



The Berkshire Guitar Society

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A good attendance came along to South Hill Park on Sunday 14th November to hear about Steve Spearing's exploits making guitars and to see and hear some of the results.

Steve introduced himself as someone who started playing the guitar at age 11, playing blues and "popular" music, but had latterly discovered a desire to learn to play "proper" music - hence his joining in with Gary Jordan's group of students - and also to make his own instrument. These two factors drove him to enrol on a 5 day "beginners course" in Derbyshire a couple of years ago at the end of which Steve was supposed to have built a guitar, having started off with a "kit".

Steve took us through his experiences on the course - both highly enjoyable and frustrating at the same time. Suffice it to say that at the end of the course none of the participants had the finished product, and it is a credit to Steve that when he got home and found that the top, sides and back of the body didn't fit together properly, he was able to take the instrument apart and put it back together again within 4 months. I can just imagine the feelings that Steve described as the strings were fitted and he had no choice but to hold his breath to find out whether the guitar would take the tension as the strings were wound up.

Anyway, the result was impressive as all present will vouch for, and has since been added to with a good looking steel string and mandolin.

I for one can only admire the skills, patience and determination that go into such a project, not to mention the empathy for the material that you are working with that is needed. I also have a suspicion that guitar making as a hobby could make my desire to get my golf handicap down seem cheap, so it's not for me, but I found Steve's presentation fascinating and I wasn't the only one. I've also added "kerfing" and "purfling" to my vocabulary, although I must admit that these aren't the sort of words one drops into everyday conversation.

After a short interval Steve on his self made steel string was joined by Peter Wheatley playing harmonica as we heard 4 blues numbers, "Lonesome Stockade Blues", "Hey hey Blues", "Trouble is going on" and "Before you Accuse Me" and highly entertaining

it was too. This provided an insight into another world - that of the harmonica - when Peter selected a different instrument according to the key of the piece. Apparently there are many different types of harmonica, so inevitably it's not the simple instrument I had in mind!

Many thanks to Steve and also to Peter for informing and entertaining us so successfully.

BGS news

PAUL MIRON & THE ROSEWOOD TRIO - NOVEMBER 7TH

The first of three BGS events in November was the concert with Paul Miron and the Rosewood Trio on the afternoon of Sunday 7th.

Now I have on many past occasions exhorted members to make sure that they didn't forget to book their tickets for concerts and workshops etc in advance as they might sell out. Pity I didn't follow my own advice - although it was excellent news to find out when I arrived at SHP that there was a full house, which meant an audience of around 75 / 80 persons for our performers (the concert having been moved to the Recital Room), that meant I couldn't get in. Ah well, lesson learned I am therefore indebted to George Macdonald for the following comments on the concert.

The Rosewood Trio (Gary Jordan, Tim Parke and Mike Hinchliff) started off the afternoon with the very popular Vivaldi Concerto in G minor. Throughout the performance all 3 players sounded good together and all 3 movements were most enjoyable to listen to. I particularly enjoyed the first Allegro and the Andante. The Trio demonstrated that one moment they can play with vigour and vibrancy, and the next moment have the audience hanging on every note with music as soft and gentle as it can be. The Vivaldi was a perfect choice of music for a slightly damp November Sunday afternoon and the audience were left very contented.

I've always been a big fan of Paul as a performer so I didn't need any convincing that his set would be very special. His music consisted almost exclusively of Twentieth Century South American pieces. This could have been a little risky, but the

variety of the music and the high standard of the performances meant the audience were always enjoying the experience and eagerly looking forward to the next piece. For me the beauty of this genre of music is the obvious song-like structure, the dance rhythms and the light-hearted or occasionally humorous nature of the music. A lot of the pleasure of the concert must go down to Paul's choice of music, but that doesn't take anything away from Paul as a performer. I have heard Paul play on several occasions now and I just love the music he plays, he seems to have an instinctive feel for what will work. And how extensive is his repertoire?! You wouldn't think he worked for a living!

There isn't really room to mention everything he played by name, but for me (and his Dad) it was great to hear him play a version of Nuages by Django Rheinhardt as his encore.

After the interval the Rosewood Trio returned with the West Side Story Suite. This suite is so incredibly tuneful and the performance so musical that it was a great pleasure to listen to.

The concert finished with all 4 players playing the very yummy Maris Pipers Mash by Ivan Andrews, leaving the sell-out audience very much uplifted. To say that I enjoyed this concert would be a gross understatement, it really was smashing (continuing the theme of the potato) from start to finish.

George

NOVEMBER 21ST - STUDENTS CONCERT

Thanks again to George for these comments on the third event of our month.

We had a great afternoon at the students concert. I don't want to pick out any individual performances because it may appear that some performances were favoured more than others, and I can honestly say that all of the students played incredibly well and it was real pleasure to listen to all of them. Debbie Haeck had put forward four students (Ben Stuart, Matthew Alston, Emmy Al-Ghabra and Rebecca Farmer) and Terry Bryanton had put forward two (Christopher and Richard Tucker, that is Steve's two boys).



Students at the concert on November 21st - from the left, clockwise: Christopher Tucker, Ben Stuart, Ben and Mathhew Alston, Richard Tucker, Emmy Al-Ghabra and Rebecca Farmer.

A lot of credit must go to Debbie, Terry and Steve because all the performers were very well prepared. They clearly knew their pieces very well and performed them with great musicality and confidence. The stars of the show were definitely the 6 student performers. It is quite evident that all six are very talented and undoubtedly get a lot of pleasure from playing the guitar.

The music included Prelude from 1st Cello Suite by Bach, Study no 12 by Metz, Picnic Piece by Christopher Norton, A Toy by Anonymous, Andante Maestoso by Sor, Julia Florida by Barrios, Bourre by Bach, Soleares and Songs of Cycles in the Avenue by Vincent Lindsey-Clarke.

The concert must give the students something useful to aim for and, as we all know, it is very valuable to have the opportunity to play in front of others. I am sure all those involved would be delighted if we could make the student concert a regular feature of the BGS year.

George

NEXT MEETING - SUNDAY DEC 12TH

As those who have been to our Christmas meeting before will know, this definitely provides an early opportunity to enter into

the Christmas spirit. Bring along some seasonal music to play, and also something appropriate to eat or drink.

This year we also decide the winner of our composing / arranging competition. There are a number of entrants, and all being well we will be able to hear all of them played. At the time of writing, I'm not sure how the judging will be done, but all will be revealed on the night.

So don't forget to come along to South Hill Park at the usual BGS time, 7.30 pm, on Sunday 12th December for a suitable climax to a highly successful 2004 for the BGS.

AMANDA COOK CONCERT

One to put in the diary for the new year. Amanda is one of the UK's best young performers.

Date: Saturday 29th January

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Venue: The Recital Room, South Hill Park,

Title: The Many Faces of the Guitar

Tickets: Adults £7, Berkshire Guitar Society Members £6,

Under 16's £3.

This a BGS organised event, let's hope it's as successful as the last one! More details next month.

Web site of the month

A good spot from Mike Lloyd, who congratulates the BGS on being the only UK local guitar society listed on the web site of that august body, the German Association of Plucked Musical Instrument Players.

If you don't believe it, go to

<http://www.bdz-online.de/frameload.htm?refer=http://www.bdz-online.de/webverz/verband.htm>

and scroll down till you find us. Clearly our fame spreads far and wide!