

❖ Classical Guitar Society of Washington, D.C. ❖

No. 7 Editor: Steven Seidenman

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April's Performers

Guitar and Recorder Greet Spring Season

The society program for April features **William Anderson** on guitar and **Kathryn D. Ellis** on recorder. William Anderson graduated from the American University in 1978 with a degree in music, and pursued a career as a guitarist and music instructor from 1978 through 1983. He performed as a guitar soloist and in a variety of string ensembles, in addition to teaching music in private study and in classroom situations. He also received a master's degree in music performance in 1982 from the American University. Anderson studied guitar under John Marlow for a total of six years.

In 1983, Anderson started a career at the Library of Congress as a braille music cataloger. He currently works in the Serial Record Division at the library as the CONSER Program Specialist, and is now resuming his music activities as an amateur guitarist. Anderson, who lives in Gaithersburg, is married and the father of two young children.

Kathryn D. Ellis attended Wellesley College as an undergraduate and received her master's degree in library science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Coming from a musical family, she has studied music since childhood, including violin, piano, and recorder, as well as singing in choruses and choirs. Her primary interest is in medieval-renaissance music. She studied this music avidly while at Wellesley and performed with the

Wellesley College Collegium Musicum and other groups. Since graduation, she has been more involved with sea music and music of the British Isles, turning from recorders to penny whistles and flutes. She is currently an intern at the Library of Congress and a member of the library's recorder club.

Ellis and Anderson will be playing "Greensleeves to a Ground"--a set of variations on "Greensleeves"--as well as some other Elizabethan tunes, and Anderson will play Manuel Ponce's "Variations and fugue on Folies d'Espagne." □

Calendar of Events

Apr 2 - Richard Savino with the Artaria Quartet, 8:00 p.m. at the University of Maryland Conference Center, College Park, Maryland. Information and phone-charge: (301) 403-4240.

Apr 3 - William Anderson and Kathryn D. Ellis, 2:00 p.m. at the Silver Spring Public Library, 8901 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, Maryland. FREE. Information: (301) 495-2703.

April 4 - Larry Snitzler, 4:00 p.m. at the Washington Plaza Baptist Church, Lake Anne Center, Reston, Virginia. Tickets are \$10 and \$5. Information: (703) 759-5334.

Apr 6 - David Coester, 7:00 p.m. at the Northern Virginia Community College, Manassas Campus, Room 214. FREE. Information: (703) 257-6681.

Apr 16 - Kevin J. Vigil, guitar; with

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Want to Join a Guitar Ensemble?
Call Cathy Fleming at (202) 546-8364.

Barbara Vigil, flute and piccolo; Jim Roberts, guitar and percussion; Ada Saunders, English horn, 7:00 p.m. at the Northern Virginia Community College, Manassas Campus, Room 214. FREE. Information: (703) 257-6681.

Apr 18 - Memorial Concert for John Marlow 4:00 p.m. at All Souls Episcopal Church, 2300 Cathedral Ave., N.W.. Tickets are \$15.00 each (buffet reception included). Information and tickets: (202) 331-7333 or (301) 654-6874.

Apr 30 - John Stover, 7:00 p.m. at the Northern Virginia Community College, Manassas Campus, Room 214. FREE. Information: (703) 257-6681.

May 1 - John Stover and Adam Tully, solo guitars, 2:00 p.m. at the Silver Spring Public Library, 8901 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, Maryland. FREE. Information: (301) 495-2703.

May 4 - Students of Kevin J. Vigil, 12:30 p.m. at the Northern Virginia Community College, Manassas Campus, Room 214. Information: (703) 257-6881.

Classical Guitar Society of Washington, D.C.

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

From a Technical Standpoint

By Don Sauter

The main reason I audit guitar master classes is for the fun of it. I enjoy listening to a variety of pieces played by a bunch of guitarists who are more or less at my level. I particularly enjoy hearing a piece shape up under the guidance of a good teacher. If I actually walk away having learned something I can apply to my own playing, so much the better; that's just icing on the cake.

Jad Azkoul's master class, given at The George Washington University on January 16 and 17, was a winner all around. Azkoul's enthusiasm, his wealth of knowledge, and his sense of humor made it virtually impossible for anyone's attention to droop even slightly throughout the eleven hours (split over two days). A nice feature of this workshop was the 'mini-recitals' portion, wherein several guitarists in succession played their pieces, complete with bows.

In terms of technical tips, the master class was a gold mine. Jad passed on many of the ideas of his well known teacher, Abel Carlevaro. I often found myself itchin' to get to my guitar and try out some of these ideas. Here are a few of those nuggets.

Most importantly, Jad demonstrated that it is possible to play with virtually no unwanted string noise. Fundamentally, one simply lifts the fingers off the string (using the left arm to facilitate this), and then shifts to the new position. In case you're worried about what that does to your legato, Jad showed that it is not necessary to have unbroken sound in order to achieve legato.

Some noises call for other actions. For instance, in the case of using a right hand finger to dampen a string that has just been set in vibration. What is important is to LISTEN. The rule is

simple: When you hear a noise, eliminate it. Although I've made attempts to reduce noise, I usually wound up discouraged. If my playing is still far from noiseless, at least now every squeak gets cursed (silently).

I have always played with nearly straight right-hand fingers for two reasons: First, because it feels perfectly natural that way, and secondly, in order to get a full, round tone. Well, that's all changed now. Jad demonstrated over and over the value of the bright, clear sound one can get from a curved finger. In fact, the idea is to use a midway, compromise curvature for the right-hand fingers, from which you can either straighten or curl them more, depending on the type of sound you want.

Jad explained that chords on three adjacent strings played with the "i," "m" and "a" fingers should be played with those fingers held together, like "one big finger." Even though held together, the player may curl them individually to get whichever sound he wants from each string. His demonstrations of this were amazing.

There were a couple of interesting points regarding thumb strokes. For a nice evenness when playing successive bass notes with the thumb on adjacent strings, aim for a smooth, continuous forward motion over the strings involved, without pausing in between or stopping on the next higher one. Regarding quick sweeps with the thumb over two or more strings, Jad demonstrated how the last note can be given its own distinct sound by making a minute adjustment to the thumb angle at the last nano-second. Typically, you may want that last note to sound bright and clear to differentiate it from the lower, accompanying notes.

There were a couple of left-hand tips: To avoid those half-step "bumps" during a glissando, reduce the pressure on the string. For smooth arpeggios, "arpeggiate" the placement of the left hand fingers in sync with the right hand, when possible.

For me, Jad's most remarkable demonstration was his muted notes. Indeed these proved a vastly more flexible device than your basic pizzicato played with the side of the right hand settled on the strings at the bridge. They involved a plucking action followed by a dampening action. This allows the player to give any sound quality he wants to the muted note; clear and bright to full and round. It also allows one to control even the onset of muting, from near-instantaneous to any delay and, what's more, to undo the muting while the note is still sounding. Jad admitted that this was the only technique mentioned that was not not simple. I concur.

All of Jad Azkoul's suggestions regarding musical interpretation greatly improved the pieces in question. Among them: Don't overuse an effect even if it sounds nice the first few times; otherwise it will soon wear out its welcome. Don't arpeggiate harmonics, which are pretty feeble as it is. And finally, give emphasis to dissonances. "We gotta hear dissonances--they sound so good!" □

New Guitar Compact Discs

Tower Records
2000 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
(202) 331-2400

Christopher Parkening plays Joaquin Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez" and William Walton's "Five Bagatelles for Guitar and Orchestra."
Angel CD-54665, \$14.99.

Kazuhito Yamashita plays J. S. Bach, "Lute Suites Arranged for Guitar," Crown Classics CD-12, \$14.99.

Serenade Record Shop
1710 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
(202) 638-5580.

Narciso Yepes and Godelieve Monden play guitar duos.
RCA CD-60764, \$14.49. □