

❖ Classical Guitar Society of Washington, D.C. ❖

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◆ **May Program**

David Allen Coester Does Britain

British composers William Walton and Richard Rodney Bennett are featured on the guitar society program for May by our performing artist, **David Allen Coester**. Coester is a native of Long Island who was brought up in northern Virginia and is now living in New York City. He first began playing the guitar in a rock band while he was in high school. A course in guitar technique at Northern Virginia Community College turned him firmly in the direction of classical guitar instead, and he enrolled in New York's Manhattan School of Music in 1985 as a scholarship student. In addition to playing several public recitals there, Coester was a finalist in the school's Concerto Competition. Having already earned his undergraduate degree, he was awarded the Master of Music degree in 1991.

Mr. Coester has performed chiefly in New York City, in his native state of Virginia, and on Long Island. In 1989 he won a scholarship to the Bowdoin College Summer Festival. Though he plays a wide repertoire, beginning with the 15th- and 16th century Spanish lutenists and vihuelists, he particularly specializes in Johann Sebastian Bach and in contemporary composers, among them Benjamin Britten, Alan Rawsthorne, Jose Ardevol, and Michael Tippett.

Mr. Coester's recent recitals have included performances in
(See Coester, page 6)



KEVIN VIGIL, Guitar

**Kevin Vigil, President of the
Classical Guitar Society of
Washington, D.C., for 1994-96.**

Calendar of Events

May 6 - Jerald Harscher and Kevin Vigil, 7:30 p.m. at Northern Virginia Community College--Manassas Campus, Room 214. Free.
Information: (703) 257-6600.

May 7 - Guitar Society Coffeeshouse featuring Jerald Harscher (professor at Roger Williams College), 1:00 p.m. at the Jasmine Cafe, 1633A Washington Plaza, Reston, Virginia. Reservations: (703) 471-9114.

(See Calendar, page 6)

◆ **June Program**

Trio Con Brio's Debut Performance

The guitar society proudly presents **Trio Con Brio** for its June program.. This trio is made up of three members of the United States Army Band (Pershing's Own) who justformed the ensemble in January of this year. The individuals that make up this "hot" new trio are **Jim Roberts on guitar, Charlotte Lucy-Roberts on cello and Laura Knutson on violin**.

Jim Roberts studied guitar at Berklee before joining the United States Army Blues Band thirteen years ago. He is a great jazz player and very accomplished as a classical guitarist. He is largely self-taught on the classical guitar, but he has taken instruction from Benjamin Verdery, Jeffrey Meyeriecks and Glenn Caluda. Not only is Jim comfortable playing both classical and jazz guitar, but he is also a great arranger.

(See Trio, page 6)

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President's Address
New Directions
for the Guitar
Society

by Kevin Vigil

Before moving to this area three and a half years ago, I was an active member of the Connecticut Classical Guitar Society. This organization brought performers such as Manuel Barrueco, David Tannenbaum, Kuzuhito Yamashita, Paul O'Dette, Benjamin Verdery and many more during the two years I was a member. These performers also gave masterclasses. People would come from all over New England for these and many other events. An average concert turn-out was somewhere between 300-500 people. The CCGS also presented concerts by local performers, presented many workshops and established a thriving outreach program.

There are many other large guitar societies in this country, including: Baltimore, Minnesota, Dallas, St. Louis, Seattle, Denver and several others. The Classical Guitar Society of Washington, D.C., has been in the past and has the potential to again be a strong, thriving organization that will unite the guitar community in our area.

The second time I met John Marlow, we spoke of the absence of a classical guitar society in Washington. He gave me some history of the success and failures of the past organizations. He suggested that I consider starting something up. Shortly after, I heard that Morey Rothberg had started a society. The first time I attended the new society's gathering was as a performer. There were about 30 or so people present (many of whom were mystudents). In the past two years, the present guitar society has grown from a small handful to a membership of about 60.

There are many plans that we have in

store over the next year. Two of these are immediate and others are long term. As of our next meeting, we are inviting all who are interested in a relaxed low-pressure performing opportunity to show up an hour before the planned program (1 p.m.). It has been our experience that many people will bring their guitars to play after the planned program, but are a little intimidated at the thought of following Paco de Malaga or one of our other past performers. If you don't feel like performing before the planned program, feel free to come early and listen.

The other immediate plan for the guitar society is to start a Coffee House Series beginning in May. We will choose a Cafe/Coffee House once a month to feature a local guitarist/s while those who attend eat and socialize to the music we all love to hear. The performer will be asked to play for tips only, so we encourage generosity from our membership. Behind the guitarist, we will display a sign that will read "Presented by the Classical Guitar Society of Washington, D.C." Not only will this be a fun outing for the membership, but it will give the society exposure and will patronize a local business. See the *Calendar of Events* for this issue.

Our long term plans include bringing "big name" and unknown, "up and coming" artists to perform and give masterclasses, establishing outreach programs, scholarships and providing performance opportunities for those seeking them. We would like to maintain a sense of community by having membership concerts and even establish a guitar society ensemble.

It goes without saying that in order for us to bring these wonderful events to life, we need money. At this time, we are going through the process of becoming incorporated and gaining non-profit status. This should become a reality by Fall of this year. Our current balance is in the neighborhood of \$750. Some of this money will be spent on the

applications to gain non-profit status. It takes money to sponsor concerts and it takes money to provide a monthly meeting place.

I am asking for members of the guitar society to extend your membership an additional year and I am asking non-members to join. With a membership fee of \$12, you will receive our bi-monthly newsletter and can attend, at no cost, twelve performance meetings a year.

Our newsletter will keep you up to date on all the guitar activities in the area and will feature articles by local contributors. Our performance meetings have featured such artists as John Marlow, Larry Snitzler, John Stover, Paco de Malaga, myself and many others. For upcoming activities, see our *Calendar of Events*.

This is a great time to be a member of the guitar society. It is time for all classical guitarists in our area to know that the Classical Guitar Society of Washington, D.C., is here and it is growing to meet their needs for performance, networking, learning and experiencing the guitar. It is time for the professionals, amateurs and guitar music lovers of this community to unite and bring the awareness of our art to the greater Washington metropolitan area.

Please take this moment to either extend your membership an additional year or to join the guitar society for one or two years. All other donations will be much appreciated, but keep in mind that we are not yet a non-profit organization and your donation is not tax-deductible.

Thank you for reading this long-winded address and I look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Attention classical guitar enthusiasts!
 Contribute an article to this newsletter.
 Publisher's address is on page 5.

Want to join a guitar ensemble? Call Dennis Utterback at (301) 460-6297.

Point of View

The 1993 GFA Festival by Don Sauter

The next Guitar Foundation of America festival is being held in Quebec and is coming up fast -- mid-July, 1994. If you've never been to a guitar festival, you might get some idea of the grand time to be had from these personal memories of last year's festival in Buffalo.

David Russell's masterclass was great, as always. His tips on the musical interpretation of a piece seem so perfect and logical that you'll wonder why you don't think of such "obvious" things when you play. (The fact of the matter is, though, that his performance genius is reserved for a miniscule fraction of the human race.) Two pointers he gave rang a bell with me. He told one guy to leave out a note that was causing problems and ruining the flow of a piece. "Nobody'll notice!" Another one I liked, but which surprised me a bit coming from a world class guitarist, was his advice to adjust some fingerings to get the stronger 2 and 3 fingers in position for some grace notes rather than the indicated fingers 3 and 4. (Hey, I've been doing that for years!) In fact, David could play it just fine with 3 and 4, but this nod to the rest of humanity was very kind of him. Regarding the glissando, David said to lean the finger over to avoid using the calloused part of the tip. When a student was having intonation problems with notes above the 12th fret, David suggested masking it with vibrato. String players do it *all* the time!

Roberto Ausssel's master class was memorable for his quote, "The guitar is a hard instrument. We can play good... but it's not enough!" He went on to explain how every element of the music - every voice, every note, every rest, every *everything* - must be carefully considered. His concert the next evening put into practice everything he said.

His control over the instrument and the music was astonishing. He received the only standing ovation of the festival (and I know who started it.)

Probably my least favorite concert was the one by the Baltimore Consort. They are certainly excellent musicians, but I don't know what to make of their mixture of authentic Renaissance instruments with non-authentic performance. In some cases, such as when they mimicked a rock group, they were just hamming it up for laughs. Ok, I'll go along with that. But in a lot of the other pieces, I doubt the ensemble was realistic, such as combining lute and cittern, or the playing styles authentic, such as the folky strumming of the lute and the frequent use of viols thrown over the right leg, Glen Campbell fashion, and plucked instead of bowed. This brings to my mind guitar arrangements of Mudarra's "Ludovica" Fantasia that observe the vihuela tuning (3rd string to F#), but then ignore completely the composer's fingerings, using an anachronistic cross-string fingering instead. I don't get it.

John Duarte wrote the set piece, "Danserie," for the competition. The first movement depicts a guitar lesson wherein the teacher demonstrates and the student makes a bumbling attempt to copy. Some of the contestants worked hilarious theatrics into their performances - awful playing positions, horrible tone, pained scrutiny of the sheet music, scratched heads, disgusted expressions, etc. One poor "pupil" even lost his grip on the guitar, but luckily made a desperation catch with his knees.

The winner of the competition was Kevin Gallagher. His performance contained some real thrills, like the 32nd note runs in a Legnani caprice (no. 36, I think) and the most amazingly powerful, artificial harmonics I have ever heard (in "Cordoba" by Albeniz.) However, he busted my heart with a

greased lightning run-through of the fugue from Bach's violin sonata in C. Why do classical musicians always have to play so fast? At this festival, the Chaconne got the same business from another performer. Does anybody agree that for some pieces it wouldn't hurt to actually let the notes sink in?

The concert given by last year's winner, Jason Vieaux, was one of this festival's highlights. Everybody who heard it was abuzz. The program notes say he is only 19 years old, but we heard a matured artist. Besides his playing, the program itself (Morel, Regondi, Bach, Ponce and Pujol) was a delight.

My personal favorite to win the competition this year was the same as my favorite last year. His name is Andrew Zohn, and I believe him to be a very natural, classy player. He placed 3rd both times, but, given the level of competition, making the finals 2 years in a row is no small feat. I predict you'll be hearing from him.

In a guitar journal in recent years someone proposed a method similar to that used by Toastmasters for judging competitions. It made complete sense to me. I'm sure that the GFA does not use it, and it worries me a little to think that the final decision may be a function of one or several judges' assertiveness. There should be no need for deliberation -- just a final tallying of the judges' ballots.

One more thought on the competition - why not put out a "hat" for no-pressure, free-will contributions to be divided equally by the four finalists? The cash prizes offered by the GFA are not very large. The finalists are all very deserving. You know they worked like demons to get to that point.

And the competition finals themselves are great entertainment.

There was a video tribute to Andres Segovia in which we saw Segovia (See GFA, page 4)

(GFA Festival, from page 3)

angrily dismiss a student from the 1986 USC master class, and then patch things up a few days later after the student had spent two sleepless nights. A festival highlight was seeing Segovia on a 1954 Ed Sullivan show. Ed introduced him as, "one of the great names in American music." (As Montgomery Burns said in one "Simpsons" episode, "What *could* old Ed have been thinking??") The first piece Segovia played was Villa-Lobos' Etude No. 1. The audience clapped prematurely and Segovia abandoned the end of the piece. He gave a little dismissive wave of his hand -- quite funny.

Jim Smith, who presented this video tribute, also had anecdotes of Segovia at Disneyland, being photographed with Shamu the whale, watching fireworks, and eating at McDonald's, etc. Jim wants to produce a video of highlights of Segovia's last USC master class. If and when he does, here's two cents from me - provide subtitles for Segovia's spoken word.

The sheet music vendors, in general, did not offer special deals at the festival. Dunno why I think they should - they just should, that's all. One exception was Willis Music, which was selling (giving away?) its editions for \$1 or \$2. Here's a quickie review of their edition of Bach's Prelude No. 1 from "The Well-Tempered Clavier", transcribed by Giovanni DeChiaro. This is probably the best of the several versions I've seen. It's in D and all of the bass notes can be sustained. Moreover, it avoids almost completely the playing of consecutive notes on the same string, thereby maintaining the essence of the piece - arpeggiation.

Another edition I bought was the collected guitar duos of Johann Kaspar Mertz. I mention this because of a bizarre discovery. You know that famous Tarantella by Mertz? The one edited and published by Sophocles Papas, for instance? It's really just the Guitar 1 part of a duet!

Trivia quiz: What is the question most frequently asked of Bill Bay, the guy behind the table of Mel Bay publications? Answer: Is there *really* a Mel Bay? (A: Yes, it's his father.)

One of my favorite lectures was Matanya Ophee's talk on Andrei Sychra, the Russian 7-string guitarist who was a contemporary of Sor and Giuliani. Sychra started a guitar journal in 1802. He engraved all of his own music - over a 1000 pieces. The Russian 7-stringers transcribed the 6-string music of Carulli, etc., for their instrument. One contribution of the Russian guitarists may have been slurred runs, which Sor used in his music only after returning from Russia. Matanya verified my suspicion that one small problem of transcribing music from the 7-string guitar is its "denser" chords owing to the instrument being tuned in 3rds. The solution is to simply redistribute the notes of the chord.

Also, since it is tuned to a major chord, some pieces written for it make use of full chords of natural harmonics. Matanya simply skips over these sorts of pieces when making transcriptions - "There are plenty of other songs to do." He very generously gave us all an etude by Sychra recently transcribed by him.

Another favorite talk was by Jan de Kloe on 9 Haydn guitar duets transcribed by Francois de Fossa. This 94-page work came to light only fairly recently and only one copy is known to exist. De Fossa used material from Haydn string quartets, symphonies and a piano sonata, plus some material which is doubted to be by Haydn at all (even though the sheet music cover says "HAYDN" as big as life. What can you trust?) However, de Fossa didn't work directly from the symphonic scores; he used string quartet arrangements of the Haydn symphonies made by Hummel. All this musicological sleuthing was quite fascinating. Jan prepared a modern edition of the work for Editions Orphee. I would have rather seen it published in "edited facsimile" form

(with touch-ups where needed, measures numbered, mistakes corrected, etc.) I find facsimiles make for a more "authentic" -- and, therefore, more fun -- playing experience. Here's a fun fact (astound your friends!): Haydn *never* used the tempo designation "Moderato".

As is usually the case, my biggest disappointment with the festival was the lack of opportunity to actually *play* guitar. The events ran from 8:30 a.m. to about 10:30 p.m. every day. More specifically, I regret the lack of ensemble playing (and this with an ensemble nut from our own area in attendance!) My suggestion to festival organizers is to reserve a music room for drop-in guitar ensembles -- if not all day, at least during the lunch and dinner breaks. It would also be a big help if there were a guitar checking facility so that a participant doesn't have to lug his guitar around all day.

I appreciate that everything is "easier said than done," and the amount of work that the organizers do is almost unimaginable. Thanks, Joanne Castellani and Michael Andriaccio for a great festival!

Oh yeah, the hors d'oeuvres at the opening and closing receptions were very tasty. Now aren't you sorry you didn't go?

Note to Members: Extend your membership for an additional year and help the guitar society grow! Use the application form on page 8.

Election Results

At our March meeting, Kevin Vigil was elected president of the guitar society for 1994-96, and Wayne Cutrell was elected treasurer for the same period. Jad Azkoul has been appointed to the guitar society executive board. The following week, the officers met to plan future activities. Watch for further details. Congratulations to Kevin, Wayne, and Jad!

Playing Without Pain-II

by Alicia Kopfstien-Penk

In last month's newsletter, I discussed a number of proven techniques for reducing stress and the possibility of injury while playing the classical guitar. Here is some additional information taken from my interview with Dr. Richard Norris, Director of the new National Performing Arts Medical Center in Bethesda (his suggestions are indicated below by the initials RN), my article on a lecture by Janet Lisak, then Director of Occupational Therapy at Good Samaritan Hospital in Baltimore (JL), and my years of playing and teaching (AKP). The following comments assume a standard classical guitar sitting position.

1) Minimize the physical stress on the body caused by the sitting position. The classical sitting position is the best for playing complicated music for a number of reasons --- among them, it allows you to keep your left wrist relatively straight. But the position itself can cause other problems with the back, shoulders or arms. Raise the guitar into playing position with some gadget designed for the purpose such as an A-frame or Guitar Rest. If you want to see if such a device is worth the money, practice with a towel roll. Fold a towel in half lengthwise, tightly roll it up, and wrap it in masking tape. (JL, RN, AKP)

2) Vary your practice session by alternating musically demanding pieces with technically demanding pieces, or alternate pieces that challenge the left hand with those that challenge the right.

You'll find the quality and efficiency of your practice improves with variety rather than with a single-minded attack on one piece. Besides, variety is more interesting! (JL)

Bring your guitar to the next society meeting at 1:00 for impromptu performances.

4) Create a good practice environment for yourself and regularly practice there. Your practice area should have a comfortable chair, music stand, footstool, enough light, enough room to move easily and good ventilation.

(JL) If you maintain a specific place for only practicing, when you sit there your mind will immediately be more prepared to work. (AKP from *Psychology Today*)

5) Maintain good posture. Bad posture results in nerve compression, therefore reduced strength and muscular control. Sit up relatively straight but not rigid and particularly open the front of the body (don't slump or hunch over). If your lower back gives you trouble, try an A-frame or similar device and/or brace the center of the lower back against the chair for practice sessions with a towel roll, pillows tied to the chair or an orthopedic back support. If you have trouble with the concept of good posture, investigate yoga or Alexander Technique. (JL)

6) Do stretches for the hands, arms and thighs. For specific exercises see: John Duarte, *The Guitarist's Hands* (I haven't seen the book); E. Lind, *Exercises for Musicians*; M. Raskin, *Isometrics for Guitarists*, all available from Guitar Solo; Aaron Shearer, *Learning the Classical Guitar*; or Alicia Kopfstien-Penk, "Avoiding Overuse Syndrome," *Soundboard Magazine*, Volume XIX, No's. 1 & 2, Spring and Summer, 1992.

7) Make sure the muscles are warmed up before stretching or playing strenuously. The purpose of warming up is to alert the body part that there will be an increased demand. The body then will supply that area with more blood. Stretching a cold muscle tears muscle fiber and will cause bleeding into the tissue.

8) Consider placing a folded cloth between your right forearm and the lower bout of the guitar. In the classical playing position, that sharp position, that sharp edge bites into the

forearm and impinges on the very muscles that are trying to work quickly. Some builders are now making guitars with a beveled edge on the bass lower bout, which is incredibly comfortable! (RN)

If you have an injury, Dr. Richard Norris, Director of the new National Arts Medicine Center, specializes in performer's injuries and is a guitarist himself. His phone is (301)654-9160.

If you have any questions about this article, please feel free to call me at (301)564-1467.

Alicia Kopfstien-Penk has taught guitar and various music courses at the Annandale Campus of Northern Virginia Community College for nearly 15 years. Alicia has B.M. and M.A. degrees in music from American University and has nearly completed her doctorate at Catholic University. In addition to a busy teaching and performing schedule, she has published articles in *Classical Guitar*, *Guitar Review* and *Soundboard* about guitar technique.

SOCIETY OFFICERS

The Classical Guitar Society of Washington, D.C.
 President: Kevin Vigil, (703) 516-9745
 Vice-President: Steven Seidenman
 Secretary: Maurice Sanders
 Treasurer: Wayne Cutrell
 Editors: Morey Rothberg and Steven Seidenman
 Publisher: Morey Rothberg

Articles and announcements relating to the classical guitar should be sent to the Publisher, Classical Guitar Society of Washington, D.C., 1001 Spring Street, No. 726, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

This is the last issue of the guitar society newsletter for 1993-94, so we extend out thanks to the Montgomery County Public Library system, our performing artists, society officers, and everyone who helped make this year so successful. See you in the fall!

(Trio, from page 1)

Charlotte Lucy-Roberts received her performance degree from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1984. Since that time she has been playing in the Richmond Symphony Orchestra. Among her many credits, she has performed at the Spoleto and Aims Festivals and is on the faculty of Mary Washington College. Ms. Lucy-Roberts joined the United States Army Orchestra in 1991.

Laura Knutson received her B.M. at the Eastman School of Music and her M.M. from Northern Illinois University. She has performed at the Spoleto Festival in 1986 and again in 1987. Ms. Knutson joined the United States Army Orchestra in 1990.

It is not that often that we get to hear guitar in combination with other instruments. The guitar society is honored to be able to present Trio Con Brio. They will be performing works by Giuliani and many arrangements by Jim Roberts.

**A Little Bit of Heritage
by Steven Seidenman**

Has anyone ever wondered whether among all the Segovia recordings there might exist that of a live performance? Has anyone familiar with any of his recordings but who had not had the good fortune to attend a live Segovia concert ever wondered how might compare to them? Or has anyone who has seen him perform life ever wished to possess a momento of such an occasion in the form of a sound recording?

If so, their answer has arrived. The Heritage label released a pair of CD's last year to commemorate the Segovia centenary. They are taken from televised performances on file in their archives. In this issue, I will focus on the first of the pair, *Guitar Recital, 1968* (Heritage Records, ERM-119). What one hears on this CD is both fascinating and startling. It includes four samplings from Segovia's relatively early period dating back to

the 50's; the rest is taken from a televised recital he gave when he was almost eighty.

In the former, one hears the stupendous brilliance of his earlier period, and while rife with unrivalled virtuosity, it occasionally lacks the "tidiness" one would hope for. The best part of this recording is the Ponce "Rondo" and "Cancion" movements from the Sonata No. 3, and the Albeniz "Sevilla," the latter remarkably vibrant and tune ful, and implementive of much of what made his first recording of the piece the best. The rest of the album is what one would more typically associate with the Segovia of the final two decades of his life: a bit more relaxed, seasoned, in short, more dignified. The sound he produces is unique, exemplary.

One conspicuous blemish which was captured for posterity occurred when he had to re-start a piece after a few bars due to a momentary memory lapse (for the benefit of prospective listeners, I will allow them the joy of discovering on their own which piece it was); once re-begun, however, it becomes one of the finest recordings of the piece, even among his own recordings of it.

His version of the Sor Rondo incorporates a lightheadedness and contrapuntal clarity facilitated through extensive playing hear the bridge of the guitar; a much more convincing rendition than his studio recording, musically speaking.

He goes on to play Tansman, more Ponce and Albeniz, the concludes with a Sor Minuet and a Villa-Lobos Etude. Among the most delightful pieces on the album, one not too frequently performed, is the Weiss "Tombeau sur la Morte de Comte Logy.: Given the control and sensitivity of this performance, it is regrettable that Segovia did not play more Baroque music, notwithstanding all his stylistic idiosyncrasies, which are far outweighed by his artistic virtues. The final selection on the disc is the Villa-Lobos Etude No. 1. There are several fine recordings of this

ever-popular piece; Segovia himself made at least two. This rendition outdoes them all. His ease of execution, his control of phrasing, and his crystalline sound quality of jewel-like perfection make most other versions I've heard pale by comparison. After listening to such a performance, one better understands why Segovia was best left alone to make his own rules. The disc actually begins with the same piece, from the 50's recital.. What an appropriate one with, all the more easily to compare side by side both ends of Segovia's expressive spectrum.

(Coester, from page 1)

Washington, D.C., at American University and the Corcoran Gallery of Art and on the Oyster Bay Distinguished Artists Series on Long Island. Performances during the 1993-94 Season include appearances at Long Island University and Concordia College and a recital of 20th-century British music for the Festival of English Music at Lincoln Center's Bruno Walter Auditorium. In 1992 he was an invited participant to the Rome Festival. Mr Coester teaches privately in New York City.

In addition to performing compositions by Walton and Bennett, Coester plans to include works by Manuel Ponce and J. S. Bach for his guitar society program.

(Calendar, from page 1)

May 14 - David Allen Coester, 2:00 p.m. at the Little Falls Public Library, 5501 Massachusetts Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland. FREE. Information: (703) 516-9745. Informal playing, 1:00 p.m.

May 21 - Informal Guitar Society Ensemble Playing Session, 1:00 p.m. Information: (301) 460-6297.

June 11 - Trio Con Brio, 2:00 p.m. at the Little Falls Public Library, 5501 Massachusetts Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland. FREE. Information: (703) 516-9745. Informal playing, 1:00 p.m.