



The Berkshire Guitar Society

www.berkshireguitar.freemove.co.uk



Newsletter No 119

July 2003

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(Web site of the month is taking a rest!)

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June meeting

Last month we were challenged by an ensemble meeting. Two groups went their separate ways to sight-read their way through music from the library, and then returned, exhausted, after an hour of gruelling rehearsal.

Jeremy Alison introduced his team's piece - a courante by Praetorius, and explained that they had adopted a revolutionary interpretation which needed to be played particularly s-l-o-w-l-y. The performance went well, John, James and June and a new member, Elizabeth Andrews (welcome, Elizabeth), producing a well-controlled rendition. Then followed an extract from Beethoven 7th Symphony. Despite its obvious challenges to five guitarists, a recognisable theme emerged - I'm not sure what inspired the rasgueado chords, but they helped make it a memorable performance. The group ended with an arrangement of Brahms Theme by Haydn.

The second group were less ambitious in that they only presented one piece, however, with repeats it lasted almost as long. Gary explained that Schubert's Rosamunde had been used in these sessions on several occasions, but he thought it deserved another chance. The performance went well with only one minor deviation from the score, and the performers stunned by their ability not only to execute all of the repeats in the correct order, but also to finish together. Well done to Rob, Andy, Bob, Steve and Richard for their playing, and to Jeremy for his arrangement which we all agreed worked well in ensemble.

Gary Jordan

BGS News

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the BGS will be on Sunday 13th July, when a presentation on guitar making will be given by Steve Spearing. Steve is a friend of Gary Jordan's and is not a professional luthier, but a player who has undertaken a course on the subject and succeeded as a result in constructing his own instrument. So for an illustration of what it is possible for an "ordinary mortal" to achieve come along on Sunday 13th July for 7.30 pm at the South Hill Park Centre.

The presentation will be followed by a member's evening, so if you want a "solo opportunity" then bring along something to play - there's no particular theme.

BARBEQUE

A reminder that the BGS summer barbeque will be held on Sunday 27th July at James' and June's residence in Wokingham. Some important points to note:

- Directions are included with this newsletter.
- The time - 2.00 pm onwards
- Food & drink - please bring along your own meat or equivalent, something to drink, and something (e.g. desert or salad) that can be shared with others.
- Other members of the family are welcome.
- In order to avoid damage to the lawn, please wear flat soled shoes - sorry guys but those stilettos you always wanted to wear are definitely out.
- A couple of folding garden chairs might also be useful if you can get them in the car.
- Lastly but by no means least don't forget your guitar!!

Let's hope the weather is kind and that the event is as successful as it was last year. See you on the 27th!!

SUMMER BREAK

There won't be a meeting in August, and this newsletter will also be taking a rest. The next edition will appear in early September. So I'll just take this opportunity to remind you all that the first meeting after the break will be on September 14th and is scheduled to be an Ensemble Evening. Enjoy your holidays, and see you then.

SPANISH CIRCLE - FROM THE AUDIENCE

As those who were present will recall, Mike Lloyd came along to the Spanish Circle on 23rd May and has sent me the following.

"Having decided to come along to the Spanish Circle but not

having prepared anything to play, I was stuck in the audience throughout. So I thought I would summarise some personal highlights as a non-participant.

The very first impressions at the door were mixed. Bad news: The gentleman at the door wanted £2 for me to get in. Good news: The £2 included wine and entertainment. Bad news (on the wine): The gentleman at the door advised that the wine would not live up to the standard of the entertainment. Good news (on the entertainment): He was right.

The first was the Chorinho, which I thought was great. The surround-sound produced by the massed guitars of the BGS worked really well. The second highlight was the range of tone colour that everyone produced. You all reminded me again of what a guitar can sound like.

Then there was the range of music, from blues to flamenco, as well as traditional repertoire and more unusual pieces. Richard and Gary's duets, for example, were new to me. My scribbled notes just say "Started and finished at the same time, but good fun to listen to. There seemed to be a bit of a discussion on which should be the third piece." (The gentleman at the door had not warned me about the effect of the wine on my ability to take notes.)

Finally, it was great to see everyone again. I recognised the slight touch of nerves, and was both relieved and a little sad not to have prepared something to play. The spirit of the evening seemed to be much as ever – just strengthened and refreshed by the newer and younger faces (watch out, Steve: young Chris is well on his way to catching you up and overtaking!). When I was an active member, I always thought that the Spanish Circle event was one of the highlights of the BGS calendar. Sitting on the other side that Friday evening, I think that it is also a highlight for the audience to have the BGS. And they do seem to ask us back over the years.

And talking about the passing of years, did I miss the 25th birthday celebrations of the BGS?"

Mike, many thanks for that. Now there's a question at the end there that I don't know the answer to - anyone like to let me know and I'll include it in the next newsletter??

Other news

TOWARDS A FEDERATION OF GUITAR SOCIETIES UK?

Gary Jordan recently attended a meeting on the above subject. The following extracts are from the subsequent press notice.

"... on the threateningly inauspicious date of Friday 13 June 2003, delegates from seven guitar societies from south-east England and from the Lute Society met at Goddards on Leith Hill to explore the benefits of closer alliance.

Discussion was lively and, even if we didn't cover everything we had hoped, all present were supportive of the formation of a federation of guitar societies... Although our focus was primarily on the classical guitar, a federation should also recognise related instruments such as the lute, mandolin and flamenco guitar...

We felt that societies could, together, more effectively raise the profile of the guitar, and in particular stimulate interest amongst younger people. Various means were discussed, ... The need is for a network enabling societies to offer mutual support - in the interest of promoting the classical guitar and related instruments, and providing a source of help and advice to enthusiasts.

We recognised the danger of making too ambitious a start without adequate energy or resources to achieve results. It is better to make haste slowly. The federation will start as an informal grouping

An early objective is to produce a web site, but this will need time and skill to develop to a standard that would be of value and achieve respect. Initially, therefore, an e-mail exchange has been established to offer the latest information on events, to pool ideas and to stimulate debate...."

SOUTHAMPTON GUITAR SOCIETY CONCERT

On Saturday, July 5th at 8pm, our neighbours to the south will be holding a concert by Craig Ogden (guitar) & Alison Stephens

(mandolin) at The Point Dance & Arts Centre in Eastleigh, Hants (5 miles north of Southampton). Have a look at the theatre's web site <http://www.thepoint-online.co.uk/> for maps.

The full programme is on the SCGS web site www.scgs-guitar.org.uk - click on "Next Concert" on the home page. Tickets are £9 (concessions & members @ £6) from Wayne Lines 01329 310792 or the box office 023 8065 2333. Buy from the SCGS (Wayne Lines) and you'll be treated as an SCGS member.

The SCGS regularly puts on concerts which are well attended by the public as well as SCGS members - worth considering a trip down the M3 next Saturday??

And Finally

At a computer expo Bill Gates is said to have compared the computer industry to the car industry by stating "If cars had kept up with technology like the computer industry, we would all be driving cars that cost £25 and do 100 mpg".

One car industry chief retaliated by saying "If the car industry had used technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics:

Your car would occasionally stop on the highway without reason. In order to get it started again, you would have to push it to the side of the road, close all the windows, then restart it and open all the windows again. For some reason, you would simply do this without question.

You would press the "Start" button to close down the engine.

The oil warning, radiator, and battery warning lights would all be replaced by a single "Unidentified System Error" light.

The air bag would ask your freshly mangled body "Are you sure?" before going off.

Every time a new model was introduced, people would have to learn to drive again because none of the old controls would work on the new model."