

CGSUNY NEWSLETTER



The Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York www.cgsuny.org
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PAUL SWEENEY
FREDERICK CHRISLIP
WILLIAM SIMCOE
MATHEW DOWNEY

Report from the Board

The board met via ZOOM on Sunday, June 7th.
We will not hold Fall Festival 2020 in person on the SUCO campus.
Even if SUCO made the decision to proceed with an open campus,
several of our members and friends would not be able to attend a public
event due to existing health concerns.

We are considering online concert opportunities.
We hope to report on these in the next issue of the newsletter.

The board has one vacancy caused by the death of George Lesh. We have
asked Harry George Pellegrin to fill the position on a temporary basis (until
October).

We are making plans for members to add (your) names to the ballot for a
new board 2020-2021 and we are addressing the issue of members dues
and voting and will report on this asap. Meanwhile, you may pay your dues
for next year on the CGSUNY website, CGSUNY.org.

In order to continue as a lively interactive organization we need to
communicate our various ideas and doings.

Please post announcements of concertizing or online videos that you'd like to share to the website,
CGSUNY.org

NEWS AND VIEWS

Paul Sweeny

Asked me to let everyone know about the Aaron Shearer Foundation's Virtual Masterclass series (July 6-10) with Manuel Barrueco, Laura Snowden and others.

<https://www.aaronshearerfoundation.org/site/virtual-masterclass-week/>

RIC CHRISLIP

It was suggested to me that I reminisce somewhat about highlights of my musical career. I lived in the Chicago area from 1964 to 1974, and most summers I was a paid member of the Grant Park Symphony Chorus. One summer (1971, I think), guitarist Christopher Parkening was a guest artist. The executive director of the concert series noticed how I was shadowing Parkening, and one day in 1972 the director asked whether I played the mandolin. I replied, "To some extent", although it was really a very small extent--I had never even learned to use a flat pick. He asked whether I would like to play the mandolin accompaniment for the serenade "Deh vieni alla finestra" from Mozart's Don Giovanni. The excellent baritone Julian Patrick would sing it. The mandolin part is completely exposed and, at Grant Park, was heavily miked. The director gave me a couple of weeks to prepare and then had me play it for him in his office. He asked whether I was nervous. I said "No", because I knew that if I admitted to nervousness, nervousness would hit me. I played the audition without an error, and the performances went well, too. It was my first time playing with an all-professional orchestra. The executive director was pleased with my playing and said that I would be doing all their "lutenist work" from then on.

I was also singing in the Chicago Symphony Chorus, and that same summer we were doing Benjamin Britten's War Requiem. I had sat right behind the orchestra for concerts for a few years, but this was the first time that I realized that the Chicago Symphony players were fallible. Coming off my success playing mandolin at Grant Park, I thought for the first time that perhaps I could play with the great Chicago Symphony when a piece called for guitar or mandolin. The personnel manager of the Chicago Symphony was Radivoj Lah ("Radi"), a wonderful man and bassist in the orchestra. I spoke to him in passing about wanting to be an extra player on guitar or mandolin. He turned me down, thinking that I didn't have enough experience (which was certainly true, and I looked even younger than I was).

I got the Grant Park executive director to recommend me to Radi, and, about a year and a half after I played at Grant Park, Radi called to give me a try. The Chicago Symphony was playing Anton Webern's Five Pieces for Orchestra, opus 10. It is a very short, economical work for fewer than twenty players, including guitar and mandolin. There are no technical difficulties in the parts—the players just need good mental musical awareness.

The Chicago Symphony used to do three performances—Thursday evening, Friday afternoon, and Saturday evening. Thursday evening's performance went well. Friday morning I awoke with considerable abdominal pain and got a ride to Orchestra Hall. People there said that my face looked yellow. I played the performance with no errors, and the orchestra's tour physician, who just happened to be there, checked me into a hospital immediately afterward. My problem manifested itself as a kidney stone, which I passed the next morning. Radi phoned my room to ask what was happening, and I replied that I was leaving the hospital and would be at Orchestra Hall for that evening's performance. I won Radi's confidence, and it wasn't long before he hired me again.

Now, during the 2020 pandemic, here is a little about how I am using my time. I start most days with the stretching exercises from an article in the Guitar Review No. 58 (Summer 1984), "An Interview with a Myotherapist"--Larry Snitzler's interview with Nancy Shaw. And, with my fitness center

closed, I do my adaptation of the so-called “Seven-Minute Workout” as well as some vigorous walking and stairs.

I moved my sound equipment to a vacant room and set up to make videos of my voice and lute performance. At the beginning of the pandemic lockdown, when everything was being cancelled, I felt giddy with freedom. Of course, as time went on, I thought of things which I have long been neglecting that need my attention, and all of that free time began to be taken up. Looking at the instability of our world, I decided that I should learn to grow vegetables, and now my wife and I have more than enough to do.

And the Lute Society of America, having of course cancelled its summer festival, is now offering online private lessons by the star performers who were to have been at the festival. So now I have a lot more preparation to do.

BILL SIMCOE

- Bill Simcoe CGSUNY Report 2020
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- I wanted to get out to more festivals and concerts in 2020 and I got off to a good start. I went to the 10th Yale Guitar Extravaganza on February 15th. The headliner was David Russell. The daylong event included a Q&A with David Russell, and concerts by Party of One, The Great Necks Duo, Duo Noire, and Jiyeon Kim.
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- I have attached the program for the day, for those who want to check it out. I hope there will be an 11th Yale Extravaganza.
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- The daytime performers all have a connection to Yale University, of course, and the artists were extremely varied in their approach:
- Party of One

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QH41-oqL0js>

The Great Necks Guitar Trio

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7R_zlPqRD9M

Duo Noire

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPHTV9D9Z3c>

Jiyeon Kim

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IW1AU5TgkXo>

I went to a New York City Classical Guitar Society International Artist Series concert at Peter Norton Symphony Space on March 6th, the Quaternaglia Guitar Quartet. There had started to be concerns about the coronavirus but everything was still open then. I took Amtrak and the subway to get there and back and I saw people trying to ride the subway without touching anything. Not easy to keep from falling down.

It was an incredible concert and the YouTube below is almost the same program.

Quaternaglia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GanDgABfVg&t=2805s>

On March 8th I performed with Beth Williams at Avila Retirement Community and that has been it for this year. Everything after that has been cancelled.

I was planning to go to Guitare Montreal May 22-25, but that was cancelled.

I bought an adaptor cable so I can plug my Myers pickup into my computer USB port. I started recording using the free software Audacity. Recording is a good way to work on your repertoire if you don't have a performance to practice for.

To all my guitar playing friends - hang in there and keep playing!

- hang in there and keep playing!

Matt Downey

Ensemble Arrangements of Renaissance Music in Elementary General Music Class

During my Undergraduate Degree at SUNY Fredonia, I was introduced to Renaissance Music in the Guitar Ensemble setting. I found the melodic dances to be quite catchy and they were a great avenue to become interested in ensemble music. The arrangements were very thoughtfully prepared and the guitar ensemble I was a member of found the selections a great way to learn practice, patience, and perseverance as a group and as individuals.

In my Elementary Ensembles classes with Ukulele and Guitar, I often use Renaissance Music for ensemble music making. The students really love the tunes and find it easy to memorize and then perform the selections. I try to find shorter song forms between 4-16 measures long when arranging but often take advantage of using repeats in the music. Please enjoy these Susato dances set for guitar ensemble (STAFF AND TAB). Thank you to George Lesh, Jahzeel Montes, James Piorkowski, Dennis Turechek, and Sal Salvaggio for their inspiration, help, and support to create these arrangements. Happy practicing and watch for more ensemble music in future CGSUNY Newsletters.

-Matthew Downey

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WrZVmiwsKX5I810aYF9FR-O7W-2KdKfe?usp=sharing>