

Washington Guitar Society

No.57

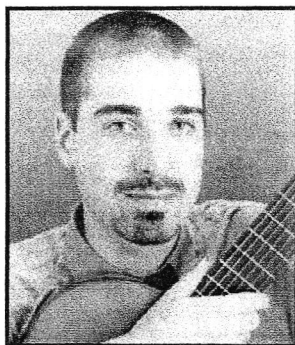
September/October/November 2001

Adam Tully Performs for WGS September 21

Adam Tully has explored and performed a wide variety of guitar styles. In addition to classical training and experience he has an active career in traditional Latin American music. Born in New York and raised in Washington, D.C., Adam studied both classical and flamenco music with John Rodgers and Paco de Málaga from elementary to high school. Upon graduation in 1993 from the St. Albans School, he received the Music Award, and subsequently enrolled in the Oberlin Conservatory to pursue classical guitar. In 1995 he spent six months in Buenos Aires studying tango with Anibal Arias, and a year later began working with the Argentinean folk group La Huella, in San Francisco, California, and

teaching and performing in La Peña del Sur cultural center.

Adam is a Winning Finalist of the Artists International 2001 Annual Auditions, and will be performing a New York Debut recital at Carnegie Hall (Weill Recital Hall) in May 2002.



For the last three years he has studied classical and flamenco guitar with Dennis Koster at the American

Institute of Guitar (New York), where he now teaches Latin American Music. He has traveled extensively in Latin America, and recently participated in the Fiesta la Guantanamera festival in Guantánamo, Cuba, where his composition "Papo" made the second round of the Changüí competition.

Currently based in New York, Adam has performed several recitals of classical music in venues such as St. Bartholomew's Church, and recorded his first solo CD in 1999. He performs locally with the Latin American groups Los Jardineros, Los Afortunados, and the Eduardo Parra Group, and completed his first solo tour in Argentina in July 2001. Adam holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music and Latin American literature from New York University.

Nicki Lehrer Performs for WGS November 16

Nicki Lehrer has become a familiar face to those who have been members of the Washington Guitar Society for the past several years. She played for the WGS in November of 1999. She opened up for Phil Candelaria (March, 1997) and the Alexandria Guitar Quartet (May, 1997) when we were presenting our concert series at the Lyceum in Old Town Alexandria. Before that, she performed on several of our WGS member's recitals. My earliest memory of Nicki is when she played for our very first WGS Youth Concert at the Bethesda Public Library in January of 1996.

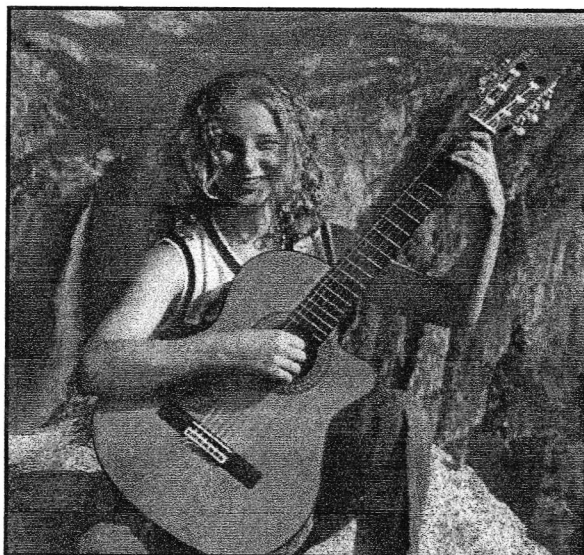
Well, Nicki is now 15 years old and continues to mature as a performer. She has performed in numerous venues across the country including Yosemite National Park, the Kennedy Center, the George Washington University Guitar Series, the Charlottesville Classical Guitar Society, and for the New Jersey library system.

In addition to her performances, she was nominated for two WAMMIE Awards (Washington Area Music Association) and was awarded the Segovia scholarship to attend the National Guitar Summer Workshop.

It is great to watch such a young, dedicated performer grow

and develop as a person and as a musician. I encourage all who are able to make it to her WGS performance to go and see her play... rain or shine!

-Kevin Vigil



**Chet Atkins
(1924 - 2001)**

Editor's Note: Chet Atkins passed away on June 30, 2001. There are obituaries and articles being published in every major guitar magazine about this great loss (or should I say great contribution). I've asked Susan Trent and Paul McGill for permission to print this wonderful article that they wrote about Chet's funeral. Paul McGill is a wonderful guitar maker in Nashville and knew Chet personally. That gives this article an even more personal touch. -Kevin Vigil

We walked into the Ryman Auditorium to see Chet's guitar and hat poised on the stage under the sole spotlight. It was a surreal experience to sit in that old and storied place, where the ceiling is tongue-and-groove and nothing about it looks familiar to our world today, right down to the "1897 Confederate Gallery" above. Various musical tributes and Eddy Arnold's brief words which he managed to give us despite much emotion began the service. Paul Yandell, Steve Wariner, and Vince Gill performed some of Chet's guitar arrangements and then the eulogy was given by Garrison Keillor.

Starting off with a letter from Chet, Keillor and his masterful talents seemed to almost make Chet Atkins come alive again for us. For a little while, Keillor's words painted such a vivid picture of Chet and the many stages of his life that it was almost easy to forget the fact that Chet's body was in a casket at Keillor's feet. He intertwined Chet's words and actions into his eulogy which was filled with Chet's gentle humor about his own humanness. The oration was delivered in Keillor's best whimsical style while Pat Donahue played Chet's music quietly in the background and Chet's guitar and white hat held center stage as if waiting for him to come and pick them up.

After more performances by Marty Stuart, Mark Cat Stevens, David Hungate, Bergen White and others, the ceremony closed and Chet's body was carried through the middle of the auditorium. The magic of Chet Atkins drew everyone near that center aisle as if a magnet were

bringing us all together around him. As Chet left the Ryman, the place where he had become so well known, for the last time, everyone followed him right out the door after him. Many had tears in their eyes; all had love in their hearts.

Certainly he had millions of guitar 'children' in a sense, whose music carries his influence. There are also many beneficiaries of his direct kindness. One example of his support of Paul has to do with a poster in his workshop of a photo of Chet. It came about because Chet went out of his way, as a total surprise to Paul, to pose with a McGill resonator for a 1995 issue of Vintage Guitar magazine. Chet actually came to the workshop the day he was interviewed while Paul was out and took the guitar he is pictured with to his office just so he could be photographed with it. It was gestures of generosity like these that made Chet not just a legend and a hero but also a kind-hearted and wonderful friend. We had already missed his presence due to his recent illness but now he is surely gone to a better place.

Later, at the cemetery, the clouds fell onto Chet's casket, noting the finality of his body's life while the words from Chet, read from his last book, reverberated with the idea that music is for eternity. "And now it's time to wrap up my story. We wish it could go on and on, but I've reached the point where it has to end. Years from now, after I'm gone, someone will listen to what I've done and know I was here. They may not know or care who I was but they'll hear my guitars speaking for me and maybe they'll understand something. That's the way it's supposed to be. The players come and go but the music lives on. And eternity will take care of the rest." (Chet Atkins: Me and My Guitars by Chet and Russ Cochran)

We share in the grief of his passing, in the gratefulness that he lived and that his bodily suffering is over; and in the prayers that his spirit will carry on with the ease and joy that he has given so many.

-Susan Trent and Paul McGill

ABEL CARLEVARO

(Dec. 16, 1916, Montevideo - July 17, 2001, Berlin)

Upon hearing that Abel Carlevaro passed away, I immediately thought of long time WGS friend Jad Azkoul. Jad studied with the maestro and had a deep connection with him and his contributions to the guitar. Jad is currently living in Geneva and kindly responded to my e-mail with the following article. This article is reprinted by permission of the Italian guitar magazine IL FRONIMO.

Guitarists everywhere know that Abel Carlevaro made some of the most significant contributions to the world of the guitar. He is one of the most talked about teachers, partly because he has questioned ideas we have come to sanctify. Some know him through his didactic series of *Cuadernos* and *Masterclass* or his textbook *School of Guitar*, while others by attending the seminars and workshops he has been giving internationally. Since the 1970's, the demand for him as a teacher increased further, thanks in part to Robert Vidal, founder of the Paris International Guitar Competition, who invited him year after year to give summer workshops, promoting him as "the possessor of the most perfect instrumental technique in the world of the guitar".

In his master classes, the Maestro spoke a language similar to that used by great pianists and composers. He was able to illustrate his crystal-clear concepts on the instrument and to transmit them easily to students. The music and the mechanics behind it always made perfect sense.

I was fortunate to have attended all the courses in France and Spain in the 70's and had only one desire: to be able to learn in depth from this magnificent musician and teacher. At the 1978 course in Madrid, the Maestro fulfilled my biggest hope and invited me to study with him in Montevideo, where I stayed for three years of intensive apprenticeship.

Carlevaro was also a marvelous performer. Those who had the privilege of attending his concerts will remember the effortless elegance and poise of this artist who produced a multi-colored, almost orchestral, rendition of each work. He truly turned Berlioz' intuitive declaration that "the guitar is a small orchestra" into reality. His vigor and accuracy were second to none. The quality of his playing was maintained over the 26 years that I have known him.

As a composer, he has written works that have entered the standard repertory. The most famous are perhaps the *Preludios Americanos*. The *Microestudios* are now used in exams in many countries, including Switzerland and England. He has also composed chamber music and three concertos for guitar and orchestra.

Carlevaro was even an inventor. His obsession with the limitations of the guitar as an instrument, led him to create a new design, the so-called "Carlevaro Model" which has the harmonic top separated from the sides, an ingenious device. He used this type of guitar, originally constructed by Manuel Contreras, for all his concerts.

THE BEGINNING

Abel Carlevaro was born on December 16, 1916 in Montevideo, Uruguay, a small country that hosted the greatest orchestras, conductors, and soloists of the time. It was considered the Switzerland of South America and was one of the continent's longest and most stable democracies. It came to fame during the first half of the century by twice winning the World Cup Football Series. Here also was the country that Andrés Segovia chose to live in for nearly a decade. Agustín Barrios also spent time in Uruguay and it was the Montevideo cathedral which inspired his last work, *La Catedral*.

It was a family of guitar aficionados that Abel was born into. His first guitar, a beautiful instrument inlaid with mother of pearl (*nacre*), was made by his father, a medical doctor and an amateur guitarist. It has been sitting for years in a glass case in Abel's living room, a tribute to his father and a symbol of what was to become central to his love and life, the guitar. His older brother, Agustín, was an architect as well as a fine guitarist who specialized in arranging tangos for the classical guitar. The most recent compositions of Abel are a set of *Milongas* dedicated to his brother's memory.

HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS

The 18-year old Abel played for Heitor Villa-Lobos during a visit by this illustrious composer to Montevideo. When the Brazilian invited him to go to Rio de Janeiro to study with him, he naturally accepted. One of the outstanding memories that Carlevaro reminisced about in Rio was his listening to the 12 Guitar *Etudes* played on the piano (*sic*), while the composer gave a running commentary and explanation for each piece. It was in this way that the young guitarist came to know these works intimately. Villa-Lobos was so impressed by the way Abel began to play them that he gave him several manuscripts of his guitar pieces, including six of the *Etudes* and the first *Prelude*.

ANDRES SEGOVIA

Another major influence on Abel was, of course, Andrés Segovia. Not only did they see each other often during the latter's long residence in Uruguay, but it was in fact Segovia who presented Abel to the music audiences of Montevideo. Although Abel Carlevaro is sometimes cited amongst Segovia's protégés, Carlevaro never considered himself a student of his. The word "student" in Spanish is *discipulo*, which of course has the connotation of being the follower of a teacher. The anecdote below will help us understand what Abel meant.

Whenever Segovia received a new work, he would invite Abel for tea and would then play it for him before he performed it in concert. Abel had the habit, which he maintained throughout his lifetime, of always initially congratulating a performer, regardless of the quality. On one particular occasion, however, Don Andrés insisted on having Abel's honest opinion. Abel said that in fact he did not like the interpretation and proceeded to give his reasons. When the older Maestro showed surprise and then remarked that these comments were very important to him, Abel suddenly felt the urge to be alone and prepared to leave. "But Abel, we have not yet had our tea!" The fact was that Abel was filled with emotion when he realized that what he considered self-evident was new to the most distinguished guitarist in the world. This experience was a major stepping-stone since he was now certain that he was in possession of a solid and personal concept of the guitar.

ORIGINS OF SCHOOL

Abel, as a boy, used to write down ideas when he played the guitar, a practice that helped him develop his logical and independent way of thinking. It also led him to make new discoveries. For example, his ergonomic and dynamic sitting position, which was to become the starting point for the application of his method, was initiated by his search for relieving his back pains. The answer came neither from the established guitarists of the time, nor from his father who would have told him to play the guitar less. He knew he had to find the solution for himself.

His ability to observe, analyze and codify his movements led him to discover those essential principles of nature that can be used to improve the playing of the guitar. His intuition and scientific thinking with respect to the acoustics of the instrument complemented his knowledge. The understanding of the interaction between these two, the body and the guitar, gave life to an approach that has universal validity. This approach, which he liked to call his "Guitar School", was perhaps his greatest contribution, for it has raised the playing —and teaching— level of our instrument to that of the finest schools of violin and piano playing. One day, all guitarists will be using many of Carlevaro's principles, whether knowingly or not.

LAST APPEARANCE AND FAREWELL

Abel Carlevaro left this world on July 17 in Berlin while preparing for concerts and his annual master class in Erlbach. I had seen and heard him in concert in Zurich at the end of May, just seven weeks before he died. He was, as always, marvelous. Half the program consisted of his own works, some of which were very recent compositions, a set of *Milongas* dedicated to the memory of his brother, Agustín. The musical and technical mastery that he exhibited is astounding for a musician at any age. This was the same Carlevaro I have been hearing since 1975, but perhaps with an additional serenity that comes with the years. No doubt this man was blessed because it was not only his fingers and hands that remained young, but also his hearing and eyesight (Carlevaro never needed glasses to see near or far).

I find it hard to believe that he is no longer here. He dedicated his whole life to the glory of the guitar, not to his own. He was always kind, considerate and discreet, and I feel as if I will be seeing him again soon. His influence on me went beyond the guitar, and I talk about him in the same way I have always done, with respect, admiration and affection. My tribute to the Maestro is to say that he is the tree in one of his favorite mottos: "Art is like a tree, which has its top in the sky and its roots in the ground". He has gone to the sky but only after firmly planting roots in guitarists fortunate enough to have studied with him. His legacy is there for anyone in the guitar world who wishes to follow it.

The Galop Of The Goblins By Walter Fay Lewis

Ok, so I've gone through my music theory reference library and there doesn't seem to be any rule that says a spooky piece has to have a Neapolitan sixth, or that a piece with a Neapolitan sixth has to be spooky. Still, I claim there's something going on here.

But before we continue, we'd better make sure we know what a Neapolitan sixth is. My **Harvard Brief Dictionary Of Music** says: "a sixth chord having as its root the flattened supertonic." My **International Cyclopedia Of Music And Musicians** says: "a chord consisting of a minor sixth and minor third on the subdominant." (Notice - nothing about ghosts in either one.) I practically had to write a computer program to determine that both of these definitions say the same thing. (I always thought a music theorist must lead a lonely life, what with only ever being able to talk to himself.)

Allow me to clear the air. A Neapolitan sixth is a major chord built on the note one half step above the tonic (the first and main note of the scale.) It's usually used in the first inversion, meaning the root of the Neapolitan sixth is flipped up to the top of the triad.

So, for example, in the key of E minor, the Neapolitan sixth is the F major chord. You will see that *The Galop Of The Goblins*, which is in E minor, drips with F major chords - to such an extent that composer Walter Fay Lewis apparently figured it was easiest just to leave the F-sharp out of the key signature! In particular, listen to the F major chords in the last two staves on the first page; I believe those examples to be very typical of Neapolitan sixth usage. Quite a distinctive sound, eh?

So where else do Neapolitan sixths evoke spooks? Well, I couldn't put my fingers on as many examples in my collection as I was hoping to. I have a trio called "Ghost", by Jamie Williams-Grossman, also in E minor that has a blast of F major chord in one of the guitar parts. There's a piece by Robin Pearson written for the month of October which has alternating E minor and F major arpeggio patterns. He calls it *Falling Leaves*, but we know his *real* inspiration - October 31st! WGS member Bob Wysong recalls *The Halloween Song*, a piece his 7th-grade band played, which used the Neapolitan sixth. Of course, the most famous example of all is heard in the well-known theme song Charles Gounod wrote for Alfred Hitchcock's tv show ¹.

But, as I said, it can also be used when there's not a ghost in sight. There's a D major chord in Chopin's *Prelude In C Minor*, but that doesn't hit me quite the same way. Bob also remembered the prominent example towards the end of Albinoni's famous *Adagio*. The first guitar music example to strike me was an *Andantino* by Neapolitan, Napoleon Coste ². The piece is in E minor, but listen for the D major arpeggio in the C# minor section. Our Bob can say he's never heard a Neapolitan sixth in the music of Fernando Sor* (although he doesn't have the complete works), but I've noticed a couple in Mauro Giuliani. Check out the trios to Nos. 7 and 8 of his *Tersicore del Nord Op. 147* ³.

Conclusion: 56% of all songs that use the Neapolitan sixth are haunted. You read it here first. (And if I can write an article about music theory for the WGS newsletter, you can certainly write about anything!)

About the piece itself: I got it from the Library of Congress. It's good.

If you adhere to all the printed fingerings, yer nuts. Happy Halloween.

-Donald Sauter

Footnotes:

1. (Something like that?)
2. "Das Gitarrespiel", Bruno Henze, book 7, page 11.)
3. "Mauro Giuliani - selected works", Frederick Noad, pp 134-5.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Beginning this month, we will be using a new location on alternate months. Our meetings in September, November, January, March and May will be held at the Levine School of Music at 2801 Upton St., NW. This is a fine facility with an excellent recital hall. It is located just east of Connecticut Ave. near the Van Ness UDC Metro stop. Many thanks to Risa Carlson of the Levine School for helping to make this available to us. The meetings for October, December, February, April and June will be held at the Chevy Chase Community Center at 5601 Connecticut Ave., where we have been for the past year or so.

This will be a nice change for us and I hope it will bring even more of you to our meetings. *-John Rodgers*

WGS MEETINGS

The Washington Guitar Society (WGS) has meetings one Friday of every month. Specific dates and performers are listed in the calendar of events. Meetings with a featured performer begin with an open stage from 7:30-8:00 pm and continue with the performance at 8 pm. Meetings are free and open to the public. A hat will be passed for voluntary contributions to the artist. For information call John Rodgers at (301) 767-3383.

WGS OPEN STAGE

The Washington Guitar Society hosts an open stage before each of its meetings. This is a great time to try pieces out for a very interested audience. It's not a competition, just plain fun. The open stages start at 7:30 followed by the featured performer at 8pm. It will take place at the specified location under each calendar of event. There is plenty of free parking.

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* MY GOOP! Bob is well aware of the Neapolitan 6th in Sor's Op. 35 no. 14.