

Fret Wire

Summer 2025



***The CGSUNY
Newsletter***

Fall Fest Headliner Bill Kanengiser

Articles! Info!

Guitar Stuff!

Fret Wire

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Our membership is encouraged to submit articles and compositions for possible inclusion to the *Fret Wire* editorial staff for consideration. Please contact Harry at recitalguitarist@verizon.net

On our cover:

Fall Festival 25 Headliner
Bill Kanengiser

Our Mission

Our purpose is to promote the education, appreciation and cultural awareness of the classical guitar and other associated instruments as a non-profit presenting arts organization.

SUMMER 2025

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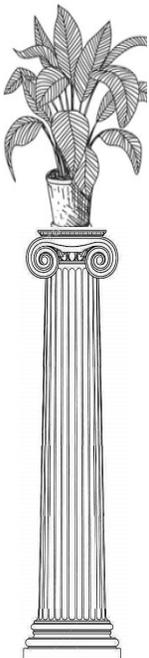
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A Note from the CGSUNY President

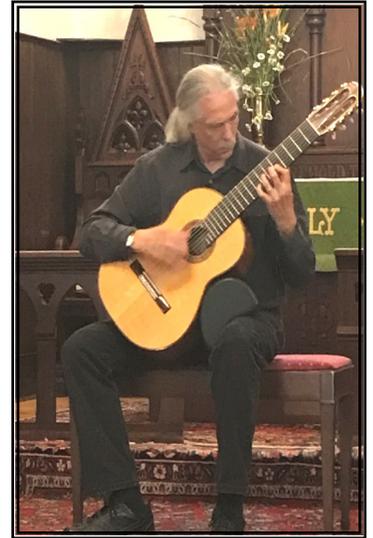
—Paul Sweeny

Lately, I have thought a great deal about many aspects of the live music (especially classical music) experience. There is no doubt in my mind that a live, in-person concert is by far superior to any form of a recorded version. While it may be perfectly comfortable to sit at home and watch a video, or even a live stream, there is simply nothing like *being there*. That said, there are many obstacles to live atten-

dance: getting to the venues, parking, etc. (not to mention paying for the ticket). I have seen attendance at local concerts dwindle, seen the audience generally getting older, and seen the choices reduced. COVID was certainly a significant factor, but it goes well beyond that.

The Guitar Society faces this problem every year for our Fall Festival, as well as for any other

events we present—including fundraisers. This Fall we are thrilled to have William Kanengiser, a great soloist, a great teacher (and member of the famed Los Angeles Guitar Quartet) as our featured soloist. I want to encourage all of our members to make an effort to be there (Saturday, October 18 in Oneonta), to support the Society and to have a truly memorable live experience. Bring friends, bring family. Hear music as it should be heard.



Fret Buzz from the Editor's Desk

—Harry G. Pellegrin

Getting ready for Fall Fest 2025! OUR 25TH YEAR AS THE CGSUNY!!! So what is the tradition for a 25th anniversary?

“The silver anniversary is important because it symbolizes the strength and endurance of a couple's love and commitment to each other, as well as the growth and changes they have experienced together over the years. It is also a time for reflection and appreciation of the past, as well as looking forward to continued growth and happiness in the future.”

So says an anniversary website. The article is written specifically for a wedding anniversary, but I think the basic concepts are found in our CGSUNY as well.

Starting at the top. The CGSUNY has shown strength and endurance through hard times—Covid 19 comes to mind. Also, we have lost members to mortality. And believe me, that hurt!

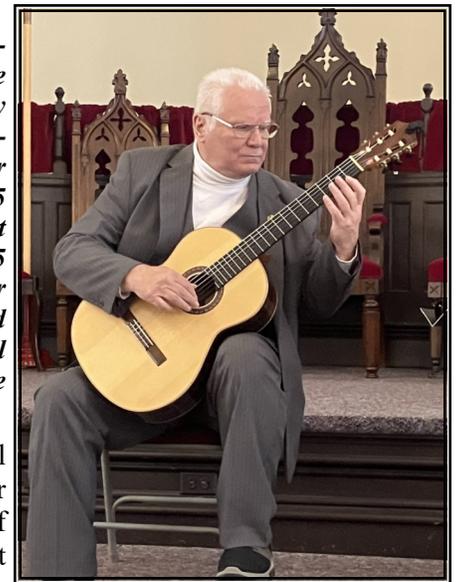
Through the aggravation of lock-down and the pain of death, the organization has shown its resilience and strength. Love and commitment? YES! It has taken both on the part of general membership as well as that of the board. And never let it be said that being a board member is a cake walk. There have been disagreements and acrimony over the years, but nothing that love and respect couldn't conquer.

And yes, we should all take a moment or three to reflect on the past we have shared and especially for our growth and progress into the next twenty-five years. Our future lies before us, and while we reflect on the past, we need to see the path ahead of us.

“Silver is associated with the 25th wedding anniversary because it is a metal that represents durability, strength, and

beauty. It is also believed to represent the strong sense of stability and warmth that a couple has developed after being together for 25 years of marriage. Just like silver, after 25 years of marriage, your relationship has stood the test of time and will last for many more years to come”

So silver is the metal that is gifted for twenty-five years of ‘together’. And don't think ‘marriage’ is too strong a term for our CGSUNY. Our corporate relationship has stood through and withstood all that time has thrown at us! We have durability and strength. We also have the mutual admiration of each and every one for one another. Stability and warmth—the quoted article



states—that we have! So as we look towards the future, let us recall our past—the joy and the heartache. None of it has been in vain. Both have formed us into what we have become as an organization!

My heartfelt best to you all!

William Kanengiser

has forged a career that expands the possibilities of the classical guitar. A prize-winner in major competitions (1987 Concert Artists Guild International Competition, Toronto Guitar '81) he has toured throughout North America, Asia, and Europe with his innovative programs and expressive musicianship. He recorded four CD's for the GSP label, playing music as diverse as Caribbean, Eastern European, and jazz. A member of the guitar faculty at the USC Thornton School of Music since 1983, he has given master classes around the world and produced two instructional videos. Most recently, he performed the U.S. premiere of "Folk Concerto" by Clarice Assad, with fellow LAGQ member Scott Tennant, and the Albany Symphony conducted by David Allan Miller.



An active proponent of new music, he recently received a grant from the Augustine Foundation for his "Diaspora Project," commissioning seven new works focusing on issues of migration and assimilation. It includes new pieces by Sergio Assad, Dusan Bogdanovic, Golfam Khayam, and others. An advocate for musicians, wellness, he serves as Chair of the Thornton Musician's Wellness Committee, curating their Wellness Initiative with health screenings and a lecture series, as well as creating a Musician's Wellness course.

A prolific arranger, he has created dozens of transcriptions for solo guitar and guitar quartet, and composed a number of works for four guitars. In 2009 he created the stage production "The Illustrious Gentleman Don Quixote" for narrator and guitar quartet, writing the stage script and adapting music from the Spanish Renaissance. It was premiered with

Monty Python member John Cleese, and extensively toured with Firesign Theater founder Phil Proctor.

As a founding member of the **Los Angeles Guitar Quartet**, William Kanengiser has given hundreds of recitals and concerto appearances around the world, and has recorded over a dozen releases. Their Telarc release "LAGQ Latin" was nominated for a GRAMMY®, and it was their Telarc title "LAGQ'S Guitar Heroes" which won a GRAMMY® in 2005 as the best classical crossover recording. Most recently, their recording of the title work on Pat Metheny's "Road to the Sun" hit #1 on the Apple Music Classical chart.

<https://www.kanengiser.com>

What are the benefits of having a record keeping system for your practice time? Do you keep a journal, or set goals? If you teach, do you ask your students to keep records? Is record keeping just for kids?

You must set goals! Without a destination, how will you know the route to take? Over the years of guitar playing, and attempting to improve my skills, I have found that initially a list I could use to make sure I was doing all the necessary practice items my teacher had required me to do kept me on track. I made a list of scales, pieces, sight reading, etc. and would have a column for the date and a place to tick each task completed. After a year or so of this, I found that I was running through the list almost by rote. Also, my priorities changed. The list became less helpful. My goals are always the same; cover technical exercises (as my teacher always stressed) and then tackling assigned lesson materials. Now that I am not actively studying with a teacher I have settled into a practice schedule that allows me to learn new music and keep old repertoire alive.

—S. Dogood

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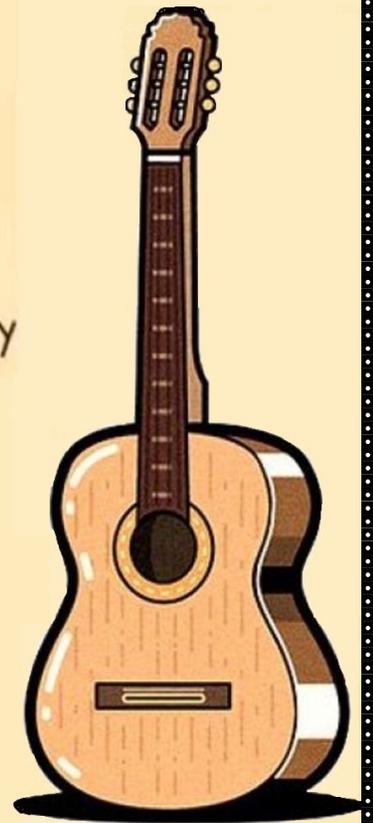
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The Technique of Practice

Not only the new student or the intermediate/advanced student may neglect a consistent and efficient procedure or regimen for practicing. All players need one! One concept must be mentioned at this juncture. Practice is not ONLY playing pieces that one has already mastered. This is part of practice, but it is more than usually 'playing' and not advancing one's performance level. Practice is a blend of three factors: 1.) Warming up both physically and mentally, 2.) Supplementing one's repertoire/progressing in the development of one's technique/technical ability, and 3.) Rehearsing and perfecting already mastered repertoire. Only by visiting each of these disciplines will results in true practice. So, allow me to visit and explain each of these factors.

Warming Up: This is critical to practice. Why? Have you ever jumped out of bed and attempted the most difficult piece in your repertoire? How did that work out for you? For most of us, either a lackluster or very mistake-laden performance ensued. As we all base our self-worth on our performance, chances are you felt terrible about your performance and—as is the case in my experience—I felt like a failure for a good few hours, if not the rest of the day! So what was accomplished? Nothing! While not the purview of this article, here is a brief description of what I have found (for myself) is a good warm-up routine. First, while both my brain and my muscles are 'cold', I start with a brick-simple exercise. Most often this is a simple two octave major scale pattern. Performed slowly, this allows my muscles to start stretching out and warming up and is not too challenging for my sleepy brain. When my fingers and brain are 'on deck', I progress to arpeggio exercises. Giuliani's 120 Right Hand Studies come to mind, but more often I use a number of Carulli's Opus 114 preludes. Carcassi's Opus 60, numbers 7 and 3 are also in rotation as the spirit moves me. To complete my warm up, I play Dale Kavanagh's Prelude Number 2—hammer-on's and pull-offs! Try it, if you never have. It is a pretty way of tying one's fingers into knots attempting some gnarly pull-offs.

Supplementing Repertoire/Progressing in Technique: Here we find what might be considered the meat and potatoes of practice time—where we push ourselves forward. An important thing to remember is that you are now warm, not burned out. Yet. Now is the time to tackle new repertoire—and hopefully something that pushes your boundaries. Not every piece has to be above you capabilities, but at this stage in your practice session, you are most able mentally and physically to expand. Regardless of what piece you are learning, some basic concepts apply. The most important thing to remember when learning any new piece is to take small bites and chew thoroughly! If I were to place a sixteen ounce steak in front of you, you wouldn't attempt to ingest it like a snake, all in one gulp! You'd cut off bite-sized bits and chew them. If the composition in front of you seems daunting, take it one measure at a time and don't progress to the next measure until you are comfortable with the first. When one tries to read through an entire piece that is above one's current abilities, frustration is the result—and when the reading is complete, nothing has been accomplished aside from a feeling of dread and inadequacy. Nothing good is accomplished.

So let's say you have read through the piece utilizing the method listed above and can play through the piece *adequately*. Now it is time to truly master the performance. Play the piece through, not stopping if an error occurs—even if it is almost a complete stop. [If you have actually learned the piece adequately, complete stops should not occur!] Take note of where you have encountered difficulties. When the performance is done, go back to those trouble spots and master those measure/phrases. Then—and only then—when those trouble spots have been satisfactorily rehearsed, THEN reincorporate them into the piece, playing through it in its entirety. Once again, no stopping! This is critical! If one practices the piece with stops every time there is a clinker, then, when a clinker occurs in performance—in front of an audience—you will stop, then everyone knows a mistake has occurred. As is the case in any public performance, musical or otherwise, keep a poker face,

as they say, and continue. The non-guitarists in the audience will probably not realize anything untoward has occurred. So, in short, always practice a piece as if you are performing it in front of an audience—no stopping!!!! This point cannot be stressed enough. Which brings us to that third bullet point in paragraph one.

Rehearsing and perfecting already mastered repertoire: It seems that we may have discussed this in the last section, but there is a subtle difference. Have you been playing a certain piece of music from memory for years? I will bet that if you were to pull out the score and read through it, you will find you have made some changes. I doubt you will play it exactly as written. I know I have slightly re-voiced chords, modified rhythms—the least of my sins have been in 'reinterpreting' dynamic markings. If you are being totally honest, I know you will have done similar disservice to the score! In a similar vein, maybe you do not agree with an editor or arranger's decisions in a piece after having lived with it for a while. This is okay, as long as it is a conscious decision! Especially in others' transcriptions or arrangements, it is fine if you modify. They did! Another aspect of this is: Let's say you have been playing a piece but have often found an 'uncomfortable' moment in it. This is the time to return to that troublesome measure or phrase and work on it a bit. This may be a piece that you have played in a recital or other performance situation and gotten through without incident, but there was that one time... I don't know about you, but if I play a piece that is say A,A,B,B,A and fluff up in the first A section, I will be worried to the point of jinxing myself on subsequent repeats. It is also useful to 'go over' older pieces that you may wish to resurrect. Which brings me to:

Recommendations for a Practice regimen for New Students:

I may have written about this before, but I tell those students who have passed the '*This is the big round whole note*' stage that they need to practice an hour a day. To me, this is the bare minimum time to practice to maintain capabilities. It usually takes a bit more time to actually advance. So how should they arrange their practice time for maximum benefit? I call it the *rule of quarters*. If one roughly divides the hour into four fifteen minute segments, one should spend the first fifteen minutes warming up and working on technical exercises: Scales, Arpeggios, Hammer-on's and Pull off's. There is a double benefit; good warm-up and advancing technique. The second fifteen minute segment is devoted to learning new material and pushing the envelope. The hands and brain are now warm, but not cooked. Both athletically and mentally, the student is ready to learn. After this fifteen minute segment, it is good to begin the memorization process, a topic for another article in and of itself, as one's concentration level may be beginning to wane. After that, comes the last segment, or cool down. Now is the time to enjoy playing through mastered and memorized repertoire. That uses up the hour. Of course, as the student progresses, the duration of each 'quarter' will be modified. It is a good starting point.

Remember this: 1.) Regular practice is paramount to success. 2.) It is better to practice one hour in the morning and one in the evening than two contiguous hours. It's the time between that matters. 3.) If one has not much time to practice, stick to the technical studies—this will keep your hands ready and willing. And lastly 4.) What works for me—and has worked for my students over the years—should work for you, but with that said, we all have different tolerances and requirements. Don't allow any practice regimen to rob you of the joy of playing or lead to frustration..



—Harry G. Pellegrin

March 2025 CGSUNY Soirée Review by Deena Freed

Our traditional monthly sound check began, as usual, at 4:30. Paul Sweeny, CGSUNY Board President gave feedback and guided players through the necessary technical adjustments. Sometimes it involved making adjustments on Zoom, or the player might need to adjust their distance from their microphones. Usually successful, occasionally stumped, we move forward to the official opening of the March Soirée in better shape than when we started.

Round One:

Ric Crislip began this month's Soirée with a song from the Oxford Book of Carols called the *Merchant's Carol*. Ric played a simple chordal accompaniment on the lute as he sang the many verses of this sacred Carol. It was a story song about the death of Jesus with the words 'He was most Kingly Dying' repeated at the chorus. The melody of the song was memorable and beautiful.

P.J. Mintz played *Birds Flew Over the Spire* by Gary Ryan (contemporary, Britain). The piece was arpeggiated with open sounding chords that evoked the feeling of birds flying. It was beautiful and soothing, especially with the harmonics that ended the piece.

Marc Hecker played Carcassi (1892-1853, Italy) *Study No. 11* from Opus 60. The study has a 'call and response' structure and is marked 'agitato'. The statement is first played in the treble, then answered in the lower registers. This study is part of Carcassi's well-known Opus 60, written many years ago, but still used as a standard text for guitar students.

Since **Eric Roth** was having problems with his fingernails today, he decided it was a good time to honor Fernando Sor (1778-1839, Spain) who was famous for playing without fingernails. Today's selection was *Andante Pastorale*, Opus 32, Number 3. Eric plays a small, parlor sized guitar that is reminiscent of the smaller guitars played during Sor's time. The effect of the smaller guitar and not using fingernails created a soft, beautiful sound. The Andante was in 6/8 time and shifted from major to minor then back to major again, ending with harmonics.

Bill Simcoe played *Ausencias* (Absences) by Astor Piazzola (1921-1992, Argentina). Piazzola is known for playing "nuevo tango" and a fusion of jazz and classical guitar styles. This is a great piece that showcases Argentinean dance rhythms.

Paul Sweeny played *Murga* (Street Band) from *Suite De La Plata* (Suite of Silver) by Maximo Diego Pujol (1957, Argentina). This is a different composer than Emilio Pujol (1886-1980, Spain) who wrote all of the *Escuela Razonada de la Guitarra* books. This piece had a catchy melody that wove around the rhythmic cords in a mesmerizing way. It was a real attention grabber.

Round Two:

Ric played a short song from the Cambridge Hymn book based on a poem by Henry Vaughan. **P.J.** played the poignant *Ecovation* from Merlin's *Suite De Ecovation*. **Marc** played a Corelli *Study in A Major*. **Eric** played *Una Flor* by Jose Broca. **Bill** played *April Flory*, **Paul** ended the Soirée with the stunning *Julia Florida* by Agustín Barrios.

At this Soirée, we had many new pieces and a few new composers introduced to us. It was a pleasure listening to the excellent selections so well played by our Soirée participants. I think we can all agree with Paul's statement that it was a particularly nice Soirée this month. Thank you to all who attended and helped to make the March Soirée another successful experience for all.



The Glimmerglass Festival is a professional non-profit summer opera company dedicated to producing new productions each season. Rob Ainsley was appointed Artistic & General Director in 2022, and the 2023 season will be his first with Glimmerglass. The company continues its tradition of four new fully staged productions, now including three operas and one work of American musical theater, performed with full orchestra, large cast and no sound amplification. These four productions are supplemented by special performances, cabarets, concerts, lectures and symposiums throughout the season. The company continues to attract an international audience to the scenic Cooperstown area, where the talent of singers, directors, designers and staff from around the world converges in the Alice Busch Opera Theater to produce world-class opera and music theater.



George Lesh Memorial Scholarship Concert Report

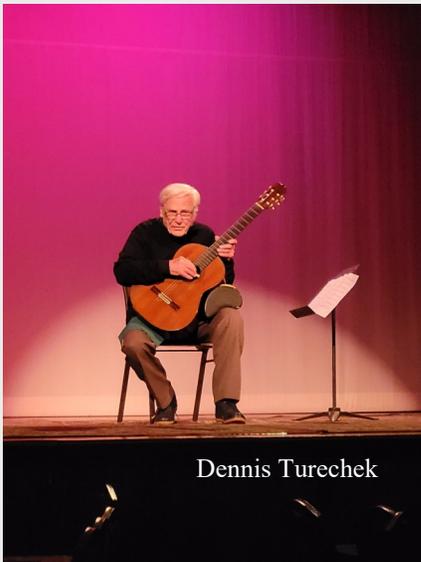
The George Lesh Memorial Scholarship was held on June 1st at the Bainbridge Town-Hall Theater. Students from Bainbridge-Guilford CSD were joined by members of CGSUNY to perform during the first half of the concert. The students played a variety of fretted string instruments including the mandolin, ukelele, bass, and guitar. The second half of the concert featured solo performances by members of CGSUNY.

A handful of Bainbridge-Guilford students between 7th and 12th grade learned the melody or chords for a few songs during their free time at school over the past few months. Members from CGSUNY were given accompaniment parts to join to the students from BG on the day of the concert. The groups practiced independently and then joined forces for the first time on June 1st. The music ranged from standard classical guitar repertoire to the Beatles.

After a short intermission, soloists from CGSUNY wowed the audience with a wide variety of musical selections. The performers included Paul Sweeny, Dennis Turechek, Giancarlo Sidoli, Bill Simcoe, Matthew Downey, and Alexander Rockwell. The performance selections included composers such as Agustin Barrios, Astor Piazzolla, Lee Ritenoir, JK Mertz, and Wes Montgomery. Alexander Rockwell performed his own composition – ‘Nags Head.’

The concert had a captivated audience that graciously donated 815 dollars to the Lesh Memorial Scholarship Fund. The BG students and CGSUNY members worked very hard over the past few months to put on a wonderful concert for a great cause. Thank you to The Jericho Arts Council for assistance in hosting this concert for the third year in a row. CGSUNY looks forward to sorting through applications this summer and announcing the awardees at the 2025 Annual Fall Festival in October.

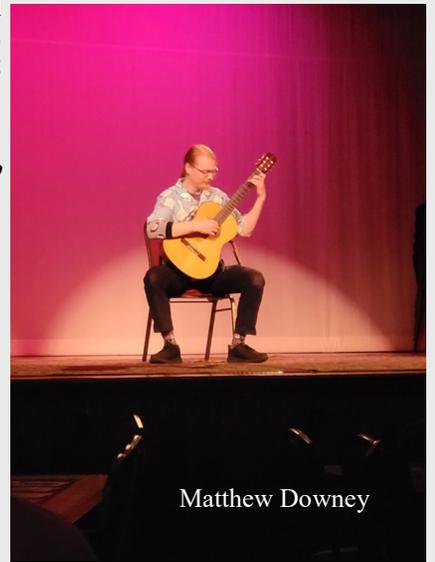
—*Matthew Downey*



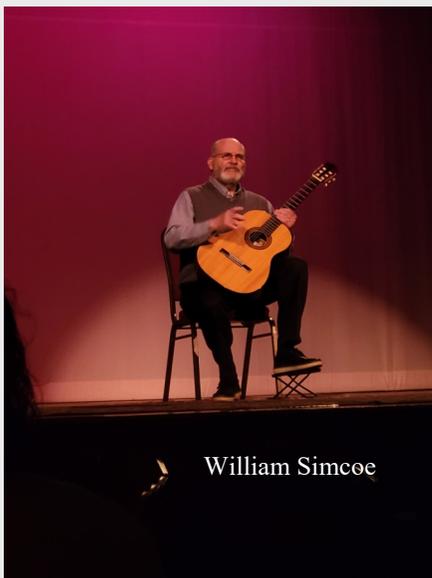
Dennis Turechek



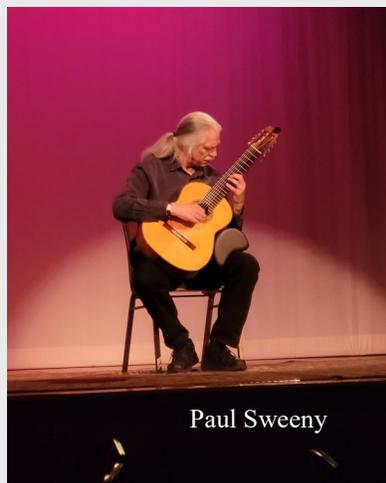
Alexander Rockwell



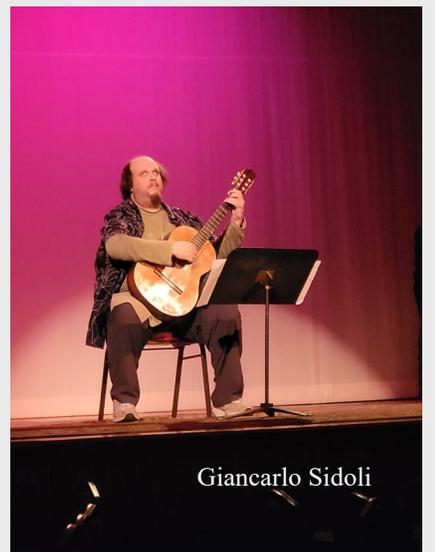
Matthew Downey



William Simcoe



Paul Sweeny



Giancarlo Sidoli



The CGSUNY members and the wonderful student ensemble.



An appreciative audience!

How I Came to Love AI!

I'm a really old guy so I have not needed to apologize for being a Luddite. I pay my bills with cash or check and go into physical stores in person to buy what I need. I do not own a cell phone. My only phone is a land line one and it is on a party line! I own a computer but require constant tutoring from my son Carl, who is a whiz with such things. Last month my cassette player broke. I drive cars at least 15 years old as they still have CD players in them. Get the picture?

About four months ago, Ben Aldrich, an arranger of some of my guitar music, on a whim, typed in "Dennis Turechek-guitarist" to ChatGPT. This is what he got back:

"Dennis Turechek is an American guitarist, known for his work in the rock and metal music scenes. He is most notable for being a member of the progressive metal band Psychotic Waltz, which was active during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The band is considered a cult classic in the progressive metal genre, and Turechek's contributions as a guitarist helped define their sound, which blends complex song structures, intricate guitar work, and poetic lyrics.

Psychotic Waltz's sound has been compared to that of other progressive metal bands like Dream Theater, but their music is also known for its darker, more brooding atmosphere and a unique blend of melody and heaviness.

Turechek's style as a guitarist involves both technical proficiency and a creative approach to composition, with a focus on creating atmospheres and melodies rather than purely relying on virtuosic solos."

As old as I may be, I'm still susceptible to flattery as much as the next person. Never have I received a more uplifting review. Had I known about ChatGPT before, I would have resourced it some time ago. I'm finally a rock star at the age of 86. Hence the title of this article.

2/13/25

—*Dennis Turechek*

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Above: Another CGSUNY desperado playing the clubs, circa 1975.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The CGSUNY
extends our most sincere thanks to
these fine organizations for their
yearly support of our
Fall Festival!

StringsByMail.com
and
**The Glimmerglass
Festival**

Monthly Virtual Zoom Soirées

CGSUNY is now offering Monthly Virtual Soirees open to our membership. We will host a Zoom meeting on the Third Sunday of Every Month at 5pm and send information out to our membership. Members may come to perform or watch the Virtual Soiree.

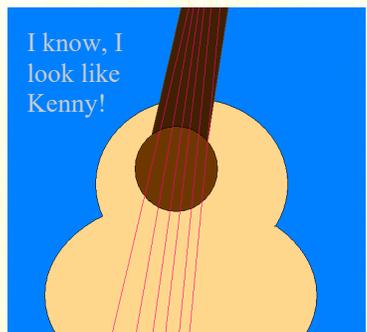
Any questions can be directed to current Secretary, William Simcoe, via email:

wsimcoe@cgsuny.org

*Deena's Question for next
quarter's issue:*

**Many pieces have noticeable
trouble spots in them. What
are some helpful ways to
conquer the challenges and
tame those beasts?**

All members feel free to respond!





See you next quarter in
the Fall Issue of

Fret Wire

Have some news?

*Have an idea for an
article?*

*Have you written a piece
that you wish to present to
the membership?*

*Consider submitting your
articles and pieces for
possible inclusion in*

Fret Wire

**Your Society's
quarterly newsletter!**

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