



The Berkshire Guitar Society

www.berkshireguitar.freemove.co.uk



Newsletter No 144

Dec 2005

CONTENTS

BGS Meeting 6th November
Student Concert 27th November
BGS News
And Finally

**** Next meeting: ****

December 11th - Christmas meeting

BGS meeting 6th November

It takes more than something as trivial as a switch of meeting date from our normal 2nd Sunday of the month to put our members off, so a good turnout came along on 6th November to take part in some advance preparation for the Woodley Festival..

Now this is so far in advance of the Festival that we don't yet know the precise date on which we will be participating in the Festival - suffice to say at the present that it is likely to be one of three weekends around early March 2006, depending upon how the Festival programme pans out.

The event is described as a "non competitive" festival of "music and dance", and an ideal opportunity for anyone who wants some experience of playing in front of a friendly "public" audience.

After some discussion we settled down in ensemble mode under Gary Jordan's guidance to a selection of 6 Gaspar Sanz dances arranged for guitar quartet by Ian Gammie, and in particular on this occasion, the Espanoletas. This feels and sounds like ideal material for the occasion, not too difficult but potentially sounding very effective once polished.

If anyone who wasn't present is interested in participating then please make your desires known at the next meeting or by email, but be aware that this will require some additional sessions in the new year to ensure that the piece is properly prepared for the Festival itself, so there is a degree of commitment required!

After an interval, we had time for member's offerings. Alan du Feu led the way with Marc Andes' Cancion, followed by myself with a Prelude by the Argentinian composer Hector Ayala.

Next up was Yvonne on her (not so) "silent guitar" with an excellent Canarios by Gaspar Sanz, and then Richard Butters with an impressive rendition of Sevilla. Not put off by the quality of what had immediately preceded, John Parr then demonstrated continued progress with those nerves with House of the Rising Sun.

Debbie Haeck came next with Villa Lobos' Gavotte Choro from the Suite Populaire Bresilienne. We then had a change of period as Steve Christmas gave us the Prelude and Sarabande from Bach's A minor Lute suite, refusing to be put off by an all too

audible barrage of fireworks left over from bonfire night in the world outside.

Debbie then joined Steve to play 3 of Greig's Lyric Pieces Opus 12 - Vals, Arietta, and Watchman's Song - which Steve had arranged very successfully himself. The duo then gave us Poulenc's Suite Francais in Ray Burley's arrangement to bring a long but most enjoyable evening to a close.

Student Concert Sunday 27th November

Not having been to one of these events before, I was a tad concerned beforehand as to whether this was going to those "duty calls" events rather than an afternoon's entertainment.

I began to understand that the afternoon might not be turning out as expected when on arrival at South Hill Park I found the waiting audience beginning to wind itself down the stairs outside the Recital Room. Then I heard that the programme included a guitar band of 40 members

It was therefore not surprising that when after only a short delay the concert started with some introductory words from George Macdonald, the sizeable audience was packed into the rear half of the Recital Room, the rest of the space being occupied by an array of chairs and music stands in readiness for the band later in the proceedings.

The music started with Chris Tucker playing Villa Lobos' Prelude No 4, which he had performed in his recent Grade 7 exam. This was admirably played with plenty of feeling and contrast, and set the standard for the rest of the proceedings.

Chris's younger brother Richard came next, playing Alborada by David Burden, a piece he had played in his recent Grade 3. Well done to both the Tucker lads, it must have been daunting to kick things off, but on Sundays evidence they can look forward with confidence to those exam results.

We then had a number of Debbie Haeck's students starting off with 2 very sprightly young lads Sean Nelson and Henry Brabyn accompanied by Debbie with J S Bach's "Musette", with Sean and Henry following this up with solo arrangements of Can-Can (Offenbach) and Spanish Romance (Anon arr. Pope).



Action from the Students Concert with Richard Tucker (above) and (below) Henry Brabyn watched by Sean Nelson.



Next we had Catriona Mackenzie treating us to Steve Marsh's The Rainbow and Ejercicio by Ferrer. The floor was then taken by John Winters and Lewis Young who played Nostalgia (Sagreras) and a Rondo by Henry Purcell, before combining to give us Carcassi's Study no 19 arranged for 2 guitars.

Xiang Hu followed with 3 solo pieces, An Almaine (Thomas Robinson), Study no 5 Op 31 (Fernando Sor) and lastly Havre Gosselin (Vincent Lindsay-Clark).

The next piece was one of my favourites from the afternoon, Cycles in the Avenue, one of Vincent Lindsay-Clark's "Five Pictures of Sark", admirably played by Becky Farmer and Calum Eele. Becky and Calum then gave us solo performances of Carcassi's Studies nos 1 and 9 respectively.

At this stage the reason for all the space at the front of the Recital Room started to become clear as the stage was taken by the 7 members of the Berkshire Guitar Youth Ensemble,

who proceeded to play 5 Brazilian Dances followed by an arrangement of Bach's Largo and Allegro. All of which were played with a great deal of "togetherness" and clearly this group (under Colin Arenstein's direction) deserve the burgeoning reputation that we heard about in Debbie's introduction.

We then reached the climax of the afternoon as the combined forces of Debbie Haeck's Bracknell and Wokingham students plus some of Steve Christmas's pupils from Windsor took their places. It didn't take long at all for the band to settle down and provide us with an arrangement by Steve Christmas of a song called "They" (which apparently featured recently in the pop charts, although I wouldn't know) followed by "Yellow Bird" (arr. Hollingdale, from "The Latin Collection"), familiar to me and I'm sure others through having heard it played by steel bands.

I thought this performance by the Guitar Band under Debbie Haeck's baton was excellent. Although some of the participants had already been performing, many had not and for such a large group to settle down so quickly and perform so effectively was remarkable.



Above - all those empty chairs have gone, occupied by the members of the Wokingham, Bracknell and Windsor Guitar Band, Debbie Haeck conducting

Clearly, the audience had been thoroughly entertained by a consistently high level of performance throughout the afternoon which was a credit to the players, to their teachers, and to the Berkshire Young Musicians Trust - this level of achievement doesn't happen by accident and reflects a great deal of hard work.

I found the occasion to be highly encouraging for the future of our instrument.

There was no charge for admission to the concert but thanks to the appreciative audience we raised donations totalling £126 which after meeting costs will enable BGS to make a worthwhile donation to the Reading and District Hospitals Charity.

BGS News

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY DECEMBER 11TH

Our next meeting will be on Sunday December 11th, 7.30 pm at South Hill Park. This will be the usual Christmas format, so bring along something seasonal to play and also some festive food and drink to share round. The BGS will provide a couple of bottles of wine, so you can "think soft" in terms of providing liquid refreshment.

CONCERT SUNDAY JANUARY 29TH

Don't forget our Sunday morning concert on 29th January at 11.00.

This features Virginia Pearson, a past winner of the Julian Bream prize. She will be playing works by Rodrigo, Dowland, Torroba, Villa-Lobos and Barrios.

And Finally ...

I heard these on the Today programme on Radio 4 and then came across them again on one of the CG fora on the web. Apparently they're attempts by Jimi Hendrix to create some new dictionary definitions ...

Stalagmite	a prison camp for fleas.
Doodlebug	to draw a flea
Gondolier	something you catch from a boatman
Mishmash	to be late for church due to drink
Subdued	a less than cool person
Himalaya	a transexual rooster
Dynamite	to take a flea out to lunch
Cursor	where young children are taught to swear