

# *Fret Wire*

*The CGSUNY  
Newsletter*

Winter 2025-2026



***Articles! Info!***

***Guitar Stuff!***

# Fret Wire

## Fret Wire staff:

Advisory Staff:

**Matthew Downey**  
**Deena Freed**  
**Dennis Turechek**

Society Secretary and  
Distribution Coordinator:

**William Simcoe**

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Our membership is encouraged to submit articles and compositions for possible inclusion to the *Fret Wire* editorial staff for consideration.

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### ***On our cover:***

Our Fall Fest 25 featured artists.  
And a reminder of the upcoming season!

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### ***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.***

## WINTER 2025-2026

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### **Contributors:** (Past and Present)

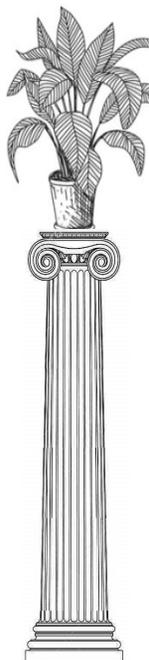
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## ***The Classical Guitar Society*** ***of Upstate New York***

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## *A Note from the CGSUNY President*

—Paul Sweeny

*As we proceed in this year's Holiday season, we share hopes and concerns for the future.*

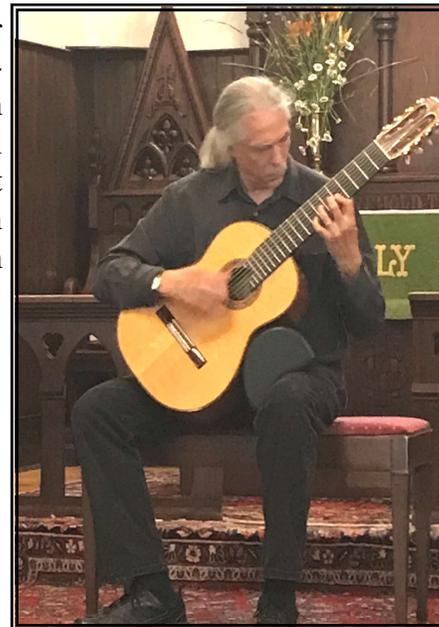
As always, the guitar, and music in general, provide comfort and optimism with the celebration of human expression and creativity. I wish all the best to our members, to all of our

friends and families, and to those we do not even know.

May we all do better-as musicians and as human beings- in the coming days.

One final note—a hearty thank you to Harry George Pellegrin who has edited our Newsletter so skillfully for the past five years. We all owe him this

debt of gratitude for his mostly anonymous efforts. I am particularly grateful that he agreed to edit this one last edition to aid our transition to the next phase. Bravo!



—Harry George Pellegrin

## *Fret Buzz*

### *Farewell and Adieu*

All things, both good and bad, must come to an end. So it is with my tenure as editor of the newsletter.

When I took over the newsletter, it was actually a return. I had been filling the role of editor from the time that George Lesh had put that task aside due to his illness. In 2020 when COVID hit, I was not enamored with ZOOM meetings as well as the insulting comments of a former board member, and so resigned. Well, the need was still there and after a distinct loss of newsletter *panache*, I rejoined the board and took on the newsletter once again.

I believe the newsletter improved through a bit of graphic design and relentless begging for articles from our multi-talented membership. Special thanks to the always gracious Dennis Turechek!

I know that there may be some teething pains switching to a new editor, but I know that whoever picks up the mantle will have fresh ideas and, once acclimated, will raise the bar to a new level. There comes a time when fresh blood and a new set of eyes is a necessity.

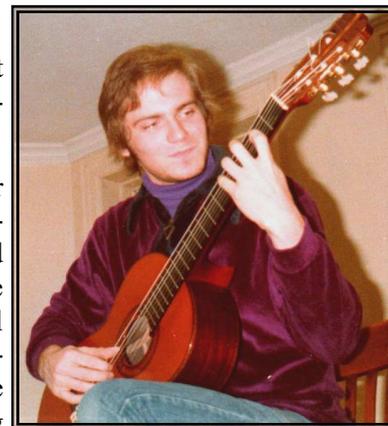
Our 25th Anniversary Fall Fest was remarkable. The level of expertise demonstrated by our headlining performers was as good or better than anything we have experienced in the past—and as you well know, historically we have had some amazing international and regional artists! I was particularly struck not only by Bill Kanengiser's expertise and musicality, but by his genuine and incredible sense of humor. Shane Bucci is a name to remember. He is a sensitive and nuanced player

who I feel will stand out in our classical guitar universe.

Changing venues for our headliner recital was honestly great! Not only did we have a beautiful venue both acoustically as well as visually, but our attendance was the largest we have seen even factoring out our period of COVID derived dearth of attendees. I, for one, hope we are allowed to use the Untied Methodist Church facilities in the future!

Our membership shown brightly in the members' recitals and especially in the master class. I was proud of how our class participants represented the CGSUNY!

So let me address the elephant in the room. Why have I resigned from the board and from the editorial posi-



tion? I realize that I am no longer that fellow you see in the picture above. I haven't been him in over fifty years. Time waits for no one and I have music to write, pieces to learn, two daughters who have grown up way faster than I wanted, three grandkids for me to love on, and a wife who deserves my undivided attention. I am 'on the clock' and my shift draws to a close. So without becoming too maudlin, I now take my leave.

# Learn Faster, Perform Better: A Musician's Guide to the Neuroscience of Practicing

By Molly Gebrian

Foreword by Dr. Noa Kageyama, [bulletproofmusician.com](http://bulletproofmusician.com)

Reviewed by Donna Noyes-Grosser

"Practice makes perfect"... "Perfect practice makes perfect"... "When you're not practicing, someone somewhere is" ... "Practice puts muscle in your brain" and so on and so forth.... It is likely a safe assumption to say that professional and amateur musicians alike are consumed by the idea of practice and how to make it "perfect" to accomplish their musical goals. Personally, I've been on a journey to perfect my practicing for years!

Having recently read Molly Gebrian's book, Learn Faster, Perform Better (Oxford University Press, 2024), I might suggest flipping the saying "practice puts muscle in your brain" (though that is undoubtedly true) to "your brain puts muscle in your practice". Dr. Gebrian has degrees in both music and neuroscience from Oberlin College and Conservatory, New England Conservatory of Music, and Rice University. A violist, academic, and teacher, she joined the faculty at New England Conservatory of Music in Fall, 2024 where she teaches courses on the science of practicing. Her work focuses on music and the brain (check out her website at <https://www.mollygebrian.com/music-and-the-brain>) and, more specifically, on how to apply the science of learning and memory to practicing and performing. In Learn Faster, Perform Better, she synthesizes research in the fields of neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and performance psychology and uses the evidence to offer pragmatic guidance and advice on how to get the most out of practice sessions and best prepare for performances. Dr. Gebrian explains the scientific basis for some of the practice tips that are very familiar (such as the importance of repetition) and expands on these tips (it's important to space out repetition of measures/phrases etc. to give your brain time to "practice on its own" and why exact repetitions may not be the best goal). Her work goes well beyond familiar practice strategies to present a comprehensive and cohesive approach to practicing, encompassing everything from the basics to mental practicing and memorization.

I was reading Dr. Gebrian's book while preparing to play "Valseana" by Sergio Assad (b. 1952) in the Fall Festival member recital and master class with Bill Kanengiser. "Valseana" is a beautiful and for me challenging guitar solo. I incorporated several of Dr. Gebrian's suggestions into my practice and preparation for the Fall Festival and thought I would share one strategy I found particularly helpful – "performing in random order". This is a strategy she recommends when a piece has been practiced well as a test for how well prepared you are to perform. Start by dividing your music into sections and numbering each section. Randomly generate the number of a section to practice (this can be as simple as rolling dice) and practice that section, no stopping for mistakes. Then, record the sections that are performance ready and the sections that need more attention (pp. 91-92 Gebrian, M. Learn Fast, Perform Better, Oxford University Press, 2024.) In my own practice sessions, I added another element recommended by Dr. Gebrian – interval practicing – and set a timer for 5 minutes, practiced the section, and moved on to the next randomly selected section.

For those interested in strengthening and enhancing practice techniques, whether your own or those of your students - I highly recommend Dr. Gebrian's book. It's readable, interesting, well-organized, and a valuable resource on successful practice strategies.

Gebrian, Molly. Learn Faster, Perform Better: A Musician's Guide to the Neuroscience of Practicing. Oxford University Press, 2024.



## Learn Faster, Perform Better



A MUSICIAN'S GUIDE TO  
THE NEUROSCIENCE OF PRACTICING

Molly Gebrian

Foreword by Dr. Noa Kageyama

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## New CGSUNY board member Alex Rockwell's *Mugunghwa for Guitar and Orchestra* A triumph

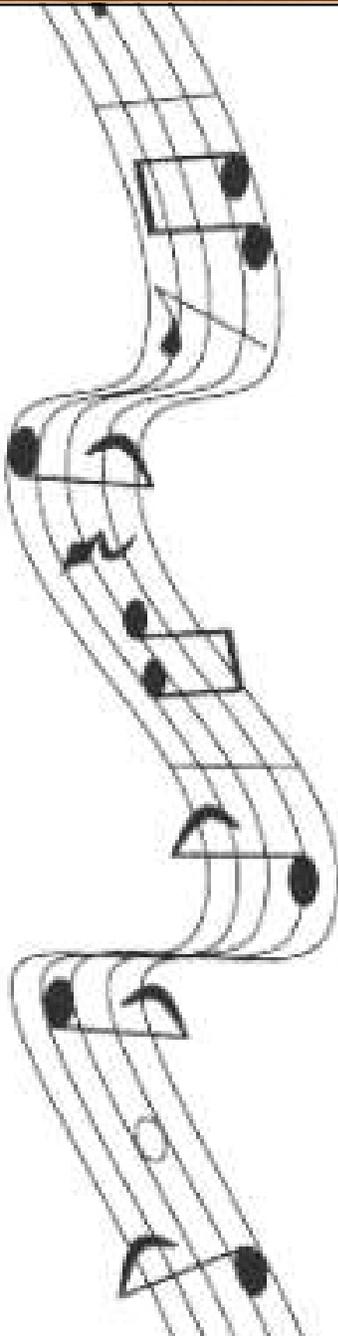
—Dick Osborne

On Sunday, November 16, fellow CGSUNY board member Bill Simcoe and I had the pleasure of attending the world premiere performance of new CGSUNY board member Alex Rockwell's guitar concerto "Mugunghwa for Guitar and Orchestra" with the Sage City Symphony at Bennington College's Greenwall Auditorium. Wow! What a gorgeous piece and what a masterful, expressive performance! When the last notes faded, the audience was on its feet in an enthusiastic and sustained standing ovation.

**In the program notes, the composer/soloist states:** *Mugunghwa is the Korean word for the Rose of Sharon, or the common hibiscus. It is the national flower of South Korea, a fact that is significant to the Korean family into which I married. Several years ago, I got my wife (before she was even my wife) a hibiscus shrub for our dating anniversary. It lived in a pot on the front step of our rented town home, not thriving, until we bought our first house together and planted it in our new front yard. When we sold the house and moved to New York, we left it behind. After we bought our new house, we were delighted to discover that our property is littered with hibiscus shrubs, as if the life we left behind came with us to grow into something greater.*

**Previously, he explains:** *To go back is to go forward. In the summer of 2023, after living in Nashville, Tennessee, for seven years, my wife and I made the decision to sell our home and move to my hometown in upstate New York. Soon, we were living with my parents, sleeping in my childhood bedroom, and my sister's old room had become my studio. Our decision to move was a sudden one. We had good reasons to leave. Most of the friends we had made in Nashville had moved away, our professional lives had stagnated, and we had no family within a thousand miles. At the time, I carried an uncertainty about it all. Were we making the right choice? Could we trade this city we'd come to love for my familiar old hometown? Were we giving up on the life we'd built for ourselves? It felt like our life wastaking a giant step backwards. Ultimately, it was the best decision we could have made. We found happiness and fulfillment we did not know we were missing, in both our personal and professional lives. In the end, our step backwards was a leap forward. This composition is an exploration of progress from retrogression. Returning to one's roots in order to flourish anew. It is loosely programmatic, telling the story of our cross-country move, portraying feelings of home, excitement, longing, internal conflict, and contentment.*

The piece presents a rich sonic tableau of themes, moods, and compelling harmonic textures and fully exploits the classical guitar's full range of techniques and colors. Percussive chords alternate with melodic lines and arpeggios. The audience seemed captivated and fully engaged with the musical story the composer/performer was telling. One can only hope that this talented composer/guitarist will continue to find opportunities to perform this extraordinary and pleasing piece.



# The Twenty Five Years of Press Coverage as Bookends

# The Daily Star

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## Local guitar society doesn't ignore classics

By Laura Alys Ward  
Staff Writer

A locally based classical guitar society has formed for players and aficionados of all ages and skill levels.

The Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York, a not-for-profit group, was created to promote study of the instrument, said Dennis Turechek, a founding member and a music professor at the State University College at Oneonta.

"I think it fills a need," he said Monday. "We want to further the appreciation of class-



cal guitar."

Gail Hamilton, of East Branch, the society's president, said the group, which began in October, now has over 30 members.

"It's taken a little bit of time, but it's off to a good start," she said. "People are very enthusiastic about it."

See CLASSIC on Page 2



Star file photo

Jim Adams, owner of The Guitar Clinic, tunes a guitar in the Ruffino Mall store in Oneonta on Jan. 17.

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## Classic

Continued from Page 1

The group has monthly meetings, which end with performance sessions. Turechek said the next meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Monday in the Fine Arts Building at SUCO, and all are welcome.

Turechek said he suspects there are "many closet classical guitar players" in the area.

"This is an opportunity to bring it out of the closet and play with other guitarists," he said.

The group will also raise funds and sponsor concerts, including an October festival with a performance by Martha Masters, who is an internationally recognized award-winning classical guitarist, Turechek said.

Jim Adams, owner of The Guitar Clinic on Main Street in Oneonta, is the group's secretary and treasurer.

"Slowly we're achieving our goals and getting stronger," he

said. "The best is yet to come."

Adams, a guitar player of 30 years, said the society also plans to hold workshops, seminars and forums.

Turechek said the society would eventually like to offer free educational concerts performed by members for area grade schools.

The group is open to professionals, amateurs, college students and those who just want to listen, he said.

"We're trying to make it as inclusive as possible," Turechek said.

People in the group range in age from 10 to 80, and come from areas including Albany and Utica, he said. The society will sponsor a performance by "The Bridge" on Aug. 8, at 8 p.m. at the Wilber Mansion. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$8 for students and senior citizens. Turechek will play classical guitar with John Davey on bass and Amy Merrill on viola. Funds raised will benefit the society.

## LOCAL

# Annual guitar festival to showcase local players, guest artists in Oneonta

**ELLA CONNORS**  
STAFF WRITER

The Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York is hosting its 25th annual guitar festival Saturday, Oct. 18 and Sunday, Oct. 19, bringing musicians together from across the region.

Dennis Turechek, a co-founder of the Classical Guitar Society that was established in 2000, said that this year's festival is set to include various activities throughout the day in the SUNY Oneonta Fine Arts building for guitar society members like ensemble performances. Both local guitar players and guest artists, national or international, play at the annual festival.

Shane Bucci, a local artist from Otego, will play at 4 p.m. at SUNY Oneonta Fine Arts M201 and Bill Kanengiser, a Grammy award winning guitar artist, is scheduled to play a concert at 7:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, located at 66 Chestnut St.

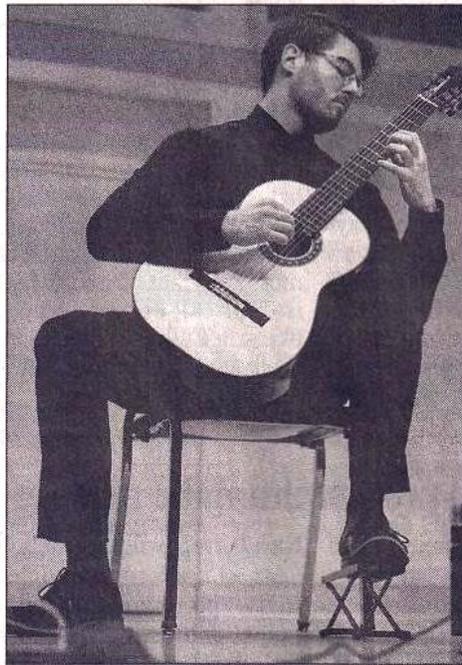
"It's a very big deal," Turechek said. "We try to do everything for everybody. We have a silent auction, so you can buy things that will benefit the society and local businesses who get advertised in our program. It's a very exciting time in October every year."

Turechek said the festival is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. Saturday. Guitarists go through a session of warm ups before a guitar ensemble plays. Members who wish to perform afterward can sign up for a members recital, and play before or after a lunch break.

"It's a wide variety of repertoire," Turechek said. "They play everything, just about."

While one does not need to be a member to attend, guitar society members can attend the fall festival for free, with the exception of the 7:30 p.m. concert, which is \$15 for members. The festival is free for all students with a student ID. General admission for nonmembers is \$30 and the 7:30 p.m. concert price is \$25.

After Bucci performs, dinner will be served before Kanengiser's performance. Silent auction will be available throughout the day, and Sunday, Oct. 19, Kanengiser is



Contributed

**Shane Bucci**, a local artist from Otego, plays the guitar in this undated photo. Bucci will play a concert at the Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York's 25th annual guitar festival Saturday, Oct. 18.

scheduled to lead a master class.

At the members recital, Turechek said he would be playing a piece written by Harry Pellegrin, another board member, that he dedicated to Turechek a year ago. At the time, he was unable to play it due to arthritis in his hands, but he said he is excited to finally play it this year. It feels like "the family getting together on a holiday," Turechek said.

The classical guitar society's mission, according to its website, is to "promote the education, appreciation and cultural awareness of the classical guitar and other associated instruments as a non-profit presenting arts organization."

When he began working on the fall festival in 2001, Turechek said, he never imagined 25 years later he would still be involved. He added that the society started fairly small, with about five to 10 members.

Now, there are close to 40 members, but there was a period about 15 years ago where it saw almost 80 members. Membership has been fairly flexible, Turechek added.

He and his cofounder Gail Hamilton, built the organization "from the ground up," he said.

As the society continued, performers began to draw more people in, Turechek said. Everybody in the society who could play was willing to do fundraisers and share their craft. Fundraisers were a large source of sustainability for the guitar society.

"I must say that all of the people who participated in the last 25 years have been heroes in my mind," Turechek said. "They unstintingly have given their talents and their time and energy to make this thing work."

Outside of guitar abilities, many members have composing skills, Turechek said, in addition to organizing and arrangement talents, which keep the society running.

The fall festival, Turechek added, typically draws people from outside of the Oneonta area. Membership is made up of people from Albany and Binghamton and other areas around the region, including those who are more local.

Turechek said the classical guitar society idea has caught on over the years. He said he believed there were "closet guitar players" who lacked contact with one another. The guitar society became a catalyst for guitarists to gather and compare notes.

The 25th anniversary is a "demonstration of that quality in people being so unselfish and egoless and willing to make a project that's bigger than themselves," Turechek said.

"It's just such a love fest," Turechek said. "Everybody's so glad to see everybody else. We don't cross paths that often, in fact, hardly ever because the people are scattered over the New York region. This is one opportunity where everybody gets to see each other and find out what we've been doing."

**Ella Connors**, staff writer, can be reached at [econnors@thedailystar.com](mailto:econnors@thedailystar.com) or 607-441-7259.

# Rifenbark Memorial Concert

Shane Bucci, Guitarist

October 19, 2025

*Review by Donna Noyes-Grosser*

The annual Rifenbark Memorial Concert is a time-honored tradition of the Fall Festival and offers CGSUNY the opportunity to showcase regional talent from across the region. This year, over 40 members of the audience were treated to a virtuosic performance by guitarist Shane Bucci. Mr. Bucci is a gifted, local talent from the Oneonta area and a graduate of SUNY Fredonia who studied with professor of guitar James Piorkowski (now retired). Mr. Bucci is completing the final stages of his Doctor of Music Degree in guitar performance, history and literature from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Upstate New York is fortunate to have him back in the area, having recently relocated to Buffalo.

The Rifenbark Memorial concert is only an hour long, and Mr. Bucci prepared and expertly delivered an ambitious and challenging program in that short amount of time. Mr. Bucci had limited opportunity to share his thoughts about the music he was performing in his program. In preparing this review, I asked if he would be able to share his ideas for this review and he kindly agreed.

Mr. Bucci's comments shared with me about the selections he performed for the Rifenbark Memorial Concert are included in quotes throughout this review.

The first set featured "Registro" by Antonio Lauro (1919-1986) and "Milonga del Viento" and "Danza in E Minor" by Jorge Morel. Mr. Bucci explained: "I find it intriguing to juxtapose repertoire that a well-informed audience may be aware of with other works that are not commonly heard together in an attempt to provide the listener with a fresh perspective on standard repertoire. I also enjoy opening my programs with more palatable repertoire to help ease the audience into the classical guitar listening experience, which is much more intimate than other classical music styles. I think some of the finest repertoire for the classical guitar has come from Latin America, so I choose to create my own sets and begin recitals with music from that part of the world."

In his second set of works, Mr. Bucci (b. 1996) performed three original compositions for guitar. In his introduction to these pieces, Mr. Bucci noted that his goal for the future is to perform programs entirely comprised of original works for the guitar, including his own compositions and those of his friends and colleagues. He began with his composition "From the Ashes" written for and dedicated to Professor Piorkowski on his retirement, in celebration of his long and prosperous career as a SUNY Distinguished Professor of Guitar. "From the Ashes" has a contemporary sound and played *allegretto* was the perfect vehicle to demonstrate Mr. Bucci's technical prowess.

The next piece, "An Afternoon", by his friend Celil Refik Kaya (b. 1991), was beautifully melodic and reflective. In contrast, "The Scorpion" by his friend Michael Bunny (b. 1997) had the interesting sting of dissonant harmony in the A theme, followed by a more harmonic B theme. Mr. Bucci commented that... "An Afternoon" was written by my dear friend and world-renowned guitarist Celil Refik Kaya for luthier Garrett Lee. Dr. Kaya has never recorded this piece, so it remains one of his lesser-known works. Including this between the more intense and harmonically dissonant works by myself and Michael Bunny, it acts as a palate cleanser, while allowing me to share music from friends that are more than deserving of their place

on a concert program."

Next on his program was the beautiful and demanding "Elegy" by Johann Kaspar Mertz (1806-1856). Mr. Bucci noted that "Elegy" is a selection from the classical guitar repertoire that he learned as an undergraduate which he has recently revisited. "Elegy" was followed by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's (1895-1968) "Variations a travers Les siècles". Dedicated by Castelnuovo-Tedesco to Andrés Segovia, "Variations" uses the compositional approach of variations on a theme and historical musical themes to highlight the range and flexibility of the guitar. Mr. Bucci played both of these compositions with exquisite technique and style. He shared that ... "While I enjoy playing original works and lesser-known works by standard composers, I still find it valuable and rewarding to program truly standard repertoire. The musical and technical challenges of "Elegy" and "Variations Through the Centuries" not only require that I maintain my musicianship in the standard repertoire category but also provides the audience the opportunity to hear my interpretive qualities when applied to repertoire they are hopefully familiar with."

Following these challenging works, Mr. Bucci tackled three movements from "Suite Brasileira No. 3" by Brazilian guitarist and composer Sergio Assad (b. 1952). Once again, Mr. Bucci delivered a fine performance of these fast-paced, technically- and rhythmically demanding movements. For Mr. Bucci ... "Texture is one of the most important qualities in classical guitar music. Texture can be the determining factor between a piece sounding natural or forced on the instrument, an instrument which by default is very difficult to compose for in a way that is both comfortable and musically interesting. One could name countless examples of repertoire that either fits the instrument excellently but is musically vapid, or conversely, is musically inspiring yet 'anti guitaristic'. Sergio Assad is one of the eminent composers of the 20th and 21st centuries who has truly mastered the art of writing idiomatically for the instrument while maintaining a high musical quality. The textures he uses in this suite are an excellent example of his skill in composing interesting and idiomatic music for the guitar, making it a joy for the performer and audience alike."

The culmination of Mr. Bucci's program was the world-premiere of his composition "Toccata", dedicated to his friend and fellow guitarist Carlos Bedoya, in honor of the soon-to-be Dr. Bedoya's new position as part-time Lecturer in guitar at the University of Louisville School of Music. "Toccata" is his second solo composition for the guitar and an important step toward fulfilling his ambition to record an album of his own works. Mr. Bucci shared that... "For this piece, I took inspiration from the Assad suite I programmed just beforehand, with subtle nods to Jorge Morel as well. My first thought in writing this piece was to make the texture polyphonic, while allowing for overlapping fingerings and continuing in developing my own harmonic voice. As it was written for Mr. Bedoya, I was doubly motivated to model it loosely on Assad's textures, as Carlos has won many competitions with Assad's piece "Aquarelle." I found the process of writing this piece rewarding and will continue to write in this style of guitaristic counterpoint with overlapping arpeggiated textures while working towards developing my own harmonic language."

After Mr. Bucci took his well-earned bows, I turned to my friend and fellow board member Dick Osborne and asked if he would share his impressions of Mr. Bucci's performance. He commented that this was a wonderful performance by a technically very skilled player with excellent tone. I couldn't agree more and would add "inspirational". Mr. Bucci is a talented young guitarist and composer with a bright future ahead, and I'm sure we will hear much more from him in time to come.

*Is there a piece of music that had  
a strong influence on you, or  
changed your life?*

**The piece that changed my life.**

—*Deena Freed*

Long ago, but you may remember.... Around 1960 I was minding my own business, walking down 12th Street in my Greenwich Village neighborhood, and I heard a magic sound coming through the shutters of a brownstone I was passing. I was struck dead by the beauty and somehow managed to get the courage to knock on a total stranger's door and ask what this exquisite sound was. It turned out that it was a recording of Segovia playing *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*! That sound, Oh, that sound. The quest for that sound has driven me ever since.

I began guitar lessons and tried to play *Recuerdos* after a while. I remember years of Giuliani right hand exercises, tremolo exercises, memorizing the left hand notes, and more years of not being able to get the tremolo part to sound like the melody. I would try hard for a while then I'd move on to other things, and finally come back to it. Many times. One day I just kinda 'let go' of control and was maybe thinking of something else, and the tremolo melody came out sweet and smooth!

I got to go to the Alhambra about 10 years ago. It is a Moorish palace in Southern Spain of fantastic imagination and unimaginable beauty. There is a stream that runs through it and a bench near that stream. I swear it made the sound of the tremolo. Planted on that bench, I swore that I would never leave.

Over the years I've held tight to the magic of that first hearing of *Recuerdos*. I've kept the feeling of 'letting go' when my tremolo melted into the shape of a melody. It has provided a 'center' and an unwavering love for a lifetime. I understand that other guitarists have had the same experience with this piece. I like to think there's almost a holy union of those of us who have.

**CGSUNY November Soiree.**

**Sunday, November 18, 2025, via Zoom**

—*Deena Freed*

Since our Fall Festival was held in October, there was no Soiree that month. Our last Soiree was September 21st. In that span of time, the season has changed and it is now cold and dark at the appointed hour for our Soiree to begin. So we gather in the dark to share our light with each other.

Those who intended to perform at the Soiree attended the sound check at 4:30. **Paul Sweeny** guided performers through the adjustments needed to maximize their sound. It continues to be a benefit to all to fix what needs fixing before we begin. Sadly, **Giancarlo Sidoli** faced a technical problem with sound that could not be solved and we did not get to hear him play.

First, **Marc Hacker** played a short Allegro by Mauro Giuliani (1781-1829, Italy). It had the melody in the bass with arpeggiated chords accompanying each melody segment. The structure created a sense of anticipation while waiting for the next part of the melody to emerge. This is one of Giuliani's well-known pieces and satisfying to listen to and play.

Next, **Eric Roth** played a Mazurka in C by Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909, Spain). This was one of Tárrega's lesser-known pieces. It had all the elements of his Romantic style: beautiful melody, lots of glissandos, and taking the interpretive license with note values and timbre. Yes, it's 'schmaltz' but somehow Tárrega's music feels like it showcases the heart of the guitar: it blends emotion and soul into every note. So many of us first fell in love with the guitar from hearing Segovia playing Tárrega's compositions.

After that, **Paul Sweeny** played *Sueño* by Julio Segreras (1879-1952, Argentina). This beautiful gem is short, but its melody pulls at the heart strings. Segreras has a gift for melody and many excellent surprises can be found in his six books of Lessons.

Second Round:

**Marc Hecker** played an Andante by Ferdinando Carulli (1770-1841, Italy), a longer piece with several sections. **Paul Sweeny and Barbara Kaufman** played a duet for recorder and guitar called *The Wind from the Sea* by Sören Sieg (b. 1966, Germany). It was from a suite called Cádiz and had a lovely, open sound featuring the recorder with guitar playing accompanying chords. **Eric Roth** played *¡Marieta!*, one of Tárrega's better-known Mazurkas; one of Tárrega's greatest hits from the early Segovia albums.

We had fewer performers than usual for this Soiree, so we called it quits early. On the bright side, there were several interested attendees who came just to listen; all are always welcome. Our next Soiree is scheduled for December 21st, the Winter Solstice. That suggests appropriate repertoire for the winter/holiday season. There are some lovely 'snow' pieces by Andrew York, Harry Pellegrin and Thierry Tisserand that I'm particularly fond of. Try Andrew York's meditative piece called *Snow Flight*. It's really easy and quite beautiful.

Thanks to all who came to play and listen. We hope to see you again at the next Soiree.

## A Dazzling Silver Anniversary Celebration with William Kanengiser

This past September 23rd, my dearest friend during my days at Mannes College, Chris Hnottavange passed away. He was an excellent musician, on guitar—both classical and electric—as well as a cellist. What made him truly extraordinary was his humor, warmth and his ability to be a positive influence in any given situation. He was one of the ‘Blain Boys’ and I will say that it was his encouragement and help that kept me focused through some very tough times in my life. He will be missed greatly.

—Harry G. Pellegrin

A memorial and musical tribute for our good friend [Chris Hnottavange](#) will be held on Sunday, January 4, 2026 at 3 pm. Venue will be at the AFM-Professional Musicians of Arizona located at 1202 E Oak St, Phoenix, AZ 85006

For those who can not attend in person, we encourage you to send a personal video message in honor of Chris which we will show during the event.



William Kanengiser, a founding member of the Grammy Award-winning Los Angeles Guitar Quartet (LAGQ) and respected faculty member at the University of Southern California’s Thornton School of Music since 1983, has profoundly shaped generations of guitarists. Known for his innovative approach and dedication to expanding the classical guitar’s boundaries, Mr. Kanengiser was the perfect choice to headline the Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York’s (CGSUNY) Silver Anniversary Fall Festival.

On Saturday afternoon, Mr. Kanengiser made a brief appearance at the Fall Festival, greeting attendees gathered for member recitals and the afternoon Rifenbark Memorial Concert before heading to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Later that day, he returned as the featured performer for the Fall Festival concert. The following morning, he led a workshop focused on warm-up techniques, followed by an exceptional master class.

### Featured Performer Concert

The evening of October 18, 2025, saw GSUNY members and Oneonta community residents gather in the beautiful sanctuary of the First United Methodist Church of Oneonta. With its remarkable acoustics, elegant architecture, and large screens for close viewing, the venue provided an ideal setting for Mr. Kanengiser’s memorable performance.

Mr. Kanengiser’s program showcased the guitar’s versatility, featuring both classical repertoire and contemporary works commissioned for his “Diaspora Project” – an initiative made possible by a grant from the Augustine Foundation. This project aims to create new guitar works reflecting indigenous music, emphasizing the role of music in preserving cultural identity among displaced populations (see <https://www.kanengiser.com/projects> for more information). Accompanying his spoken introductions, Mr. Kanengiser provided detailed program notes, enriching the concert experience with personal stories and musical insights.

The concert opened with Joaquín Turina’s *Fantasia Sevillana*—a work rooted in the traditional sevillanas dance and blending Spanish and French Impressionistic styles. Mr. Kanengiser’s expert rasgueado technique and vibrant interpretation brought the piece’s flamenco rhythms and trumpet-like fanfares to life, reminiscent of the famous bullfighting rings of Seville.

He continued with John Duarte’s *English Suite, Op. 31*, dedicated to Andrés Segovia and his wife on the occasion of their marriage. He described the movements of the suite as a musical depiction of the wedding festivities. Each movement—from the dignified Prelude to the tender Folk Song and lively Round Dance—was performed with warmth and expressiveness.



A highlight of the evening was Andrea Clearfield's *Reflections on the Dranyen*, a piece commissioned for the Diaspora Project. Inspired by Tibetan music and honoring the dranyen, a three-stringed plucked instrument, Mr. Kanengiser's performance evoked its unique timbre and conveyed the "faint heartbeat of a cultural heritage that struggles to survive." The first set concluded with composer Ian Krouse's *DADGAD*, a piece inspired by Jimmy Page's version of the traditional folk tune "Black Mountain Side" and named after a popular guitar tuning. Mr. Kanengiser seamlessly blended folk, blues, and rock elements, demonstrating both technical mastery and musical sensitivity.

The second half featured two pieces by Léo Brouwer, underscoring the Cuban composer's significance in the guitar world. In *Afro-Cuban Lullaby*, Mr. Kanengiser delicately rendered pizzicato bass lines to suggest a mother's gentle footsteps. *Danza Característica*, with its carnival-inspired themes, portrayed a bustling street scene and a mother calling her child home. Matthew Dunne's *The Village*, the opening movement of *Beyond the Horizon*, is also a work commissioned by Mr. Kanengiser for the Diaspora Project. The first of three movements, *The Village* is a dance with influences of folkloric music from Africa, Asia, and Celtic regions. Mr. Kanengiser called the audience's attention to the guitar – a portable instrument – as an ideal instrument to express the music of migratory and displaced people. He exquisitely captured the shifting rhythms, melodic lines, and subtle dissonances inherent in the music. Dušan Bogdanović's *Three African Sketches* explores the composer's affinity for African music. By preparing the guitar with small stables on the treble strings, Mr. Kanengiser transformed its sound to resem-

ble an idiophonic rattle, reminiscent of the kora. The central movement's intricate polyphonic textures were executed with remarkable finesse.

To conclude, Mr. Kanengiser performed Frederic Hand's "Missing Her," a lyrical ballad evolving into an improvisatory solo and ending with a jazz-inspired waltz, followed by Brian Head's *Brookland Boogie*—an energetic tribute to the composer's youth and jazz guitar lessons in Washington D.C. Mr. Kanengiser honored Mr. Head as both his long-time colleague and founding member of LAGQ.

Throughout the concert, Mr. Kanengiser's artistry transformed the guitar into a vehicle for expressive storytelling, celebrating its past, present, and future. After the performance, he joined the audience for a reception in the church's Fellowship Hall, offering a chance for personal interaction with our guitar hero and one of the guitar world's most admired figures.

### Sunday Morning Workshop and Master Class

On Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, Fall Festival attendees gathered at 10:00 AM for a workshop on warm-up techniques for practicing and performing. Mr. Kanengiser guided participants through a sequence of full-body warm-ups, gradually focusing on the shoulders, arms, hands, and fingers. These exercises helped master class participants relax and ease pre-performance nerves.

Four individuals—two CGSUNY members and two students—had the opportunity to work with Mr. Kanengiser on selected pieces. These included contemporary works ("Valseana" by Sergio Assad and "The Black Cockatoo Flying Alone" by Richard Charlton) and classical standards (Isaac Albéniz's "Mallorca" and Federico Moreno Torroba's "Andante" from *Sonatina*). Mr. Kanengiser's teaching style was both encouraging and insightful, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all. The morning session was a fitting conclusion to the 25th anniversary celebration of the Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York, marking a memorable milestone in the Society's history.

— *Donna Noyes-Grosser*

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## 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](mailto:wsimcoe@cgsuny.org)**

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

*All members feel free to respond!*

In the classical guitar world we often discover obscure composers from a variety of centuries. What are some examples of discoveries you have made?



*See you next quarter in  
the Spring 2026 Issue of*

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