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**BGS meeting 14<sup>th</sup> May**

For our May meeting we once again found ourselves in SHP's Studio 2, which although not our preferred location suits our purposes well enough. It was also good to see Dave Stinchcombe back amongst our ranks, after an absence of a couple of years.

Once we had settled down we found ourselves in "orchestra mode" under Gary Jordan's leadership tackling the third of Ivan Andrews pieces written for the BGS, this one entitled "South Hill Park", the music being intended to convey the variety of activities taking place at SHP. As such it lacks anything so obvious as a melody or theme running through the piece, and has been likened (I'm not sure who by) to an impressionist painting. It certainly demands that the players are mindful of a variety of dynamics and tempos.

The piece was really beginning to sound quite good by the time we had done with it and I think we're all looking forward to putting it together with the rest of Ivan's work and getting to play all the sections of "Berkshire Themes" together.

After an interval Petros Andreou led the way as we switched from group to solo performance with two Scarlatti Sonatas, L423 and L 352, followed by Carcassi's Study no 8. Tim Blass gave us Dowland's Frog Galliard and in a jump of 3 centuries played us Villa Lobos' Prelude No 3. Debbie Haeck then took us back in time again with the Andante from one of J S Bach's violin sonatas, notably played from memory, although unfortunately for the record Debbie's memory didn't extend to which sonata the Andante was from. The Bach was followed by 2 Catalan folk songs, El Noi de La Mare and Canco del Ladre, as Debbie took advantage of the opportunity to give these an airing before the upcoming Spanish Circle.

The evening was brought to a close by Steve Christmas with the Campo from Manuel Ponce's Sonatina Meridional, in a performance which one of those present was heard to voice the thought that this was Steve's best performance on a Society evening to date.

On this high note the meeting came to a close at the possibly unprecedented late time of 09.45 which indicates both the quality and quantity of the evening's entertainment.

**Spanish Circle 26<sup>th</sup> May**

Our annual visit to Caversham to entertain the Reading Spanish Circle got off to a slow start as circumstances delayed the arrival of some of our party which threatened our much needed rehearsal time for the ensemble pieces. Fortunately our hosts were also slow in gathering, or perhaps required a few minutes to get a glass or two of what turned out later to be a very nice Spanish red under their belts, so we were able to get our two ensemble

pieces, Ian Gammie's Tango Betulaceo and John Zaradin's Carnavalito sounding good before our group (featuring Allan du Feu and John Parr in addition to the subsequent soloists) took our places in front of about 20 members of the Circle. Unfortunately we then suffered one of those classic false starts as half of us started off with the Gammie and the other half with the Zaradin. Never mind, once that was sorted out we managed to pull off both pieces in a manner which our audience certainly seemed to appreciate.

The solo playing then commenced with myself playing the Prelude and Guarania from Hector Ayala's South American Suite, the latter inspired by the music of the Guarany Indians of Peru.

We then moved into truly "Spanish" rather than merely "Hispanic" mode as George Macdonald performed a set of Sevillanas with some style and panache, notable also for his introduction (one of number of creditable attempts during the course of the evening in spoken Spanish) in which George explained that Sevillanas is believed to be an old Castilian folk dance (*Seguidilla*) and did not originate from Seville as its name suggests. It is a very popular dance for couples of all ages in Andalusian towns, where it will be danced at the time of the town's [feria](#) - follow the link to find out more about the whole subject.

Debbie Haeck came next with 2 traditional Catalan folk songs, El Noi de La Mare and Canco del Ladre, followed by Torroba's Madronos and then Tarrega's Recuerdos, the desire to learn the latter piece being inspired by a visit to the Alhambra. Debbie's set finished with Turina's Soleares which Debbie succeeded in making sound very authentically "Spanish".

Gary Jordan warmed up with a short Sor study followed by an excellent rendition of Albeniz' Mallorca (another piece inspired by a holiday visit?).

The evening's last solo performer was Steve Christmas with Rodrigo's En Los Trigales and then all three movements of Ponce's Sonatina Meridional, all of them impressively played. To bring the evening to a close, Steve was joined on stage by Debbie as the duo gave us Rodrigo's Fandanguillo del Ventorillo, and then two dances from De Falla's "The Three Cornered Hat", firstly Dance of the Corregidor and then The Miller's Dance. The latter in particular rounded off the evening brilliantly as was apparent from the reaction of our audience, who seem to have thoroughly enjoyed their entertainment. We might just possibly be making another appearance next year ...

## BGS News

### NEXT MEETING

The June meeting will be on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 pm. This is a members evening with a "Blues and Ragtime" theme under Debbie's guidance so if you didn't manage to select something from the material kindly brought along by Debbie at the May meeting, then dig out something suitable of your own and bring it along. All being well there will be an opportunity to air those skills at improvisation that us classical guitarists are sure are lurking there somewhere but we never actually get round to exercising.

### Other news

#### WE'RE NOT ALONE!

Thanks to Gary for picking up a recent piece from "You and Yours" on BBC Radio 4.

It seems that according to a recent survey by the Music Industries Association, sales of guitars have doubled in the last 4 years. This is being driven by the guitar having overtaken the recorder as the most played instrument in schools, and also by baby boomers aka middle aged rockers reliving their youth and being able to afford to graduate from the famed "air guitar" to the real article.

Whilst the latter category of resurgent player may not be too relevant to ourselves, the interest in guitar among the younger generation sounds quite encouraging, helped along by the cheapness and ready availability of the guitar as a starter instrument, and the fact that the guitar is so much a part of the younger generation's culture. Not all youngsters go electric to the exclusion of everything else - some seem to manage to mix both classical and electric styles quite successfully.

It's good to hear further evidence to add to our own successful student concert last November of a future for our instrument!