

# Washington Guitar Society



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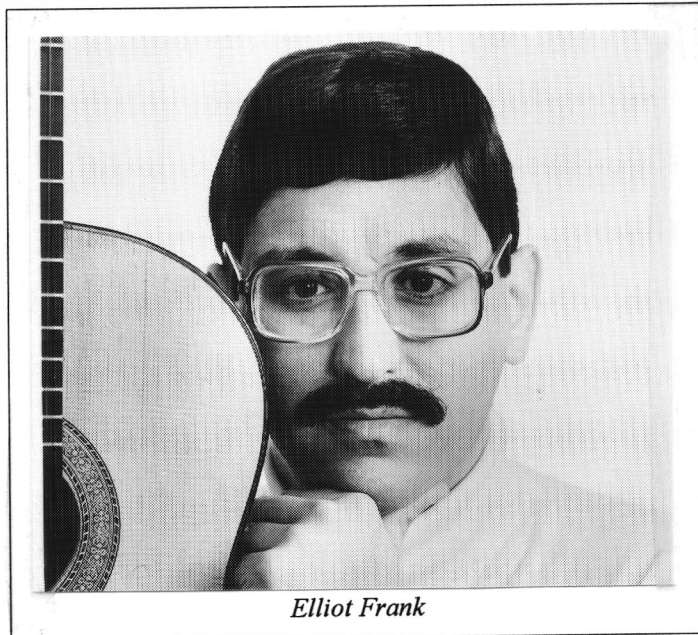
## ELLIOT FRANK WRAPS UP THE WGS SEASON

The Washington Guitar Society will be wrapping up its 1995-96 season with a performance by Elliot Frank on Friday, May 17 at 8 pm at the Dorchester Tower Rooftop Garden. Dr. Frank's recital will be the last in a series of seven concerts that the WGS has presented in conjunction with the Dorchester Towers. Previous performers in this series have been: Scott Tennant, Ignacio Rodes, The Alexandria Guitar Quartet, Jason Vieaux, Duo Firenze (Robert Trent and Pamela Swenson Trent) and William Feasley.

Elliot Frank began his study of the guitar at the age of 19 in Atlanta under the tutelage of Charles Duncan. Despite this late beginning, he progressed quickly and became the first guitarist to receive an Atlanta Music Club scholarship at their annual auditions. Dr. Frank received the first Bachelor's Degree in guitar performance to be awarded by the University of Georgia where he studied with John Sutherland. He was subsequently awarded a grant by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for further study in Spain with José Tomas. He has also performed in master classes with John Marlow, David Russell, Pepe Romero, Oscar Ghiglia, and Manuel Barrueco.

After his return to the U.S., Dr. Frank went on to earn his Master's Degree in performance at Southern Methodist University under the direction of Robert Guthrie. During this time, he served as Artist-in-Residence for the city of Dallas. He recently earned the Doctor of Music degree in guitar performance at Florida State University where he studied under the direction of noted pedagogue Bruce Holzman and served as his teaching assistant.

Dr. Frank has also participated in North Carolina's Visiting Artist Program. He has performed Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* as a featured soloist with the North Carolina Symphony. He has appeared in solo recitals for the Dallas Guitar Society, the Piedmont Guitar Society, the Richmond Classic Guitar Society, the Museum of Colonial Art in Caracas, and at the National Guitar Institute in New York. He is an authority on Latin American guitar music and has performed lecture/recitals pertaining to the music of Antonio Lauro for the Guitar Foundation of America at international festivals in Pasadena and New Orleans. He is a prize winner in two international competitions, the Concurso Internacional de la Casa de España in San Juan, and the Concurso Internacional de Guitarra, "Alirio Diaz," in Caracas.



Elliot Frank

Dr. Frank was selected to initiate the guitar studies program for East Carolina University and is currently teaching there in addition to maintaining an active concert schedule. His students have earned awards on the state, regional, and national levels, including national first prize of the Music Teacher's National Association Wurlitzer Young Artist Competition. Dr. Frank is also a founding member of the North Carolina Guitar Quartet, the only professional ensemble of its type in the Southeast.

Elliot Frank's recital should prove to make a very enjoyable evening of great music by a great artist. There will be a "meet the artist" reception after the performance. For additional information, see the calendar of events in this issue.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

This has been a very exciting season for the WGS. This is the first season that we planned a year in advance. Previous to this, we were planning them one at a time to prevent losing money. With only one concert remaining, we have lost about \$250 on the entire season. This was due to poor weather conditions in February. I would consider this season a success. \$250 is not a lot to lose on a series of seven concerts; we will simply avoid presenting anything in February next season. I would like to encourage everyone to come out to our closing concert with Elliot Frank on May 17. Not only would your presence insure that we don't lose any more money, but it will be a good time for all. Start spreading the word now and make plans to attend;

I would love to see you there!

In the last newsletter, we announced that the membership directory would be mailed with this newsletter. We will be mailing it separately. Our secretary has decided that doing the mailing list in addition to the newsletter is just too much work for the time that he has. This is understandable, but it means that the directory will be slightly delayed. We are converting the list to a new system and that will take another couple of weeks. You can look forward to your directory then. I apologize for the delay.

I would also like to point out that an organization like the WGS depends greatly on those who are willing to help. I would like to thank the following people for making the WGS what it is: Don Sauter, Sean Dodson, Tim Evans, Stuart Paine, Lee Becky, Mike Davis, Jeff Baker, Steve Seidenman, Beverly Ross, Debbie Bard, Michael Bard and Rob Nathan. These are the behind the scenes people who make our newsletter and our concerts turn out the way they do. If I have forgotten anybody, I sincerely apologize and will print your name in big letters next issue.

*Kevin Vigil*

### **GWU STUDENTS PERFORM FOR WGS Saturday, May 4, 1996**

The Washington Guitar Society is very pleased and proud to present guitar students from George Washington University under the direction of Myrna Sislen.

George Washington University has a very active guitar department. There are close to 100 guitar students, including guitar majors, minors and general university students who study guitar as an elective.

The GWU Guitar Ensemble has been performing for the last seven years. Under the direction of Professor Myrna Sislen, the group (which has had as many as 12 members) has appeared at UDC, The Burke Middle School in Fairfax and The Marvin Theatre on the GWU Campus. Their repertoire ranges from Vivaldi to Piazzola. For the performance on May 4, the GWU Guitar Ensemble will pay tribute to Laurindo Almeida by playing his *Españoleta de Camera*.

The GWU Guitar Ensemble is open to all guitarists in our community and anyone interested in joining should contact Myrna Sislen at (202) 994-6245.

Also performing on May 4 will be GWU seniors Omar Kabbarah playing Ponce's *Sonatina Meridional*, Jon Kim playing Albeniz' *Granada* and Scott Gruber playing the *Choros I* by Villa-Lobos. In addition to the current GWU students, we will have alumni Lee Becky and Mike Perez on our program. Lee is becoming very well known in our area and Mike is one of the best flamenco

players in Washington.

This presentation will take place on Saturday, May 4 at 2 p.m. at the Little Falls Public Library. See the Calendar of Events for specific information. Come on out and support these fine students and their teacher.



*GWU Guitar Ensemble*

### **A NEW HOME FOR THE WGS at the Washington Conservatory of Music**

As of Saturday, July 13, 1996, the Washington Guitar Society's monthly programs will be taking place at the Washington Conservatory of Music. These meetings will take place on the second Saturday of each month. Having one location and a set day will make remembering meetings very easy.

The Washington Conservatory is housed in the Briggs Memorial Church 5144 Massachusetts Avenue in Bethesda, MD. It is about one mile north of American University and about 1 mile south of the Little Falls Public Library (where we have met before). The programs will take place in a chapel that seats about 150 people and is complete with a stage and the perfect amount of reverb. The listening environment will be a big improvement over the public library system.

### **THE FIRST MEETING ON JULY 13 featuring a Guitar Ensemble Session with Fred Wilchek**

The first meeting on July 13 will feature a guitar ensemble session led by WGS member Fred Wilchek who is on the faculty of the Washington Conservatory. Fred will be directing two guitar ensembles in the Fall. One will be a Classical Guitar Ensemble and the other will be an Electric Guitar Ensemble. Both will be offered through the Washington Conservatory. This session is free and all are

welcome to participate. This event will hopefully encourage people to sign up for one of Fred's ensembles in the Fall.

If you would like to participate in this ensemble session you can pick up music at the next two WGS meetings or by mail from Fred Wilchek at (301)445-7726.

## DUO FIRENZE

March 15, 1996

The early 19th century guitar is not the instrument we know today. Some might say that's just as well, but the performance by Duo Firenze March 15 showed that the instrument was more than adequate when played as it was intended to be played.

The duo, Robert Trent on early 19th century guitar, and Pamela Swenson Trent on fortepiano (a predecessor of today's pianoforte) plucked a number of pieces from the 19th century repertoire and performed them in the proper setting: an intimate room.

Trent's instrument could have been snatched from an engraving with its small body, narrow neck, sharp waist, and mustachioed bridge. While the instrument is about 2/3 the size of today's guitar, it projected well and had a wonderful range of color, which Robert used to the music's advantage. Despite its size, it was not drowned out by the fortepiano and the two artists achieved a fine balance in their interpretations.

The fortepiano is built very much like a harpsichord. It lacks the rigid iron frame of today's piano, and is much lighter as a result. Because its strings are not strung as tightly, its dynamic range is different than the piano's. It is capable of a very delicate tone.

Ernest Legouve is quoted in Frederic Grunfeld's "The Art and Times of The Guitar" saying of his friend Berlioz, "The guitar embodied all instruments to him." The great romantic composer apparently found the small, narrow waisted instrument of his time capable of evoking any sound made by any instrument in the orchestra. The Duo Firenze concert illustrated that 19th century instruments in capable hands can produce a beautiful sound, elaborate tonal texture, and ravishing dynamics.

I was inspired. The next day, after helping move the fortepiano from the concert parlor into a van, I spent the afternoon playing Giuliani, Carcassi, Aguado, and Sor on my own anonymously made 19th century parlor guitar.

Duo Firenze will be playing at a number of places on the east coast this spring. Catch them if you missed this concert.

Michael Davis

## DUO BOZZA Simply Delightful!

On Wednesday, March 27, the International Artists Alliance presented Duo Bozza (flute/guitar) in a recital at the Dorchester Tower Rooftop Garden. This duo from Germany consists of Andreas Evers on flute and Stephan Schäfer on guitar.

From the moment the first notes sounded and the last ones died away, their performance was simply delightful. Nothing was too tense, strained or too difficult and everything was immaculate. Their ensemble revealed the fact that they have been playing together for several years and had that unique connection that only comes from a mature performing relationship. The program also featured solos from both performers.

Stephan Schäfer performed two pieces by Isaac Albeniz: *Zambra Granadina* and *Torre Bermeja*. Mr. Schäfer gently breathed life into both of these works which have become standards in the guitar repertoire. He showed that there is a reason why some pieces become standards...because they are simply great pieces.

Andreas Evers performed André Jolivet's *Incantation pour flute en sol...Pour que l'image devienne symbole*. The flute is not usually thought of as a solo instrument, however, between the skills of both this composer and this performer, the audience was held captive by the various landscapes created.

Another feature on this recital was guest artist Ernesto Farago (violinist) with Martha Blakely accompanying on piano. Mr. Farago is well known in major cities throughout the world. His concert career encompassed tours in 15 countries and he was a violinist in the National Symphony. He was chosen to perform on this recital to help increase the attendance for this unknown duo from Germany. It worked! The room was packed! He performed *La Folia* by Arcangelo Corelli and *Czardas* by Vittorio Monti. His cadenza was breath taking and brought back the true sense of romanticism for which the maestro is known.

The rest of Duo Bozza's program included the *Hamburger Sonate* by C.P.E. Bach, *Erste Walzer* and *Deutsche Tänze* by Franz Schubert, *Romanian Folkdances* by Béla Bartók, *Entr'acte* by Jacques Ibert and a *Sonata in A Major* by W.A. Mozart. This was a perfect selection of repertoire which was enthusiastically received by the audience resulting in numerous stage calls and an encore. The duo is planning on another tour in the U.S. in the 1997-98 season. If they play in this area, you won't want to miss them. I know I won't.

Kevin Vigil



## OUR NEW WGS RECORD LIBRARY

The Washington Guitar Society thanks François-Marie Patorni for the generous donation of his collection of classical guitar LPs. François gave us about 35 record albums. Some have an air of collectibility, such as Segovia 10-inch Deutsche Grammophon discs. Besides solo guitar, there is guitar paired with flute, piano, orchestra, voice, jazz combo and sappy backings (John Williams' pop stuff). Artists include Andres Segovia, John Williams, Julian Bream, René Bartoli, Leo Brouwer, Konrad Ragossnig, Evelyn Schönfeld, Turibio Santos, Angel Romero, Oscar Ghiglia, Barbara Polasek, Alexandre Lagoya, Carlos Barbosa-Lima, Christopher Parkening and Laurindo Almeida.

There is a lot of good listening here for those of us who still have analog ears. The records have all been given a clean bill of health - skips were mercilessly tracked down and eliminated. (It seems that some of the records had been subjected to over-zealous cleaning.)

Now all we need is for someone to step forward as the WGS librarian. The actual work required by this position would be very minimal. It would benefit many, and probably only require the sacrifice of an hour or so of tv <sup>viewing</sup> every couple of months. With a lending system in place, other members might be inclined to share their guitar recordings, books or periodicals. How about it? Anybody?

## THE MARCH WGS PROGRAM A Guitar Orchestra!

The WGS program for March was a guitar orchestra. Ten guitarists joined the fun. The largest "Thanks!" goes to our tireless president Kevin Vigil who coached us, conducted us, and even recorded us on his state of the art equipment.

The idea was for players to work up their parts on their own beforehand so we could "hit the ground running." We worked up 2 pieces, supplied by WGS member Sean Dodson. The first was "The Old Castle" from "Pictures At An Exhibition" by Modest Mussorgsky and arranged for guitar ensemble by Yvon Rivoal. The second was a more advanced modern piece, "Toccata" by Leo Brouwer.

The intrepid players included Debbie Bard (treasurer), Michael Bard (vice president), Mike Davis, Robert McMurphy, Jerry Pena, François-Marie Patorni, Bryan Ramsey, Bev Ross, Donald Sauter and Steve Tjernagle. Debbie Bard gets an honorable mention, joining in on the Mussorgsky with no prior guitar-playing experience!

No doubt we will do this again. Be there!

## ON THE ROAD WITH THE LAKE BRADDOCK GUITAR ENSEMBLE

Some of you may have noticed my absence at the William Feasley concert on April 19. That is because I was on the road with the Lake Braddock Guitar Ensemble. Lake Braddock Secondary School has a guitar program with over 100 students. The program is run by WGS member John Graham. The Lake Braddock Guitar Ensemble is the advanced class of these fine young players consisting of about 20 members. Where did we go? None other than the "Big Apple"...New York City!

My interest in this ensemble lies in the fact that I teach seven students at Lake Braddock every week. In addition I have an enormous amount of respect for John Graham. He has brought the level of secondary guitar students to a level only achieved before by high school orchestras and bands. His guitar classes meet every single day for almost an hour. That is built in practicing for these students. Those that study privately in addition to his classes do extremely well. One (Joe Simpson) even gets paid for bluegrass performances with his sister (Ann) with the money going toward their college funds.

The itinerary was packed full of events for the ensemble. Upon arriving in NYC, they performed at St. John's Cathedral on Amsterdam Avenue. This cathedral is not to be completed until world peace is achieved (that explains the rusty scaffolding). Their program consisted of works by Handel, Vivaldi, Chobanian and York. They played beautifully and the acoustics of the cathedral made it extra special.

On Saturday morning the ensemble was on their way to Benjamin Verdery's apartment for a masterclass. Traffic was less than expected and we needed some time to kill. It was then decided that we would stop by Strawberry Fields to play John Lennon's *Imagine*. They all carried their guitars to the memorial where there was a tour guide talking about the site. When she finished, she noticed the guitars and said, "I think they have a song for us." At that, the students began to play. There was no singing, but a huge crowd gathered around them. It was truly a magical spontaneous moment.

The group then got back on the bus and went to Benjamin Verdery's place. This was truly a highlight for the students as well as for John Graham myself and for Steve and Gordon (the two accompanying parents). As the ensemble started playing, Ben got his guitar out of his case and started playing along with the first guitar part. He was having as much fun as they were, especially when he would mess up. This really put the group at ease. Ben continued to play along with the group on the Chobanian and York as well.

It is amazing how Ben can get immediate results from performers, not to mention a group of high school students. Within minutes, he had them sounding like a college level



guitar ensemble (probably better). Not only did he address the technical and musical aspects of performing as a group but the emotional aspects as well. If you have ever been around Benjamin Verdery, you are already aware of the positive energy that radiates from him. He definitely left a memory that will last a lifetime for these students.

It is quite likely that this is not the last time Ben will meet with these students. He would like them to come back to perform with another high school ensemble doing his piece *Ellis Island* on Ellis Island. The date is not set, but he was definitely impressed and was sincere about this offer.

The rest of the trip was spent doing typical NYC sight seeing. At first I was a little nervous about being partially responsible for 20 students, but they proved to me that there was nothing to fear. This group plays well together and has an amazing amount of mutual respect from oldest to youngest and from most advanced to least. There were no ego or discipline problems. I believe that this is one of the effects of being on a team of a musical nature.

The Lake Braddock Guitar Ensemble has a concert coming up this month. Check out the calendar of events for details and don't you dare miss it. You'll regret it if you do!

Kevin Vigil

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- \* A translation of J. Bap. Lud<sup>co</sup> de Castillion's preface to François LeCocq's *Recueil des pièces de guitarre*, 1729 (facsimile edition: Thesaurus musicus; Brussels: Editions Culture et Civilisation, 1979). By Beverly Ross.

To follow is a translation of a portion of the introductory material found in an important, late baroque guitar manuscript. In it, its author, Castillion, provided much detail on the rudiments of music and guitar playing, including such topics as selecting strings, reading the tablature, deciphering rhythmic values, performing 'notes inégales,' and executing ornaments. I have translated just the preface for its general historical interest: the guitar was enormously popular in Europe at the end of the seventeenth century and Castillion lived to see it. By the time he wrote this, however, interest in the guitar had diminished greatly. Most all that is known of both Castillion and LeCocq is found right here. The music from the LeCocq manuscript is predominantly French dance music.

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If it is true that the guitar is the 'kithara' of the Holy Book, as Mr. Furetiere seems to say in his dictionary, one is struck immediately by its ancient origins and the fact of the sweetness and charms of this instrument. It would be this instrument that is discussed in the fourth chapter of Genesis and, as Isaiah wrote, whose sweetness stops one short. In the 24th chapter, it

would express the sad image of the desolation and ruin of Babylon and Jerusalem. I leave it to the curious to research this question and if there are savants who do not agree with this long history, it has to be admitted that the guitar is a most harmonious instrument and that it has served, throughout history, for the amusement of Princes during their precious hours of leisure. But, as everything is subject to the vicissitudes of time, it seems that the grand king Louis XIV was the last to have so occupied himself and that the guitar is presently languishing.

The famous François Corbet inspired a great interest in the guitar in the Low Country and, after he dedicated his book to the Archduke Albert and Isabelle, every noble person in Brussels gloried in playing it. At the end of the last century, and at the beginning of the present century, I observed that only the guitar was fashionable. Madame The Princess of Bavaria was taught by Mr. François LeCocq, who was Musicien Jubilaire in the Royal Chapel of the Court. The manner and easy turn he gave to the pieces he composed, in the modern taste, showed such very high perfection that he was judged the most skilled master to have appeared up to the present time. It was after I had heard him play with such a surprisingly accurate and delicate touch that I took up this noble and melodious instrument again after having abandoned it for more than 20 years, occupied as I was with my work and too serious affairs. I have tried to play the same airs that he had the honor of playing, more than one time, for Her Serene Highness, the Archduchess, sister of the Emperor Charles VI, our noble Sovereign and King, Governor of the Low Country, in the cabinet of this illustrious Princess.

Several small services that I had casually rendered and old acquaintance brought him to present these to me, written in his own hand and authenticated by his signature and I copied them, also in my own hand, in this book that I have prepared and checked myself. I include in this collection, after the airs of Mr. LeCocq, several pieces of other masters who excelled in the last century. You will find in those of François Corbet much gravity. Mr. Lelio's have an agreeable sweetness. The pieces by Michel Perez de Zavala, a Spaniard and my father's teacher in Madrid in 1690, seem to me to have not badly imitated these two excellent authors. The pieces by Mr. Gaspar Sanchez, also a Spaniard, and of Mr. Jean Baptiste Granata, an Italian, have their merit; the chaconnes and passacailles of the latter pass as good. Mr. Robert De Visée was renowned throughout France for the honor he had of playing so often before the grand king, Louis XIV and for having dedicated his guitar book to him in 1682, a work that took several years. Mr. Saint-Luc had, about this same time, a grand reputation and played the guitar with great skillfulness. Finally, Mr. Nicolas Derosier, Ordinaire of Music for her highness Princess Palatin, very knowledgeable in music, undertook a special study of the guitar and so perfected his playing that he invented the guitar angelique, with 8 more strings than the ordinary guitar. He gave the public a book for the one and the other in 1692. It is from all these authors that I have copied several pieces that you will find after those of Mr.

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\* This and the following articles on the Baroque guitar relate to the WGS June 1 program. See Calendar of Events.

François LeCocq.

In the beginning of this book I give the principles of the guitar where I explain the signs and marks that you find in the tablature. Many masters have particular uses for these signs; I have tried to clarify them, especially the arpeggios of Mr. LeCocq, which give his pieces an incomparable flourish. I also explain everything you need to know about music to be able to play the instrument well. At the end I give an alphabetized glossary of the most used musical terms, with an explication full of instructions. God grant that this book, after my death, falls into the hands of music lovers who can take pleasure from my troubles. Done in Gent, during the year 1730.

**Review of Craig Russell's Santiago de Murcia's Códice Saldivar no. 4: a Treasury of Secular Guitar Music from Baroque Mexico.** Two volumes. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995. By Beverly Ross

Classical Guitar magazine recently hailed Craig Russell's 2 volume work on Santiago de Murcia's manuscript of baroque guitar tablature as "monumental" (Jan. '96, p. 4). Volume 1 of the work, "Commentary," indeed sets new standards for depth of musicological research into guitar-related matters. Russell describes having scoured archival resources in both Spain and Mexico to uncover scraps of information he then pieces together to form a plausible biography of the guitarist. Russell also cites what must be nearly all the relevant research literature (in English and Spanish) pertinent to the style of music found in Murcia's Códice Saldivar no. 4.

The Mexican musicologist, Gabriel Saldivar y Silva had found and purchased the manuscript in an antique shop in Mexico in 1943 but it was not until 1985 that scholars well-versed in Murcia's work had opportunities to examine the manuscript and see its obvious provenance. Just prior to the discovery that this manuscript was by Murcia, three dissertations (including one by Russell) had been completed, each examining Murcia's other known works: "Passacalles y obras," published in 1732 and "Resumen de acompañar," published in 1714. These manuscripts had shown a curious neglect for Spanish music, focused as they were on presenting French dance music. The Códice Saldivar, which turned out to be a companion volume to the "Passacalles" solved the mystery—it is a treasure trove of music popular not only in Spain but in the New World.

Russell's "Commentary" volume is most useful where it offers details on each of the Spanish dance forms found in the Códice Saldivar: nearly one-third of the three hundred page first volume is devoted to a detailed explication of each musical form found in the manuscript. Russell also devotes a substantial portion of his first volume to a biographical reconstruction of Murcia's life. The section is fascinating in that it paints a picture of musical life in the Spanish court at the beginning of the 18th century (Murcia was, at the start of his career, guitar

tutor to the Queen of Spain). The reader must remain somewhat skeptical, however, since the biography is built on slender threads of evidence throughout. We learn, for instance, that there was a husband-wife team of instrument makers also name Murcia active in the court at the same time and of an age old enough to have been Santiago de Murcia's parents. Extensive familial links to this couple are then developed leading to a conclusion that Murcia came from a family that had musical involvements for three generations. Russell also develops a strain of evidence that links Murcia to having emigrated to Mexico at the end of his career.

I find Volume 2 of Russell's work, "Facsimile and Transcription," much more difficult to recommend. Michael Lorimer had already self-published an excellent facsimile of the Códice Saldivar in 1987. Russell, curiously, barely alludes to the fact of its availability and, when he does, he depreciates it by calling it a "home-released photocopy" (Vol. 1, pg. 193, note 1). In fact, Lorimer's edition is a professionally printed and bound edition, albeit based on hand touched-up photocopies. Russell, by way of contrast, offers small photographs of the pages of the manuscript taken using "computer enhancements ... made using Digital Darkroom" (Vol. 2, p. xix). As high-tech as the procedure sounds, the photos are barely usable from a player's standpoint—fuzzy tablature on a grey background, all this bound, together with the transcription, in a bulky 300 page textbook format (6" by 9.5").

I also have some difficulty recommending Volume 2 for the transcription it contains, although in this case there is no alternative to recommend. Here we have a real dilemma: one wants the music to be made available to a larger audience than those who read tablature and possess baroque guitars. However, it is very hard to impart the flavor of this music by playing it on a keyboard or even a modern guitar. (Imagine what would be lost transcribing, say, flamenco guitar music and playing it on a keyboard.) The baroque guitar was strung differently than the modern guitar. The basic difference was that what we call our 'D' string was paired with a 'd' an octave higher, and, instead of our 'A' string, there was an 'a' an octave higher. This stringing allowed for enhanced "campanella" effects—scale passages with open strings ringing throughout (especially in the keys of A, D, and G). Russell's transcription is devoid of string indications so even with a baroque guitar one would never know the effect intended. Having access to Volume 2 was, however, useful to me at times: at problematic junctures in the tablature I turned to the transcription to see what solution Russell came up with. Ultimately, no matter who the transcriber, things get lost and errors crop up in the work, which points to the value of learning to read the tablature. For guitarists, this isn't very hard.

These volumes cost around \$60 for Volume 1 and \$40 for Volume 2 and can be ordered from the publisher by calling 1-800-545-4703 (in Baltimore, dial 410-516-6927).



## MY QUASI-BAROQUE GUITAR

Years ago I became somewhat interested in the Baroque guitar. Most of all, I wanted to play Baroque guitar music "faithfully". Not as faithfully as possible - that would require a real Baroque guitar or a copy. One problem with that is the expense. As big as that problem is, for me, personally, there is an even bigger one: the need to reorient the hands to new fret and string spacings switching back and forth from the modern guitar to the Baroque guitar. I tip my hat to those who fearlessly take on that challenge, but... not me, brother!

To be reasonably faithful, all you need is doubled 4th and 5th strings. This allows you to add high octaves to those pairs. It always seemed like it would be a very simple thing to add 2 extra string tuners on the head of the guitar and gouge out a couple of extra slots in the nut. The stumper was how to drill 2 extra holes through the bridge for the added strings.

After years of contemplation, it hit me all at once - I didn't *have* to drill holes in the bridge. I could simply feed 2 strings through the same hole and separate them with some kind of a spacer behind the saddle. This presumes, of course, that the 2 strings will fit through one hole. On my first guitar, a Yamaha G-50A, they do with no problem. I was off and running.

I went to an instrument repair shop and they sold me a couple of used steel-string-type tuners for a buck. I cut some little pieces of paper to the size and shape of the tuners and slid these around on the underside of the head until I found good positions for them. These positions were marked, a couple holes drilled for the tuning barrels and the machines attached with little screws.

Slots were filed into the nut next to the slots for the 4th and 5th strings using my Revlon nail file. I took a guess at the proper separation. I found some little screws to serve as the spacers down at the bridge. Keep in mind that they do not actually screw into the wood.

At this point I probably yelled, "Voila!" If I did, it was slightly premature. The next headache was finding the right strings. To double the 4th string with a high octave, I planned to use a 1st string tuned down a step to D. Likewise, to double the 5th string, I planned to use a 2nd string tuned down to A. With the guitar strung this way, it didn't take long to realize that there was simply too much total tension on the 4th and 5th courses. I wasn't worried about the instrument, which is quite hardy, but my fingers would ache pressing 2 strings at once - requiring just about twice the accustomed pressure.

Trying to find the proper strings dragged me into the morass lute players call "string calculation". This deserves a whole article in itself. In a nutshell, let me say the current situation is a complete mess. First of all, classical guitar strings are sold in sets - not in a range of gauges like steel strings. Second of all,

even if they were sold in a range of <sup>u</sup>gages, the gauge, or string diameter, is not a useful measurement. Given the scale length of your guitar, the desired note and the desired tension, you can calculate the *mass per length* of the string you need. This is the defining characteristic of a string - regardless of composition. A convenient name for this measurement might be "linear density"; a practical unit would be "grams per meter". Unfortunately, string manufacturers do not supply this bit of information.

Using high- and low-tension classical guitar strings, plus some thin lute strings, I rigged up something that worked pretty well. Even then the tension was a bit much for my hand so I lowered the whole thing a half-step. I believe when a few more people convert modern guitars to quasi-Baroque guitars, a combination of careful string calculations and some trial-and-error will yield a general solution to this problem.

This quasi-Baroque guitar works very well. I have used it in two of the most important Baroque guitar tunings. Both have a treble/bass pairing on the 4th course. They differ in that one has a treble/bass pairing on the 5th course while the other is treble/treble. (To play Sanz, who used no basses on either the 4th or 5th course, I just use a modern, single-strung guitar with treble A and D strings on the bottom.)

The goal of not having to reorient going from the modern to the Baroque guitar was *almost* met. One slight difference in feel is that, with the doubled strings, you have to be a little more careful with your right-hand finger strokes. It's a little easier to hit an adjacent string by accident. But this problem is easy to overcome-and doing so may just benefit your technique on the modern guitar.

I wondered whether the tuning machines for the added strings could be improved upon. I had a viola peg installed between the slots of the head. After using it a while, I found advantages and disadvantages. The viola peg is lighter, simpler and maintains the symmetry of the head. It is just more "in tune" with the spirit of a Baroque guitar. On the other hand, it's much easier to fine tune with the machine tuners. The viola peg was added as an experiment, but since it's there I kept it in service doubling the 3rd string for a bit more authenticity.

The photos show all of the modifications described here: the steel-string tuning machines, the viola peg, the added slots in the nut, and the spacer screws behind the saddle. In Guitar Review 49, page 24, Don Rowe gives another method for converting a modern guitar into a Baroque guitar. It requires drilling a hole through the bridge, but no additional tuners.

For those who are or might eventually be bitten by the Baroque guitar bug here is a parting round-up of thoughts. You can very simply modify a modern guitar into a quasi-Baroque guitar with doubled 4th and 5th strings. Use one of your old student model guitars. Finding the right strings is a problem,



My own solution was to write a tablature program for my computer. Since then I have seen inexpensive tablature programs advertised. I don't know how easy they are to use and whether they are smart enough to convert from fret-letters to fret-numbers, or from upside-down to right-side-up tablature. Still, I suspect this is the way to go for the time being.

Shown here is a "Gavotte" by Ludovico Roncalli translated into a modern tablature. Compare it with the facsimile shown in Frederick Noad's "Baroque Guitar" anthology, page 8. Also compare it with his transcription for modern guitar on page 48. The transcription makes a very nice piece for our classical guitar. It also concisely shows up the difference between Baroque guitar music and what our modern ears have become used to. The original includes strums and many more ornaments - both very characteristic elements of Baroque guitar music - which were left out of the transcription.

Donald Sauter



## Roncalli

[illegible]

**Fixes:** Measure 10, beat 1 was 0 on string 2.



## A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF THE BAROQUE GUITAR

This timeline was derived mainly from information contained in Richard Pinnell's dissertation "Francisco Corbetta and the Baroque Guitar" (1980.) I have included Baroque guitarists who are important for their innovations or achievements, or might be known to modern guitarists via transcriptions of their music.

Donald Sauter

Publication year place	Guitarist	Accomplishment			
1596 Spain	Amat	First Baroque guitar treatise. Coined term "Spanish Guitar". Devised "alfabeto" chord chart using numbers to name chords.	1650 Italy	Pellegrini	One known book.
1606 Italy	Montesardo	His revamped alfabeto using letter names became the standard. First published passacagli.	1671 Paris	Corbetta(4)	4th surviving book - his peak. New tuning for this book - no bass string on 5th course. Sanz called him "the best of them all."
1620 Italy	Sanseverino	Included time signature, bar lines and note-values for strummed music. Used stems to indicate up and down strums. Notation for shifting barre chords one step higher.	1674 Paris	Corbetta(5)	5th and last surviving book. Many duets.
1620 Italy	Colonna	Notation for shifting barre chords to any position.	1674 Spain	Sanz	No basses on 4th or 5th courses. Composed in Spanish and other national styles. Could copy Corbetta's style.
1626 France	Briceño	Spaniard. Re-entrant tuning (like Sanz, no bass strings.) Earliest examples of many Spanish dances by a Spaniard. Used his own alfabeto system.	1676 Paris	Medard	Rooted in Corbetta's style, but mostly strummed and simpler.
1627 Italy	Millioni	Early description of "repicco", a rapid strumming pattern.	1677 Spain	Ribayez	Valuable comments on performance practices. Includes pieces by Sanz.
1628? Italy	Pico	Altered 4 chords of the alfabeto to include dissonance.	1682 Paris	Visee(1)	Devoted pupil of Corbetta.
1629 Macerata	Foscarini(1)	A.k.a. "il Furioso". This is his 2nd book.	1684 Britain?	Gallot	Large manuscript. Pieces from 1660 to 1684. High quality original music. Many Corbetta pieces. Several trios.
1637 Italy	Colonna	Indicated single notes of melody between strummed chords.	1686 Paris	Visee(2)	2nd book - more his own style. Greatest French Baroque guitarist.
1639 Italy	Corbetta(1)	First book - peak of strummed style. Stimulated whole school of Italian guitarists.	1688 The Hague	Derosier	Also published a pamphlet in Amsterdam, 1696. But largest collection of his works is in the Le Cocq anthology.
1640 Italy	Carbonchi	First Baroque guitar book in lute tablature. (Remember that Renaissance guitar tablature books had been printed in 1500s.)	1692 Italy	Roncalli	High quality music - first to be studied in modern times.
1640 Italy	Bartolotti	Developed ringing, cascading scale called campanelas.	1694 Madrid	Guerau	Highly creative. Of the Spaniards, furthest removed from Corbetta's influence.
1640 Italy	Foscarini(2)	His 5th book. Perhaps was inventor of mixing alfabeto and lute tablature in earlier books.	1705 France	Campion (1)	Second to Visee among French guitarists. More influenced by lutenists than Corbetta.
1643 Italy	Corbetta(2)	2nd surviving book. Many influences from Foscarini.	1714 Spain	Murcia(1)	Treatise for playing basso continuo.
1646 Italy	Granata	Virtuosic student of Corbetta. This is 1st book. 7 books through 1684.	1729 Brussels	Le Cocq	Explains performance practices. High quality music. Includes other composers. Tells of Corbetta's prestige in the Low Countries.
1648 Brussels	Corbetta(3)	3rd surviving book. Visits Low Countries around this time (see Le Cocq.)	1731 France	Campion (2)	Last dated works. High quality fugues.
			1732 Spain	Murcia(2)	2 large manuscripts. Many pieces by Corbetta.
			1736 Denmark	Diesel	2 manuscripts contain almost 1000 pages of his music. Music not like Corbetta's.
			Left out of timeline because of lack of precise publication dates:		
			Saint-Luc	Born 1633 in Brussels.	Employed by Louis XIV. Popular in Vienna and Berlin.
			Santa Cruz	Spanish	Manuscript from late 1600s. Spanish music plus some resembling Corbetta's.
			Count Losy	ca. 1650-1721	Heard Corbetta in France. Manuscripts in Prague, but music in western European style.

## TIMOTHY EVANS REVIEW

Timothy Evans performed for the Washington Guitar Society on Saturday, April 6 at the Little Falls Public Library. His performance was interesting and enjoyable both for the quality of his selections, and his renditions of them. In addition to some staples from the solo guitar repertoire, he included a couple of noteworthy duo collaborations, thanks to the help of his two guest artists: Michael Bowyer (flute) and José Sacin (voice).

A predominantly 20th century program, Evans opened with a rather meaty work (especially as warm-up material!) Namely, the Ponce *Sonata No. 3*. The work, which for me reflected Ponce at his best, incorporates its share of technically demanding runs and dissonant harmonies to contend with. Evans' acknowledged affinity for Ponce was in evidence throughout. Aside from a few precarious moments in some of the intricately laid out quick scale passages in the last movement, his was a very satisfying rendition of this beloved work. I should add that he maintained a nice tone. Incidentally, Evans plays an inversely strung guitar, being left-handed. While this was visually interesting (essentially one sees a mirror image of the usual guitar position, fingerings and all), Evans proves that such a practice need not hinder one's guitar playing (whoever said it does?)

Evans then dived into a spirited version of the *Prelude* from Bach's *Fourth Lute Suite*, otherwise known as the *E Major Violin Partita*. Also included were two other movements from the suite, closing the first half of the recital with the ever-popular *Gavotte en Rondeau*.

The second half opened with *Dreamscapes*, a four movement suite by Glenn Smith. Evans was assisted by flutist Michael Bowyer. Smith is Professor of Music at George Mason University (where Evans is pursuing a Masters degree), and the first Resident Composer for the Fairfax Symphony. The artists had quite a bit of the emotional content of the picturesque work under their fingertips. I found the work itself very appealing, now whimsical, now energetic. It nicely balanced the two instruments, drawing on idiomatic resources of both. At the very least, it is a noteworthy contemporary (and in our case local) contribution to the flute/guitar repertoire, and certainly made me want to hear more of Smith's music.

There followed the second and third movements of the Turina *Sonata* for guitar. In addition to the utter control over those slurless breakneck scale runs in that second movement, Evans also maintained a convincing sense of lyricism therein. The third (and last) movement, by contrast, allowed him to let loose with some evocative flamenco-like *rasgueado* passages, encountered often enough in Turina's all-too-few guitar works.

Lastly, Evans was joined by singer José Sacin in Three Spanish Songs by Rodrigo: *En Jerez de la Frontera*, *Adela*, and *De Ronda*. Ingeniously combining the old with the new in Spanish music, as is so typical in Rodrigo, these songs couldn't have

found a more suitable medium of expression. The unpretentiousness and simplicity of the guitar part admirably supported and beautifully punctuated the vocal line. Sacin covered a wide emotional spectrum in these relatively brief songs. Theirs was a felicitous collaboration, and a rare, pleasant treat with which to conclude the recital.

Steven Seidenman

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**May 4 (Saturday) 2 p.m. - Students of George Washington University** under the direction of Myrna Sislen, will be performing for the Washington Guitar Society's May meeting. Come an hour early (1 p.m.) for the WGS open stage hour. This will take place at the Little Falls Public Library, 5501 Massachusetts Ave., Bethesda, MD. This event is free and open to the public.

**May 9 (Thursday) 7:30 pm - Lake Braddock Guitar Ensemble** at Lake Braddock Secondary School, 9200 Burke Lake Rd., Burke, VA. Works by York, Chobanian, Vivaldi, Handel and others. Admission is \$2 at the door. For information, call John Graham at (703) 385-6433.

**May 11 (Saturday) 11 a.m. - Rob Nathan will be playing classical guitar, Bach, at Quartermaine Coffee Roasters, Cleveland Park , (202) 244-2676.**

**May 17 (Friday) 8 p.m. - Elliot Frank** will be presented by the Washington Guitar Society at the Dorchester Tower Rooftop Garden, 2001 Columbia Pike, Arlington, VA (near the intersection of I-395 and Washington Blvd.). Tickets are \$10 for general public and \$7 for WGS members. Available at the Guitar Shop, 1216 Connecticut Ave., NW or at the door. For reservations, please call Kevin Vigil at (703) 644-1659.

**May 26 (Sunday) 3 p.m. - A concert with the Navy Seals and the Dale Warland Chorus** will include guitarist **Jeffrey Van** performing his composition, *From the Shadows*, a choral work that features the guitar. The concert will take place at T.C. Williams High School, 3330 King St., Alexandria, VA.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**May 31 (Friday) 8 p.m. - Michael Nicollela** was tentatively scheduled for a concert at the Dorchester Tower Rooftop Garden. He has been rescheduled for the Fall season. Further information will appear in a future newsletter.

**June 1 (Saturday) 2 p.m. - Baroque Guitar Lecture/Recital** featuring **Beverly Ross, Don Sauter and Jim Stimson** will be presented for the Washington Guitar Society's June meeting. Come an hour early (1 p.m.) for the WGS open stage hour. This will take place at the Bethesda Public Library, 7400 Arlington Rd., Bethesda, MD. This event is free and open to the public.

**June 7 (Friday) 7 p.m. - The Santa Fe Guitar Quartet** (from Sante Fe, Argentina) will be performing as part of the Smithsonian series at Baird Auditorium, Natural History Building. For information call the Smithsonian Associates General Information (202) 357-3030.

**June 21 (Friday) 7:30 pm - William Feasley** at the National Cathedral. For further information, call (202) 537-6216.

--- ON-GOING GUITAR GIGS ---

**Amazonia Grill - Richard Miller** playing solo Brazilian Music. Thursdays from 8-10 pm. The Amazonia Grill is located at 4615 Wisconsin Ave., Washington, DC (near Tenley Town). For reservations, call (202) 537-0421. Richard lets other guitarists sit in, just go up and talk to him.

**Bistro Bistro - Max Sadtler** playing solo classical guitar music for Sunday brunch 11:30 am - 2:30 pm. Bistro Bistro is located at 4021 28th Street South, Arlington, VA in the Shirlington shopping center. For reservations call (703) 379-0300.

**El Bodegon Spanish Restaurant - Paco de Malaga (guitar) and Anna Martinez (dancer)** performing two shows of flamenco music and dance on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The first show is at 8 pm and the second is at 10 pm. El Bodegon is located at 1637 R Street, NW, Washington, DC. For reservations, call (202) 667-1710.

**Habana Village - Richard Miller** playing Brazilian Music with bass and percussion. Wednesdays from 10-midnight. Habana Village is located at 1834 Columbia Rd (Adams Morgan near 18th St.), Washington, DC. For reservations, call (202) 462-6310.

**Jasmine Cafe - John Butler and Kevin Vigil** alternating on Fridays 7-10 pm. **David Arnold** on Saturdays, 7-10 pm. Classical Guitar music. The Jasmine Cafe is located at Lake Anne, 1633A Washington Plaza, Reston, VA 22090. For reservations, call (703) 471-9114.

**The Park Cafe - Richard Miller, Ramon Gonzalez and Peter Richardson** alternating Fridays and Saturdays from 7:30-10 pm. Classical and Latin American Guitar Music. The Park Cafe is located in the Capital Hill area on Lincoln Park, Washington, DC. For reservations, call (202) 543-0184.

**Russia House Restaurant - Michael Bard (guitar) and Pam Ferguson (violin)** playing Gypsy Music on Saturdays from 7-10:30 pm. The Russia House Restaurant is located at 790 Station St., Herndon, VA. For reservations, call (703) 787-8880.

**July 7-13, 1996, Common Ground on the Hill** will hold its 2nd annual Music and Arts Summer Camp at Western Maryland College in Westminster, Maryland. A wide variety of music styles will be presented. Classes will be taught in classical, blues, dobro and other guitar styles. Courses will also be offered in song writing, orchestration, banjo dulcimer, fiddle and many other widely diverse subjects including: story telling, dance, gospel singing and Celtic music. Guitar instructors will include: Garth Baxter (classical) Guy Davis (blues), Robin Bullock (fingerstyle), Joe Herrmann (beginning), Harry Orlove (studio) and Stacy Phillips, Paul Beard, David Giegerich, Paul Reisler, David Whitaker (dobro). Call Common Ground on the Hill at (410) 857-2771 or 857-2772 for more details and a catalogue.

**Intimidated Performers Group Forming.** If you find it hard to play in front of others, consider joining Vic Brod and Mike Davis once a week with other, similarly afflicted lovers of the guitar. The idea is to gather as a sympathetic and non-critical group and play something -- anything -- in each other's company just to get used to doing it. Could be a fun way to dissipate some of the stress; we wouldn't be performing, just playing the guitar. If interested, call or e-mail Vic (703/553-9073; vbrod@ix.netcom.com) or Mike (703/532-4755; 72007.3132@compuserve.com)."

**Call for Scores.** Scores are sought for the book *Music for Voice and Classical Guitar, 1945-1996*, an annotated catalog to be published in the Fall of 1996 by McFarland & Company, Inc. All music must be performable by the duo of one vocalist and one classical guitarist. Send scores, tapes (optional), and supporting information to : James Maroney, 257 Berkshire Rd., Southbury, CT 06488-2039, USA, no later than July 1996.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

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