

CGSUNY NEWSLETTER

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

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In this issue you will find

Frederic Chrislip

Eric Roth

David Temple

Janet Sutta

Frederich Chrislip's Memoirs, continued

I ended my previous article for the CGSUNY newsletter saying that, in February 1974, I had just played for the first time as an extra player with the Chicago Symphony and won the personnel manager's confidence. He immediately hired me to play guitar for "Pianissimo" by Alfred Schnittke under the direction of composer Lukas Foss. The guitar was to be amplified, so I brought a guitar amplifier which I borrowed from a friend. The amplifier provided a moment of humor to one of the rehearsals when I decided to move it slightly, which resulted in loud echoing noises. In spite of that mistake, the piece turned out well for me. I was getting ready to move to New York City, where I became Lukas Foss' first-call guitarist and mandolinist at the Brooklyn Philharmonia (it wasn't called the Philharmonic at that time). Radi Lah, the Chicago Symphony's personnel manager, continued to use me as his first-call guitarist even though I was now living in NYC.

The same month that I arrived in New York City, Lukas Foss hired me to play the mandolin part in *Das Lied von der Erde* by Gustav Mahler with the Brooklyn Philharmonia. In the Chicago Symphony Chorus, I had learned to attack precisely on the conductor's downbeat. Lukas patiently explained to me that my precise attack with the mandolin pick came too early to coordinate with other instruments which speak with less immediacy. I learned to time my playing to the sound of the orchestra more than to the conductor's baton.

I was making lots of professional contacts around that time—farewell concerts in the Chicago area before leaving for New York, and contacts and auditions in New York City. In the summer I returned for my second season playing in the Santa Fe Opera orchestra. Raymond Leppard was conducting his realization of Francesco Cavalli's opera *L'Egisto*, for which I played guitar, and I also played the banjo part in Alban Berg's opera *Lulu*.

In October in Manhattan I encountered British tenor Peter Pears on the street, introduced myself, and arranged to perform some Dowland songs for him later, accompanying myself on guitar. In November I was hired to play onstage guitar for Jules Massenet's opera *Don Quichotte* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. While I was in Chicago, Radi Lah tracked me down for a gig with the Chicago Symphony, playing guitar for *D'un Espace Déployé* by Gilbert Amy. Sir Georg Solti was conducting the main orchestra, while the composer conducted a chamber ensemble which included the guitar. One of those performances was on the same night as a performance of *Don Quichotte*, but my scene in the opera was late enough that I played at the Symphony and still had time to walk the mile-and-a-half to the opera house (carrying my heavy Mark Leaf guitar case). Onstage at the Symphony I sat next to the young black soprano Barbara Hendricks, whom I had recently heard in a master class at Juilliard in NYC. The next time we met was two years later, by which time she was a big deal. I finished the year in the Chicago area with solo appearances for school concerts with the Lake Forest Symphony.

Frederic Chrislip

Eric Roth's 15 UBUNGSTUCKE by Mertz

The 15 Übungstücke by Mertz: a great addition to any guitarist's practice repertoire!

Most beginner-and-intermediate-level classical guitarists are always looking for nice-sounding etudes and other short pieces from the 19th and early 20th centuries to add to their repertoire. The standard choices, like the "Segovia 20" of Sor, Carcassi's 25 progressive etudes, the first two books by Sagreras, and the various etudes of Barrios, are all great, of course. They are particularly good for developing and refining technique while also being musically interesting. However, they can be quite technically challenging, making it harder to simultaneously develop musicianship and interpretive skills. A good teacher can help guide the student through phrasing, dynamics, handling dissonance, etc., but it is still a daunting task to incorporate them when focusing so hard on the technical aspects.

The 15 Übungstücke (practice pieces) by the great 19th century guitarist, Johann Kaspar Mertz, provide a nice bridge from the simplest beginner pieces to more challenging technical etudes and beyond. Mertz is mostly known for his concert works like Hungarian Fantasy, Elegie, and the Bardenklänge series, but he also wrote countless shorter works designed for beginner and intermediate guitarists. The Übungstücke are found on pages 24-29 of Mertz's *Schule für die Gitarre* (School for the Guitar) published in 1848. They are all short pieces. Two are only eight measures long while most end at 16 or 24 measures. The etudes are somewhat progressive but not as much as those of Carcassi or Sagreras. Unlike many etudes, each of Mertz's Übungstücke function more as short musical works rather than etudes designed to develop specific techniques.

Mertz was a contemporary of mid-Romantic composers like Chopin and Berlioz rather than the early Romantic composers like Beethoven and Schubert. As a result, his music sounds more romantic than Sor and Carcassi, which are more classical by comparison. His Übungstücke, as short and simple as they are, feature a nice variety of romantic musical devices such as chromaticism, interesting use of dissonance, and portamentos. Even more important, most of the melodies are memorable and can be easily sung to help build the student's sense of tunefulness. Several of the pieces are

also simplified extracts from Mertz's longer works, giving the student something to aspire to in the future. My personal favorites of the Übungstücke are numbers 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, and 14. Enjoy!

The score of Schule für die Gitarre is available for free online in the Petrucci Music Library (IMSLP - see link below) and also in the Boije Collection.

[https://imslp.org/wiki/Schule_f%C3%BCr_die_Gitarre_\(Mertz%2C_Johann_Kaspar\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Schule_f%C3%BCr_die_Gitarre_(Mertz%2C_Johann_Kaspar))

YouTube videos of the Übungstücke include recordings by me and by Graziano Salvoni:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkWgi0eElgNkbnxiPaKWKvXEWmPCHfyJm>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEydm7BlaU>

DAVID TEMPLE invited me to include the following invitation to the “Virtual Cafe”. If you would like to attend, please email to David to request a Zoom invitation.

David Temple <david.albert.temple@gmail.com>

Hello Guitar People!

Next Guitar society “Virtual Cafe” next week: Wednesday, July 22, 7:00 p.m.

I will send Zoom invite beforehand

David

JANET SUTTA

I found this bit of trivia on page 673 of James Michener's "Texas". The date is 1869 and one Captain Reed, is being sent to Jacksborough, Texas to establish a fort to protect settlers from the Comanche.

Orders initiated by General William Tecumseh Sherman for Captain George Reed

"You will proceed immediately to the spot where Bear Creek joins the Brazos and there establish a fort of the type common in Texas and the Indian Territory. You will take with you two companies of the 14th not to exceed the authorized complement of 12 officers, 58 non-commissioned officers and 220 privates, 8 musicians and 14 auxiliary personnel"