



The Berkshire Guitar Society

www.berkshireguitar.freemove.co.uk



Newsletter No 123

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CONTENTS

November meeting

BGS News

Other news

Web site of the month

And Finally

**** Next meeting Sunday 14th December ****

Christmas Members Evening

November meeting

Unfortunately I was laid up with flu in early November, so in addition to missing a meeting I wanted to attend I had to hand over the editor's pen to Gary Jordan who has kindly contributed the following.

At the meeting on November 9th we were treated to another performance by Paul Miron, this time as part of his preparation for the FRSM Diploma he is playing for in December, and he certainly has to work hard for it (the FRSM is the Fellowship of the Royal Schools of Music, the highest of the Associated Board's Diplomas).

Typically for Paul, he arrived with just minutes to spare, and warmed up with an arrangement of a Shaker Folk melody by Richard Hand. This was a pleasant little piece based on the tune otherwise known as 'Lord of the Dance'.

Then came the serious stuff, starting with Bach's Chaconne. Paul told us that there are 64 variations, and that the theme is not based on a melody, but on the 4 note descending bass line. This a very ambitious piece to play at the start of a recital, but Paul certainly managed a convincing performance.

The second piece was in complete contrast - "Hika: in memorandum of Toru Takemitsu" by Brouwer. Paul described the style as Asian influence with Western tonality. The dreamy opening eventually gave way to a more frantic centre section and then returned to its restful state for the close.

The grand finale was Rodrigo's Concerto de Aranjuez, which of course called for an orchestra. Since a real one wasn't available, we were treated to an electronically generated ensemble which generally gave a good impression of the real thing. Paul seemed to be well on top of the first movement, notes from his Greg Smallman guitar sail-

ing effortlessly over the sea of digital strings. The second movement came across particularly well, with some unbelievably accurate ensemble playing when the recorded orchestral part picked up from Paul's expressive cadenza with no trace of hesitation.

Judging by the standard of this mini-recital, Paul is well on the way to success in December; I'm sure we all wish him the very best of luck on the day!

I understand that Paul's next feat will be to play the Aranjuez concerto with a real orchestra in March - definitely one for the diary. More details will no doubt appear via the newsletter in the coming months.

By the time several of us had taken advantage of the opportunity to play Paul's new guitar and finished chatting, there was little time left for the planned orchestral session, so we continued in recital mode. Andy Scott tried out a couple of flamenco pieces, and Peter Brown rounded the evening off with Tarrega's Recuerdos and Variations on a theme by Verdi.

BGS News

NEXT MEETING

We meet next on Sunday 14th December 7.30 pm at South Hill Park as usual. This is our Christmas members evening, so bring along something appropriate to play plus some festive food & drink to share round.

Depending upon the number and length of solo offerings, and the amount of time we take soaking up the Christmas spirit, there will hopefully be time for some impromptu ensemble or orchestra playing - another reason to make sure you bring your guitar!

See you on the 14th!!!

Other news

POSSIBLE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS??

If you were thinking of buying some guitar music this Christmas, or hoping that Santa would put something worth playing in your stocking, then have a read of the following contribution from Jeremy Allison....

Every so often Trinity College have brought out books of music from Grades 1 - 7 (sometimes Grade 8) which have often proved of great use to guitarists and guitar teachers, usually having 12 pieces at more or less the same grade, well printed and invariably with a smattering of quality pieces, occasionally new to me.

Often they would feature pieces by the person who devised the book. For the last few years I have been using the Trinity Grade 6 book which has at least 6 pieces out of the 12 which are worthwhile (50% is good for guitar books!).

In the last month or so Trinity have brought out a new set which I have had a cursory look at, my impression unfortunately being one of disappointment.

The overall editorship is by Gary Ryan who hasn't hesitated to include his own music - Grade 4 has 3 of his pieces. Though I have bought the Grade 6 & 7 which are just about OK, the Grade 7 book has one of his pieces which makes me dubious about buying or using the earlier books.

When it comes to educational or easy music for the guitar, in this country we have a couple of good writers, Peter Nutall and Vincent Lindsey-Clarke, who are mostly pretty consistent in what is a very difficult endeavour.

Lindsey-Clarke and Alexander McDonald have brought out "Basic Skills for Spanish Guitar" Books 1 & 2 from Montagu Music MM123 and MM124 (each £8.00). These books go from beginner to approximately Grade 4 / 5. They fill in the gaps and reinforce knowledge already gained with stimulating exercises and pieces.

Lindsey-Clarke has also brought out "5 Easy Jazz Pieces" MM122 (£7.00). These pieces go up to Grade 4 and although jazz -tinged they are not too formulaic and have enough individual character to be classed as compositions. I think these books are pretty good and well worth looking at.

Jeremy Allison

Another possibility is a new autobiographical DVD from Julian Bream, which includes numerous contributions from well known musical names and also contains over an hour of performance. The total length of the main profile is 2 hours and there are also 4 other performances from the archives plus other material.

The DVD is available from www.fretsonly.com priced £26.50, which includes postage and packing

Web site of the month

You might find the web site of the Gitarrenschule Bieberthal, a small guitar school in the middle of Germany, well worth a visit. Although the bulk of the site is in German, assuming that it's the downloadable resources that you are interested in rather than a desire to practice your German, then if you follow the obvious link to "download scores" on the home page <http://www.gitarrenschule-biebertal.de> you will be taken to an English version of the download archive and from there it's all pretty obvious what you have to do.

The music looks to be all in the public domain and contains some composers not found on other sites offering similar material. It is well presented in pdf format with an accompanying midi file. I had a go at an arrangement of Scarborough Fair which worked pretty well and is trying to find its way into my (limited!) repertoire.

You will need to work out your own fingering.

And Finally

I hope I haven't used any of these before, I wouldn't like to think I'd inflicted them on anyone more than once

Two peanuts walk into a bar - one was a salted.

A jump lead walks into a bar - The barman warns "I'll serve you, but don't start anything".

A sandwich walks into a bar - The barman says "Sorry, we don't serve food here".

A dyslexic man walks into a bra.

A man walks into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his arm and says "A pint of bitter for me please, and one for the road".

Two aerials met on a roof, fell in love and got married. The ceremony wasn't much but the reception was brilliant.

Two cannibals are eating a clown. One says to the other "Does this taste funny to you?"