
Washington Guitar Society

No. 20



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April/May 1995

THE ALEXANDRIA GUITAR QUARTET MINUS ONE for WGS in April

Originally, Stephen Turley from Baltimore was scheduled to perform for the WGS April meeting. Due to circumstances beyond his control, Stephen will not be able to play.

On less than a weeks notice, 3 of the 4 members of the Alexandria Guitar Quartet have agreed to take the stage with a combination of solos and ensembles.

The Alexandria Guitar Quartet has a diverse repertoire including music from Brazil, Cuba, Europe and the United States, and all periods of music from Renaissance to the present. The quartet was chosen to perform with the George Mason Orchestra in the 1994 George Mason Concerto Recital. Three members of the quartet were winners in the 1993 Montpelier Cultural Arts Center Recital Series as a trio guitar ensemble. They were finalists in the 1993 and 1994 D'Addario National Guitar Summer Workshop Ensemble Competition. the quartet is involved in supporting local composers and performing their works. All the members of the Alexandria Guitar Quartet study guitar with Jeffrey Meyerriecks.

Tomothy Evans holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Guitar Performance at George Mason University and is pursuing a Masters degree at GMU in Guitar Performance. He was a finalist in the Philadelphia Classical Guitar society Solo Competition for 1993. Mr. Evans currently teaches classical guitar at Sterling Academy of Music.

Jeffrey Baker earned a Bachelor Degree in Electrical Engineering and a Minor in Music from Virginia Tech in 1986 where he studied string bass with Patrick Simpson. He is currently studying at George Mason University for a Masters Degree in Guitar Performance. Mr. Baker teaches guitar at Wakefield and Providence Recreation Centers in Fairfax County.

Sean Dodson earned his Bachelor of Music degree in guitar Performance from George Mason University in 1994 and is pursuing a Masters degree at GMU in Guitar Performance. In 1993, he was chosen to perform as a soloist in George Mason Concerto Recital. Mr. Dodson currently teaches classical guitar at the Fairfax Conservatory of Music and Art, and at the Columbia Institute of Fine Arts.

Don't miss this exciting last minute change to our April 8th meeting. It will take place at Bethesda Public Library at 2 p.m.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Washington Guitar Society continues to grow in membership and activity. We have been fortunate to be able to present many very accomplished musicians at our monthly programs at the Bethesda Library as well as concerts of the highest quality at the Reid Foundation Building in Washington, DC. Our newsletter consistently improves in format and content and informs the area about performances and workshops.

I am very excited about two particular concerts headed our way. The first is guitarist Ivan Rijos from Puerto Rico. Ivan won the GOLD Competition this past Summer. That is just the tip of the iceberg, however. To find out more about Ivan, read his biography on page 2. The WGS will present Mr. Rijos in concert on Sunday, May 21 at the Reid Foundation Ball Room. You won't want to miss this one.

The other concert that I am thrilled to announce is a WGS presentation of Scott Tennant. As many of you probably already know, Scott is a member of the famous Los Angeles Guitar Quartet. We will publish a full biography and details of his September performance in the next newsletter.

This has been a very exciting year for guitar in the Washington Metropolitan area with the John E. Marlow Guitar Recital Series kicking off to a brilliant first season. A word of thanks to its organizers Tim Healy, Regis Ferruzza, Wade Dunn, and the performers and audience. It is great to have such a wonderful series established in the memory of such a influential person, John E. Marlow.

If you want to keep up to date on the latest guitar activities in your area, be sure to join or renew your membership to the Washington Guitar Society today! Our quality is high and our dues are low (\$12 per year). Take a moment to fill out the application on the back so you don't miss another event or issue from the

In this month's WGS Newsletter Issue..

Interesting Music Reviews...

Performance Announcements...

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Special Events and Entertainment...



IVAN RIJOS PERFORMS
on May 21
Don't Miss This One!

A native of Rio Grande, Puerto Rico, Ivan Rijos began his guitar studies with professors Ruben Guzman and Gamalier Roman. He was educated at the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music where he obtained his Bachelor's Degree (Cum Laude) under the tutelage of Leonardo Egurbida in guitar and Joaquin Vidaechea in Chamber music. There he received the Arturo Somohano Medal for excellence in music interpretation.

Rijos studied with Manuel Barrueco and Ray Chester at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore. He has taken master classes with Leo Brouwer, Jose Tomas, Eliot Fisk, Nicholas Goluses, David Russel, Angel Romero and Ernesto Bitteti. In 1987, he was selected to participate in the Andres Segovia master classes given at the Manhattan School of Music, where Maestro Segovia invited Rijos to play for him at a recital given in his honor.

Ivan Rijos has won many distinguished guitar competitions, performed at many prestigious music festivals and has appeared with orchestras as a soloist. Ivan Rijos has performed concerts in the United States, Mexico, Spain, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Martinique and Curacao. Rijos has taught guitar at the Boston Conservatory of Music, at the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music and at the University of Arizona in Tucson where he is currently studying towards his Master's Degree with professor Thomas Patterson.

Competitions:

1994 - First prize in the Sholin Guitar Competition at the University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

1994 - First Prize in the Alhambra International Guitar Competition in Alcoy, Valencia, Spain.

1994 - First Prize in the GOLD Competition of the Lakes Classical Guitar Festival, Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, Ohio.

1994 - First Prize in the Pro Musicis International Award, New York (entails his presentation in recitals in major concert halls in Paris, Rome, New York, Boston, Los Angeles and Washington.)

1994 - Recipient of The Magnifico award was created at the University of Arizona to honor an artist achieving truly superior distinction.

1993 - President's Concerto Competition of the University of Arizona in Tucson.



*Ivan Rijos Performs for WGS May 21
 at the Reid Foundation Ball Room
 at 3:00 p.m.*

1990 - Top Prize at the Concurso Internacional di Chitarra in Milan, Italy.

1990 - Finalist at the Concurso Internacional di Chitarra in Milan, Italy.

1986 - First Prize in La Casa de Espana International Guitar Competition in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

1984 - First Prize in La Casa de Espana International Guitar Competition in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

1982 - Special Prize for best interpretation of Latin American Music at the Havana International Competition in Cuba.

1981 - First Prize Concurso Nacional Jose I. Quinton.

Festivals 1983-1994

Casals Festival, San Juan, Puerto Rico
 Festivale Mondial de la Guitarre, Martinique
 Boston Guitar Festival, Boston, Massachusetts
 La Guitarra Hoy, Mexico D.F., Mexico

Festival Internacional de Guitarra, Havana, Cuba
Festival de Guitarra de Guanajuato, Mexico

Orchestras:

Boston Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, Boston Massachusetts
Valencia Symphony Orchestra, Valencia, Spain
Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, Regular Season
Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, Casals Festival
Conservatorio de Musica Symphony, San Juan, Puerto Rico
University of Arizona Symphony Orchestra, Tucson, Arizona
Padre Antonio Soler Chamber Orchestra, San Juan, Puerto Rico

The Washington Guitar Society is very proud and honored to present such a fine guitarist in concert. This concert will take place on Sunday, May 21, 1995 at the Reid Foundation Building, 1319 18th St. NW in Washington, DC (near Dupont Circle Metro). Tickets will be \$15 for non-members and \$12 for members. You can order your tickets from:

The Washington Guitar Society
c/o Wayne Cutrell
2301 Jefferson Davis Highway
Suite 726
Arlington, VA 22202

Or you can purchase your tickets at the Guitar Shop, located at 1216 Connecticut Ave., NW in Washington, DC.

This concert is expected to be a sell out, so buy your tickets NOW so that you will not miss out on, "the concert of the season!" If there is enough demand, Ivan Rijos will perform another concert on the following day.

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JEFFREY MEYERRIECKS/ MYRNA SISLEN Concert in Review

On January 27, the John Marlow Guitar Recital Series had its second of four concerts. This featured Washington's own Jeffrey Meyerriecks and Myrna Sislen with guest artist Alan Wade. Jeffrey Meyerriecks presented the first half of the concert while Myrna Sislen and Alan Wade presented the second half.

Jeffrey Meyerriecks is the first American to win one of Latin America's major guitar competitions, the Palestrina International Guitar Competition. Jeffrey has a multifaceted involvement in the world of music. He is a Washington-based composer of works for his instrument and performs regularly with several well-known ensembles including the Washington Guitar Quintet. He was a member of the Lenox Ensemble, a group specializing in modern improvisational expressions. As a faculty member of George Mason University, he is a highly regarded and much sought after teacher of the guitar.

Mr. Meyerriecks performed works by Piazzolla, Tedesco and several South American composers. His performance was communicated well to the audience as he maintained a relaxed and enjoyable light program from beginning to end.

After the intermission, Myrna Sislen appeared with Alan Wade. Myrna Sislen is one of the leading female classical guitarists in the world. She is a member of the very successful Washington Guitar Quintet. Ms. Sislen has toured extensively giving sold-out performances throughout Europe, Canada, Central and South America as well as the United States. She has published eight books of arrangements and transcriptions for guitar. Myrna Sislen was the first female classical guitarist to give a solo concert at the Kennedy Center. Of her Carnegie recital hall debut the New York Times called her, "...a versatile and fluent musician..." with "...naturally lyrical impulses..."

Alan Wade is Associate Professor of Theatre at George Washington University. Most recently Mr. Wade directed the critically acclaimed Washington professional premier of Ted Talley's Terra Nova for the Washington Stage Guild. Last Summer he appeared with television star Linda Purl at the Olney Theatre in Noel Coward's Fallen Angels. Mr. Wade has been a member of the Arena Stage Company and has appeared on television in A Man Called Hawk and Robert F. Kennedy and His Times.

If you were not in attendance, you may be wondering what instrument Mr. Wade plays. Well, to my knowledge, he doesn't. He narrated Tedesco's Platero and I as Ms. Sislen accompanied him.

Platero and I, by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, is a collection of

compositions for narrator and guitar based on a book of prose by Juan Ramon Jimenez who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1956. The book, originally in Spanish and first published in 1917, is a series of lyrical impressions about a little donkey named Platero, to whom the poet, "I" confides his innermost thoughts and feelings.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco set twenty-eight of the verses to music in 1960. Soon afterwards, Segovia recorded ten of them without narration, since much of the musical score sounds complete by itself. The music and the text independent of one another are highly expressive and moving; when put together, they become a little-known masterpiece.

Ms. Sislen and Mr. Wade did a wonderful job creating images in the minds of the audience with their performance of Platero and I. This is only the second time I have heard this piece. It should be done more often. Thanks Myna and Alan!

This concert was well received by a full audience, which demanded an encore from both Jeffrey Meyerriecks and Myrna Sislen.

This makes for yet another success for the John E. Marlow Guitar Recital Series. If you haven't made it to one of their concerts, you've missed out!

Kevin Vigil

Eric Swanson Performs for WGS on May 6

For our May 6 meeting, the WGS is proud to present Eric Swanson. Eric Swanson began guitar studies at age 12. Two years later he was awarded a scholarship to study at Santiago de Compostela, Spain, with Jose Tomas. Mr. Swanson has worked with Elliot Fisk, Juan Mercadal while earning a B.A. at the University of Miami and with Ricardo Iznaola while earning a M.A. from the University of Denver. Mr. Swanson was the recipient of the Outstanding Performer Award at the University of Miami and served as the teaching assistant at the University of Denver. He has performed in master classes with Manuel Barrueco, David Tannenbaum and Gilbert Biberian.

Eric will be performing at the Bethesda Public Library at 2 p.m., for more information, see the calendar of events.



MICHAEL BARD REVIEW

with guest artist Kevin Vigil

Washington Guitar Society featured Michael Bard, guitarist, at the March 11th meeting. Bard, who holds a Masters from Arizona State, displayed artistry, versatility, sensitivity and confidence during this "sampler" program.

Bard opened the first of the carefully-balanced sets with Andante Grazioso, op. 11 by L. Moretti followed by an Allegro from F. Sor's Sonata, op. 22. His playing was clean and expressive. It reflected meticulous attention to phrasing and employed a full range of always-appropriate, tasteful, tone colors. Bard's interpretations of these works demonstrated that music of the classical "fathers" need not be dull, mechanical or boring. The homage to the past continued with the Bach Cantata, "Sheep May Safely Graze." Bard kept multiple voicings intact during the incredible "ballet" that took place on the fingerboard.

After the intermission, N. Koshkin's "Usher Waltz" almost stole the show. Bard explained the thematic material built around Edgar Allan Poe's story, "The Fall of the House of Usher," which outlines a man's descent into madness. A recurrent waltz theme signals the solace sought by this victim as he plays his guitar. Bard skillfully, yet playfully, executed myriad special effects. No grimaces, no grunting and no goofs. The music spun off the guitar, as if by magic, and much to the audience's delight.

Next, WGS President, Kevin Vigil, joined Bard in the world premier (!!!) of Prelude and Feud for two guitars. The piece, composed by New York-based James Park, highlights the competitive streak that lurks in the musician. Beneath that calm exterior - enter, the oh-so-peaceful Prelude - is a caged animal just waiting for the opportunity to lay waste to the "opponent" - enter, the Feud. Bard and Vigil worked well together and brought this premier off to the credit of the composer. May Park be encouraged to write more music for the guitar, and may these two local artists find more time to work as a duo.

Bard is a lively performer. He smiles alot, even as he is playing difficult passages. His engaging stage presence brings to mind an early Benjamin Verdery.

There was a Rube Goldberg appearance to Bard's stage equipment that I found mildly distracting. The high stool from which he performed certainly kept him in view of those who sat in the back rows. Unfortunately, however, he used a small box in addition to a foot stool. The set-up took on the appearance of a perch. When Bard performs on the more traditional concert circuit, some energy should go into resolving this minor problem in a way this is comfortable for the performer yet aesthetic. Bard also teaches. He was at ease as he fielded

questions from the audience. The well-chosen comments preceding each piece helped to give the listeners a focus for reflection and enhanced the total experience.

Officially, the program concluded with A. Barrios' "Sueno en la Florest." Temolo to burn is my only comment regarding Bard's performance of this familiar piece. Welcome neighbor! May we borrow half a cup?

Cate Fleming

REVIEW OF BERTA ROJAS

On February 24, the International Conservatory of Music presented the third of four John Marlow guitar recitals of this season, an all-Barrios program performed by Ms. Berta Rojas of Asuncion, Paraguay. In calling Barrios the best of all guitar performer-composers, John Williams is probably right; I can barely imagine creating as nice a program from the works of any other individual - maybe Ponce.

Ms. Rojas appears quite comfortable before an audience. Throughout most of her performance I felt absolutely at ease both watching and listening. The sound of her guitar, although not terribly strong, was rich, warm and rounded in tone. Her posture is a bit unusual - the head of the guitar being elevated considerably higher than shoulder level - but it works for her.

She did a good job with Allegro Sinfonico, Julia Florida and Cueca in the first half. Julia Florida was gorgeous. After intermission, Mazurca Apasionata, Las Abejas, Maxixe, and La Catedral were impressive. I particularly liked La Catedral; she managed to maintain the allegros relentless tempo sure-handedly and without allowing it to drive her too hard. However, her approach to the two Waltzes Op.8 (Nos. 3 & 4) which opened the program left me wanting an explanation. A waltz rhythm is not so difficult to understand. Also, beyond its initial melody, Danza Paraguay (No. 3) just wasn't there. No meter, and far too tame.

All in all though, this was a charming and well considered program. I would enjoy hearing Ms. Rojas again. *Stuart Paine*

JESSE TAN = GUITARZAN!

Jesse Tan was the featured artist for the WGS February meeting. Jesse is a medical doctor by profession but boy can he play! Being self taught shows by his lack of cleanliness, but his musicality comes shining through in a very vivid and exciting way!

I am Jesse's new fan. I wish more professional guitarists would throw away their concepts of control and just cut loose like him. Whether playing a tango by Piazzolla or a waltz by Barrios, there is something very characteristic of Dr. Tan's style. He has a great time playing and it shows! This, to me, makes Jesse Tan the ultimate hobbist of the guitar well deserving of the title "GUITARZAN"! I haven't been on the edge of my seat like this since the last time I saw Julian Bream!

Kevin Vigil

CHRISTOPHER TEVES CONCERT REVIEW

In the last issue of our newsletter, Christopher Teve's biography was published with the request of someone to present him in concert as he was passing through town. The day after the newsletter was mailed out, Myrna Sislen promptly called about presenting him at George Washington University. THANKS MYRNA!!! Thanks to her, Christopher Teves was able to perform to an audience of over fifty people.

With mature artistry, Christopher immediately held his audience captive. He opened with Twelve Etudes by Leo Brouwer and connected them as if they were composed in three or four movements. This was quite exciting, as I kept wondering what he would do next.

The remainder of the program consisted of Sonatina Meridional by Ponce, Three Spanish Pieces by Joaquin Rodrigo, Variations on a Moldavian Hora by Ian Krouse and two pieces written especially for him. These pieces were Capriccio by Sally Chen and Tango and Drone by Richard Jordan Smoot.

It was refreshing to hear so much new music. The pieces by Chen and Smoot were quite involved, but Christopher Teves guided his listeners by the hand (or their ears) through the many changing textures and rhythms new to them.

After the concert, there was a nice reception. Starting off the reception was a contest. The contest was to guess Christopher's age. While he is twenty-nine, it is the opinion of others that he looks ten years younger. I am sure that this will change, however, as he has just learned that he is going to be a father. I'm sure that'll give him some grey hair! Congratulations Chris for a wonderful performance and also for the new addition to your family!

Kevin Vigil



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NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

At our February meeting, the WGS held elections for the officers of Vice-President and Secretary.

Michael Bard is now our Vice-President and Rob Nathan is our new Secretary.

Thanks goes out to Steven Seidenman and Maurice Sanders as they have faithfully served these offices for the past two years!

REAL CHEAP THINGS YOU CAN DO...

to make our guitar society a big success

- * Show up at meetings.
- * Play for the open-stage hour.
- * Bring refreshments.
- * Submit articles to the journal. Do you have any original compositions or arrangements you'd like to share?
- * Host a drop-in ensemble session.
- * Typing. Enter handwritten or typed journal contributions onto computer disk.
- * Take notes at meetings that feature a workshop. Put together a summary for the next issue of the journal.
- * Put society promotional material in music stores.
- * Donate a guitar magazine subscription to the society library.
- * Librarian. Organize our journals and other publications received, and control the lending of whatever material the society accumulates.
- * Historian (perhaps same person as the librarian.) Archive material relating to society activities, and the D.C. area guitar scene as well. Collect concert programs, promotional materials, newspaper ads, etc.
- * (Add anything I'm forgetting.)

JOIN THE WGS

OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

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THE VERY OLDEST GUITAR MUSIC

The oldest surviving guitar music is found in Alonso Mudarra's publication from 1546 called Tres libros de mvsica en cifras para vihuela. This is the third oldest vihuela publication, following Luis Milan's in 1536 and Luit de Narvaez's in 1538. There are six pieces for 4-course guitar in Mudarra's book.

Of special interest is the first of these six pieces, a fantasia written for "gvitarra al temple viejo" - guitar in the old tuning. And believe you me, if the tuning was already old by 1546, it is *old*. This tuning is like the highest 4 strings on the modern guitar, but with the 4th string tuned down one step to C.

Mudarra's piece turns out to be our only surviving piece of published music for renaissance guitar tuned this way. Juan Bermudo, writing in 1555, tells us that this tuning was "more suitable for old ballads and strummed music than for modern music." When you tune your 4th string down a step and strum the open four strings, you'll understand why renaissance jazz musicians were so fond of the major 7th chord. (That's a joke, son.)

The last of the 6 pieces for guitar by Mudarra was his rendition of the "Romanesca: o guardame las vacas" (look after the cows for me.) This is for "gvitarra al temple nvevo" - guitar in the new tuning. This "new tuning" is the same as the first four strings of the modern guitar.

The vihuelists were the first to compose instrumental theme and variations. "Guardame las vacas" was a popular theme for composing variations on. Mudarra wrote another set for the vihuela, and 3 other vihuela composers did, too. You might like to compare Mudarra's 4-course guitar version with Narvaez's well-known vihuela version which can be found, for example, in Frederick Noad's Renaissance Guitar anthology. I suggest you first tune your guitar like the vihuela - that is, tune the 3rd string down a half-step. ~~Play the Narvaez version, but on the middle 4 strings of your guitar.~~ This very nicely transposes Mudarra's piece to the same key as Narvaez's.

* see note.

Mudarra's tablature was of the upside down sort. (The only vihuelist who published right-side-up tablature was Milan.) The 2 pieces here have been reset in an easy-to-read, right side up tablature. Spaces, rather than lines, represent strings, and rhythm values are given for every note or chord. The original tablature for "Guardame las vacas" can be seen in the book Guitars (Evans, p107). Mudarra's complete Tres Libros is published in a very nice facsimile edition by Editions Chanterelle. Information in this article was gathered from guitar histories by Grunfeld, Turnbull, Bellow and Evans.

Don Sauter

Romanesca: o guardame las vacas

Guitarra al temple nvevo. Quickly.

Alonso Mudarra. Libro I, XXIII.

1

5	3	5	3	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	6	5	3	3	3	3
6	6	6	6	5	3	5	3	5	6	5	3	2	2	6	6	5	5	5
3				5		5	3			2	2	2		3		5	5	5

7

1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	3	1	0	5	3	5	7	8	7
3	3	2	3	3	3	1	0	3	2	3	1	0	6	3	5	6				
0	2	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	0	2	0	3	2	0	3					
							4		0	3	2	0	3							

12

8	6	5	0	1	3	5	3	5	3	1	0	5	5	3	6	3	5	6		
5	8	6	5	3	2	3	3	1	0	6	5	0	2	0	6	5	0	2		
	7	5	0					2	3	1	0	2	0	2	0	5	0	2		
												3		3						

17

1	0	0	1	3	5	6	5	3	2	5	3	3	5	7	9	10	6	6	9	7	9	7
3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	0	3	6	0	1	3	5	6	6						
0	2	3	0	0	0	5	5	3	2	0	3	2	3	5		9	7	9	7			
																0						

24

9	7	5	5	6	5	3	3	5	7	9	10	9	7	9	10	1	0	3	1	0	2	3	2	3
5	8	6	6	0	2	4	5											3	1	0	2	3	2	3
7																				0	2	3	2	3
																				0				

Fixes (M=measure r=rhythm s=string): All rhythm values have been quartered. M14r4s1 was 9. M20 double bar added.

Suggestion: First tune your guitar like the vihuela - that is, tune the 3rd string down a half-step. Play the Narvaez version like this. Without retuning play Mudarra's version, but on the middle 4 strings of your guitar. This very nicely transposes Mudarra's piece to the same key as Narvaez's.

Primer tono. Medium tempo. (4) = C

Primer tono. Medium tempo. (4) = C

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

Fixes (M=measure r=rhythm s=string): All rhythm values have been halved.