

April 2014

Editorial

Welcome to the first Christchurch Guitar Society newsletter of 2014, and my last as secretary. It's a little late this time round, but I wanted to wait to feature the Taranaki Summer School and AGM. The issue features:

News - what's happening in the guitar society and the wider guitar world

Special feature - Gillian reports from her experience at the Taranaki Summer School

Profile - Miles Jackson from Duo Jackson, who performed recently at the Taranaki Summer School

Focus On: Nails - An article shamelessly pinched from Classical Guitar News website

The newsletter will be being put together by Gillian Calvert from now on so please email her with any suggestions on gillian@magi.gen.nz

Guitar society news

AGM

The AGM was held on Sunday 2nd March. David and Kathryn stepped down from the positions of treasurer and secretary, and Wolfgang and Gillian were voted in to replace them. Subjects discussed included possible concerts with Gunter Herbig and Matt

Withers, the society website, and the society concert. Full minutes will follow, but if anyone needs a copy please contact Kathryn (kathersluv@gmail.com). The current committee is:

President - Paul Zdrenka
Secretary - Gillian Calvert
Treasurer - Wolfgang Zdrenda
Committee - Jeni Berryman, Alan Dixon, Sue Hely, Roger Welsh

Society concert

The annual Christchurch Guitar Society will be held at Hohepa Christchurch, Cashmere, on a date yet to be confirmed but possibly 10 May 2014. Please let Gillian know if and what you intend to play, and the duration of your programme.

Christmas Barbeque



Wolfgang and Grace hosted the CGS Christmas barbecue and December meeting on Sunday 1 December. A pleasant and relaxing afternoon of guitar chat (and food) blended smoothly into a pleasant and relaxing evening of

guitar playing, with music from Mozart to Megadeath. I've popped a couple of photos on here, and the rest can be viewed [online](#)



Guitar world news

Taranaki Summer School 2014

Paula and Gillian attended the Taranaki Summer School in January 2014, and both came back brimming with enthusiasm. They highly recommend that everyone put it in their diaries for 2016! A full report follows.

Jim Hall (1930-2013)

Jim Hall, a famed jazz guitarist who played with Ella Fitzgerald and Sonny Rollins, died on 10 December 2013, aged 83.

Paco de Lucía (1947-2014)

Paco de Lucía, born Francisco Sánchez Gómez, widely credited as bringing flamenco to an international audience, died on 26 February 2014, aged 66.



Special Feature: Taranaki Summer School

By Gillian Calvert



This was the second Taranaki Classical Guitar Summer School and I'm pleased to say that the organisers John Couch, Wendy Diamond, Dominique Blatti and their team have improved their offering from a very successful first time around.

The school was held at the New Plymouth Girls High School and the evening concerts at the 4th Wall Theatre, while the Devon Hotel was the place for accommodation and evening get togethers. All these venues were only a few minutes walk apart. The hotel was very comfortable and I enjoyed the proximity to the venues although other participants chose to stay at other accommodation. The school was well set up with rooms, hall and the staff room for the lunch and dinner included in the registration.

The programme was once again packed with ensembles, masterclasses, workshops, lunchtime and evening concerts. Morning and afternoon tea had to be fitted in to the tight schedule, but they and the meals were well attended by attendees and

artists, providing a great chance to chat to everyone.

The concerts were a real feature of the school: the best chance to hear a diverse selection of classical guitarists in New Zealand. The first concert was by William Kanengiser, a founding member of the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, and featured "Music of Spain" by Manuel de Falla, Sor, Tarrega and Turina and "Music of North America" by Ernesto Garcia de Leon, Manuel Ponce, Fred Hand, Bryan Johanson and Brian Head. William was the school's featured artist and his concert was excellent but I'm pleased to say that it did not stand out above all others and our local talent showed to advantage.

Gunter Herbig, who teaches in Auckland, performed on Monday night. He played Dilermando Reis, Bach and Villa-Lobos in the first half followed by Douglas Lilburn and Barrios in the second. This was his first concert after a long break in performing; the first half lacked fullness in tone and assurance in rhythm but in the second half we heard some superb playing. Tuesday night featured Simone Iannarelli, an Italian guitarist and composer currently professor of classical guitar at the University of Colima (Mexico). He played his own compositions based on introspective flowing arpeggios and in scordatura. These were very beautiful as individual items but there was extensive retuning of the guitar during the concert and

it overall lacked the variety of mood to fill out a whole evening. However, there were some pieces of great beauty which may yet appear in future concerts.

John Couch's concert on Wednesday evening had a similar programme to the concert he played in Christchurch last year and was of a similar outstanding quality. This concert also included the world premiere of a Sonata by the New Zealand composer Campbell Ross, now living in Queensland. John learned this in three weeks, and a few little hesitations showed through but overall it was a great success.

The last guest concert on Thursday night was from the Sydney Guitar Trio, comprising Raffaele, Janet Agostino and Richard Charlton, playing mostly Australian works by Richard and Philip Houghton plus other pieces by Maximo Pujol and Loris Chobanian. This was a revelatory concert for me as I had never heard of these players from over the ditch. Much of this music was plinky-plonky, usually not my favourite, but here the modern plinks and plonks added up to real music. The years they have spent



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By Gillian Calvert

together showed with their impeccable ensemble.

Lunchtime concerts were ably provided by the New Zealand Guitar Quartet (the fourth time I've heard them and showing a reliable high standard) and Duo Jackson of guitar and viola/violin (the years of experience together adding up to an outstanding performance). One concert was dedicated to student guitarists from the school showing the wide range of abilities and courage at the school. On Friday evening a Student Caberet featured student soloists, groups (including Paul Zdrenka in two groups) and the ensembles that had worked each morning.

Featured at the school were New Zealand aspiring guitarists Jamie Garrick and Nick Price who gave a combined lunchtime concert on Thursday. They had submitted applications similar to those required for professional engagements and received free entry to the school, a masterclass with William Kanengiser, and the concert slot. Jamie played Mertz, Regondie and Finchdean by Bruce Paine - 19th century guitar music appears to be his passion and he played an incredibly musical concert. Nick is a more flamboyant performer. His section included Aguado and Pasiczny's Hommage a Tansman (plus another piece I can't remember!) played with outstanding passion. Both are performers to watch in future.



Our final concert was the gala in the park for the Festival of Lights which included the full guitar orchestra, the ensembles and solo guest artists. On a pleasant evening with our picnic tea we had a lot of fun in our last formal event.

Each night there was a gathering of guitarists at The Rocks bar at the Devon Hotel and the last night was no exception as we celebrated a great event. That night did end with the die-hards gently moved on at a quarter to three in morning after a lot of noisy fun!

I managed to attend every timetabled event of masterclasses and workshops. Some classes went rather over my head but I feel that they all expanded my ideas about playing classical guitar. Gunter Herbig's workshop on wanting it all *now*, without putting in the hard work, felt very relevant to me, as did Raffaele Agostino's workshop on sight reading, a skill that definitely requires some more work. Paul Zdrenka's workshop on recording allowed me to correctly identify a condenser microphone and encourages me to consider recording myself.

Each morning we had an ensemble class directed at the student evening and the gala concert performance. I was in Raffaele's class and it was well directed and I think we managed a good final performance. However, it may have been a little too hard for me, especially since there is never enough time to practice. (It is true that sitting up late in the bar does not help.) There is a chance to change but it needs to happen early so I carried on with this class.

The masterclasses covered a wide range of abilities, not just the best students, and I was really encouraged by the warmth and sensitivity of the teachers, especially since I agreed to do one with Janet Agostino. I did this masterclass with no preparation and of course no chance to prepare at the school itself so I did not have time to get very nervous. This class, along with the two private lessons I had with John Couch and Owen Moriarty, has given me much to think about and practice now that the summer school is over.

I had a great time. There was so much to learn and hear and see: I really hope that I can get to 2016.



Profile: Miles Jackson from Duo Jackson

From Miles Jackson and the Duo Jackson website



Miles began his study of classic guitar in 1965 and has studied with many world renowned masters including John Mills and Vladimir Mikulka. Several periods of study in Spain have allowed him to explore and develop Flamenco techniques.

He has been performing with his wife, Margaret, for over 35 years. The diverse range of musical styles featured in the Duo's repertoire and the beauty and authenticity of their performance creates a unique musical flavour and style. Margaret and Miles have performed in many

countries, including performances for the New Zealand Embassy in Madrid and Singapore, made programmes for Radio and television and recorded several albums. Duo Jackson perform at recitals, house concerts, private functions, school concerts and weddings and their musical styles include Classical, Jazz, World Music, Flamenco, Latin, Gypsy and original compositions.

Margaret began her formal training at the age of seven, culminating with four years of study at Canterbury University under Polish master Jan Tawroszewicz. As adept with the subtleties of the classics as she is with gypsy music, Margaret has an astonishingly creative flair for Jazz improvisation as well.

Question and answer

What is your favourite piece of music to play?

At the moment my favorite piece to play is the Sonatina in A by Federico Moreno Torroba. He writes such beautiful melody and,

for me, has managed to capture and evoke in his compositions, images so essentially Spanish.

What is your favourite piece to listen to?

I do not have a favourite piece of music. Often, first thing in the morning, I listen to J.S. Bach's Goldberg Variations played by Ekaterina Dershavina. In the evenings it may be Jazz, Latin, Penguin Cafe Orchestra, Flamenco, Fado, Classical; - Different genres for different moods.

What's your most embarrassing performance memory?

My most embarrassing performance memory was arriving for a concert on the wrong day.

For more information about Miles and Duo Jackson visit

<http://duojackson.wordpress.com/>

Miles's top tips for practising

I think the most important tip for practicing is to identify exactly what you are trying to achieve and knowing clearly the exercises and studies that will support this. Regular focused practice is essential.

Recognize technical issues that you wish to improve upon and intelligently focus on them with the help of a teacher and the appropriate material.



Having received no contributions for this issue, I have shamelessly plundered this article from the Classical Guitar News website (<http://www.classical-guitar-news.co.uk/Nails.html>)

How long should they be and why?

We personally recommend playing with an appropriately shaped nail (following the line of the finger tip or in ramped formation) at some 1/16th to 1/8th inch above the finger line, depending on the nature of finger and your nail shape. The reason for this is that playing without nails, in our opinion, will not enable a clear and variety of tonal qualities to be produced with the important right hand and enable the necessary string control.

How often and how long should I be taking to do them?

Once again, it's a question of experimentation and preference but it's time well spent. On average you should be looking to spend around twice a week (for around 10-20 minutes a time) keeping them shaped and maintained. Always have the guitar close at hand so you can check and fine tune them easily. Find an environment where you can concentrate too, away from distractions, as sometimes this can lead to undesirable results.

What should I be using to file my nails?

Whatever you do, don't cut them with scissors or clippers, this will only damage and cause unwanted fractures in your nails, weakening them in the process. We recommend using a range of files/shapers, with 3 or 4 different parts to shape, polish and buff the nail. To finish off or to concentrate on small parts of the nail only (as often the case around its extremities), use a medium to fine grade sandpaper. You can buy special kits, but a visit to your local hardware supplier will suffice. We always carry some spare round at all times. You'll often see guitarists on stage using it occasionally in between pieces to fine-tune and remove any unwanted snicks etc. By finegrade we mean around 160-220 grit. If unsure, ask your local store for guidance.

What shape should I be filing them?

Either in a ramp running from low to high or from left to right of the nail for right handers at the length given above. Round off the edges too to facilitate string entry and exit on the fingers. Watch very carefully and pluck the string to see where your current string entry and exit points are, i.e. where the string first touches the nail and impact and where it is subsequently release. Basically the longer the

distance between the 2, the fatter, round the sound.

Again experiment with what suits, but whatever, do not create an arched or pointed shape in the middle!

How should I be filing them?

You should go up and over the nail basically so the inside nail line (left side of the nail for right-handers) should be on a slight angle before squaring off around the central part of the nail. It's quite difficult to explain, but if you have shaped them appropriately, the file should follow this line pretty much automatically. Always file with the nail towards you (see picture above) so that the nail sits comfortably on the edge of the file. You can also use the file as a quasi string running the finger across the top of it to check for fluidity of motion.

I have weak nails, what can I do to strength them?

There are a number of options-it's a question of finding what works for you. Try a cube of raw jelly a day (it works for some of us). The protein will help to strength and enrich the nail. Other solutions include applying silk re-enforcements. A number of guitar retailers stock these, so you can visit our retailers links page to find out more. We suggest avoiding commercial nail-hardeners as these can "pickle" and weaken the nail over time. The final option would be to try artificial nails.