



The Berkshire Guitar Society

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Newsletter No 139

June 2005

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April meeting

We did not get off to a good start to our meeting on April 11th - Graham Cooper and Yvonne de Souza must have been getting a bit worried as they sat in the Recital Room (correct venue) wondering whether anyone else was going to turn up. By the time that the creatures of habit among us who went to the Dance Studio (wrong venue on this occasion) had joined them, and we had eventually sorted ourselves out into ensemble groups with some music from the library, the evening eventually took on a more promising note.

The usual pattern for an ensemble session was followed, as the groups prepared their piece(s) prior to coming together after an interval.

Thus it was that James, June and George led the way with one of Pieter van der Staak's Snapshots called In a Spanish Tavern - notable for the BGS in having June leading the way on her clarinet - not bad June - I find it difficult to believe that you really hadn't picked up the instrument for the 25 years that I think you were claiming!!

This was followed by Richard Butters, Gary Jordan, Debbie Haeck and Stephen Christmas with an impressive rendition of Stuart Orford's arrangement of Handel's Overture from Alexanders Feast - remarkable considering the lack of time to prepare a serious piece of music.

Inevitably we then headed to the opposite end of the difficulty spectrum as John Parr, Cheryl Slater, Allan du Feu and myself tackled the Courante from Terpsichore (Michael Pretorius) and the theme from the second movement of Beethoven's 7th Symphony, in the arrangements by Thorben Jensen.

Our ensembles were brought to a close with Andy Scott, Michelle Cole, Graham Cooper and Yvonne de Souza giving

us Kurt Sydow's Suite for 4 guitars from a Puppet Pantomime, including some unusual time signatures that made me glad I was in another group!

Efforts are being made to get the library rather better organised, so that these evenings can get off to a better start, but despite our initial difficulties we all enjoyed ourselves, and heard some music from the library that hadn't been aired in my experience into the bargain.

The evening was brought to a close in very enjoyable fashion with Debbie and Stephen in duo playing 3 of Granados' Spanish Dances (nos 5, 2 and 1) in some new arrangements by Ray Burley. There was a suggestion that Ray is recording these with John Mills, which gives us some listening material to look forward to hearing.

Spanish Circle, Reading, 27th May 2005

My thanks to George Macdonald for the following.

Always one of the highlights of the BGS calendar, this year's Spanish Circle was no let-down. The audience of Circle members numbered a respectable fifteen or so, and as always were very welcoming and appreciative.

Gary, having pulled the programme of music together, bravely took to the stage first and treated us to a very nice performance of Soleares by Turina. This was an excellent choice of music with a very strong Spanish feel. Gary clearly knew the piece well and his performance was excellent.

Richard and I then performed 3 short pieces from a lovely book of "Songs and Dances from Latin America" by Yvon Rivoal. Serteneja and Cueca are both strongly rhythmical and are quite easy on the ear. Terezinha de Jesus is more mellow but has a contrasting up-beat section that carries it along nicely. Special thanks to

Richard for standing in at the last minute, Graham unfortunately having to withdraw.

Steve Tucker was up next. His first piece was Spain (by anon.) taken from a guitar tutor book. This is a nicely put together study piece with a scattering of strong flamenco sounding chords. His second piece The Princess and the Puddings by J. Renbourn was not evenly vaguely Spanish, being slightly folky with an underlying English baroque style. It was clear that Steve liked these pieces and his playing was strong and confident with a very nice guitar sound.

Michelle then played Tanga and Zapateado by C Romero. Once again a great choice of Spanish music, and Michelle played the pieces very well.

Steve Christmas and Debbie then played four Spanish Dances (nos. 1, 2, 3 & 5) by E. Granados with great fluency and feeling, and sounded excellent together. The pieces were very much appreciated by the whole audience.

After the break Richard and Liz played five Latin American pieces, with Liz playing recorder. The pieces they played were Ojos Azules and De Allacito by J Benites, O Rio by J Zaradin, and Takirari del regreso and El humahuaqueño (Bolivian and Argentinian pieces respectively). The two instruments complemented each other very well, and I could easily see the two of them performing in a shopping precinct wearing ponchos and selling CDs.

Next I played Seguriyas arr. J Martin and Guajira from "An Introduction to the Flamenco Guitar" by Anita Sheer and Harry Berlow. Despite my usual fumbled fingering the audience seemed happy enough.

Debbie then came back to play Madronõs by Torroba followed by Steve Christmas playing Torija by Torroba and Mazurka-Choro by H Villa Lobos. It was very pleasing that they both maintained the excellent standard of their first half pieces - not that we were expecting an

A.C. Milan style collapse you understand! - and the audience were once again very appreciative.

The entire group then got together to perform Los Palmeros by Ian Gammie and the very well known Cucaracho by Jan-Olof Eriksson. In practice all of our performances had been a little shaky, to say the least, but it really came together on the night, partly I think because Steve and Debbie strengthened the ensemble and partly because of the enforced discipline of performing in front of an audience; whatever had made the difference both pieces worked well and rounded off the evening very nicely. We were all thanked for our efforts and for providing an enjoyable evening's entertainment.

Our biggest thanks should go to Gary for organising everything and for his patience and skill in bringing the group pieces to an enjoyable climax.

George

BGS news

NEXT MEETING

On Sunday June 12th we have an Orchestra session - 7.30 pm as usual at the South Hill Park centre in Bracknell. Anyone who wishes to is welcome to do a "solo spot" after the main event but could you please let George Macdonald know beforehand so that we have some idea about timings for the evening.

BGS SUMMER BARBEQUE JULY 10TH

Graham Cooper has kindly offered to host this year's bbq - from about 2.30 on Sunday July 10th. This is always a most enjoyable event upon which the sun in my experience usually shines (hopefully that's not tempting fate). So make sure it's in the diary and watch out for next month's newsletter which will have directions and other vital information.

Other News

Wednesday 11th of May was a significant day for the guitar in the Guildford area. Ex-BGS chairman Roger Green has been talking about starting a guitar society for quite a while now, and managed to draw 10 guitarists together for the inaugural meeting of Surrey Guitar Society. I was delighted to be able to get there on what is normally a difficult evening for me.

To begin with Roger lead us through one of his own compositions, Tama's Ghost, a piece inspired by stories surrounding a lake in New Zealand. Despite the wide range of playing abilities in the room, Roger coaxed us into playing the notes that he intended, and mostly in the right order. By half-time we managed to play the whole thing through with a fair degree of confidence - pretty good going for a first meeting!

After chatting over tea and biscuits, we sat down to listen to one another play. I was honoured to have the opportunity to play a duet with Fiona Harrison who had recently moved into the area. I'm afraid I don't know the names of the other players, but we also heard a Bach prelude, some flamenco and another composition written by the player's teacher.

I'm sure we all wish our new neighbours every success and look forward to arranging a society visit in the near future. Roger Green would be delighted to see BGS members - he writes "Anyone from BGS who wants to come along would be most welcome - good that it's a different night because they could do both (i.e. BGS and SGS). They can contact me for details (01483 275381 or email janet.green@which.net). We are set for now to meet on the second Wednesday of every month at Tanyard Hall, 30 Station Road, Gomshall, GU5 9LF. "

Gary Jordan