



# The Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York Newsletter

Fall 2004

Volume 2, Ed. 3

## President's Message



We're getting pretty good at this. Our fourth annual fall festival was a success by any standards. The Newman/Oltman Guitar Duo presented a scintillating and varied concert filled with sophistication and wit along with incredible musicianship and cohesiveness in their ensemble playing. Their master class the following day was no less inspiring.

I thought the day performances were even better than last year and last year the standard was high. The Pedrick/Hutson Guitar Duo was particularly convincing in their diverse program. (See reviews of festival by Don Witter).

The guitar giveaway, conceived and executed by Bruce Walker (guitar maker extraordinaire) has become a mainstay of the festival. New, this year, was the silent auction which was the brainchild of Christine Ligio. This too was a resounding success and promises to become a regular feature.

Already we give our thoughts and energy to the Spring Festival and to the next Fall Festival.

None of this is possible without your membership, so please, re-register if you haven't already and keep this labor of love flourishing.

**Dennis Turechek**

### Membership Dues

**For the 2005 season  
are now due.**

**Please renew your  
membership today.**

**Our Society depends  
on your generous  
support.**

**If you are not yet a  
member, please join  
and become one**

**Thank you.**

**On the Web:**

**[www.cgsuny.org](http://www.cgsuny.org)**

**Fax: 607-865-8775**

## Oct. Performances

Following the great performances at the Oneonta Guitar Festival in early October, I went on to enjoy two more concerts before the month ended. At these concerts, guitarists shared the stage with other instrumentalists. One concert featured Italian music which might have been played during the Romantic Period and the other, Modern Latin American Music. The performing guitarists were, Sten Isachsen and Paul Quigley. Both concerts were well attended. Sten Isachsen played as a member of the Musicians of Ma'alwyck in the first concert, held at the historic Schuyler Mansion in Albany, on October 17. Music for the event was selected to give listeners a feel for Italian music that might have been performed for American music lovers 200 years ago, and the audience was treated to the compositions of, Luigi Boccherini, Mauro Giuliani and Niccolò Paganini. The Musicians of Ma'alwyck, comprising an ensemble of violin, cello and guitar performed the works beautifully,

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<b>Oct. Performances continued</b>
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and one was easily transported to that earlier time in history. Sten also did a wonderful solo performance of Guilliani's, "Variations on a Theme by Handel". While the modern guitar he used was not yet developed at that time, his masterful playing nevertheless kept us firmly wrapped in the aura of the occasion.

The second concert was held on October 24, and was sponsored by The College of Saint Rose, in recognition of Latino Heritage Month. Pieces played were selected from the compositions of the following famous Latin American composers: Angel E. LaSala, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Astor Piazzolla, Jose Elizondo, Maximo Diego Pujol, Carlos Guastavino, and Antonio Lauro.

The selections were pleasingly melodic, and the music was presented in a colorful mix of instruments. We listened to trios, duets and solos, combining, flute, piano, guitar, soprano saxophone, and voice. Paul Quigley as guitarist performed a piece with a soprano and three pieces with a flutist. He then did three solos, one by Villa-Lobos and two by Lauro. I particularly enjoyed Paul's energetic expression of the Latin rhythms, once again appreciating why this music is so much loved by guitarists.

Albert Muir

### **Attention Members!**

We would like your help with the  
Quarterly Newsletter.

**Please submit** articles, reviews,

Listing of Upcoming Events

Topics you would like to see discussed,

**Dead Line Jan. 15th** for submission  
for the next Newsletter.

You can include photos

Email to: [musicalm@hancock.net](mailto:musicalm@hancock.net)

Or fax: 607-865-8775

## 4th Annual Fall Festival Review

By Don Witter Jr.

### Overview of the Weekend

With overcast sky and off and on sprinkles, another great day for the Classical Guitar was executed by the Great staff of The Classical Guitar Society of Upstate NY.

Starting at 9:08 just a mere 8 minutes behind schedule, the day ran smoothly exhibiting an extremely wide display of interesting repertoire and fine performances. We got a chance to listen to a "cousin" instrument—The VIHUELA, a very ethereal sound world. The day ended with a blistering and exacting performance by the Virtuoso Duo of PEDRICK/HUTSON for 1 hour as they whetted our appetite for the main evening concert of the Newman/Oltman Duo. Also running in the background was a "Silent Auction" which was a collection of various offerings from concert tickets to a handmade wonderful instrument by local master Luthier Bruce Walker!

The evening concert was another choice of excellence as Michael Newman and his wife Laura Oltman gave us a stunning evening of excellent music dipping into Tango, Contemporary, Brazilian and Spanish works that displayed the Classical Guitar in full flower both in Virtuosity and Musicality. At intermission, a Bruce Walker Guitar was given away to a happy audience member and some of the "Silent Auction" items were still available and offered at final prices. I, as a guitarist would have to say that the most incredible bargain was the Bruce Walker Guitar that went for a ridiculously low bid!

Sunday, we were treated to a couple of hours of superb instruction in the "Masterclass" of Michael Newman and Laura Oltman as they "Tag teamed"

each player with the most insightful collection of Guitar playing experience. Clear, concise and helpful, each player flowered before us as they exercised the just given instructions by this marvelous teaching and performing duo!

I had a chance to treat Michael and Laura to lunch before they headed home as I sat reviewing my notes of the weekend and this was another positive jolt of life for the Classical Guitar in this beautiful Upstate region. Now for the details of this weekend!

### Festival Day Performances



Starting at 9:08 a.m. we were treated to a Guitar Quartet: The CGSUNY Ensemble. Under hot display lights of the Wilber Mansion, in which I attended the opening of a duo art display last night, there was a minor tuning problem that would plague various players throughout the day. Finally corrected, the quartet composed of Society President Dennis Turechek, Vice President Gail Hamilton, founding member Salvatore Salvaggio, and Board Director Christine Liggio. An excellent array of music was offered with gusto and early morning positive spirit which set the wonderful tone of delicious musical offerings we were to receive all day long.



Next up was a recent graduate and student of Dennis Turechek– Jon Tario, who offered a program of basic student works culminating in two works by his teacher. After a small case of stage nerves in presenting his 1st offering, a Jazz arrangement of “Makin Whoopie”, the kid found out that we were there to enjoy his talent and he relaxed and brought his young heart out for us. I thought it was a great overview of basic repertoire and Jon made some beautiful music when he let himself relax. He will be a fine player.

At 10 a.m. we had first the solo Baroque guitar of Sal Salvaggio. Getting a chance to dwell in the sound world of this early cousin of our Concert guitar, we had a chance to visit the past in three short pieces by one of the Major composers of that period Gaspar Sanz. Then came a section of solo guitar pieces performed by Dave Raphaelson who treated us to some 19th/early 20th century Parlor Guitar music laced with some operatic excerpts which was typical of this period. Beautifully played giving the music room to breathe and exhibiting beautiful tone. He was then joined by Sal to form “Dos Amigos Guitar Duo”.





Dave and Sal revealed that this is a fun duo formed from their over 20 years of friendship after having met in College. They would get together at each others' house and slam down a few brews and play guitar! That wonderful spirit was shared in their various selections today.



At 11 a.m. superb and fun loving Tom Rasely presented a great display of how to arrange songs for the Classical guitar by using various popular songs familiar to everyone. I really enjoyed his clear and illuminating series of arranging techniques and it was a masterful 25 minutes by Tom.

At 11:30, I popped on the stage to give a surprise tribute to my teacher-Society President DENNIS TURECHEK! I set it up by sending in a "False Program" to be printed and then went on after my first piece to tell the audience "The program you have in your hands ain't going to happen". In order to heighten the surprise I opened playing "shakers" walking around the audience before putting the guitar in my lap and improvising a program especially for my dear teacher which included pieces I first studied with Dennis and ending with a jazz standard that said it all "BODY and SOUL". I have played that piece tons of times but never played it as well as that day for Dennis as I made him and the audience understand how important he has been to my life. Anyone who gets a chance to know him knows exactly what I am talking about. This man is a wonderful human being and virtuoso teacher and Guitarist! He has

trained a staggering amount of great performers out there and his passion, love, and dedication to the craft of playing and teaching is just awe-inspiring! On top of that he is one of the sweetest people you could ever be associated with. He is an incredible "workaholic" and loves what he does!

**THANK YOU DENNIS!!!**



After lunch our 1st performer for the afternoon was the fine virtuoso Lou Romao who treated us to an



absolutely superb set which included a solid block of music standards in the Segovian tradition by starting with the Sor variations on a Mozart Theme, continuing with Partita No.1 in D, BWV825 and ending with Sunburst by LA Guitar Quartet resident composer and super virtuoso Andrew York! This young man Lou Romao is a huge man physically and musically gifted with superb tone and top executional prowess! A

true joy to hear, he was one of the wonderful surprises in today's list of players.

Frank Galante from 1:30-0 1:55 p.m. introduced us to two early instruments. The Vihuela and the Baroque Guitar. Reading from the original tablature, we were offered works on Vihuela by Narvaez and Mudarra and on Baroque Guitar works by Sanz. At one point not being pleased by his 1st performance, he excused himself and proceeded to give us a second and more solid performance.



**Trivia Answer: Castelnuovo-Tedesco**

Since these gentle instruments are strung with double strings and are very gentle musical creatures, I believe Frank had a small visit from our "heat devil" (the art display lights) but he got through it without shedding too much performance blood!

At 2:10 we had another solo/duo pair. This time William Simcoe, an upstate performance dynamo and a young brash upstart kid Alessandro Gerbini! I thought this to be a really great mix of a



seasoned pro and a young kid who has a great future. Bill, as usual, treated the audience to an array of diverse works by Vivaldi, Granados, Dyens and Powell. Then he was joined by the young Mr. Confident in works by Piazzolla, Cardoso and Abeniz, and this set ended with the youngster playing Villa-Lobos and Morel. This section was such a diverse mix of two generations and was so much fun to experience as the mix of these two gave us an exciting look into two generations of performers who passionately love this instrument.

At 2:30 a very easy going person...Fred Hellwitz stepped on the stage and gave us 25 minutes of

S. de la Maza, J King, and A. Lauro which exhibited another surprise for me as the music making and technique was absolutely top notch in every way. It was so funny for me to check out this mans' easy going stage demeanor and the tiger that roared



when he performed! What a special joy to have heard him as I know both the De la Maza and the Lauro and he did a great job on both accounts!

Erik Sootes from Russia was next and "blew me away" literally by having the nerve to play amplified in this very small and intimate setting. I really wanted to walk out immediately as I saw him enter with that amp but there I was in the first row!. Well at one point I had to leave for the bathroom and was glad that I did. His whole set was played amplified which I felt was a little crazy since he started off with 2 pieces by Bach and The Entertainer by Joplin both easily negotiable on a regular unamplified Classical Guitar. I must qualify my view by telling you that he had a female colleague do a super sell of his background. She relayed to us the reason he amplified was for "his type" of playing at the end which was Erik Sootes AMPED, Arrangements and several pieces from his albums "Diary" and "Spanish Image".

I guess his thinking was to prepare us for the sharp and explosive sound of his compositions. This "hard sell" seemed out of place to me at the time but I must say that he is a blistering virtuoso. I would have rather heard him in a large concert hall or auditorium because it was way out of place in this small venue. That said, I applaud his incredible virtuosity and he is definitely a wonderfully gifted artist and in looking back I must also applaud the Classical Guitar Society of Upstate NY for taking the chance on presenting this segment with this really impressive artist!



The Pedrick/Hutson Duo gave us a mouth dropping hour of pure excellence in every area of their program!



Another excellent array of diverse musical styles played with such stunning technical prowess, absolutely gorgeous tone and pin point articulation!

Starting with Bach and Beethoven, they gave us an incredible musical palette of Giuliani, Koshkin, Smith, Pedrick and Machado! There was so much in this hour and I was super impressed with their William Henderson Guitars— crisp, clean, clear, and powerful!

This duo is already one of the best duos in the world and today's performance opened our hearts and minds brilliantly towards the evening concert. These two virtuosos really performed as one and really had us gasping for breath as they floored the audience with their superior excellence! I felt sorry for the less than full audience these great artists had at the end of the day. Their artistry deserves only the best and fullest crowds!

### **Saturday Evening Concert/Drawing**

The Saturday night concert gave us another example of both musical and technical excellence as Michael Newman and Laura Oltman shared an extremely diverse program starting with the great tango master of the 20th century— Astor Piazzolla. Michael was attired in a pristine all white suit to contrast with his wives' all black casual tuxedo and opened the evenings' verbal statements with "It is a great pleasure after having played 49 States and 4 Continents to be here in this delightful place. We are devoting the 1st half of the program to composers who have lived in New York City". After *Lo Que Venda* by Piazzolla who lived in the lower east side of Manhattan, Dusan Bogdanovic from Yugoslavia wrote "No Feathers on this Frog". Based on an old folk tune his mother used to sing to him as a lullaby when he was a child, he doesn't know why the Frog had no Feathers. Composer Lowell Lieberman's pieces— *Nocturne-Fantasy*. Opus 69 written in the Year 2000 is a very dark piece in one movement using various thematic material that sounded like a visit to outer space walking on moon craters. It was a gorgeous piece with several magical moments.

To end the 1st half we were treated to a real cornucopia of diverse musical styles and outrageously inventive techniques as a collaboration of two young composers, Rami Vamos and Randall Avera offered us "Three Songs for Twelve Stings" Entitled: *A Light Dry Table Wine, Cricket and Berries n' Cream*, each having an association with something or someone they both experienced in their life. The techniques they used to convey their stories were mind-boggling as they ran a fruitful array of 6 string aggressive strumming, string sliding and scraping, plucking behind the nut, and trills!

The musical languages were so inclusive having touches of boogie woogie and old Jazz Dancehall rhythms to Tango/Habanera. I'd love to hear some more from these two inventive minds because their compositions are so fresh and non-cliched.

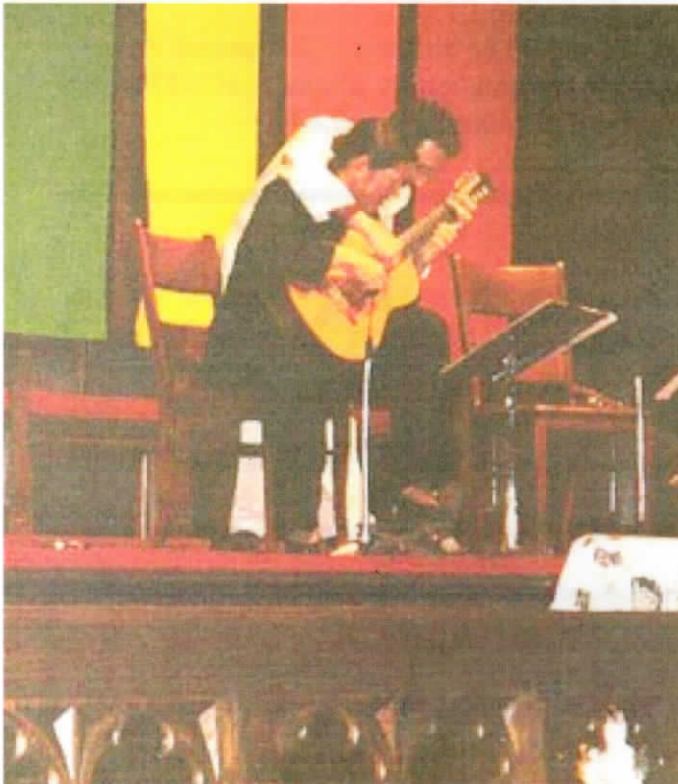
During intermission it was time to have the drawing for the door prize....an excellent instrument built by local Luthier Bruce Walker. Every ticket purchased gave you a chance in the drawing and I actually had an extensive talk with the eventual winner of the instrument and he was so happy and deserving of that wonderful instrument.



The second half of the program by Mike and Laura began with a lovely and exciting group of pieces by Brazilian Legend Celso Machado. Four Brazilian pieces seducing us into lovely melodies an percussive rhythms A great montage of Brazil by this great guitarist and composer. The program ended with a group of four pieces transcribed by the duo keeping all the original keys by pianist Isaac Albeniz. By ending with these gems we were treated to such joyful sounds and passionate melodies from the heart of Spain.

All evening were treated to the most spectacular presence of the highest realms of virtuosity and musicianship by the NEWMAN/OLTMAN Guitar Duo on their late 80's superb Thomas Humphrey Guitars.

Whatever pieces of music these great virtuosos touch, you can rest assured that it will be executed in the most moving and brilliant manner. Here you have two incredible musicians joining together to create one huge guitar with four hands working as one. I have been able to enjoy the tremendous growth of both these artists pretty much from the beginning and am so proud that the Classical Guitar Society of Upstate and its' community was able to also experience greatness! As an encore, the duo treated us to one of the great fun pieces from the Renaissance. A Piece made to be played on one Lute by two People. It was commissioned by a wealthy patron of the arts in an attempt to grow closer to the heart of the woman he desired. In this case of course being played by two on one guitar and it is a real show stopper! Another truly great evening concert presented by the Classical Guitar Society of Upstate NY!



## Masterclass/ Sunday

On the following day, Sunday from 11– 1:30 or so, we had another area of virtuosity that is very well known about the Newman/Oltman Duo– that of teaching! These wonderful artists have a tremendous gift in this area as they “Tag Team” their students with an incredible pool of experience and resources. I use the phrase “Tag Team” because each student will receive a ton of information on various aspects of improving the mastery of their chosen pieces. Sprinkled with the sharp wit and humor of Michael Newman, the team zeroed in on every aspect of achieving performance and musical excellence! Some of the great tips centered on basic stage presentation, not passing on to the audience in any way shape or manner that you made a mistake, taking apart difficult passages to work on line by line and beat by beat, playing pieces very slowly to be aware of all that is happening, playing position, relaxing while performing, various ideas on phrasing and singing the phrases as you play, knowing every musical term in the piece in order to present the music as the composer requested, practicing in front of a mirror in order to watch exactly what you are doing from posture, hand position and body language to wrist angle and tone production, having fun while you are playing, noticing facial and body movements/jerks that take away the efficiency in your playing and many details of stage presence. Everyone willing to put into practice immediately any of their suggestions reaped immediate improvement.



**Afterthoughts by Don Witter Jr.**

This was my third trip up to this very sweet town and my first experience actually being a guest player and I am so happy to be a part of this noble and inspiring collective of people who love the instrument as much as I! The Festival continues to be a wonderful collection of great music and great performances! This year there was the added attraction of a "Silent Auction" which I hope enticed enough people to open their wallets wide or me the greatest deal was the superb instrument offered by the great Luthier Bruce Walker. I had my bid in for this marvelous instrument myself but decided to let it go to my bidding partner because I didn't need a whipping from my wife for buying yet another "great guitar". That whipping can now be administered by my bidding colleague who wanted it for his son! That instrument was the biggest "steal" I have ever been involved in.

I must extend a great hug and pat on the back to the staff of the Guitar Society for again showing us the way to do a fine job. All of you can pat yourselves on the back. Such a great group of great individuals working together so well in order to achieve the goal of making the Classical Guitar in their neck of the woods as important as it should be taken. I look forward to covering this event next year and hope that those of you in this local area will do as much as you can to support this wonderful society.

**Don Witter Jr.**

Sunday "New York Marathon Day"

Nov. 7th 2004



**Trivia Question**

Who composed the first guitar concerto in the 20th century?

(answer on page 4)

**Did You Know.....**

The first guitar manual published in North America, The "Complete Instructor for the Spanish and English Guitar, Harp, Lute, and Lyre", was brought out in 1820 by J.Siebling of Charleston, South Carolina.

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**Upcoming Events**

**Guitar Competition**

The D'addario Foundation is sponsoring a classical guitar competition for young artists.

First prize, the D'Addario Prize, is \$1,000;  
Second Prize is \$500.

Applications must be postmarked by January 25, 2005; however, only the first 25 applications received will be guaranteed participation in the competition. Contestants must not be older than 23 years of age as of February 19, 2005. Contestants must not be enrolled in a graduate program or hold a graduate degree of any kind. A nonrefundable entrance fee of \$40 is required.

**Questions** should be directed to **Townsend Plant**, competition coordinator, **by phone at 607-274-3366** or **by e-mail at [tplant@ithaca.edu](mailto:tplant@ithaca.edu)**.

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The Classical Guitar Society of Upstate NY will be presenting it's **2nd annual Spring Concert**

**Saturday April 30, 2005**

Check in on the website for details as they become available.

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**Wishing everyone a  
Safe and Happy Holiday  
Season!**

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