

The Classical Guitar Society of Washington, D.C.

Editor - Steven Seidenman

November 1992

No. 2

SOCIETY OFFICERS

The Classical Guitar Society of Washington, DC:

President : Morey Rothberg (301)495-2703
VP & Editor : Steven Seidenman
Secretary : Peg Dawson
Treasurer : Mark Lewonowski

Articles and announcements of events related to the classical Guitar are welcome and should be sent to
Editor, Classical Guitar Society of Washington DC
1748 Featherwood St, Silver Spring, MD 20904

SOCIETY EVENTS

The Classical Guitar Society of Washington, DC Series (all performances are at the Silver Spring Library, 8901 Colesville Rd, one-half block north of Spring Street at 2:00 pm):

November 7 - Kevin & Barbara Vigil, guitar and flute. Program will include works by Mozart, Leisner, and original compositions by Kevin Vigil. Please bring your guitar for post-concert activities.

AREA EVENTS

The D'Addario Foundation has announced its 1992-3 concert series. The Washington, DC series will be held at the Annunciation Church, 3810 Massachusetts Ave, NW at 8:00 pm. The series performers here will be:

Nov 13 The Assad Duo
Jan 15 Jad Azkoul (see related biography in this newsletter) performance will include works by Augustin Barrios, Lourival Silvestre, Auster Piazzola, and Isaac Albeniz.

Feb 12 Guitar Trek (quartet)
Mar 26 David Russell

Tickets are available at the concerts for \$15.00 per person or full series tickets are \$45.00. Contact Connie McKenna at (202) 296-7992 or (202) 296-3509 for information. Make checks payable to The D'Addario Foundation and send along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

The D'Addario Foundation
c/o Connie McKenna
Suite 406, 1330 New Hampshire Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Steven Seidenman
Borders Bookshop (Rockville, MD)
11500 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD
December 13 at 2:00 pm

The Baltimore Classical Guitar Society Concert Series 1992-93 at the Walters Art Gallery, 600 N. Charles St, unless otherwise indicated:

Oct 18 RICHARDO COBO at 3:00 pm. Mt. Vernon Place United Methodist Church, N. Charles St. & Mt. Vernon Place.

Nov 15 DAVID TANENBAUM at 3:00 pm.

Feb 7 DAVID LEISNER at 3:00 pm.

Apr 24 PACO DE MALAGA & ANA MARTINEZ (Flamenco Guitarist and Dancer) at 8:00 pm.

Individual tickets will be on sale one month before each concert: \$12 - general public, \$10 - BCGS, ASTA, Walters members, students &

seniors or subscribe to the series at an average cost of \$9 per concert. Full series subscriptions are available at \$36.00 each. Make checks payable to The Baltimore Classical Guitar Society and mail to:

4607 Maple Ave
Baltimore, MD 21227

For more information call (410) 242-2744.

November's Performers

Classical Guitar Society of Washington DC

Barbara Seilheimer Vigil is currently a piccoloist with The United States Army Band ("Pershing's Own") in Washington, D.C. She received her MM from the University of New Mexico where she studied with Frank Bowen and served as his graduate teaching assistant. She received her BM, magna cum laude, from Southern Methodist University where she studied with Claire Johnson.

Ms. Vigil has performed with the Fairfax and Santa Fe Symphonies and appeared as a soloist with the Sewanee Festival Orchestra, the SMU Symphony and the SMU Wind Ensemble. As a member of "Pershing's Own", she has performed at the Capitol, the Washington Monument, the White House and the Kennedy Center.

"...sensational on the flute, but when the piccolo appeared it was out of this world...heavenly."

-Efrin Tinoco

FM 90 WEVL, Memphis, TN

Kevin J. Vigil received his BM from Memphis State University where he studied with John Stover and his MM from Yale University where he was the teaching assistant and student of Benjamin Verdery. He also studied with David Leisner at the Bowdoin Summer Music Festival. While in school, Mr. Vigil won top prizes in several competitions, including the ASTA National Solo String Competition.

Mr. Vigil is an active chamber musician and

soloist in the Washington, D.C. area, has taught master classes in Connecticut and Washington, D.C., and is on the faculties of Northern Virginia Community College, the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop and the historic Guitar Shop. He has been published in the ASTA Stringendo, Soundboard Magazine, and has recently been recognized among the "...leading American writers" and as an "...eminent teacher" by the European Guitar Teachers Association Journal, for which he has also written. .

"...natural, both technically and conceptually."

- Efrin Tinoco

FM 90 WEVL, Memphis, TN

Duo Con Brio has performed throughout the United States, including Connecticut, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Washington, D.C. Their repertoire spans from the Renaissance to the present day. Some of the works they perform have been transcribed from other instrumentations and many have been written specifically for flute and guitar.

AREA ARTISTS

We feature this month two exceptional teacher/performers who are relative newcomers to Washington, but not to the classical guitar world internationally.

JAD AZKOUL will be performing in concert January 15th as part of the D'Addario series (see "Area Events"). Born in New York City of Lebanese parents, he has studied abroad with many eminent guitarists, most notably with Abel Carlevaro in Uruguay. He was tenured professor of guitar at the Conservatoire Populaire de Musique in Geneva, and has opened a studio in Falls Church since arriving here this year.

Azkoul gives master classes and concerts in many

countries. The past three years, he has been a featured performer and teacher at the annual guitar festival in Krakow, Poland. Since 1985 he has directed an annual two-week guitar workshop in France. While he learned principles of gesture and movement in playing classical guitar from Abel Carlevaro, Azkoul has developed his own special techniques for practice and performance. He has studied the relationship of gesture to rhythmic sense and has found that any musical outcome depends on the quality and kind of gesture used. He emphasizes the least amount of muscular effort to get the maximum musical result and stresses the development of listening skills to hear and use the full range of tones on the guitar.

Azkoul is planning a workshop to be held in the Washington, D.C. area on January 16th and 17th.

Azkoul's new CD is devoted exclusively to Latin American music: "Latin Illustrations for Guitar" (Forlane Records), available in Europe and soon to be distributed in the United States. It is also available now directly from Azkoul for \$17.50 (including shipping and handling). Azkoul may be contacted at (703) 534-1532. His address is 2711 Welcome Drive, Falls Church, VA 22046.

GRANT GUSTAFSON is a native of Minneapolis who came to the Washington area after nearly twenty years of study, performance, and teaching of classical guitar in Germany. He moved to West Germany in 1973, and was a student at the Bremen Conservatory from 1974-1981. While at the conservatory, he studied with the American guitarist Bernard Hebb, earning bachelor's degrees in guitar pedagogy and music pedagogy and a M.A. in guitar performance.

Gustafson directed the guitar department in a music school in Herford, Germany, from 1980-1990, while performing frequently as a soloist, in ensemble settings, and as a vocal

accompanist with his wife, Lory Ann Darnell, who is a soprano. He has made concert appearances in Germany and Poland. In the United States, he has concertized in San Diego, Minnesota, and at the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. He has also recorded performances for broadcast on Radio Bremen, Radio Poland, and West German Radio.

In 1982 Gustafson co-founded the annual guitar festival in Rotenburg, Germany and returns there regularly to teach and perform. He has published eight books for guitar with Schott Publishing Co., including a new book of his own compositions, "Tangos for Two--American Style (for two guitars)", available now in Europe and soon to be distributed in the United States. He has published and performed the works of the noted Chilean composer, Gustavo Becerra-Schmidt. He presented the opening lecture-recital on "the compositions for and with guitar from Gustavo Becerra-Schmidt" at the 1991 Guitar Festival of the Americas in Miami. Gustafson is also a performing lutenist.

Gustafson teaches privately in Leesburg, where he lives, and at the Shenandoah Conservatory in Winchester. He performs Wednesdays and Thursdays from 6:30 until 9:00 at the Terramar restaurant, 7800 Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda. He is also a dealer in hand-made guitars from Germany. He can be reached at (703) 777-3726. His address is 304 Edwards Ferry Road, NE, Leesburg, VA 22075.

COMPUTER CORNER

A local FREE Computer Bulletin Board System has recently been started which is dedicated to interests of the Acoustic Guitar. Newgrass City,BBS provides a worldwide communications forum for announcing events and concerts, classified ads, services, message discussions with other musicians, downloadable computer programs, information exchange, radio/tv shows

concerning acoustic guitar, a clearinghouse for information, and catalog services. The BBS is managed by

Beckie and Wally Aldred
Newgrass City, BBS
26821 Dix Street
Damascus, MD 20872

Voice phone: (301) 414-0122

Bulletin Board Numbers:

(301) 414-2383 for up to 14.4K baud (8-N-1)

(301) 414-2358 for up to 2400 baud (8-N-1)

Computer synthesizer software is finally beginning to recognize the guitar as a valid instrument. So far this recognition is mostly for the Acoustic and electric styles. Hopefully, it will not be long before we will be seeing software which will produce tablature and support (classical) guitar notation. Below are described two computer software products which include specific support for the guitar:

Power Chords (version 1.0) - is a MIDI music program geared toward the guitar player rather than the piano player. It includes an excellent interactive tutorial and can export finished songs as standard MIDI files. The user creates chords by clicking on the frets of a graphical guitar fingerboard to generate fingerboard chart symbols which can then be dragged into different measures of a work to create its harmonies. Typing the chord name will cause the program to build the draggable fingerboard charts for the user. and the user can customize the number and tuning of the program's graphical strings.

To sound the chords the user fashions picking or strumming patterns, which can be saved as icons and are then dragged into the work below the chord charts. In addition a separate bass and drum track can complement the guitar chords.

Power Chords, version 1.0, \$84.95. Requires: 2MB RAM, Microsoft Windows 3.0 with Multimedia Extensions or Windows 3.1, MIDI interface or synthesizer. A mouse is recommended. Howling Dog Systems, PO Box 80405, Burnaby, BC, Canada V5H 3X6. Phone: (604) 436-0420. Fax: (604) 436-0425.

(reference PC Magazine, Vol 11 No 18, October 27, 1992)

MusicTime will allow the user to compose, edit, play back, and print sheet music using standard musical notation with a provision to include guitar chords. Music can be played back instantly through a sound card or MIDI. The user can automatically transpose notes into any key and include lyrics. Publishing-quality sheet music can be output. MusicTime is available for PCs with Windows or the Macintosh. MusicTime's compatibility includes the Miracle Keyboard, Sound Blaster Pro, Media Vision Pro Audio Spectrum, and Thunderboard, and AdLib Gold.

Passport Designs, Inc. 100 Stone Pine Rd., Hlaf Moon Bay, CA 94019. Phone: (415) 726-0280. Fax: (415) 726-2254.

Master of the Ten-String Guitar

by Steven Seidenman

Among contemporary classical guitarists, there is one well known individual who occupies a singular position; so much so, that one could go as far as calling him one of the three or four greatest guitarists in the world. In addition, he not only single-handedly re-established the use of the ten-string guitar, but tapped its hitherto unforeseen potential. Those who are already familiar with the artist in question know, of course, that I could only be referring to Narciso Yepes.

Having made his formal debut at age 27 with the

famous "Concierto de Aranjuez," by Rodrigo, his was one of the first recordings of the work, and one of the best.

He has an innate feel for the Spanish idioms, and has introduced many important works by Spanish and South American Composers, most of them written expressly for him. Notable among the latter are Salvador Bacarisse, a disciple of Falla. Bacarisse's works seem to push the guitar to its physical limits. It is with utter awe that one listens to the stupendous scale runs found in his works, as rendered by Yepes. It is not just the sheer velocity with which he plays such passages that is so impressive, but also the elegance, the cleanliness, and the purity of sound that he is consistently able to maintain in such passages. There are other guitarists who are often noted for their ability to play fast scales (not that this alone could ever be sufficient to make a great artist). The truth is that Yepes has the last word when it comes to quick scales (at least among classical guitarists, as opposed to flamenco guitarists).

Early in his studies the pianist/composer Vicente Ascencio contended that perfectly rhythmical, fast, legato scales could not be played on the guitar. Yepes was motivated by the challenge to develop a technique utilizing all the fingers of the right hand, instead of the customary two traditionally used, to play fast scale passages. Ascencio's response? "Ah, so it is possible."

Ever since his well-known conversion to the ten-string guitar in 1966, for which he adopted a rather unique tuning for the extra bass strings, this instrument has become more commonplace, particularly for those who play a lot of Baroque music. It was after careful study and research that Yepes finally approached Jose Ramirez with his proposal to construct his ten-string guitar. As the story goes, Ramirez's first response was: "Impossible!", to which Yepes countered: "Difficult, but not impossible." Ramirez: "It cannot be done." Yepes: "Then I'll simply have my

ten-string guitar built by another luthier." Ramirez: "Okay, Okay. Difficult, but not impossible." And the rest is history.

Although ten-string guitars were used in the 19th century, most notably by Johann Kaspar Mertz, Nikolas Makaroff, and even Ferdinando Carulli, it was not until Yepes' example that it came to be used as widely as it now is among concert guitarists, although its practitioners still represent a small percentage of them. Some guitarists have found the eight-string guitar to be a happy compromise between the six- and ten-string guitar, but nothing can compare to the tremendous resonance and contrapuntal potential that is derived from those extra four bass strings, for those who can contend with the considerable "dampening" problems associated therewith.

The great advantage to these extended range guitars is that they allow one to make more faithful transcriptions. This is particularly valuable in playing Baroque music, in which transcriptions (for six-string guitar) often require bass note transpositions, significantly altering the original bass line. Thus the extra bass strings allow one to play such works as the Bach Lute Suites, the Weiss Fantasias, and the Scarlatti Sonatas as they were written.

Yepes sometimes conveys the impression more of a scientist than a musician. His renditions may at times seem rather cold and mechanical, and while his playing is usually remarkably precise, his tone is often harsh and flat. On the other hand, his technical precision, clarity, and consistency of conceptual approach give his interpretations a convincing rhythmic drive and elegance uniquely his own; e.g., as in his Bach and Scarlatti. Sometimes his approach suits the music he is playing, sometimes not.

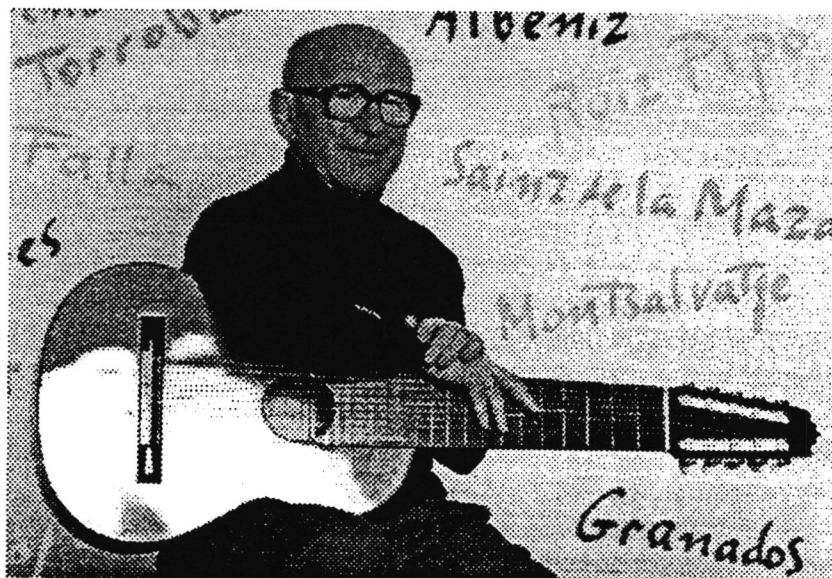
Whatever may be said about his playing, it is at the very least artistically interesting and certainly worth listening to. The 1978 version of his

recording of Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez" is one of the finest available, perhaps destined to become the definitive one. From his performance of this work at the Kennedy Center some years ago, his affinity for this music was readily apparent. His recording of the Villa-Lobos Etudes is also excellent. Yepes has also made recordings devoted to the music of Bach, Sor, Tarrega, Scarlatti, and the Bacarisse and Halffter concertos.

The following is a partial discography. All reference the Deutsche Grammophon label with LP numbers given:

- * Bach Lute Music, Vol. 1 #2530 461
and Vol. 2 #2530 462
- * Bach and Weiss #2530 96
- * 3 Bocherini Quintet, op. 50 #2530 069
- * Rodrigo: Concierto de Aranjuez and Fantasia para un Gentilhombre #139 440

- * Rodrigo: Concierto Madrigal (for two guitars and orchestra) #2531 208
- * Sor: 24 Etudes #139 364
- * Villa-Lobos: Guitar Concerto #2530 718
- * Villa-Lobos: Etudes and Preludes #2530 140
- * Musica Espanola (music of Albeniz, Granados, Falla, and Turina) #2530 159
- * Spanish Guitar Music of Five Centuries, Vol. 1 #139 365 and Vol. 2 #139 366
- * Canciones Populares Espanolas: Songs by Falla and Lorca, with Mezzo-soprano Teresa Berganza #2530 875
- * Guitarra Romantica: Music by Giuliani, Sor, and Tarrega #2530 159
- * Vivaldi: Concertos for Lute and Mandolin, with Takashi and Silvia Ochi, mandolins #2530 211



NARCISO YEPES with his Ten-String Classical Guitar
(photo from libretto in Deutsche Grammophon, DG423 699-2)