

Washington Guitar Society



No. 32

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WGS Season Finale THE ALEXANDRIA GUITAR QUARTET Saturday, May 10

On Saturday, May 10 at 7pm, the Washington Guitar Society will be presenting its last concert of the season at the Lyceum Museum in Old Town Alexandria. This is an event that you won't want to miss!

Over the past several years the members of the **Alexandria Guitar Quartet** have given generously of their time and talents for the benefit of the Washington Guitar Society. This concert will be no different. They are donating their performance as a fund raising effort for the Washington Guitar Society.

Your attendance will not only leave you with a smile on your face and a kick in your step, but will also help the WGS cover its losses on the season. If you have not made it to one of our Lyceum concerts this year, you have certainly missed many special performances. Don't miss this one as it is sure to be a climactic end to a wonderful season.

The Alexandria Guitar Quartet has a diverse repertoire representing music from the Renaissance to the present, including music from Brazil, Cuba, the Middle East, Europe and the United States. The quartet has performed with the Symphony Orchestra of Trujillo, Peru, the George Mason Symphony Orchestra and has been selected to perform in the Kennedy Center Grand Foyer Series for three consecutive years. Recently, the Alexandria Guitar Quartet performed at the Portland Guitar Festival along side guitar greats Benjamin Verdery, the Pearl/Gray Duo, Lily Afshar and Antigoni Goni.

The Alexandria Guitar Quartet has been very involved in getting new works written for guitar quartet. Their commissions have certainly added many new important works to the repertoire. Composers who have written for the quartet include Will Ayton, William Bland, Dusan Bogdanovic, Michael Eagen, Bryan Johanson, Glenn Smith, Michael White, Rex Willis and Andrew York.

Their program for the May 10 recital will include works by Handel, Machado, Bogdonovic, Salinas and local composers **Glenn Smith** and our own WGS vice-president **Michael Bard**.

The icing on the cake will be 12 year old **Nicki Lehrer**. Nicki will be opening up for the Alexandria Guitar Quartet with a 10-15 minute program of her own. If you missed her



performance in March when she opened up for Philip Candelaria, you certainly don't want to miss her this time. She is a wonderful young guitarist with a maturity beyond her years.

So come out and show your support to our local artists Richard Miller, Tim Evans, Sean Dodson, Jeff Baker as well as Nicki Lehrer in a performance that you are sure to remember.

This concert is likely to sell out, so make plans and get your tickets early. See the calendar of events for further information.

From the President

We are soon coming to the end of our concert season with one performance left. This will feature the Alexandria Guitar Quartet with special guest Nicki Lehrer on May 10. This concert will be a fund raiser for the Washington Guitar Society, so please show your support by attending this concert. This is likely to be a sell out performance, so purchase your tickets in advance at a WGS meeting, from the Guitar Shop, 1216 Connecticut Ave. NW or from Springfield Music Center, Concord Center, 6125-C Backlick Rd., Springfield, VA. If you are unable to get to a meeting or one of these locations,

you may have tickets reserved by calling me at (703) 644-1659.

I would like to invite all members of the Washington Guitar Society to attend a membership meeting on May 10 at 1 pm at the Washington Conservatory of Music, 5144 Massachusetts Ave., Bethesda, MD. This meeting will be to discuss the transition from the current officers to new officers. We will also discuss options for working with the John E. Marlow Guitar Recital Series. Following this meeting, at 2 pm will be a WGS Youth Concert featuring young guitarists 18 years and younger.

The WGS has a membership of about 150 members. It seems that since we started meeting at the Washington Conservatory some people who used to come to all the meetings stopped coming but remain members. I am very curious why this happens. Is this because we are no longer close to a metro, or is it that we now pass the hat (we were unable to do that in the public library)? We continue to offer an open stage hour as well as wonderful performances and workshops. I invite input from our membership for suggestions to improve meeting attendance and interest. Remember, we are more than just a bi-monthly publication!

As you may know, Debbie Bard has stepped down from the treasurer position and Beverly Ross has taken over that role. Thanks goes to Debbie for all her hard work and to Beverly for stepping into this position. Please check your membership expiration date on your mailing label and send membership/renewal checks to Beverly Ross as directed on the application form.

We are still in need of people to step forward for officer positions in the WGS. These include the offices of President, Vice-President and Secretary. If you have any questions about the expectations of these roles, please feel free to contact me at (703) 644-1659.

Sincerely,

Kevin Vigil

JOHN STOVER Keeps Me on the Edge

On Friday, April 18th John Stover got on a plane in San Francisco and arrived at Dulles Airport at 4 pm after a five hour flight. By the time he got his luggage and got to my house it was 5:15 pm. Warming up between "It's great to see you" and "How are you doing?" was a challenge at best. At 6:00, we got in the car again so we could be at the Lyceum by 6:30. As there was no smoking allowed on the plane and he was down to his last cigarette, John's nicotine deprivation sent my wife Barbara and college buddy Michael out to pick up some smokes before the performance.

Without any excuses for his current state of focus, he walked out on the stage knowing that "the show must go on". It was a rough start with two pieces by Sylvius Leopold Weiss and a set of 3 Renaissance pieces, but by the time he got to the 3 Scarlatti Sonatas, he had reclaimed his focus. They were played with that old Stover magic that I had been introduced to back in 1984.

Stover gave deeply convicted performances of Scarlatti *Sonatas K.322, K380 and K11* as well as the *Canzonetta* from *String Quartet op.12* by Felix Mendelssohn in the first half of the recital. The second half brought forth charm and emotional depth from *Manha de Carnival* (Luis Bonfa), *Asturias* and *Rumores de la Caleta* (Isaac Albeniz) and *The Entertainer* (Scott Joplin). In contrast to the aforementioned works was the more intellectual *First Guitar Suite* by Peter Scott Lewis from which Stover seemed to bring forth some personal insight.

The one aspect of Stover's playing that has always cast a spell on me was his incredible tone and manipulation of his guitar. He seems to know every intimate aspect of sound from his instrument. There are sounds that he gets that nobody I have ever heard can duplicate. After the concert, several guitarists were trying out his worn and beaten Ramirez guitar and not one of them could come close to Stover's sound. It is as if the guitar and he are truly best friends.

As I mentioned in the last issue of the WGS newsletter, John was my teacher at Memphis State University. One person in attendance said to me, "It must be interesting to see your college teacher after all these years. You probably see him in a different light." To be honest, he is not all that different...he *still* keeps me on the edge of my seat!

Kevin Vigil



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JULIE GOLDBERG in Review

When I joined the Washington Guitar Society about a year ago, a guest artist performance series had just begun, where guitarists are invited to perform for the monthly WGS meetings. Our gathering on April 12 featured Julie Goldberg who, having attained a B.M. in performance and a Masters in Music, is now pursuing her Doctorate at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. She has performed numerous recitals throughout the U.S. and has studied in master classes with Oscar Ghiglia and Pepe Romero.

Julie's performance style includes informative discussions about most of the pieces in the program, along with the composers of the pieces. This is presented with her relaxed, personable manner and enhances the overall program. The narrative, combined with her excellent technical and artistic ability, made for a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

She opened with three romantic waltzes, none which I was familiar with: *Maria Luisa* by Julia S. Sagraeras, *Plegaria* by Guillermo Gomez, and *A Mia Mie* by Alberto C. Obregon.

Next came *A Fancy* by John Dowland which was preceded by her discussion of the piece. One interesting thing mentioned was that this is one of the first pieces to use tremolo to sustain a voice.

When the first few bars were played, it reminded me very much of another Dowland Fantasia (transcription in Frederick Noad's *The Renaissance Guitar*), in which the melody starts with a single voice, is taken up by a second voice, and then a third (like a canon).

The majority of the program was devoted to Manuel M. Ponce, who Julie is researching for her Doctorate. She had some interesting anecdotes about her experience in Mexico, where she was able to view Ponce's original notation. Many of these had comments written all over them by Andre Segovia, who reviewed and edited the guitar pieces before publication. Segovia was not bashful in stating his mind about any particular piece, sometimes rejecting them outright, and freely wrote in editing solutions for his idea of improvements in the music or technical feasibility. In Julie's opinion, after reviewing the original music, this ultimately may have been for the best.

The first selection by Ponce was *Seis Preludios Cortos*, followed by *Sonata Mexicana*, from which Julie elected to omit the fourth and final movement. The final Ponce piece was *Theme Varie et Finale*.

After giving a humorous, brief profile of the guitarist/composer Augustine Barrios Mangore, the recital came to a completion with Barrios' *Julia Florida*, which was

followed by *Waltz*.

All in all, Julie Goldberg's recital was a pleasurable experience, and I'm looking forward to hearing her again.

Bob Wysong

Some Things Old, Some Things New, Candelaria and Nicki Too

Saturday, March 15 was a special evening of guitar music for those in attendance at Philip Candelaria's performance for the WGS. The evening opened with 12 year old Nicki Lehrer playing works by Fernando Sor, Jose Ferrer, Joao Guimaraes, Mason Williams and Harold Arlen. With her angelic smile and beaming enthusiasm she played her way into the hearts of her captivated audience. This set the stage for a most memorable performance by Philip Candelaria.

Candelaria's program gave the listeners a taste of some guitar standards with *Asturias* and *Rumores de la Caleta* by Albeniz as well as bringing us to the current day with a piece for guitar and DAT (digital audio tape) *Sudden? Metamorphosis* by Daniel Bedard. Other works on the program were given in thematic sets like 3 Pieces from Haiti, 3 Pieces from Brazil, 3 Tangos, and 3 Pieces from Argentina. This gave a unique twist to the normal classical guitar presentation and took the audience on a musical journey through each of these themes.

Mr. Candelaria's program was not only well selected, but was executed with the highest level of artistry. His immaculate technique and ease of playing took a backseat to his strong convictions for the music at hand.

In this age of the guitar, there are many performers who can literally play circles around the "big name" players. Philip Candelaria is certainly one of these. It is a shame that there were only about thirty or so people in attendance for what I considered to be one of the best performances in the Washington area this year.

Kevin Vigil

ON THE ROAD AGAIN with the Lake Braddock Guitar Ensemble

Every year, the Lake Braddock Guitar Ensemble (directed by John Graham) takes a road trip to perform and get coached by well known teachers. Last year they went to New York where they gave a concert at a cathedral on Amsterdam Ave, played at Strawberry Fields and had a clinic with Benjamin Verdery. This year they went to Boston with a short stop for a concert at the Community College of Rhode Island.

Thursday night, April 24 at 10:30, we boarded the bus to begin our journey. We slept on the bus and woke up in Rhode Island for breakfast. After breakfast, the ensemble went to the Community College of Rhode Island for a 10 am performance. As John Graham is an alum of this school, this was a most meaningful performance. The CCRI students got to see what the future possibly holds for them, the faculty got to see the result of their work, the ensemble got to see that Mr. Graham was a student too and John Graham got to make everyone proud (including me).

After the CCRI performance, we had lunch, jumped back on the bus and headed for the Berklee School of Music in Boston. It was there that they had a clinic with the Guitar Department Chair, Mr. Larry Baione. While Larry Baione is mostly a jazz guitarist, he had many good tips for the ensemble, especially about the *DC Blues* (by Buzzelli) that the group played for him. He was obviously impressed with what this ensemble was capable of. After the clinic, we got a tour of the Berklee campus. Quite impressive!

After checking into the hotel, we went to Quincy Market for dinner and shopping. That was followed by a trip to the largest Tower Records I have ever been to (five stories high).

The next morning, a tour guide met us to show some of the highlights of Boston. A very nice town with a lot to do! We got our exercise at Bunker Hill and got to see "Ol' Iron Sides" otherwise known as the USS Constitution. It will be sailed for the first time in over one hundred years this summer!

After the tour, we went to the New England Conservatory of Music for a clinic with Robert Paul Sullivan. He had two of his students with him. The ensemble opened with the Boccherini *Introduction and Fandango*, followed by *On All Fours* by B. Johanson and *Samba Quica* by K. Wusthoff. I thought Mr. Sullivan's jaw was going to hit the floor. He was overwhelmed at the level of this 21 piece high school guitar ensemble. They played extremely well! He had a few pointers for them, but most of all let them know how fortunate they were to have this opportunity. He then performed a trio with his two students. It was very solid playing with beautiful tone and ensemble. We then got a tour of the New England Conservatory. What a beautiful school! You should see

Jordon Hall, it is most impressive.

That was the last performance of the trip, but not the end of the fun. After the clinic with Mr. Sullivan, we went shopping at local music stores and that night we saw a West African Drum Ensemble at Club Passim (a non-alcohol, smoke-free club). The show was intoxicating. One can see how these subtle rhythmic changes may have influenced the minimalist composers of this century. There were dancers as well. They even pulled John Graham and a couple of students up to dance with them. (That was really funny!) Secretly, I was hoping they would pick me too...oh well, somebody's got to sit back and laugh!

The next morning we went to the Boston Museum of Science for about three hours. There was a lot to see and we couldn't see it all. It was a nice venture anyway. After the museum, we had lunch and got back on the bus to arrive back at Lake Braddock Secondary School by 11:15 on Sunday night. Wow, what a trip!

The Lake Braddock Guitar Ensemble will be performing on May 7 at 7:30 pm at Lake Braddock Secondary School in Burke, VA. If you go, you will simply be amazed at what our youth are doing! See the calendar of events for further details.

Kevin Vigil

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Guitar Ramble

A few months ago, the magazine produced by USAir had an article called "Guitars With A Past". This was reprinted from *Art & Antiques* magazine. It discussed the collectibility of vintage guitars, which it defined as "electric and acoustic instruments made in America between about 1920 and 1970." It mentioned a guitar collection in New Jersey - 810 guitars worth \$10 million - which "chronicles the history of the guitar from its debut in 1833." Say what?

A recent batch of mail brought a flyer for an upcoming symposium with Aaron Shearer. It states, "this forum will explore new directions on the most important role of the instrumental teacher - helping students to study and practice efficiently, thus more fully realizing their maximum potential." All well and good, but I would submit that the most important role is to foster an enthusiasm in the student for the instrument and its music. Is there any defensible reason for doing it if it's not fun? And if every now and then a student becomes an excellent musician - that's just icing on the cake.

Fingerstyle Guitar magazine No. 20 has an article on the Los Angeles Quartet. It mentions their 7-string guitar and gives the diameter (.056) of the low string. Nobody listens to me, but string diameter is *not* a useful measurement; the same diameter string made out of different materials will give you different pitches, everything else being equal. Observe that your 3rd string is fatter than your lower-pitched 4th and 5th strings. "Mass per length" is the useful measurement - regardless of composition. C'mon string companies, you can do it!

Dunno about you, but I get a little kick out of seeing my hobby-type interests mentioned in works of fiction. Classical guitar references don't seem to pop up too often. (Rather "thin on the ground," as Julian Bream would say.) By way of contrast, I've come across quite a few Beatles references. Heck, I've seen more references to Scrabble[®], my favorite game, than to the guitar. A classical guitar reference I stumbled on recently - and the only one that comes to mind - is in a short story from *Twilight Zone* magazine (April 1985, pg82). "Then, perhaps, she might sit down with a glass of fresh iced tea, and listen to a record. Not the high, piping voices of Chipmunks or Smurfs, hiccupping over the peanut butter jammed in the grooves, but a record of her own, maybe *Parkening Plays Bach*." The title is *Barter*, by Lois McMaster Bujold, and it's the gut-bustin' funny story of how a housewife triumphs over 3 kids, 2 cats and 1 husband (with a little help from her extra-terrestrial friend.)

- Classical Mechanics -

One of the nicest guitar surprises was finding a piece of guitar music published in my college (Drexel University) literary magazine, *Maya*, in 1976. It's a snappy, little piece (see page 6), and I'm sure the composer would be happy to know his

work is still remembered and enjoyed more than 20 years later. Notice that it was all drawn free-hand - including the staff lines. Thank you, E. Gretz, wherever you are now. *Donald Sauter*

Philip Candelaria Master Class

Here's just a handful of things of interest - among many - I took away from Philip Candelaria's WGS Master Class in April:

In the Baroque - as opposed to the Classical period - the preludes were "Big Stuff." Give them all you've got. The dances in the suite are actually a come-down from the prelude.

Philip *used* to think rest stroke was so important, but now uses 99% free stroke.

He fell in love with the A-frame guitar support, but later found it too wobbly and gave it up for the foot stool.

He makes ample use of hinge bars for the sake of relaxation. He even plays extended passages of 1st string notes with the bottom joint of the 1h index finger when there's no reason to crank the tip around!

He believes that "the work is the fingering." If something's not working well - change it! "Fingerings are a guitarist's secret weapon!"

He even played a piece for us - a rare treat at a master class. Thanks, Philip!

Donald Sauter

(Doodle a cool-looking guitar in this space. Submit it for consideration as the WGS logo.)

Classical Mechanics (Prelude)

Allegro

rallentando

E. Gretz