

# C.G.S.U.N.Y. NEWSLETTER

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## President's Message

By Dennis Turechek

It happened in the middle of Don Witter's performance. Eerily, minutes after Don had admonished us to tell the people in our lives that we love them before it is too late, guitarist/lutenist Sal Salvaggio, member of the board of CGSUNY collapsed outside the U.U. Church on the walkway. Albany guitarist Fred Hellwitz was summoned. He instantly morphed into Dr. Hellwitz and after quickly examining Sal, took the phone from another society member and authoritatively motivated the dispatcher to stop arguing and to send an ambulance immediately which arrived in minutes. Sal's wife was called and Sal was eventually taken to Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown.

Dr. Hellwitz then changed back to Fred Hellwitz and concocted and executed the idea of having society members sign get well wishes on a program after the evening concert. Then Fred Hellwitz emerged from his phone booth as Dr. Hellwitz once again and after getting directions to Bassett Hospital, set off to deliver the program and check on Sal's condition before driving back to his home in Albany presumably then reassuming his Fred Hellwitz role.

Did I mention that Fred earlier in the afternoon played a stunning program of Villa Lobos etudes and preludes? Why am I continually amazed at the exploits of our diverse and exceptionally talented membership? Can it be that people who are attracted to the subtle, delicate, and human values of the classical guitar are apt to have profound humanitarian instincts as well? Whatever the answer, I am both proud and humbled to be a member of a society of such people.

ps. Sal Salvaggio has recuperated nicely and has attended the last two board meetings.

**Dennis Turechek**

### Attention Members:

#### **MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE PAST DUE!**

If you have not yet sent in your renewal membership for 2008, please do so today...we need your support to continue bringing guitar events to the upstate area. Membership form is on back page of this newsletter.



**Wishing Everyone  
a very  
Happy and Healthy  
Holiday Season**

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	1
Review of John Williams and John Ethridge by Ron Scott	2
Announcements and Upcoming Events	3
Fall Festival 2007 Review by Don Witter Jr.	4

**Review of John Williams and John Etheridge  
in Het Concertgebouw in Amsterdam  
by Ron Scott**

With very little forewarning, I jumped at the opportunity of seeing John Williams and John Etheridge live in Amsterdam earlier this year. I simply came across the concert by luck on the internet, and immediately bought tickets. No advertising or word of mouth made it my way. Also badly advertised was Pepe and Los Romeros performing Rodrigo the following night. Apparently it was part of some guitar weekend in Amsterdam that was badly promoted. I'll be sure to keep a close tab on things from now on.

The JW/JE program was essentially the live CD they recorded together. In addition to that, they both performed some solo pieces. According to the program notes, the pair bring together opposing worlds; the division between classical (nylon strings) and jazz/pop (steel strings) and then the combination of Western and World music. They also brought a lot of very dry English humour.

The first half of the concert was mostly duets, though both guitarists took the opportunity to play some quick solo pieces. For me the highlight of the first half was JW's Extra Time. This is a composition based on the 2<sup>nd</sup> prelude from the Well Tempered Clavier by Bach.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> half began with JE performing an old jazz number called Mean to Me. Towards the end of the piece, he accidentally stood on his cable and unplugged himself. He let out a huge cry of 'Noooooo', casually bent over, plugged himself back in and finished the piece. 'All part of the show' he assured us afterwards. For me this solo number was the best piece of the concert. I'm not familiar with the piece, but I loved the different moods and dynamics JE brought out of it.

Now it was some solo time for JW. Without introduction he ripped right into Barrio's Una Limosna Por el Amor de Dios - as fast and accurate as the CD of course! The next piece was called 'Hello George', written by JW in dedication for an old friend. A lot more emotion was expressed in this piece than his others. He continued with some Venezuelan numbers he recorded. I found these a little dry and stiff. I couldn't help feeling he has become bored of playing these pieces.

To wrap things up, the duo ended with a piece written especially for them by Benjamin Verdey called Peace, Love and Guitars. An enthusiastic crowd managed to squeeze three encores out of them. They would have happily played a fourth I believe, but the hall needed to be vacated in preparation for the evenings concert.

## Announcements and Upcoming Events



**March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**The Brazil Guitar duo** will perform at the Unitarian church in Binghamton.

### **Brasil Guitar Duo**

Classical Guitar Magazine exclaims: "*The maturity of musicianship and technical virtuosity displayed...is simply outstanding.*" in describing the Brasil Guitar Duo, winner of the 2006 Concert Artists Guild International Competition. With full touring schedules on two continents and critically acclaimed recordings, the Duo is quickly solidifying its status as one of the preeminent guitar duos of its generation.

The Brasil Guitar Duo has developed a broad repertoire of classical guitar duos (Bach, Sor, Scarlatti) and in recent years has broadened its aesthetic to encompass the traditional music of its native land (samba, maxixe, choro and baião). These diverse influences come together in the duo's programming, a seamless blend of traditional and Brazilian works.

*Concert Artists Guild, January 2007*

More details to be announced soon. Check back on the website, events page for more information as we get closer to the date.

**Saturday, May 17, 2008**

**Ulisses Rocha will perform. Venue to be announced soon.**



**Ulisses Rocha**

Ulisses Rocha (pronounced oo-LEEsees ROW-sha) was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in November of 1960 and has been considered to be one of his country's finest guitarist/composers for over twenty years. He began playing and studying classical guitar at a young age. At the same time there was the everpresent influence of Brazilian music and its abundance of great guitarist-composers. All these elements have combined to make him comfortable in playing a variety of musical styles while enabling him to insert his own distinguishable creative guitar style.

Ulisses sometimes performs or records as a soloist but is also often found in the musical company of some of Brazil's most known artists. In the early 1980s he united with fellow guitar players André Geraissati and Mozart Mello to form the Group D'Alma and with that his career was set in motion. The eclectic styles performed by the group are said to have been an influence in the formation of the enormously successful trio of John McLaughlin, Paco de Lucia, and Al di Meola.

*Byron Fogo- Fingerstyle Guitar july/august 2002*

Check back on the website, events page for more information as we get closer to the date..

## 7th Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York Fall Festival- 2007 Review

By Don Witter Jr.

The 7th Fall Festival sponsored by the Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York kicked off with some choice renderings from the fertile pen of one of my mentors Laurindo Almeida. I was in heaven as **Bob Donahoe** started off by a small tutorial in the derivation of his family name. His program was four arrangements of popular songs by Blane, Goulding, Provost, and Kern. Bob said he came up from the Catskills and instead of putting his glasses on he took his off to play. You could see his love for these little gems of arranging genius from the masterful Almeida and all four arrangements were beautifully interpreted although after his 1st rendition, he stated "That was 85% of the notes". No matter how many notes he dropped, Bob gave my mentor his best and we grew to thoroughly enjoy Bob's stay with us because his love of the Guitar and the music of Almeida was thoroughly evident in his performance. I loved Bob's easy stage manner even though a few difficulties arose as some phrases escaped him. He was able to endear himself to us poking fun at his "Old gray hair he ain't what he used to be". But let me tell you that his tone was lovely and he had all the chops he needed to make these babies sing with love. Way to go BOB! We loved you buddy!

Our second performer, a student of Society President Dennis Turechek, **GIANCARLO SIDOLI** gave us a sweet program of Frescobaldi, or and Brouwer and once again showed us that he is a totally serious student of the Guitar and has all the skills to be an outstanding practitioner of our craft. He offered comments to the audience about each piece and forged his unique positive spin on each interpretation. Another fine job. This was his second year on stage and he came through again with a winning performance! Keep it up Giancarlo! Keep your eyes on this kid folks because he is on his way to becoming a very outstanding young artist!

**BRIAN GARDINER** played a couple of Waltzes by Tarrega and The "English Suite" by John Duarte which proved to be a nice change of mood and pace after the heavy Brouwer Elogio. Brian had a light interpretational touch to guide him through his stay with us. He was performing on a guitar he won at a previous Fall festival made by former Society president Bruce Walker constructed with maple sides and back and sounded as fine as each and every Walker I have heard over the years.

**DAVE RICHMOND** was up next playing a program of Music from Venezuela by Vicente-Sojo and Suite #1 by Bach. He mentioned that through some mix up his name didn't get on to the program. He chose the Sojo after hearing a performance by John Williams perform it on a recording. His performance of the five Venezuelan melodies was tender and sweet and the Bach was played with a commitment to keeping the essence of the movements in tact. Sometimes he may have lost a note here or there but each movement was very well played. Since he read the Bach from the score, a page turn here and there halted the festivities every so often but Dave forged ahead with the true guts of a seasoned performer. Smart contrasting choices well played Dave!

The ever positive **TOM RASELY** took the stage and introduced the crowd to all the activities for the weekend like the "Silent Auction", things for sale, upcoming events and introduced our next artist **MARK VOLKER** who informed us that his wife being pregnant ( 8 months ), could not perform with him as listed on the program, so he proceeded to perform his own composition "Triptych", composed of 3 parts. The musical language was attractive and beautifully played as it told an interesting musical story to the audience. I liked it and Mark played it with a lovely tone and flawless execution. Thanks for introducing us to your compositions Mark!

**TOM RASLEY** took the stage once more this time as the witty and masterful artist and once again showed us why he is acknowledged as such a superb artist as he shared several well known songs under the heading " Songs I Should Have Written" like "Over the Rainbow" and "Killing my Softly" ending with his own "Words Are Not Enough". He didn't even announce himself he just went into his lovely solo Guitar version of " Michelle". His easy laid back manner of performing just makes you feel really mellow and before concert time we spoke about how he had some work done on his Classical that made the "action" as easy as "butter" for the left hand. That easy action just made him glide through his portion of the day. GREAT STUFF TOM!

Next up was a special "**Meet the Composer**" workshop presented by a truly extraordinary artist, Pakistan born **MIR ALI** who simply dazzled us with his incredible artistry. Visit his website at [WWW.MIR-ALI.COM](http://WWW.MIR-ALI.COM) and every single word describing this special artist is absolutely true. I heard that the original choice the Society requested for this "Meet The Composer" slot had to pull out at the last minute and Mir was asked by that artist to replace him . Mir Ali stepped in to save the day and WHAT A SAVE!! This artist is one of the most gifted artists in the classical guitar world and I would hope that he has much more exposure to the whole classical guitar planet because he is so incredibly perfect! For his "Meet the Composer" workshop, he took us through the nuts and bolts of what he does on our instrument and he has quite an array of styles including music from North India, jazz and flamenco. One of his guitars had two "sitar" strings

to allow him to play in the North Indian style of improvisation supported by an "Electronic Drone" (4 strings). For his workshop, Mir requested that the small audience move up front so he could better share his information and informed us that he does a lot of these workshops and asked how many actual composers were on site and set the parameters for how he composed and what he wanted to accomplish for his hour with us. Born in Pakistan he has lived in Spain for several years assimilating the Gypsy culture of Spain. He mentioned that his afternoon performance will mirror his Spanish background. He told us that foremost in his mind when composing had to do with how the music sounds and feels. For the workshop he played a standard flamenco guitar and a special guitar made by Augustino Loprenzi which features two "sitar strings" (the 5th and 4th strings). This guitar with sound ports is called the "Nova Futura". He then played an example of how he uses the North Indian music tradition in his compositions. Before hand illuminating in extreme detail exactly how the music is structured, we, who were in attendance, were transfixed as his magical performance unfolded in all its complexities. I'm hungry for exceptional teaching like this and just "ate it up". Mir explained the various types of rhythms by singing and accenting each and every change in the composition. He asks himself in his composing "DO I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?". This man is exceptionally brilliant and is tremendously gifted in so many ways. He is totally involved in passionately making music and I could listen to him all day and night. He also spent some time showing us how he uses pulloffs and hammer ons with his left hand to develop a necessary part of his composition. This display just builds in intensity and complexity. W H E W ! He also mentioned how difficult it is to notate the improvisations and how many phone calls he would get from people wanting to decipher how to play his works correctly. He then went on to play a "Salsa" piece which had 4 parts (Originally composed for the Buffalo Guitar Quartet) and that was "SMOKING"!! He gave us many details of how he developed as a composer by studying the masters for details of how they thought - "getting into their heads". He said he composed "ALHAMBRA" a few years ago which he will be playing this afternoon at his special 1 hour concert to end the members portion of the concert day and spoke about his reservations of playing a "Spanish" composition in Spain when he was asked by the locals. He described for us the extremely lax attitude he encountered when he was studying in Spain. 8pm really means 10 pm and after playing a few hours, they partied till dawn on Spanish wines! . He continued giving us the background of the Flamenco techniques and "DUENDE" to ready us for the performance. He dazzled us once again with the extreme depth of his performance. It was as though he put his fist into the earth's core and pulled out all the depth, passion and pathos of the Spanish soul. Again referring to his concept of "Sound" as the main inspiration of composing his pieces, he always returned to the main question - "Do I Have Anything to Say"?. He then opened up the floor to questions which started off with why he uses a capo (To play in a different key). I asked about the drone box and the specially built guitar with the sitar strings and he showed us how careful you have to be when playing the 2 sitar strings. Others were interested in the special open sound holes on his guitar and what they bring to the listening experience. He mentioned Ruck and others who use "sound posts" in their construction. He also took time to mention how much PACO de LUCIA changed the world of flamenco with his introduction of jazz chords and then went on to play pieces in the "Traditional-Old style" and the present "Now" style developed by De Lucia and others in order to show us how flamenco has changed over the decades. I tell you if I had the bucks, I would pay him a good penny to have him spread his vast and unique knowledge. What a deep well of experience this great artist has!!!. One last interesting question was posed by Society President Dennis Turechek: "Why don't you play sitar like compositions on the sitar"?. The answer was that he is not a sitar player. He wants to "recreate the sound of the sitar by using the sitar strings".

We took a 1 hour lunch break and when we returned, one of the truly magnificent artists in the Upstate New York Area, my dear buddy **WILLIAM SIMCOE** in DUO mode with **ELISABETH WILLIAMS** on flute, played an exceptionally beautiful program of Latin American and Spanish compositions. WILLIAM SIMCOE is an exceptionally brilliant artist and I look forward to each and every time I can get to hear him because he is one of the finest examples of what an artist truly is! Anyone he works with is also an exceptional artist and whether playing solo or accompaniment, this man is an expert and music is so well and beautifully executed, you can lay back and rest assured of perfection. There is a glow in the eyes and smile of WILLIAM SIMCOE that tells you this man's each and every corpuscle contains "M U S I C". I love you BILL and hope that you continue to give us at least another 30 years of great performances! OH! I forgot to mention that his duo with ELISABETH WILLIAMS is called "SPIRAL TANGO" and I also forgot to mention that Elisabeth Williams is an exceptionally gifted artist in her own right and played like an angel! Beautiful tone and superior musicianship! WHAT A TEAM!!!

Brazilian virtuoso **EUGENIO REIS** offered an exceptional grouping of lovely and virtuosic pieces by Brazilian Artists like: Guiga, Jobim, Soarez, Gismonti, Paraiba, and Lobo. All played in cross-legged position. This young man is a true virtuoso and I believe this is either the 2nd or 3rd time on the Upstate Festival stage and he is a "MONSTER" guitarist and always gives an excellent performance. MUY OBRIGADO !!!

**FREDERIC J. HELLWITZ** played an exceptionally thoughtful set of Preludes and Etudes by Heitor Villa-Lobos imbuing them with probing interpretations and lovely tone. I spoke to him afterwards and applauded him for such

smart musical ideas. I always love to be at a concert that makes me look at pieces I know with a new slant on the interpretation. Villa-Lobos is not as popular as he once was so again it was a refreshing breeze to hear these works so beautifully interpreted. Thanks FREDERIC!

**PAUL SWEENEY** and **BARBARA KAUFMAN** on guitar and recorder gave an excellent grouping of works by John Dowland and Jacob van Eyck that brought us back a few hundred years into Elizabethan England. Perfectly performed and balanced volume between the instruments. What a true joy to Listen to .

The Great **SALVATORE SALVAGGIO** today played in duo with tenor **FREDERIC CHRISLIP** and again we visited the "MASTER" - JOHN DOWLAND in "SONGS from the First Book of Ayres". Just exceptionally beautiful music making by two remarkable artists. Sal, of course played his magnificent Lute and again there was a perfect balance between the two instruments. Each and every song was a gem!

Next Up was **ME** and I was in excellent form as I played a basically "JAZZ on the CLASSICAL" program dedicated to my 1st Guitar Teacher-Society President DENNIS TURECHEK. I also took time to acknowledge all of the great work of former Society President- in fact the 1st Guitar Society President - GAIL HAMILTON! Gail is a powerhouse and not only runs a horse ranch but just recently opened a laundry and I don't know where this woman gets her blood from! This great woman is an incredible human force and I admire her so much! She better not delete these words because she deserves a big hug and pat on her back for all she has done in all her endeavors. I especially chose my program for the love I have for my first guitar teacher- The present Guitar Society president DENNIS TURECHEK. Musically my most important mentor on the guitar was DENNIS and I owe my ability to perform several styles due to his outstanding teaching of me for several years. He is so incredibly sensitive to what the student needs! I have been so lucky to have him in my life! THANKS UNCLE DENNY!!!!. Getting back to my performance, I chose works by Reinhardt, Jobim, Ellington, Green and Rodgers and Hart- all jazz standards. During my performance, I noticed that a couple of folks quickly left the room as I was playing and I found out later that SAL SALVAGGIO had a heart attack right on the steps of the building. I found this out from Frederic J. Hellwitz who knew exactly what to do ( He is a doctor) and because of this, Sal was given immediate medical treatment and should make a good recovery. That shook me up for the rest of the weekend.

#### MIR ALI IN CONCERT!

For me to follow Sal and precede the magnificent MIR ALI was a great honor and Mir continued his mesmerizing stay with us by entering from the rear of the hall slowly walking up and playing a program of all originally composed works in the two main styles in which he is so exceptionally fluent: music of North India and flamenco! His slow walk to the concert stage opened with his 3 movement piece RAG KIRVANI where we got an ample chance to experience the magical bends of the 2 Sitar strings on his Guitar. Composed in 2004 it was a stunning entrance with such mesmerizing magic that I just put down one word : " W H E W " ! His next work brought us to southern Spain, the home of Flamenco with his thoroughly evocative "ALHAMBRA ". Earlier in his workshop at 11am, he broke down, for those in attendance, how he composed the various elements of this piece and we caught a little taste which whetted our appetite for the full performance here. It was supremely deep and probing! He decided to change the program at this point and played some Barrios, Merlin and Morel which further gave us the incredible depth of repertoire he has at his command. He finished with a Rumba by MONOLO SANLUCAR / ALI and an original Buleria he composed in 2006. Brilliant all the way!!! PERFECT MIR!!!

#### THE SEGOVIA ARCHIVE CONCERT BY MARK DELPRIORA

Our special guest artist this year is the Co-Chair of the Classical Guitar Department at the Manhattan School of Music, the TRIPLE THREAT (VIRTUOSO GUITARIST, GREAT COMPOSER and OUTSTANDING TEACHER ) **MARK DELPRIORA!** I have known Mark for a couple of decades and he is one of the finest artists in history and tonight he performed some of the great body of work in the SEGOVIA ARCHIVES! It was a thoroughly satisfying evening of works Segovia decided to put in his drawer and collect dust instead of performing them. Mark is such an exceptionally gifted artist who makes every piece he touches sing to the core. His tone is so full and round and his technique is razor sharp. On top of those two pluses is an exceptionally deep interpretational prowess second to none. At the Sunday morning after talk when his masterclass concluded, I and MIR ALI praised Mark for his exceptionally beautiful interpretations even when some of the pieces seemed to have not had much to say. Mark made the works live large with his excellent tone and probing musicality! The composers represented on the program were: Gaspar Cassado, Aloys Fornerod, Pierre-Octave Ferroud, Cyril Scott, Henri Martelli, Federico Moreno-Torroba and Vicente Arregui. Every single work sparkled and many times Marks exceptionally rich tone production and articulation

matched the juicy full sound of Maestro Segovia. Of course his instrument of choice - a ROBERT RUCK had a little to do with the incredible tone colors achieved all evening! Mark decided to read from the scores and in so doing, gave

the most accurate representation of each work to the core! I told him I wish I had the money to have him record the whole archive. It was a stunning event to have an evening of works we have never heard performed so perfectly! Thank you MARK for an incredible concert!

### MARK DELPRIORA IN MASTERCLASS MODE

The exceptionally gifted MARK DELPRIORA gave a Masterful Masterclass Sunday morning to 3 extremely lucky students. It was a compendium of such enormity garnered by an exceptional career that I don't quite know what the best format is to convey the great knowledge he shared with us. This newsletter was held up by me a little because this last bit of info about the masterclass was so meaty and chuck full of gourmet treats, I wanted to include every tidbit but that should be tackled in a separate piece so what I will do is to point out the main instructional comments from the two hour masterclass.

How the shape of the nail determines the tone. He had to work with one student 1st in showing him how to file his nails because the student was presenting a "Nasty" abrasive naily sound due to poor nail care. This was coupled with a tutorial on how to produce effective free and rest strokes coming from the knuckle as the main source of power. This student was also taught how to play chromatic octaves (and their permutations) in the 1st position to secure accuracy and pinpoint technical command in note articulation. He was also shown how to relax and how to naturally position the hand for ease of execution. It was also mentioned to check out the great performance videos of John Williams and Julian Bream as both have great close ups of their right hands which were great models of note execution. A topic that was also interesting was when so many guitarists tackle their practice, they seem to want to go for speed 1st instead of the Quality of their sound, dynamics or voicing (bringing out a particular note in a chord). He also spoke about the time period in his learning process when he was taught by the famous BLAIN BROTHERS-ROLANDO and ABERT VLADES BLAIN. They taught a dynasty of players including the great MICHAEL NEWMAN.

We had an exceptional tutorial on the ROMANTIC PERFORMANCE STYLE as espoused by Tarrega, Pujol and Segovia. During the romantic era, fingering choices and personal interpretations were the law. It was noted that an earlier student played variations by Segovia (Frescobaldi) in which Segovia left out a variation. It was mentioned how even Tarrega in the violin piece by ALARD left out most of the piece. We, in fact had a great talk on how Tarrega and his style asked for less rest strokes and wanted to make you hear no difference between the rest or free stroke! Pujol was a devotee of playing with the flesh - NO NAILS! He was going for purity of tone! There were other great points brought out that must be mentioned. Using the 5th Etude of Villa-Lobos, Mark showed how he used different volume levels to bring out the three voices in this Etude and how exercises in "voicing" develops such sensitive control. The great topic of "VIBRATO" was given a great going over and he showed how his use of vibrato when studying violin has helped his "guitar vibrato prowess". That in itself requires a separate write up! Mir Ali was in the audience and with his probing questions forced an excellent dialogue on the topic of Vibrato length and intensity!

Well folks, there you have it! I really enjoyed spending the extra time on this year's great festival! I learned so much from both Mir and Mark and hope that this will encourage people to better attend this great Festival. There is so much incredible thought done to put this lovely weekend together and there should really be more people in those seats. The Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York is a "CLASS ACT"! I throw a big hug around each and every person working in this Society and so should you!!! Better, please come out and experience it yourself next year! You will not be disappointed because there will be so much great music performed by so many loving artists all day and night and you may even get a chance to catch a great gift if they have the silent auction again!

Don Witter, Jr.