

Washington Guitar Society

No.58

December/2001, January/February/2002

WGS Members Recital December 14

The WGS meeting for December will be a "members recital". While the title suggests that only WGS members can participate, that is far from the truth. We would like to encourage members and non-members to come, play and/or listen to others. This is a great opportunity for amateurs and students to try out their pieces in front of other amateurs and students. It is also a chance to meet others who share your interests, joys, and frustrations with our beloved instrument. Teachers are encouraged to invite your students to play. Our member's recitals are always casual and fun; so come on out and play.

The December member's recital will take place at the Chevy Chase Community Center, 5601 Connecticut Ave., NW in Washington. For more details, please see the calendar of events.

No January Meeting

The WGS meeting locations for this year were designed to alternate between the Chevy Chase Community Center and the Levine School of Music. The dates for the Levine School of Music were reserved before the John E. Marlow Guitar Recital Series announced its concert season. In the interest of supporting guitar activity in the Washington area, the WGS intentionally avoids scheduling events on the same dates as the Marlow series. We would hate to draw audiences away from Washington's largest presenter of great guitar performances.

The date scheduled for the WGS January meeting was the 25th of the month. As it turns out, the Marlow series is presenting their "Artists of Washington" concert on that date. The Washington Guitar Society would like to encourage its members to attend this concert which features former WGS president Kevin Vigil and John Marlow's son Richie Marlow. For further information, please see the calendar of events.

THE FEBRUARY WGS PROGRAM A Guitar Orchestra!

The WGS get-together for February 8, 2002 will be a guitar orchestra led by Kevin Vigil. See the Calendar of Events for the time and place. Kevin, of course, is known to all of us as the former WGS president, and all-around guitar dynamo. We will be playing "The Floating Ancillary Ants" by Rex Willis. This piece received an enthusiastic review in **Soundboard** magazine (summer 2000). The ant inspiration is explained as follows: "During a flood, if the water is still enough, ants with no place to climb will float. They then lock their legs together in what looks like a floating, glistening red pad that is about pancake thickness and perhaps one to two feet across."

"The Floating Ancillary Ants" is in 3 parts, but is recommended for a much larger guitar orchestra. There are some scraping and scratching sound effects, and, obviously, the more guitars you have, the more ants you can sound like. The piece was designed for players of all levels: Guitar 1 is intermediate plus; Guitar 2 is intermediate; and Guitar 3 can be knocked out by beginners, even. Teachers, this is a great opportunity for your students.

Take a look at the sample extract in this newsletter and select a part. If you need a part in advance, the best thing to do is SHOW UP AT THE DECEMBER MEMBERS' RECITAL, where parts will be available. Failing that, I can send out parts. (If the demand is large, I wouldn't object to reimbursement for the stamp.) See the contact information at the bottom.

Getting a part in advance is not a requirement - don't hesitate to show up even if you don't get one. Of course, the session is open to *everyone*, whether or not a WGS member. And it's not unthinkable that your non-guitarist friend or family member might enjoy watching and listening.

Besides the fun of playing with a bunch of guitar friends, an incentive for joining in is that you will be credited in the next newsletter (yippee!), and that the results will be recorded. We have recorded several earlier WGS guitar orchestra sessions and I'd like to think that in no time we'll have a jivin' CD to pass around.

Maybe you can tell that these guitar orchestra sessions are my favorite offering of our guitar society. In 1997 violinist Phyllis Fleming rehearsed us in a work by John Duarte, which we then played as the first item of a members' recital. Over the years, Kevin Vigil has worked wonders pulling us together on pieces like John Duarte's "Summerset Follies", Musorgskii's "Old Castle", Leo Brouwer's "Toccatà" and (my all-time favorite) Walter Burke's "A Trip To Rocky Point". The last one involved whistles and bells and sand blocks, not to mention Kevin's mandolin and train conductor calls. See what you missed? Don't let it happen again!

-Donald Sauter
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A DICTIONARY OF MUSICAL THEMES - Book Report

I had the **Dictionary Of Musical Themes** by Harold Barlow and Sam Morgenstern in my collection for a few years without actually using it too much. It presents more than 10,000 themes of instrumental music - symphonies, concertos, and chamber works. The themes are arranged in the book by composer, from Adam to Zimbalist, and there's an index which will lead you to the theme in question after you figure out the first few notes and transpose them to the key of C. In the authors' words: "The book should prove useful not only to those who are bothered by a theme and can't remember its source, but also for those who know the source but can't remember the theme."

The identification of an unknown theme can be very tricky, though. I remember my first effort. I have a shellac disc privately recorded in 1962 by George W. Mitchell, called "Songs For Children", on which he sings nursery rhyme-like verses to tunes by Grieg, MacDowell, Offenbach, etc. His tune to "The Friendly Cow" was familiar, but I couldn't name it. So I turned to the **Dictionary** - without luck. I later found my answer while playing through some guitar arrangements by American guitarist Charles de Janon. The tune was Anton Rubinstein's "Melody in F" - which *is* in the **Dictionary** but which I didn't find for the simple reason that Mitchell had fit two eighth notes to Rubinstein's opening quarter note.

In fact, a reviewer in the April, 1949 edition of **The Gramophone** wrote, "I have tried this index out with friends of varying degrees of musicality (including professionals) with, I regret to say, no more than 20 percent success." So I let the **Dictionary** languish on the bookshelf, figuring it to be mainly a source of frustration. The themes themselves are teensy - only a few measures long (2.75" inches worth, to be precise) - so how useful could they be?

Well, surprise, surprise, the answer is *very* useful! I eventually discovered that it is an extraordinarily satisfying experience to follow along in the **Dictionary** while listening to a musical work. Just having a few measures of each of the main themes brings order to the whole shebang. The second half of a theme is sure to be much like the first, and then the whole thing gets repeated, so right there you got 16 measures of music for the price of 4. Same thing goes for the 2nd theme, and the 3rd... When the composer gets into "development" you can easily see which theme he's noodling around with. And you can't miss the recapitulations. What a book! Makes me feel like I know something about music! Honestly, in many ways, having just those few notes is far better than wrestling with a full score. (Imagine - holding the equivalent of thousands of scores in one scrawny hand!)

There are all kinds of fun discoveries to be made just browsing the **Dictionary**. It's also useful in that it gives the precise identification of a work. For instance, the "Melody in F" mentioned earlier is Rubinstein's Op. 3, No. 1. It gives the original instrumentation for the piece, and the composer's dates. What more could you ask? If it's not still in print, visit every used book sale until you find a copy.

Fine and dandy, you say, but what does all this have to do with the guitar? Not much, that's for sure, but maybe a guitar presence near absolute zero is itself interesting. The themes chosen for inclusion in the book were considered by the compilers to be the 10,000 most important themes in all of music up to 1948, so which, if any, guitar works are represented? Here's the complete list: "Tema y Variaciones" (on "Guardame las Vacas") by Narvaez (actually composed for vihuela); "Petite Suite in D Minor" by de Visee; and "Fandanguillo" by Turina. See the extracts in the accompanying figure. Why just these, and no others which were important enough, say, to have been recorded by Segovia before 1948, I can't speculate.

Of course, we can find tons of themes in there which we know well in guitar arrangement - me more than you since I have a thing for well-aged guitar transcriptions. It's interesting to see such a theme placed naturally within its own family of important musical themes created by the same composer.

The **Dictionary** also includes two chamber works involving guitar: "Entr'acte" for flute and guitar by Ibert; and two sonatas for violin and guitar by Paganini. It lists 7 works for lute and strings by John Dowland. Finally, I'll round this off with two pieces naming the guitar in the title, but not written for guitar. These are: "La Guitarre" for harpsichord by Louis Claude Daquin (d. 1772); and "Guitarre" for piano by Moritz Moszkowski (d. 1925.)

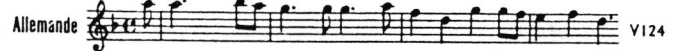
NARVAEZ, Luis de (16th Century)

Tema y Variaciones, Guitar



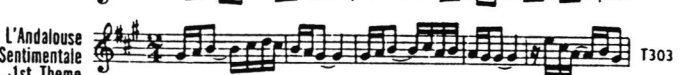
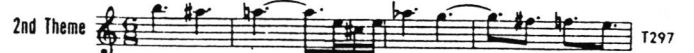
VISÉE, Robert de (17th-18th Century)

Petite Suite in D Minor, Guitar



TURINA, Joaquin (1882-)

Danzas Fantásticas, Orch. or Pft.



Fandanguillo, Guitar By permission of Associated Music Publishers, Inc.

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A DICTIONARY of MUSICAL THEMES

by

HAROLD BARLOW and SAM MORGENSTERN

(1948)

Here are all of the solo guitar themes among the 10,000 entries.

THE FLOATING ANCILLARY ANTS - a representative system:

Musical score for 'THE FLOATING ANCILLARY ANTS' featuring three guitar parts (gtr 1, 2, 3) with various techniques like gliss., vib., and dynamic markings (p, f). Includes a box with the number 15.

MANUEL BARREUCO'S MASTER CLASS

Levine School of Music

Nov 3, 2001

World-renowned guitarist Manuel Barreuco gave a master class at the Levine School of Music in November 2001. I first heard Manuel play at my college, Drexel University, in Philadelphia in 1976. I was going to brag here about having heard him before anyone else in attendance at the master class - before many of them were born, even. (Yikes, maybe that's not something to brag about!) Then I pulled out the old program and read that he had already been active in the Washington area the previous couple of years - as guest artist with the National Symphony several times, for example. So maybe I wasn't first; so what?

I went to that 1976 concert never having heard of him, and I was completely blown away. Even with being nothing of a music critic, I knew I was hearing absolute perfection. I also remember hearing gasps from the people sitting behind me. One, a violinist who had never heard a classical guitarist before, shook her head in amazement. She said she had *never* heard anything like that before, ever.

For years afterwards, whenever the question of "who's the world's greatest guitarist?" came up, I had a ready answer: Manuel Barreuco. Even though I am not so inclined to get caught up in that question any more, darn if I can think of anyone obviously more deserving of the title.

From the master class, here are some things to think about:

You must place the right-hand fingers on the strings very carefully. If the string jumps from the flesh to the nail, you will lose control of the sound.

In general, the right hand is not capable of playing rest strokes in the melody and bass simultaneously. You have to decide which you want more. Of course, the melody will usually get it. Decide exactly where you want free stroke and rest stroke; winging it is a recipe for disaster. It's a good idea to start working on a piece using all free strokes, and then decide where to add color.

Since there's no 7th string you can't play a rest stroke on the 6th string with a right hand finger. However, Manuel has used his right-hand thumb as the stopper for a finger to come to rest on.

Be aware that vibrato produced by yanking the string back and forth across the fingerboard only raises the pitch. It may make your note or chord sound sharp. On the other hand, a back and forth tug in the direction of the string raises and lowers the pitch, giving a nicer vibrato centered on the correct pitch.

Whenever you make a mistake, you must consciously ask yourself what happened.

Slow practice is valuable for musical and technical reasons. It ultimately gets us where we want to go faster. Practice as slowly as necessary to allow the brain to think of *everything*.

Don't use movements of the left hand to poke the strings; make the fingers do that work. Manuel demonstrated a trill exercise for each of the left hand fingers in turn while the other three stayed clamped to the fingerboard.

You want to make the melody sound like a different voice - like a different instrument entirely. Think about the *line* - not "chord-note-chord," or "note-note-chord," for example. Manuel admits this is difficult. At one point he said, "I think the guitar is really hard to play. I think it borders on impossible, as a solo instrument." I've been thinking much the same thing lately, but then, I'm just a hack. It was a bit of a surprise, coming from one of the world's greats. I'd be interested to hear Manuel expand on this sometime.

-Donald Sauter

Jad Azkoul's New CD Release

Many of you probably remember Jad Azkoul. He lived in the Washington area for several years and was a strong supporter of the WGS. He also wrote the article on Abel Carlevaro in the last edition of the WGS newsletter. Jad is now living in Geneva and has just released his second CD "De Granada a Buenos Aires". It won't be available in the US for a while, but he is making it available to WGS members. For more information on purchasing his new recording, please e-mail me at WGS001@aol.com

-Kevin Vigil

Correction and Apology

In the article accompanying "The Galop of the Goblins" I stated that Bob Wysong had never heard a Neapolitan 6th in the music of Fernando Sor. In fact, the first Neapolitan 6th that jumps to his mind when the subject comes up is the one in Sor's Op. 35, No. 14 ¹. Sorry, Bob! Since then I also noticed one in Sor's E-minor arpeggio exercise, Op. 35, No. 24 ².

- Donald Sauter

1. See **Classic Guitar Technique, Volume II**, Aaron Shearer, page 153. Or see **Music for Classical Guitar**, Harvey Vinson, page 54.

2. See **The Classical Guitar**, Frederick Noad, page 66. His performance note 3 coincidentally and conveniently marks the Neapolitan 6th chord.

WGS CLASSIFIED

1992 Concert guitar by Fabio Raghianti who makes guitars and violins in Italy. Spruce top, Rosewood sides and back. Very sweet and balanced sound, light action, classy hard shell case. There is one very minor (short) crack appeared during the first year, otherwise it has been stable ever since. It was \$2,200 when new, asking \$1,400. Call Jay Juan at work (703) 948-3216 or email jjuan@erols.com.

Guitar Society Email List

The Washington Guitar Society has recently setup an email list to announce its events and concerts. If you would like to receive email announcements and reminders for Guitar Society events, then please sign up for our email list by sending an email to wash_guitar-subscribe@yahoogroups.com or by visiting http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wash_guitar





FROM THE PRESIDENT

Many thanks to those who are now making the newsletter a team effort. This will give us a bigger and better newsletter. We would like to have more contributors of articles, reviews, music, etc. Please let us know if you would like to be a part of this effort. I hope to see all of you at 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 location specified under each calendar of event. There is plenty of free parking.

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