
Washington Guitar Society



No. 26

May/June 1996

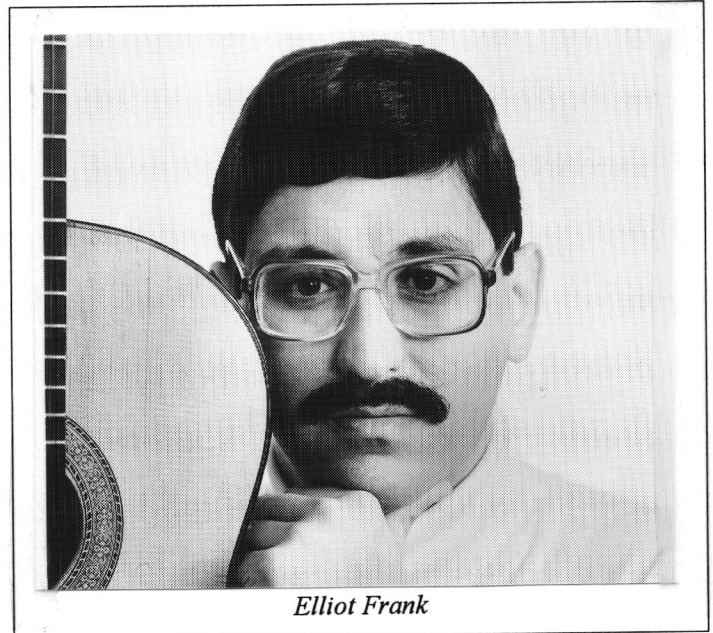
ELLIOT FRANK WRAPS UP THE WGS SEASON

The Washington Guitar Society will be wrapping up its 1995-96 season with a performance by Elliot Frank on Friday, May 17 at 8 pm at the Dorchester Tower Rooftop Garden. Dr. Frank's recital will be the last in a series of seven concerts that the WGS has presented in conjunction with the Dorchester Towers. Previous performers in this series have been: Scott Tennant, Ignacio Rodes, The Alexandria Guitar Quartet, Jason Vieaux, Duo Firenze (Robert Trent and Pamela Swenson Trent) and William Feasley.

Elliot Frank began his study of the guitar at the age of 19 in Atlanta under the tutelage of Charles Duncan. Despite this late beginning, he progressed quickly and became the first guitarist to receive an Atlanta Music Club scholarship at their annual auditions. Dr. Frank received the first Bachelor's Degree in guitar performance to be awarded by the University of Georgia where he studied with John Sutherland. He was subsequently awarded a grant by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for further study in Spain with José Tomas. He has also performed in master classes with John Marlow, David Russell, Pepe Romero, Oscar Ghiglia, and Manuel Barrueco.

After his return to the U.S., Dr. Frank went on to earn his Master's Degree in performance at Southern Methodist University under the direction of Robert Guthrie. During this time, he served as Artist-in-Residence for the city of Dallas. He recently earned the Doctor of Music degree in guitar performance at Florida State University where he studied under the direction of noted pedagogue Bruce Holzman and served as his teaching assistant.

Dr. Frank has also participated in North Carolina's Visiting Artist Program. He has performed Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* as a featured soloist with the North Carolina Symphony. He has appeared in solo recitals for the Dallas Guitar Society, the Piedmont Guitar Society, the Richmond Classic Guitar Society, the Museum of Colonial Art in Caracas, and at the National Guitar Institute in New York. He is an authority on Latin American guitar music and has performed lecture/recitals pertaining to the music of Antonio Lauro for the Guitar Foundation of America at international festivals in Pasadena and New Orleans. He is a prize winner in two international competitions, the Concurso Internacional de la Casa de España in San Juan, and the Concurso Internacional de Guitarra, "Alirio Diaz," in Caracas.



Elliot Frank

Dr. Frank was selected to initiate the guitar studies program for East Carolina University and is currently teaching there in addition to maintaining an active concert schedule. His students have earned awards on the state, regional, and national levels, including national first prize of the Music Teacher's National Association Wurlitzer Young Artist Competition. Dr. Frank is also a founding member of the North Carolina Guitar Quartet, the only professional ensemble of its type in the Southeast.

Elliot Frank's recital should prove to make a very enjoyable evening of great music by a great artist. There will be a "meet the artist" reception after the performance. For additional information, see the calendar of events in this issue.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This has been a very exciting season for the WGS. This is the first season that we planned a year in advance. Previous to this, we were planning them one at a time to prevent losing money. With only one concert remaining, we have lost about \$250 on the entire season. This was due to poor weather conditions in February. I would consider this season a success. \$250 is not a lot to lose on a series of seven concerts; we will simply avoid presenting anything in February next season. I would like to encourage everyone to come out to our closing concert with Elliot Frank on May 17. Not only would your presence insure that we don't lose any more money, but it will be a good time for all. Start spreading the word now and make plans to attend;

I would love to see you there!

In the last newsletter, we announced that the membership directory would be mailed with this newsletter. We will be mailing it separately. Our secretary has decided that doing the mailing list in addition to the newsletter is just too much work for the time that he has. This is understandable, but it means that the directory will be slightly delayed. We are converting the list to a new system and that will take another couple of weeks. You can look forward to your directory then. I apologize for the delay.

I would also like to point out that an organization like the WGS depends greatly on those who are willing to help. I would like to thank the following people for making the WGS what it is: Don Sauter, Sean Dodson, Tim Evans, Stuart Paine, Lee Becky, Mike Davis, Jeff Baker, Steve Seidenman, Beverly Ross, Debbie Bard, Michael Bard and Rob Nathan. These are the behind the scenes people who make our newsletter and our concerts turn out the way they do. If I have forgotten anybody, I sincerely apologize and will print your name in big letters next issue.

Kevin Vigil

GWU STUDENTS PERFORM FOR WGS Saturday, May 4, 1996

The Washington Guitar Society is very pleased and proud to present guitar students from George Washington University under the direction of Myrna Sislen.

George Washington University has a very active guitar department. There are close to 100 guitar students, including guitar majors, minors and general university students who study guitar as an elective.

The GWU Guitar Ensemble has been performing for the last seven years. Under the direction of Professor Myrna Sislen, the group (which has had as many as 12 members) has appeared at UDC, The Burke Middle School in Fairfax and The Marvin Theatre on the GWU Campus. Their repertoire ranges from Vivaldi to Piazzola. For the performance on May 4, the GWU Guitar Ensemble will pay tribute to Laurindo Almeida by playing his *Españoleta de Camera*.

The GWU Guitar Ensemble is open to all guitarists in our community and anyone interested in joining should contact Myrna Sislen at (202) 994-6245.

Also performing on May 4 will be GWU seniors Omar Kabbarah playing Ponce's *Sonatina Meridional*, Jon Kim playing Albeniz' *Granada* and Scott Gruber playing the *Choros I* by Villa-Lobos. In addition to the current GWU students, we will have alumni Lee Becky and Mike Perez on our program. Lee is becoming very well known in our area and Mike is one of the best flamenco

players in Washington.

This presentation will take place on Saturday, May 4 at 2 p.m. at the Little Falls Public Library. See the Calendar of Events for specific information. Come on out and support these fine students and their teacher.



GWU Guitar Ensemble

A NEW HOME FOR THE WGS at the Washington Conservatory of Music

As of Saturday, July 13, 1996, the Washington Guitar Society's monthly programs will be taking place at the Washington Conservatory of Music. These meetings will take place on the second Saturday of each month. Having one location and a set day will make remembering meetings very easy.

The Washington Conservatory is housed in the Briggs Memorial Church 5144 Massachusetts Avenue in Bethesda, MD. It is about one mile north of American University and about 1 mile south of the Little Falls Public Library (where we have met before). The programs will take place in a chapel that seats about 150 people and is complete with a stage and the perfect amount of reverb. The listening environment will be a big improvement over the public library system.

THE FIRST MEETING ON JULY 13 featuring a Guitar Ensemble Session with Fred Wilchek

The first meeting on July 13 will feature a guitar ensemble session led by WGS member Fred Wilchek who is on the faculty of the Washington Conservatory. Fred will be directing two guitar ensembles in the Fall. One will be a Classical Guitar Ensemble and the other will be an Electric Guitar Ensemble. Both will be offered through the Washington Conservatory. This session is free and all are

welcome to participate. This event will hopefully encourage people to sign up for one of Fred's ensembles in the Fall.

If you would like to participate in this ensemble session you can pick up music at the next two WGS meetings or by mail from Fred Wilchek at (301)445-7726.

DUO FIRENZE

March 15, 1996

The early 19th century guitar is not the instrument we know today. Some might say that's just as well, but the performance by Duo Firenze March 15 showed that the instrument was more than adequate when played as it was intended to be played.

The duo, Robert Trent on early 19th century guitar, and Pamela Swenson Trent on fortepiano (a predecessor of today's pianoforte) plucked a number of pieces from the 19th century repertoire and performed them in the proper setting: an intimate room.

Trent's instrument could have been snatched from an engraving with its small body, narrow neck, sharp waist, and mustachioed bridge. While the instrument is about 2/3 the size of today's guitar, it projected well and had a wonderful range of color, which Robert used to the music's advantage. Despite its size, it was not drowned out by the fortepiano and the two artists achieved a fine balance in their interpretations.

The fortepiano is built very much like a harpsichord. It lacks the rigid iron frame of today's piano, and is much lighter as a result. Because its strings are not strung as tightly, its dynamic range is different than the piano's. It is capable of a very delicate tone.

Ernest Legouve is quoted in Frederic Grunfeld's "The Art and Times of The Guitar" saying of his friend Berlioz, "The guitar embodied all instruments to him." The great romantic composer apparently found the small, narrow waisted instrument of his time capable of evoking any sound made by any instrument in the orchestra. The Duo Firenze concert illustrated that 19th century instruments in capable hands can produce a beautiful sound, elaborate tonal texture, and ravishing dynamics.

I was inspired. The next day, after helping move the fortepiano from the concert parlor into a van, I spent the afternoon playing Giuliani, Carcassi, Aguado, and Sor on my own anonymously made 19th century parlor guitar.

Duo Firenze will be playing at a number of places on the east coast this spring. Catch them if you missed this concert.

Michael Davis

DUO BOZZA Simply Delightful!

On Wednesday, March 27, the International Artists Alliance presented Duo Bozza (flute/guitar) in a recital at the Dorchester Tower Rooftop Garden. This duo from Germany consists of Andreas Evers on flute and Stephan Schäfer on guitar.

From the moment the first notes sounded and the last ones died away, their performance was simply delightful. Nothing was too tense, strained or too difficult and everything was immaculate. Their ensemble revealed the fact that they have been playing together for several years and had that unique connection that only comes from a mature performing relationship. The program also featured solos from both performers.

Stephan Schäfer performed two pieces by Isaac Albeniz: *Zambra Granadina* and *Torre Bermeja*. Mr. Schäfer gently breathed life into both of these works which have become standards in the guitar repertoire. He showed that there is a reason why some pieces become standards...because they are simply great pieces.

Andreas Evers performed André Jolivet's *Incantation pour flute en sol...Pour que l'image devienne symbole*. The flute is not usually thought of as a solo instrument, however, between the skills of both this composer and this performer, the audience was held captive by the various landscapes created.

Another feature on this recital was guest artist Ernesto Farago (violinist) with Martha Blakely accompanying on piano. Mr. Farago is well known in major cities throughout the world. His concert career encompassed tours in 15 countries and he was a violinist in the National Symphony. He was chosen to perform on this recital to help increase the attendance for this unknown duo from Germany. It worked! The room was packed! He performed *La Folia* by Arcangelo Corelli and *Czardas* by Vittorio Monti. His cadenza was breath taking and brought back the true sense of romanticism for which the maestro is known.

The rest of Duo Bozza's program included the *Hamburger Sonate* by C.P.E. Bach, *Erste Walzer* and *Deutsche Tänze* by Franz Schubert, *Romanian Folkdances* by Béla Bartók, *Entr'acte* by Jacques Ibert and a *Sonata in A Major* by W.A. Mozart. This was a perfect selection of repertoire which was enthusiastically received by the audience resulting in numerous stage calls and an encore. The duo is planning on another tour in the U.S. in the 1997-98 season. If they play in this area, you won't want to miss them. I know I won't.

Kevin Vigil

OUR NEW WGS RECORD LIBRARY

The Washington Guitar Society thanks François-Marie Patorni for the generous donation of his collection of classical guitar LPs. François gave us about 35 record albums. Some have an air of collectibility, such as Segovia 10-inch Deutsche Grammophon discs. Besides solo guitar, there is guitar paired with flute, piano, orchestra, voice, jazz combo and sappy backings (John Williams' pop stuff). Artists include Andres Segovia, John Williams, Julian Bream, René Bartoli, Leo Brouwer, Konrad Ragossnig, Evelyn Schönfeld, Turibio Santos, Angel Romero, Oscar Ghiglia, Barbara Polasek, Alexandre Lagoya, Carlos Barbosa-Lima, Christopher Parkening and Laurindo Almeida.

There is a lot of good listening here for those of us who still have analog ears. The records have all been given a clean bill of health - skips were mercilessly tracked down and eliminated. (It seems that some of the records had been subjected to overzealous cleaning.)

Now all we need is for someone to step forward as the WGS librarian. The actual work required by this position would be very minimal. It would benefit many, and probably only require the sacrifice of an hour or so of tv, every couple of months. With a lending system in place, other members might be inclined to share their guitar recordings, books or periodicals. How about it? Anybody?

THE MARCH WGS PROGRAM A Guitar Orchestra!

The WGS program for March was a guitar orchestra. Ten guitarists joined the fun. The largest "Thanks!" goes to our tireless president Kevin Vigil who coached us, conducted us, and even recorded us on his state of the art equipment.

The idea was for players to work up their parts on their own beforehand so we could "hit the ground running." We worked up 2 pieces, supplied by WGS member Sean Dodson. The first was "The Old Castle" from "Pictures At An Exhibition" by Modest Mussorgsky and arranged for guitar ensemble by Yvon Rivoal. The second was a more advanced modern piece, "Toccata" by Leo Brouwer.

The intrepid players included Debbie Bard (treasurer), Michael Bard (vice president), Mike Davis, Robert McMurry, Jerry Pena, François-Marie Patorni, Bryan Ramsey, Bev Ross, Donald Sauter and Steve Tjernagle. Debbie Bard gets an honorable mention, joining in on the Mussorgsky with *no* prior guitar-playing experience!

No doubt we will do this again. Be there!

ON THE ROAD WITH THE LAKE BRADDOCK GUITAR ENSEMBLE

Some of you may have noticed my absence at the William Feasley concert on April 19. That is because I was on the road with the Lake Braddock Guitar Ensemble. Lake Braddock Secondary School has a guitar program with over 100 students. The program is run by WGS member John Graham. The Lake Braddock Guitar Ensemble is the advanced class of these fine young players consisting of about 20 members. Where did we go? None other than the "Big Apple"...New York City!

My interest in this ensemble lies in the fact that I teach seven students at Lake Braddock every week. In addition I have an enormous amount of respect for John Graham. He has brought the level of secondary guitar students to a level only achieved before by high school orchestras and bands. His guitar classes meet every single day for almost an hour. That is built in practicing for these students. Those that study privately in addition to his classes do extremely well. One (Joe Simpson) even gets paid for bluegrass performances with his sister (Ann) with the money going toward their college funds.

The itinerary was packed full of events for the ensemble. Upon arriving in NYC, they performed at St. John's Cathedral on Amsterdam Avenue. This cathedral is not to be completed until world peace is achieved (that explains the rusty scaffolding). Their program consisted of works by Handel, Vivaldi, Chobanian and York. They played beautifully and the acoustics of the cathedral made it extra special.

On Saturday morning the ensemble was on their way to Benjamin Verdery's apartment for a masterclass. Traffic was less than expected and we needed some time to kill. It was then decided that we would stop by Strawberry Fields to play John Lennon's *Imagine*. They all carried their guitars to the memorial where there was a tour guide talking about the site. When she finished, she noticed the guitars and said, "I think they have a song for us." At that, the students began to play. There was no singing, but a huge crowd gathered around them. It was truly a magical spontaneous moment.

The group then got back on the bus and went to Benjamin Verdery's place. This was truly a highlight for the students as well as for John Graham myself and for Steve and Gordon (the two accompanying parents). As the ensemble started playing, Ben got his guitar out of his case and started playing along with the first guitar part. He was having as much fun as they were, especially when he would mess up. This really put the group at ease. Ben continued to play along with the group on the Chobanian and York as well.

It is amazing how Ben can get immediate results from performers, not to mention a group of high school students. Within minutes, he had them sounding like a college level

guitar ensemble (probably better). Not only did he address the technical and musical aspects of performing as a group but the emotional aspects as well. If you have ever been around Benjamin Verdery, you are already aware of the positive energy that radiates from him. He definitely left a memory that will last a lifetime for these students.

It is quite likely that this is not the last time Ben will meet with these students. He would like them to come back to perform with another high school ensemble doing his piece *Ellis Island* on Ellis Island. The date is not set, but he was definitely impressed and was sincere about this offer.

The rest of the trip was spent doing typical NYC sight seeing. At first I was a little nervous about being partially responsible for 20 students, but they proved to me that there was nothing to fear. This group plays well together and has an amazing amount of mutual respect from oldest to youngest and from most advanced to least. There were no ego or discipline problems. I believe that this is one of the effects of being on a team of a musical nature.

The Lake Braddock Guitar Ensemble has a concert coming up this month. Check out the calendar of events for details and don't you dare miss it. You'll regret it if you do!

Kevin Vigil

* A translation of J. Bap. Lud^{co} de Castillion's preface to François LeCocq's *Recueil des pièces de guitarre, 1729* (facsimile edition: Thesaurus musicus; Brussels: Editions Culture et Civilisation, 1979). By Beverly Ross.

To follow is a translation of a portion of the introductory material found in an important, late baroque guitar manuscript. In it, its author, Castillion, provided much detail on the rudiments of music and guitar playing, including such topics as selecting strings, reading the tablature, deciphering rhythmic values, performing 'notes inegales,' and executing ornaments. I have translated just the preface for its general historical interest: the guitar was enormously popular in Europe at the end of the seventeenth century and Castillion lived to see it. By the time he wrote this, however, interest in the guitar had diminished greatly. Most all that is known of both Castillion and LeCocq is found right here. The music from the LeCocq manuscript is predominantly French dance music.

If it is true that the guitar is the 'kithara' of the Holy Book, as Mr. Furetiere seems to say in his dictionary, one is struck immediately by its ancient origins and the fact of the sweetness and charms of this instrument. It would be this instrument that is discussed in the fourth chapter of Genesis and, as Isaiah wrote, whose sweetness stops one short. In the 24th chapter, it

would express the sad image of the desolation and ruin of Babylon and Jerusalem. I leave it to the curious to research this question and if there are savants who do not agree with this long history, it has to be admitted that the guitar is a most harmonious instrument and that it has served, throughout history, for the amusement of Princes during their precious hours of leisure. But, as everything is subject to the vicissitudes of time, it seems that the grand king Louis XIV was the last to have so occupied himself and that the guitar is presently languishing.

The famous François Corbet inspired a great interest in the guitar in the Low Country and, after he dedicated his book to the Archduke Albert and Isabelle, every noble person in Brussels gloried in playing it. At the end of the last century, and at the beginning of the present century, I observed that only the guitar was fashionable. Madame The Princess of Bavaria was taught by Mr. François LeCocq, who was Musician Jubilaire in the Royal Chapel of the Court. The manner and easy turn he gave to the pieces he composed, in the modern taste, showed such very high perfection that he was judged the most skilled master to have appeared up to the present time. It was after I had heard him play with such a surprisingly accurate and delicate touch that I took up this noble and melodious instrument again after having abandoned it for more than 20 years, occupied as I was with my work and too serious affairs. I have tried to play the same airs that he had the honor of playing, more than one time, for Her Serene Highness, the Archduchess, sister of the Emperor Charles VI, our noble Sovereign and King, Governor of the Low Country, in the cabinet of this illustrious Princess.

Several small services that I had casually rendered and old acquaintance brought him to present these to me, written in his own hand and authenticated by his signature and I copied them, also in my own hand, in this book that I have prepared and checked myself. I include in this collection, after the airs of Mr. LeCocq, several pieces of other masters who excelled in the last century. You will find in those of François Corbet much gravity. Mr. Lelio's have an agreeable sweetness. The pieces by Michel Perez de Zavala, a Spaniard and my father's teacher in Madrid in 1690, seem to me to have not badly imitated these two excellent authors. The pieces by Mr. Gaspar Sanchez, also a Spaniard, and of Mr. Jean Baptiste Granata, an Italian, have their merit; the chaconnes and passacailles of the latter pass as good. Mr. Robert De Visée was renowned throughout France for the honor he had of playing so often before the grand king, Louis XIV and for having dedicated his guitar book to him in 1682, a work that took several years. Mr. Saint-Luc had, about this same time, a grand reputation and played the guitar with great skillfulness. Finally, Mr. Nicolas Derosier, Ordinaire of Music for her highness Princess Palatin, very knowledgeable in music, undertook a special study of the guitar and so perfected his playing that he invented the guitar angelique, with 8 more strings than the ordinary guitar. He gave the public a book for the one and the other in 1692. It is from all these authors that I have copied several pieces that you will find after those of Mr.