Potsdam took the stage next. They are Zachary Brehm, Spencer Elias, David Elliott and Yaroslav Lohzko. They performed two movements from 'Apuntes for Four Guitars' by Leonardo Balada. The first was Movement 3 'Estratos' and the other was Movement 5 'Insistencias.' Both require precise coordination and the musicianship to know who has what role. Their music is powerful when the music calls for it and lyrical when it must be. Everything was wonderfully done. They closed their set with 'Quiccan,' a work by Andrew York. Thanks for a wonderful performance.

David Elliott performed the 'Little Sonata' by Marek Pasieczny. The 'Moderato Galante' was marked by majestic opening chords, beautiful harmonies along with very lyrical playing. David captured the rich full sound that is so necessary in the 'Lento Religioso.' There are a lot of long robust sounds that are apparent even in the softer sections of the 'Arpeggiato Largamente.' Then came the dramatic sounds of the 'Allegro Vigoroso.' It requires lightning fast technique and the articulation and control were superb. Well Done David.

The next featured player was another member of the Crane Guitar Quartet. This time we heard Zachary Brehm performing 'Song to the Mother' by Johannes Moller. His playing possessed beautiful robust sonorities, great technique and lyrical delicate playing that really makes this stunning work come alive. The work on the upper frets was superb. The melody really sings and the sounds always lead somewhere. The strummed chords in this work are really the icing on the cake. Congrats on a very musical and artistic performance Zachary.

Matt Gillen, a guitarist from Ithaca College performed 'Elegy' by Johann Kaspar Mertz. The opening chords really set up the melody for the theme. There were wonderful sounds, beautiful phrasing, lyrical melodic interpretation and seamless transitions in his playing. Thanks for a fine performance Matt.

We were then treated to another Ithaca College student, Terence Marciano. He performed 'An Malvina' by Mertz. Again it was so interesting to hear how the suggestions from David Starobin bear fruit. The opening chords were so lyrical and set up that beautiful soaring melody. He was able to create rich sounds that allowed the melody to really soar. There was also control in the tricky right hand passages and those chords at the end were really special. Thanks so much for a fine performance.

Michael Nowotarski is also a guitarist from Ithaca College. His performance of 'Guardama Las Vacas' by Luys de Narváez was terrific. Many of the characteristics I've mentioned before were present in this artistic and musical performance as well. Rich sonorities, wonderful control and very precise clean articulation to reiterate just a few really made his performance of this wonderful work really shine.

J. P. McShane is a guitar student from Mannes College of Music. His first selection was 'Improvisation #2' by Django Rheinhardt. The full sounds of the introduction were absolutely gorgeous. The melody contained rich, full lyrical tone. His nuanced control in all dynamic panels and timbres, precise position changes and pinpoint pizzicato were a joy to see and hear. We then got to hear Henry Mancini's 'Days of Wine and Roses.' This work was transcribed and arranged by J. P. McShane. Again, his playing featured rich full beautiful sounds, even in the softest dynamic panels. The phrasing was terrific and it allowed every sound to lead to the next. His artistry in both the composition and performance were stunning. He was masterful at creating and releasing tension in the song. Great Job J. P. !

The NYC Duo consisted of two students from Mannes College of Music, Aria Kitaguchi on violin and Michael Gilsinan on guitar. They are first and foremost wonderful musicians. There is always an interesting give and take between them. They chose to perform 'Three East Tales' by Atanas Ourkouzounov. The first piece is titled 'The Fox.' Vibrant energy and great joy were readily on display. 'The Red Elf's Lullaby,' with its' mysterious opening and plaintive sounds provided a poignant contrast that set up the last movement, Dracula's 'Caprice.' This movement is a constant whirl of devilish humor, pizzicato mystery and eerie grace. They were terrific. What a wonderful way to close the Collegiate Honors Recital !

Paul Quigley Concert



Paul Quigley opened his program with two works by Francisco Tárrega. The first was a beautiful rendering of the 'Capricho Arabé.' The second was a set of 'Four Mazurkas.' All of these works were examples of superb music from the Romantic period by a composer whom many regard as the 'patron saint of the classical guitar. Whether performing grand lyrical lines, rich harmonies or skillfully creating beautifully shaped and nuanced phrases, Paul's playing was up to the task. Next we heard the 'Prelude, Fugue, and Allegro (BWV 998)' by Bach. The graceful Prelude led to a very difficult Fugue that was really done quite well. The Allegro is a real challenge. The lines must move rapidly and yet still sing. Closing out the first half was the 'Gran Sonata Eroica, Opus 50' by Mauro Giuliani. Paul artfully and musically worked through each of challenges found in this work. After a short intermission, we were treated

to the 'Castles of Spain,' a suite of five short pieces by Federico Moreno-Torroba. These were very rich sonorous pieces that ranged in style from a robust fanfare, a beautiful lyrical song and a terrific dance that closes the suite. 'Ya Se Van Los Pastores' and 'En Los Triangles' were both written by Joaquin Rodrigo. His performance of these works was very musical with a pianissimo section at the end of "En Los Traigles' that was simply beautiful. He closed his program with a 'Tarantelle' by Johan Kaspar Mertz. It was a spirited performance of this powerful closer. What a delightful way to bring this year's Fall Festival to a close.