

THE CLASSICAL GUITAR SOCIETY
OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Editor: Steven Seidenman

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No. 4

SOCIETY OFFICERS

The Classical Guitar Society
of Washington, D.C.

President: Morey Rothberg
(301) 495-2703

Vice-Pres.: Steven Seidenman

Secretary: Peg Dawson

Treasurer: Mark Lewonowski

Articles and announcements
relating to the classical
guitar should be sent to the
Editor, Classical Guitar
Society of Washington, D.C.,
8411 Flower Ave., Takoma
Park, MD 20912

SOCIETY EVENTS

Jan 16 - The John Rodgers
Guitar Quartet and String
Artistry (guitar and violin
duo). House concert at the
home of Lucille Foster at 7:30
p.m. (See "January's
Performers," this page.) FREE.
Open stage afterward.

Feb 6 - The Imperial Guitar
Quartet, Silver Spring
Public Library, 8901
Colesville Road, at 2:00 p.m.
FREE. Open stage afterward.

AREA EVENTS

Jan 15 - Jad Azkoul, concert,
Annunciation Church, 3810
Massachusetts Ave., NW., at
8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$15.00.
Call (202) 296-7992 or (202)
296-3509 for information.

Jan 16-17 - Jad Azkoul,
master class at the Academic
Center, George Washington
University. Call (410) 789-
3527 or (301) 926-4738.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Morey Rothberg

At our February 6 meeting, we
will hold elections for Vice-
President and Secretary. The
term of office for both is two
years. Nominations are
limited to members of the
society. Interested
individuals should contact me
by January 15, 1993.
Nominations are also invited
for the four one-year
positions presently open on
our executive board.

JANUARY'S PERFORMERS

The John Rodgers Guitar
Quartet, consisting of John
Rodgers, Eloise Brandt,
Barbara Scherokman, and Suly
Uberman, was formed in 1987.
They have performed at
numerous locations in the
Washington area, including
appearances at Borders
Bookshop and the National
Cathedral.

John Rodgers has been teaching
in the Washington, D.C.,
metropolitan area, for more
than 25 years. He teaches at
the National Cathedral School,
St. Alban's School, the Chevy
Chase Community Center and the
Music and Arts Center. He
studied with John Marlow,

919 Lamberston Drive
Ct → Arch
2 1/4
Ht on Lamberston
274-46 in 1/4

Sophocles Papas and Jose Tomas. The other members of the group are long-time students of Rodgers and have performed with other ensembles in the area. They plan a program of music by Boccherini, Telemann, Schubert, and Vivaldi.

String Artistry, consisting of Cathy Fleming on classical guitar and her sister Phyllis Fleming on violin, was formed in Detroit where both women grew up. Combining a commitment to Beethoven and Stevie Wonder, they served as session musicians on recording dates and as principal players in the Detroit Community Symphony. Cathy is a former Michigan assistant state attorney general now working as a librarian in the Copyright Office at the Library of Congress. Phyllis, a former music teacher and education coordinator with the Detroit Symphony, now works as a professional musician in the Washington, D.C., area. They plan a program of Bach, Faure, seasonal music and American folk music.

Lucille Foster, a new member in the society, will host this recital in her home in Wheaton, Maryland. Space is limited to 15 people. Call Morey Rothberg at (301) 495-2703 by January 9 to reserve a place and get directions.

ENSEMBLE PLAYING - II
by Cathy Fleming

Last month, I described the valuable experience I gained as a member of a guitar

ensemble formed by my teacher in Detroit, Michael Stockdale. In addition to being a fine guitarist, Stockdale provided his students valuable insights on ensemble playing that I would like to share with you.

The benefits of ensemble playing to the individual guitarist are many and long-lasting. Ensemble playing emphasizes synchronized playing and maintaining a steady beat. It develops confidence, provides the understanding that comes through shared expression, and highlights a player's strengths and weaknesses.

Being part of an ensemble places obligations upon the individual members. You should be familiar with the other players' parts as well as your own. Read through the music, and try to sing it, before you pick up your instrument. This last step helps to convert thought into action and teaches you to express your part like a voice.

You must show commitment to the ensemble by being on time for rehearsal, not playing your part to yourself while someone else is talking, and taking time for warm-up exercises by yourself or with the group. You must be focused as well. Meditation can help, as well as thinking through the entire piece.

It's not all work, obligations and burdens. Ensemble playing is a great way to make music and socialize with people who share your appreciation for

music. If you are interested in an "ad hoc" ensemble experience, call Cathy Fleming at (202) 546-8364.

MUSICIANSHIP AND TECHNIQUE
by Jad Azkoul

Everyone will agree that good technique is essential to the art of good music making. What is less obvious, however, is that the development of a good technique requires good musicianship! There is no paradox here. My own experience with students at the Geneva Conservatory and in master classes, as well as with myself, has proven time and time again that genuinely productive results are only obtained by linking every exercise with a musical notion.

Productive practice is equivalent to efficient problem solving. Every passage is actually made up of a complex set of movements, so that locating the component part or parts responsible for our inability to play it well should be top priority. Modifications to the component part(s) must always be made WITHIN THE ORIGINAL MUSICAL FRAMEWORK, and then the parts can be built up and put together until the original passage is arrived at. The type of modifications made, the order used to build up the parts, and the time taken on each part, will depend on the specific needs and ability of each student.

Playing becomes smoother and easier and learning takes much less time. However,

until the guitarist experiences first-hand that a more efficient way of practicing exists, the old method of repetition will likely win the day.

All those who have learned this way of studying realize that their previous method of repetition of exercises (scales, slurs, arpeggios, etc.) in an abstract way--without reference to any musical ideas--was sterile. They now know that practicing an extract from a musical piece will only yield the desired result if practiced within its original context of rhythm, dynamics and phrasing.

If this were not true, how could we explain frustrating experiences like the following: the difficulty of playing very easy 2-octave scales with open strings when put into the context of Villa-Lobos' Etude 7 and Prelude 2; or the uneven slurs in Tarrega's Adelita; or the lack of excitement in the simple but beautiful rhythms of Villa-Lobos' Etude 8; or making some Bach work sound like interminable exercises; and so on.

We should understand the term "technique" in a broader sense: mechanical skills that are intimately linked to a musical intention. The instrumentalist who cultivates musicianship and makes use of it in his or her daily practice session will acquire true technique, and that is the source of real music making.