



The Berkshire Guitar Society

www.berkshireguitar.freemove.co.uk



Newsletter No 145

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BGS meeting 11th December

Our Christmas meeting on December 11th attracted a good turnout, drawn no doubt not just by the prospect of some free seasonal goodies but also of being able to play and listen to some edifying guitar music.

The evening got off to an entirely unexpected start when Gary Jordan produced the first section to come off the press of Ivan Andrew's commission for the BGS. This is a work in four sections with six guitar parts that Ivan, the founder of the BGS way back in the 1980's, is writing for the BGS, all the sections being on Berkshire themes. This first piece is entitled "On the River" (referring to the Thames) and introduced us to an arrangement of an instantly familiar boating song which lent itself admirably to the needs of the Society. After this introduction we look forward to the rest of the work.

After this surprise the solo playing commenced with Cheryl Slater first to take her place in front of the group - this being a break with tradition as on the last members evening the feeling was that it would be more meaningful for performers to take a more central position rather than simply remain in situ where they happened to sit on arrival. Thus it was that Cheryl got us off to a seasonal start with Silent Night.

Richard Butters also elected to play before the evening's refreshments had a chance to take their toll during the imminent interval. Richard provided us with extracts from Granados' Valses Poeticos, which sounded much better than Richard's claims that the piece was "somewhat experimental" might have suggested.

After this we could restrain ourselves no longer and we tucked into an admirable selection of seasonal fare before resuming with my rendition of the carol O Holy Night. This was followed by Andy Scott, with El Noy de la Mare, including a discussion of whether this was a Cata-

lan "folk song", "Christmas Carol" or a "Christmas Carol in a folk style".

Next up were Debbie Haeck and Steve Christmas who played us some rags by Scott Joplin, culminating in The Entertainer. Debbie and Steve then played us Derek Hasted's arrangement of Teddy Bear's Picnic. The warnings from Steve beforehand that this "could go wrong" were quite unnecessary and I thought that this piece as played by the duo was one of the best things I have heard on a BGS members evening in a good while.

Gary Jordan then played us 3 seasonal pieces, God Rest ye Merry Gentlemen, Walking in the Air, and a Winter Idyll - the latter being a piece which Gary originally found in a guitar magazine in the 80's and (understandably) can't resist at this time of year.

The hot seat was then taken by Yvonne De Souza with Pernambuco's The Sound of Bells and finally by Steve Tucker, with a piece called Spain which despite being short certainly briefly brought an Iberian atmosphere to proceedings. The last piece of the evening was the Prelude from Bach's 1st Cello Suite, excellently played by Steve from memory.

As we moved through the latter part of the meeting the gaps between performances was taken up discussion provoked by George Macdonald of what would be the ideal present for a guitarist for Christmas. Suggestions which can safely be reproduced here included:

- The latest version of the Guitar Pro software, which apparently becomes ever more versatile;
- Scott Tennant's DVD, full of good technical material;
- A glass nail file which although more expensive than the usual product is slow to wear out and is kinder to the nails.

Although too late for 2005 these ideas are likely to be just as relevant next christmas so if you want to do some early shopping

An excellent meeting, lets hope 2006 continues in the same vein.

BGS News

NEXT MEETING SUNDAY JANUARY 8TH

Our next meeting is on Sunday 8th January, 7.30 pm at South Hill Park as usual. This will be an orchestra session during which we shall resume acquaintance with Ivan Andrew's piece described above and further explore some of the recently acquired material in the Society's library.

CONCERT SUNDAY JANUARY 29TH

Please note that the recital scheduled for January 29th has been cancelled as Virginia Pearson has injured her right hand.

AGM

The AGM will take place during the meeting on February 12th, when all being well the proposed Diary for 2006 will be unveiled.

Unless the AGM proves to be unusually lengthy (!!) there will also be the opportunity to play prepared pieces.

Other news

Fiona Harrison is holding her "Spring Guitar Break" between April 14th- 16th at Bloxham School nr Banbury, Oxfordfordshire.

To quote from the promotional material:

"This is an inspiring weekend for adult classical guitar players of all levels.

Guitarists will be able to participate in guitar ensembles, flute and guitar ensembles, technique workshops, master-classes, discussions on theory and practice ... and there will be plenty of opportunity for solo and ensemble performances. The scope of the activities is wide ranging and will sharpen up your musical skills!

Flute players of all levels will be available for you to work with and we will suggest partnerships accordingly. If you have a regular duo partner or have never played with a flautist before but like the idea, come along!"

For further information, contact Fiona Harrison on 01306 883306 or email: guitar@fluteandguitar.co.uk.

Web site of the month

Thanks to Richard Butters for this link to a video of the Assad brothers playing the same guitar together - amazing stuff!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6EDwEpUya3o>

There's also been some interesting developments on the web in recent times, in that it seems that the music industry is after web sites offering unlicensed material. For more details see

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/4508158.stm>.

It will come as no shock to us that some guitar web sites infringe copyright in their choice of pieces to offer for downloading - perhaps the main surprise is that it's taken the media moguls so long to do something about it.

Thus it is that for example Dirk's website

<http://dirk.meineke.free.fr/>

has taken down it's Latin, Popular and Modern sections and is restricted to offering "classical" pieces and contributors own work. I'm sure that it won't be the only site affected!

And Finally ...

After numerous rounds of "We don't even know if Osama Bin Laden is still alive," Osama himself decided to send George Bush a letter in his own handwriting to let him know he was still in the game.

Bush opened the letter and it appeared to contain a single line of coded message:

370HSSV-0773H.

Bush was baffled, so he e-mailed it to Condi Rice. Condi and her aides had no clue either, so they sent it to the FBI. No one could solve it at the FBI so it went to the CIA, then to the NSA.

With no clue as to its meaning they eventually asked Britain's MI6 for help. Within a minute MI6 cabled the White House with this reply: "Tell the President he's holding the message upside down."