

Recital Class **George Robinson**



Still recovering from the recent dearth of performing opportunities, I jumped at the chance to perform in front of real people, partly to put my degrees to good use! My programme consisted of J.S Bach's *Allemande* from BWV 996, *Cançó del Iladre* from Llobet's Catalan Folksong Arrangements and Dyens' arrangement of Jobim's *Felicidade*. The arrangement captures the opening

lyric of *Felicidade* "Sadness has no end, happiness does". I was so grateful to receive some wonderful feedback from Chris, saying the Bach was "stylistically sensitive and beautifully shaped", "sensitively shaped melodic lines played with real feeling that really focused the listener" in the Llobet and "clarity, precision and musical flair from the first note to the last, making this a performance to remember" in the Dyens. Sounds like he received the bribe! In competing in the class, I rediscovered a love for solo performance that has been left for dust in the past few years of relentless teaching. I will forever cherish the stage on Sudley Road, with fond memories of competing in the festivals during my childhood, which prompted the unusually astute observation that "either this stage is smaller, or I've got bigger!"

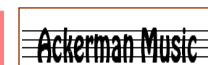
Other participants included **Peter Russell** whose sheer volume of repertoire sadly could not be condensed sufficiently to squeeze into this article. Suffice to say he did himself justice in all four classes and deserved Chris's words of praise on how much he had improved. **Artemis Gitiforoz**, a history student studying in London, earned himself a masterclass with Chris following his performance of a Villa Lobos Prelude. **Linda Kelsall-Barnett** was the penultimate person to perform after a tiring two days of aiding and encouraging her younger students, and probably even more exhausting, the WSGO. A big thank you must first go to the adjudicator Chris Stell for his pearls of musical wisdom and genuine encouragement. We must also thank Sasha and Nina for organising/hosting/collecting the cups and generally keeping things running smoothly. A final thanks to Andrew Richardson for buying us big box of Cadbury's Heroes to keep us going throughout the day.

Teresa Henley



2022

A Special Report



Winners t 2022

JUNIOR CLASSES

12 & under I	Attie Leney	Advanced Open Class	Jacob Luttrell
12 & under II	Anna Swain	Bach Class	Evelina Kisliak
15 & under Intermediate I	Dan Betsworth	Guitar trio or quartet I	Regis Harmonics
15 & under Intermediate II	Seth Morgan	Guitar Duet	Sofia & Lucy Carson
Technical perfection Class II	Vakaris Silaikis	Musical Diversity II	Jacob Luttrell
Intermediate Open Class	Robbie Cartwright	Junior Recital II	Sofia Carson & Vakaris Silaikis

SENIOR CLASSES

Guitar ensemble	Guitar Harmony	JS Bach Class	Andrew Richardson
Intermediate Class II	Leigh Boyle	Arrangement Class	Debbie Burford
Early Music Class	Jay Huff	Advanced Class	Jay Huff
Guitar Orchestra	WSGC Orchestra	Guitar trio or quartet	New Gala Quartet
Music Around the World	Andrew Richardson & Peter Russell	Recital Class	George Robinson

Once again I had the privilege to be invited to adjudicate one of the most important events in the calendar for aspiring guitarists of all ages. The whole event was an inspirational two days listening to a variety of solos duos and guitar ensembles playing a variety of different musical styles. I was particularly struck by how the overall level of performance has continued to improve in both solo and ensemble playing, the commitment of the players was clear to see both in the playing and also in some ingenious arrangements and new compositions that were offered up. The organisation was meticulous and the whole festival found the right balance between respect for the art of performance whilst at the same time managing to remain warm and encouraging to all the participants so they are able to learn from each other. It was particularly nice to see young professionals who started their careers inspired by the West Sussex Guitar Club come back as fully formed players and delight the audience with their musicianship and skill. Lead by Sasha's remarkable vision the West Sussex Guitar Club continues to inspire players of all ages and provide an inspirational platform for our cherished instrument.

Christopher Stell Professor of Guitar Royal College of Music



West Sussex Guitar Orchestra Only seven members of the WSGO (Jay Huff, George Robinson, Debbie Burford, David Clarke, Teresa Henley, Julian Bobak and Andrew Richardson) could participate in the Guitar festival. However, the class description of "Any number of guitarists plus a conductor" justified us entering the Orchestra rather than the ensemble class. Under the baton of Linda Kelsall-Barnett, we played Faure's "Pavane pour une infant defunte", "Tango" by Brian Bonsor and arranged by Debbie Burford, and "Andalucia" by Ernesto Lecuona, arranged by John Whitworth. We had recently performed these pieces at a concert where the adrenaline flowed in abundance. The warm and encouraging presence of adjudicator Chris Stell calmed our nerves and allowed us to breathe and embrace the music more than before. The feedback about the Orchestra's striking dynamics, strong rhythmic precision and the description of "A polished performance" reassured us that we were doing justice to each composition. The orange sticker of "Outstanding", placed on the certificate by Chris sent a ripple of delight and laughter as he lamented the fact that his trusted assistant Debbie Burford was not there to do the honours.



well projected and without a smudging of sound on sliding the first finger up or down a fret, something that had been a problem in practice. My second piece was "Stomping the Blues" by Peter Wrieden. This had an easy going lilt swing rhythm and based predominantly on the blues chords of A, E and B dominant 7th. A piece that is also well suited to the piano, it was difficult to stop the chord from continuing into the following rest. Chris's constructive and encouraging feedback and the support of the other participants made the weeks of practice all worth while.

Gala Quartet at WSGC Festival 2022 The trio/quartet class had only one entry this year so there was a good chance the New Gala Quartet might win the cup!



The Elephant's Tango, featuring a melody played on the bass guitar, was followed by The Waltzing Cat where glissandos represented the miaows of the cat. These characterful pieces from the light music repertoire (both arranged by Debbie Burford) earned a 'Bravo' from adjudicator Chris Stell, adding that we kept the humour going throughout the pieces. He also went through in some detail possible improvements to both pieces with great ideas to make the opening bars of 'The Cat' pizzicato, to play the glissandos with more vibrato, to pause for greater effect on the penultimate chord but also to look as if we were enjoying the golpes in 'The Elephant.' A suggestion that we might also like to add a "nut-scrape" here and there caused much laughter in the audience. Chris is always incredibly helpful in the role of adjudicator and the quartet feel very lucky to have been able to play to him at this festival.

The Adult section of the WSGC festival was held on Sunday 6th November after a successful Children's section and outstanding recital by Xuefei Yang on the Saturday. As seems to be the way for guitar festivals, the weather was wet and blustery but two guitar orchestras, one quartet and nine soloists participated and here are some of their thoughts about entering the festival.



Andrew Richardson. I was privileged to lead Guitar Harmony and very proud of their performances at the festival. GH is one of the club's larger ensembles, meeting most Monday afternoons at the Recital Hall. As well as giving us the opportunity to have a performance to work towards, we received very helpful and positive feedback from the adjudicator Chris

Stell. We perform a wide range of pieces; on this occasion leaning towards arrangements of popular music from The Shadows (Guitar Tango arr. by Andrew Gough) and Beatles (In My Life). After my original composition (A Trip To Spain) we finished with Deep Purple's Smoke On The Water. The individual players did a great job bringing together their parts to create something special as an ensemble. Our written feedback could not have been any more positive we were delighted to have been categorised as 'Outstanding'. I entered three solo classes performing early music by Robert Johnson and Mudarra's incredible Fantasia X from 1546. For the Bach class I managed to get through Bach's Fugue in Am from memory. Finally two of Gary Ryan's folk song arrangements Scarborough Fair and Banaha in the World Music class. With all of these, I have benefitted from the incentive to practise and the chance to overcome the nerves that most of us suffer from. The written feedback from an expert is obviously very supportive. Getting to hear the other participants and everyone's summary feedback will also help me to develop my playing. Traditionally there are cups and trophies but it's great that it doesn't feel like a competition and that everyone who takes part is a winner!



Jay Huff. In the Renaissance class I played Guardame Las Vacas and Tres Diferencias Por Otra Parte by Luys de Narvaez. They are two Spanish Vihuela pieces published in 1538 and represent the first published set of variations for any instrument. Based on a popular folk song of the time they give us a glimpse at the type of improvisation that was common with lutenists and vihuelists of the time. For the Advanced Class I

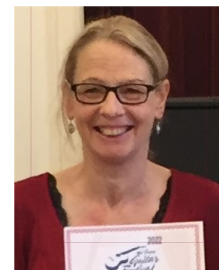
played 3 pieces; the Prelude in D from Bach's famous Prelude, Fugue and Allegro, Ave Maria by Charles Gounod, transcribed from piano by Tarrega, and Pulsar by Vincent Lindsay Clark. The Ave Maria is a lovely piece based on Bach's Prelude No. 1 from The Well Tempered Clavier and is not as well known as it should be. Pulsar is an interesting piece to play because it has a rock solid quaver pulse that continues throughout the whole piece, with drone notes either in the bass, treble or middle voices and interesting melodies, harmonies and rhythms woven around them.



David Clarke For the WSG Festival this year, I entered the Bach class. I had recently learnt an arrangement for guitar, by Bradford Werner, of a lovely piece with a religious theme called Bist Du Bei Mir which can be translated as “Be Thou with me”. Originally, this was an arrangement by J S Bach for voice and continuo of an aria from an opera by Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel, a contemporary of Bach. Bradford Werner’s arrangement is quite close to Bach’s as it has just the continuo and melody lines. I like the way you can hear the chord changes as the bass line leads the melody through the piece without the chords being played. My second piece was the Bourré from the 4 th Lute suite by JS Bach, one of my Trinity Exam pieces, which I’ve been working on for some time. I haven’t quite got it up to the required tempo yet, but I knew that playing it in the festival would be good practice for the exam. The change in tempo was a challenge after the fairly leisurely first piece. In addition to the performance practice, it’s always worthwhile playing in the festivals for the constructive feedback you receive from the adjudicator. In this case, Chris confirmed that I needed to play the Bourré a little faster and bring out more of a 2 to the bar feel in the piece – useful advice for the exam!



Leigh Boyle When I entered the West Sussex Guitar Club festival, I wasn't totally sure I would have my pieces (Sueno by Tarrega and Joie de Vivre by Gary Ryan) ready to play in time. I was finding the two pieces I had chosen to be very challenging, even though I had been working on them for some time in preparation for my next exam, and I couldn't even play them by myself without making any mistakes, let alone get up on a stage and play them in front of other people. I was helping out at the junior festival the day before, where all the participants gave excellent performances. This was a little daunting - a hard act to follow - but I was impressed by the adjudicator's encouraging style. He really picked up on the good points, whilst still giving ideas on areas where further work would make the performances even better. Of course I was nervous for my own performance the following day, but I felt that the work I had put in was really recognised by the adjudicator. Also, the only people in the audience were totally on my side as most of them were about to perform themselves! The adjudicator praised many of the things I had been working on, and didn't go into details on the bits where we both knew I had made mistakes. He offered some advice on trying to keep my guitar more steady, which I hadn't previously noticed was a problem, and gave great practical and musical advice. For anyone wondering whether or not to enter festivals, my advice is to just do it. The preparation, the performance and the feedback will all help you to improve. Go for it!



Teresa Henley I entered the Intermediate II class in the years WSGC festival. The first piece performed was “Prelude ”(At the Villa) by Peter Nuttall form The Guitarist's Way. I was particularly drawn to the simple yearning melancholic melody that floats over an E minor triad that repeats like a drone. The repeating of each phrase allows the player to alter the dynamics to produce a different feel or colour. Although a grade 2/grade 3 piece there are technical challenges firstly with the opening harmonics but also the shifting up and then back down the fretboard when playing the melody. I was encouraged by Chris Stell 's comments that this was