



The Berkshire Guitar Society

www.berkshireguitar.freemove.co.uk



Newsletter No 113

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HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!!

December meeting

As readers will be aware, Paul Miron has followed up his earlier success in the ABRSM Diploma by taking the exam for the LRSM in December.

To give Paul practice in front of an audience, a good turnout at the meeting on December 8th was treated to Paul running through some of his exam programme.

In addition to Dowland's Lachrimae and Fantasia (P1), Paul's exam programme consisted of Brouwer's The Black Decameron and the first movement of Ponce's concerto.

In playing the latter work for the BGS audience, the accompaniment part was taken by a digitally derived orchestral backing track which Paul played along to and required assistance (ably provided by Tim Parke!) to stop and restart the recording whilst Paul played the cadenza.

Ponce commenced work on this concerto in 1924 and required encouragement from Segovia in order to complete it. It was therefore not performed until 1941 and was a success at the time. It seems to have fallen into disfavour with current performers but in Paul's view is one of the best concertos for guitar.

It's not often that one gets the opportunity to hear a guitar concerto being played so we were a lucky group indeed.

Here's hoping the exam went well, Paul, and we look forward to hearing the result.

After a change of room necessitated by the noise from the bar downstairs, the "members" part of the meeting commenced as a number of us ran through seasonal and other offerings.

It's good to see new members so a warm welcome to Peter Brown who made an impressive debut with Tansman's Barcarolle, Sakura Variations and "Walking in the Air" to provide a seasonal note.

Andy played us two movements from a Sonatina by Giuliani, followed by Paul and Tim playing a Lauffenstein duet. Gary stuck to the script and gave us 2 seasonal pieces, a traditional Canadian "Huron Carol" and "A Winter Idyll" by Steven Lane. I played a

somewhat jazzed up version of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer obtained from October's "Web site of the Month" and we closed with Jeremy Allison's arrangement of Silent Night for guitar ensemble.

A most enjoyable evening.

Web site of the month

For lovers of our old friend Johann Sebastian Bach this is definitely one to bookmark, whether you are (like me) a dabbler or have a more serious interest.

Alan Melvin's site <http://alan.melvin.com> contains his own transcriptions, mostly from the violin sonatas and partitas BWV 1001 - 1005 but also a number of other works including some duets. Whereas there are a number of sites where one can find transcriptions of the Lute and Cello suites, I'm not aware of many other internet sources for Bach's violin solo works, which makes these transcriptions particularly useful.

The transcriptions are available as midi files, in pdf format and also as Tabledit files. The pdf files contain tab which may not be to everyone's liking but if you have the Tabledit programme you can get rid of the tab when printing.

The site also contains what is claimed to be a comprehensive list of free sites offering "Bach for guitar in tablature" if you wish to pursue other J. S. Bach resources on the web.

BGS news

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting is on Sunday 12th January (7.30 p.m. at the South Hill Park Centre) and will be an ensemble evening.

A TALE OF 2 VIOLINISTS, A PIANIST AND GUITARIST
(by Gary Jordan)

On the evening of Saturday 23 November, the above ensemble got together at Wesley Church in Reading for an hour and a half of musical miscellany in aid of charity - the guitarist being your Chairman. An audience of about 50 appeared as if

by magic during the incredibly short 30 minutes before the performance, and were impeccably behaved throughout, clapping enthusiastically in all the right places.

Ivanka Shana (violin 1), Carston Maass (violin 2) and Christine Angwin (piano) made an impressive start to the concert with the Bach double violin concerto. Then yours truly joined Ivanka on stage to play Ivan Andrew's Devon Sketches. I had been looking forward to playing this piece ever since hearing Ivan and his daughter, Kate, play it earlier in the year. It is a set of six musical picture-postcards describing scenes from Devon - Distant Hills, Steam Train to Kingswear, Elegaic Dart, Boats in Harbour and rather less romantically - Tractor in the Lane and Holiday Traffic. Ivan has a great deal of experience in writing for the guitar, and seems to have put the same dedication into his violin composition. Ivanka and I both enjoyed playing these pieces, and the audience obviously appreciated them as well.

After an extended interval, Carston played Paul Simon's Hobo Blues arranged for violin and I followed up with Danza Brazilliera and Satie's Gymnopodie 1, the latter piece chosen to serve as an introduction to Debussy's Danse which Christine performed most effectively upon the piano.

The last piece in the programme was Rodrigo's Fantasia para un Gentilhombre. This was the cause of most of my sleepless nights over the past month, but actually seemed to go pretty well. I was glad that nerves didn't seem to get in the way too much, and up until the last movement all went smoothly. It was only after I started Canario off just a little too enthusiastically that things started to get a bit tricky. Fortunately we managed to keep the two parts together and all ended happily to lots more applause.

The part I hadn't really thought much about was the few days after the concert - suddenly no more need to rehearse and a backlog of jobs around the house to catch up with - well perhaps its time to start thinking about the next one.....

Editors note: Thanks to Gary for contributing the above which missed the December newsletter due to technical problems at my end.

HARRY COOK - DJANGO REINHARDT

Harry Cook is a former member who likes to keep in touch.

I have received from Harry a fascinating recording about Django Reinhardt, full of information on his activities around the war years, interspersed with plenty of musical clips.

A must for Django fans - if you would like to hear this recording, email me and I'll send it to you (please send it back!). The recording is on a CD in mp3 format and is about ½ hour long (unfortunately the file is probably too large to be emailed).

ROGER GREEN

Gary has pointed out that there are probably readers who know Roger Green (past-chairman/guitarist/composer/poet and part time audiologist) and would be interested in his 32 day walk completed earlier in the year from Portland Bill to Berwick upon Tweed.

To see the record of this major undertaking then visit the following url:

<http://homepages.which.net/~janet.green/walk.htm>

Other news

If you need to buy a set of strings then you could try Stringbusters (<http://www.zencatalog.com/Stringbuster/>) who are selling D'addario Pro-Arte strings EJ45/46/44 at £5.49 inc vat per set. P&P is 82 pence per order.

Also the Intelitouch tuner is available for £39.99 inc VAT (£10 less than list, and delivery is free) at <http://www.musicianshop.com/cgi/musicianshop-uk.cgi/pagetuners>.

This tuner clamps onto the instrument and feels the vibrations when you sound the note. The display shows the note you are playing and indicates how close you are to the correct pitch by means of converging arrows on either side of the note being played. The display is backlit so that it can be easily seen. I use one of these tuners and as I find it makes easy work of tuning it is permanently attached to my guitar (except when it has to go in it's case!). If anyone else has one and is not so pleased then let me know.

Thanks to Steve Tucker (who obviously spends even more time than I do on the Internet) for the above links.

And Finally

Some of you will already be familiar with this offering but in view of the imminence of a certain date of international significance towards the end of January then it seems appropriate to include here for the benefit of our wider readership.

Tony Blair is visiting an Edinburgh hospital. He enters a ward full of patients with no obvious sign of injury or illness. He greets the first patient who replies:

"Fair fa your honest sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin' race,
Aboon them a you take your place,
Painch, tripe or thairm,
As lang's my airm."

Tony is confused, so he just grins and moves on to the next patient and greets him. The patient responds:

"Some hae meat and canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it,
But we hae meat and we can eat,
So let the Lord be thankit."

Even more confused, but trying not to show it, Tony moves on to the next patient, who immediately chants:

"Wee sleekeit, cowerin, timrous beasty,
Thou needna start awa sae hastie,
Wi bickering brattle."

Now alarmed, Tony turns to the accompanying doctor and asks "What kind of facility is this? Is it a mental ward?"

"No", replies the doctor. "This is the serious Burns unit".