



# The Washington Guitar Society Newsletter



Number 72  
Summer 2005

## Basic Hand Anatomy and How it Affects Us

By Keith Filppu

### Basic Anatomy:

Each finger is controlled by two sets of tendons; flexor tendons which allow the motion of making a fist, and extensor tendons, which allow extending the fingers outward. The position of the wrist and hand can change the length of the tendons. By dropping the wrist downward the flexor tendons become longer since they stretch over the backhand side of the wrist. By bringing the wrist up the extensor tendons become stretched on the palm side of the wrist.

Near the wrist all of these tendons are held together by the "retinaculum", a super strong sheath. This sheath allows for greater hand strength by combining the individual tendons into a group. But by having all the tendons working together for greater strength it reduces their individual flexibility. Some people may have a smaller or larger "retinaculum", that will affect their flexibility. Having a thicker "retinaculum" or one that extends

farther back into the arm will mean decreased flexibility, whereas having one that is thinner and shorter will mean greater flexibility.

The "palmaris longus" is a muscle which helps in flexing the wrist. This structure is vestigial (like the appendix), meaning since we don't need it anymore not everyone is born with this muscle.

### How it Affects Us:

Try holding your arm straight out with your wrist straight and your palm facing down. Try flexing and extending your fingers, you should find this rather easy. Now drop your wrist. Try flexing your fingers so that you make a fist, you should find this harder because the flexor tendons are stretched out over the top of the wrist. Now bring your wrist up so that your knuckles come back toward your body. Try extending your fingers all the way, this should be a little more difficult because the extensor

*continued on page 3...*

## From the Desk of the Editor

By Bob Wysong

Welcome to the newly revised Washington Guitar Society (WGS) newsletter. I want to first thank Bill Dykes for all his efforts in putting the past issues together and his help in transitioning to the new one. The newsletter is an excellent way for all guitarists and aficionados in the local Washington, DC area to stay attuned to what is going on and where!

With this issue, you will notice some additions and changes as we have redesigned this newsletter. Please take a look at the "Take Note" section that will list upcoming meetings, concerts, and notices. As always, we need your help in keeping not only this newsletter active, but the Society together as well. One way to keep down mailing costs would be for us to send this newsletter out via e-mail. If you would like to sign up to receive our letter this way, please contact me.

I am also soliciting feedback on what members expect from the

*continued on back page ...*



**On the Airwaves: WCVE -- 88.9FM now has a weekly feature called "Hour with the Guitar" which airs every Sunday morning from 7 - 8 a.m. and is hosted by Grete Dollitz.**



**WASHINGTON GUITAR SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Please complete the following:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phones: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please let us know a little bit about you:

Are you a (check all that apply):

- Music Performer
- Music Teacher
- Music Hobbyist
- Luthier
- Guitar music lover
- Student
- Interested in ensemble playing
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Can we:

Include this information in our membership directory?

Yes: \_\_\_ No: \_\_\_

May we call upon you to volunteer on occasion?

Yes: \_\_\_ No: \_\_\_

Annual Memberships Dues are as follows:

Regular membership -	\$15.00
Family Membership -	\$20.00
Non-Local Membership -	\$10.00
Additional contribution to the John E. Marlow Guitar Recital Series (optional)	_____

Total amount included with this application: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks/money order payable to the Washington Guitar Society and send to:

Ms. Beverly Ross, Treasurer  
The Washington Guitar Society  
4607 Guilford Place  
College Park MD 20740

**Thank You for Your Support!**



## Basic Hand Anatomy and How it Affects Us

By Keith Filppu

*continued from page 1...*

tendons are stretched out on the palm side of your wrist. Compare those again with just having your wrist straight, you should find that it was much easier to do all necessary finger movements with a straighter wrist. Of course playing with a perfectly straight wrist is nearly impossible, but the closer to it we can be, the easier our fingers can move.

Everyone's hands are different and there is nothing we can do to

change what nature gave us. With the size of the "retinaculum" there is a trade-off either way. If it is thicker and longer, then it will be easier to play chords that require a lot of strength, yet harder to move your fingers independently. On the flip side, if it's thinner and shorter there will be greater finger independence, but less overall hand strength.

It may be possible to see if you have the "palmar longus" by simply flexing your hand, and bringing it towards your wrist. If you see a thin muscle going into the center of your palm that bulges out a little bit then you probably have it. Some people may have the "palmar longus" in one arm, in both arms, or neither. If you have it, it will mean that you have slightly more wrist and hand strength than if you don't, but it is not a huge factor in hand strength.

### End Notes:

Anatomy of the hand, and the entire body is incredibly complex, and this article only touches on the many aspects that make up hand and finger movements. The hand especially, is one of the most complicated and intricate parts of the body. In the brain the "motor cortex", which is the part of the brain devoted to movement, plays a huge role in hand movements. The majority of this section of the brain is actually devoted to the fine movements of the hands and arms, and to vocalization.

Our anatomy is something we are born with and can't change, the only thing we can do is try to understand what we are given so we can make the best use of it.

*\* a special thanks to Holly Frost, anatomy professor at NVCC, for all of her help in writing this article\**

*Keith Filppu has been playing classical guitar since age 15 when he picked up his first guitar. He is currently a junior in college and has been enrolled in classes at NVCC and George Mason; he is transferring to James Madison University in the fall, where he will be a performance major. He has spent the last two years studying under Dr. Kevin Vigil. He recently won first place in the annual music competition at NVCC, and has been awarded a scholarship from Fairfax County's Spotlight on the Arts Program. He also teaches at several Music and Arts stores in the area.*



palmaris  
longus  
tendon



## GASPAR SANZ – MASTER OF THE BAROQUE GUITAR

by John Patykula

Gaspar Sanz (1640-1710) has been called “the outstanding man of the guitar in seventeenth century Spain.” In spite of this praise, surprisingly little is known about his life. What is known about this great artist and his travels offers insights into his development as a guitarist and composer.

Sanz was born in 1640 to a prosperous family in Calanda in the province of Aragón, a region of Spain that is known for its folk dances. He attended the University of Salamanca where he studied theology, philosophy, and music. He graduated with a Bachelor of Theology degree and later became a Professor of Music there. Sanz traveled to Italy where he studied organ and theory with G. C. Carissimi and guitar with Lelio Colista. For several years, Sanz was organist of the Spanish Viceroy in Naples, a city whose popular dances would later inspire some of his guitar works.

Sanz later traveled to Rome where he became acquainted with the music of the great Italian guitarists Foscarini, Granata, and Corbetta, whom he called “the best of all.” Besides the new techniques learned by Sanz in Italy, the popular music of Italy would exert considerable influence on him as a composer.

Sanz returned to Spain and was appointed instructor of guitar to Don Juan, the natural son of King Philip IV and Maria Calderon, a noted actress of the day. It was for Don Juan that Sanz wrote his first book, Instrucción de Música sobre la Guitarra Española, first published in 1674 in Saragossa. A second book entitled Libro Segundo de cifras sobre la guitarra española was printed in Caragoza in 1675. A third book, Libro tercero de música de cifras sobre la guitarra española, was added to the first and second books, and all three were published together under the title of the first book in 1697. It is his masterpiece and, at the same time, his only known contribution to the repertory of the guitar. Yet from these inspired pages, songs and dances of three hundred years ago remain favorites with classical guitarists and audiences alike.

### THE MUSIC OF SANZ

Instrucción de Música sobre la Guitarra Española by Gaspar Sanz is a complete instruction book covering all the aspects pertaining to the Baroque guitar. It provides the player with a wide selection of pieces in both *punteado* (“plucked”) style and *rasqueado* (“strummed”) style.

This is not a book for the simple strumming of chords—it is a serious contribution by a well-trained virtuoso who desires to impart his knowledge and love of music and the Baroque guitar. Sanz’s book is for those who wish to excel in this art.

The majority of the pieces are dances in the *punteado* style. The stately Pavanas and Galliardas are reminiscent of sixteenth century Spanish court music and the aristocratic vihuelists. The Españoleta, one of Spain’s most beautiful melodies, is treated in variation form, a form that the Spanish composers excelled in; this haunting melody inspired many Baroque guitarists to compose their own versions. The Canarios, perhaps the most popular of all of Sanz’s works, is a musical portrait of the lively, syncopated dance from the Canary Islands. Other dances like the Villano or “village dance” and Jacaras, inspired by the songs of the ox-cart drivers, offer attractive musical snapshots of Spanish life of that time. Sanz projects a strong nationalistic trait through these selections.

While the Spanish flavor dominates, Sanz’s book also presents a “cosmopolitan” view of musical life in the Baroque era. Baile de Mantua, La Tarantela, and Saltaren are inspired by the



music of Italy, while La Minina de Portugal, Zarabanda francesa, and Jiga inglesa musically represent other European countries. And while the popular elements govern the majority of the selections, an explanation of figured bass realization for the Baroque guitar raises the level of musical sophistication of this book over the other tablature books of the time. Sanz even includes a brief section on the rules of fugal writing, demonstrating their use through an actual sketch of a fugue composed specifically for the Baroque guitar. These important aspects suggest that Sanz was writing for a more musically advanced segment of the Baroque guitar population and, perhaps, was encouraging further serious study of all the aspects of the theory of music.

#### THE MUSIC OF GASPAR SANZ IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The music of the Spanish Baroque guitarists and the sixteenth century vihuelists attracted the attention of the Spanish musicologist Felipe Pedrell (1841-1922). Pedrell was a proponent of the Spanish nationalistic movement and inspired composers like Isaac Albeniz (1860-1909), Enrique Granados (1867-1916), and Manuel de Falla (1876-1946) to

write works inspired by the folk music and the great musical heritage of Spain.

For the guitar, the work of Emilio Pujol (1886-1980) is especially noteworthy. His numerous editions of the old masters like Sanz, transcribed for the modern guitar, have been popular for decades. Pujol, who was regarded as an authority on vihuela and Baroque guitar music, followed the principles for transcribing music established in 1909 by the International Congress on Musicology in Vienna. Through his scholarly and artistic work, the music of Sanz became a staple of the modern classical guitar's repertory.

The music of Sanz inspired the great Spanish composer Joaquin Rodrigo (1901-1999) to create a unique work for the repertory of the classical guitar. Rodrigo's Fantasia para un Gentilhombre, composed in 1954 for the Spanish virtuoso Andrès Segovia (1893-1987), is one of the most popular and colorful works for the guitar and orchestra. Through the creative energies of Rodrigo, the music of Sanz was reborn and clothed in modern harmonies.

The Fantasia para un Gentilhombre is one of those rare works which has helped to secure the place of the classical guitar in the concerto repertory of most orchestras.

The music of Gaspar Sanz holds an important place in the history of the guitar. One cannot treat this music with indifference. This music is the inspired work of a true artist—one who “knew well the art and science of composition. His music is beautiful and in it one can feel the nobility of his spirit.”

*John Patykula is the Assistant Chair and Head of the Guitar Program at Virginia Commonwealth University.*



# TAKE NOTE:

*Upcoming calendar of events*

News from Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Music

## **LEGENDARY GUITARIST HEADLINES 2005 GUITAR AND OTHER STRINGS SERIES**

British guitar virtuoso John Renbourn will headline the 2005 *Guitar and Other Strings Series*. One of the world's finest fingerstyle guitarists, Renbourn has created a fusion of British and Celtic folk music with influences from jazz, ragtime and pre-Renaissance music—a style often called "folk-baroque." Also featured on this year's series will be the instrumental duo Al Petteway and Amy White, harp guitarist Stephen Bennett, and the VCU Community Guitar Ensemble. 88.9FM WCVE is the media sponsor for this series.

### **VCU's 2005 Guitar and Other Strings Series (13<sup>th</sup> season)**

- \* Friday, July 8, 8pm **Al Petteway and Amy White**, ([www.alandamy.com](http://www.alandamy.com))
- \* Friday, July 15, 8pm **John Renbourn**, ([www.john-renbourn.com](http://www.john-renbourn.com))
- \* Friday, July 22, 8pm **Stephen Bennett**, ([www.harpuitar.com](http://www.harpuitar.com))
- \* Sunday, July 24, 4pm **The VCU Community Guitar Ensemble**



All concerts will be in the Vlahcevic Concert Hall in the Singleton Performing Arts Center, 922 Park Avenue, Richmond, VA. For ticket information, please call the VCU Department of Music at 804-828-1166. Tickets go on sale June 27. If you have a friend who would like to be added to the *Guitar E-News* mailing list, have him/her contact John Patykula at [jtpatyku@vcu.edu](mailto:jtpatyku@vcu.edu). For more information about the VCU Guitar Program and the VCU Department of Music, go to [www.vcumusic.org](http://www.vcumusic.org).



**July 16 - 24, 2005**

**The 2005 Alexandria Guitar Festival concert series has moved to:**

The Old Presbyterian Meetinghouse  
(OPMH)  
316 S. Royal Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-3716

#### Concerts:

**Julian Gray & Nathan Fischer**  
*with guest flutist*  
**Betsy Trimber**  
Thursday, July 21, 8:00 p.m.

**Duo Erato**  
**Martha Masters & Risa Carlson**  
Friday, July 22, 8:00 p.m.

**Participants Concert**  
TBA (Free Admission)

**Ricardo Cobo & Nicholas Goluses**  
Saturday, July 23, 8:00 p.m.

For more information, visit:  
[www.alexandriaguitarfestival.com](http://www.alexandriaguitarfestival.com)

#### **Sixth Annual Adult Piano, Classical Guitar & Music Appreciation**

**Workshop**  
July 27 – August 5, 2005  
Varna, Bulgaria

Additional information: For questions regarding the workshop, please contact Anne & Paul Williams (301-838-2756, or at [annewilliams@starpower.net](mailto:annewilliams@starpower.net)). For questions regarding more specific curriculum, please contact Spencer Fellows, Music Director at [spfel@aol.com](mailto:spfel@aol.com)