

Vakaris and Sofia ran the gauntlet, and all received an applause for bravery even before reaching the stage. Sasha asked Anna to play her scale as fast as she could go to which she assuredly replied that she would go slow! However, she played three octaves rather than two to compensate for the tempo. “Allegro” by Giuliani was as poetic as any piece played.

Vakaris played “Study by Alfonse” which exhibited a tantalisingly difficult dotted semi quaver to demi quaver rhythm. Sofia then played “El Calibri” showing that even a study is a demonstration of musicality.

The joy of fewer entrants is that more can be written about each individual, their performances and their feedback. However, we would welcome more entries for next year’s festival. A big round of applause should go to all who entered this year, their stamina in playing in so many classes is to be admired. An equally big round of applause must go to Mark for his stamina, patience, inspiring pearls of musical wisdom and for taking time out of what must be a hectic schedule to adjudicate for both adults and children. As ever, we all give thanks to Sasha and Nina for their generosity in spirit of hosting and organising the weekend, it really is a labour of love. Another thank you goes to Julian Bobak, Debbie Burford, David Clarke and Teresa Henley for assisting Mark Ashford with certificates, trophies and stickers, collecting the monies at the door and making cups of teas. A big thank you to Terry Woodgate for the numerous articles written about the festival over the many years of being editor of the newsletter. It is by no means an easy task to make each article interesting and different and his past efforts were of great help in writing this. All we now need is for more entrants next year!!

Teresa Henley

Chichester Festival for Music Dance & Speech 2023 Junior Guitar Section.

2023

A Special Report



Chichester Festival 2023. Guitar Section Winners

JUNIOR	CLASSES		
Name	Trophy	Sophia & Vakaris	Advanced Duet
Dylan Hooker	Solo Novice	Regis Harmonics	Trio or Quartet
Athalay Leney	Solo Beginner	The Carsons Trio	Family Ensemble
Mia Prince	Novice 13& under	Anna Swain	Technical Perfection I
Athalay Leney	Solo Grade 4 & under	Vakaris Silaikis	Technical Perfection II
Lucy Carson	Solo Grade 4 & above	SENIOR CLASSES	
Sophia Carson	Solo Grade 5 & above	David Carson	Late Starters
Vakaris Silaikis	Solo Open	Richard Baldwin	Solo Intermediate I
Tneo Marshal-Lee	Junior Bach	Leigh Boyle	Solo Intermediate II
Vakaris Silaikis	Bach Intermediate	David Knight	Amateur Open
Vakaris Silaikis	Junior Recital	Joe Taylor	Bach Class
Ben Ward	Intermediate Recital	Richard Andrew	Bach Class
Seth Swain	Advanced Recital	Debbie Burford	Arranger's Class
Lucy & Robbie	Intermediate Duet	Debbie Burford	Trio or Quartet
		GO & G. Harmony	Guitar Orchestra

This was the 68th Anniversary of the Chichester Festival of Music, Dance and Speech. Rather than two different adjudicators for the children and adult classes, Mark Ashford undertook the marathon task of adjudicating for both. Mark Ashford is well known and much respected to all at WSGC and the guitar world at large. He is currently Head of the Guitar Section at the Birmingham conservatoire, course organiser at West Dean Guitar Festival and has graced the stage at the Regis School of Music with the much-acclaimed Vida Quartet, The Frontiers Trio and as a solo performer. You could say that he has more than one string to the proverbial bow, or guitar!



The children's section was held on "Take Your Children to the Library Day" which was fitting. Unfortunately, the writer of this article was absent

Focus on the dynamics when technically challenged to avoid overly concentrating on these difficult sections.

Try to resist using only the right index finger in scales passages, a tendency commonly induced when under pressure. Something we all do but can really hold back one's progress.

Practice in front of a mirror to keep an eye on tension developing in the right hand side. Video record one's performance to double check posture and, of course, how one sounds.

The Junior Bach class opened with 8 year old Theo Mitchell playing "Minuet in G Major" and "Bouree". Mark was astounded and delighted that Theo was playing Bach at such a young age. On asking little Theo whether he listened to Classical music, he was equally surprised by his reply; that he listened to "Dance Music"!



Mark successfully bridged the musical divide between early Baroque and modern-day dance by saying that Bach is to be found in dance music, as demonstrated by Theo's choice of pieces. He went on to ruefully say that whenever he tells his daughters that all music was inspired by Bach he is met with a rolling of the eyeballs and a "Never say that to me again". Theo's bow and look of sheer pride as he triumphantly held his trophy up high melted everyone's hearts and should be an inspiration to any young guitarist new to the instrument.

Vakaris returned to the stage for the Solo Bach Class but unfortunately with insufficient time to grow his nails. Mark remarked on his clear directional phrases and mature musicality in the Cello Suite no.1: Prelude in G Major. No first prize for guessing the other words of advice!

The Junior recital class began with Vakaris Silaikis playing Sonata no.1 by Heinrich Albert. There was a slight hiccup at the midpoint but cleverly disguised by a "Smile and just keep going". This was followed by some "Furiously fast and fine finger playing" in the right hand and a good use of alliteration of words beginning with the letter "F" by Mark. The "Andante in Estudio no. 1"

contained some good fluid playing and control of finger pattern in the right hand but the sound could be improved by the ubiquitous but absent thumb nail!

Vakariss then played "Sound of Bells". Mark gave some pearls of advice on the Holy Trinity of nails, string tension and sound hole. If you do not possess nails, then use higher tension strings and don't stick around the sound hole as this is the slackest part of the string and the sound just buckles. The Class ended with Sasha stating that there would be a nail check rather than a sound check at the next Festival.

In the Intermediate section, how the pieces were chosen was deemed as important as how they were played. Sofia Carson started with "Dreams" and then "Bolero". There was a firm pulse of rhythm in the first piece but Mark stated that if you stick to the true definition of Rubato then any time stolen must be given back. Sofia was commended on successfully finding her way out of the maze when she became lost in the Bolero.



Ben Ward then played a different and equally convincing interpretation of Pernambuco's "Sound of Bells" followed by "Bolero". Mark suggested exploring colour and tone and, more importantly, for Ben to change his strings, as the vibrancy was lost. Quick to seize an opportunity, Sasha announced that a set of six D'Aaddario

medium tension strings could be purchased for £7.50 from Ackerman's music shop if you were a club member or, even better, could be won at a club evening in the raffle. Ben retorted by saying that these were the ones he won at the last club evening he attended which, judging by their sounds of antiquity was a long time ago! Ben may have a career as a comedian awaiting him.....

The Advanced Class unfortunately had only one entrant which, according to Sasha is not so exciting to perform in when you know that you are probably going to win. Hopefully there will be more entrants next year. However, Seth Swain gave another convincing interpretation of Pernambuco's "Sounds of Bells". It was all there but possibly held back by nerves.

from the morning section, but the afternoon section proved bountiful in musicality and sound feedback from Mark.

The proceedings began with the Guitar Solo Open class where the girls outnumbered the boys! Hazel Swain started with "Romanze" by Carulli, played with an innate musical feel. This was followed by "Malaguena" which conveyed a strong sense of dance. Evelina Kisliak also played

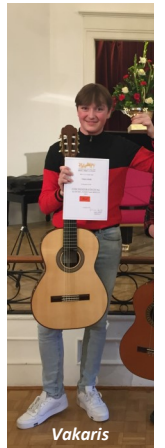


"Malaguena" with a fiery flamboyance and a confidence in knowing what she wanted to achieve. She then gave a heartfelt performance of "Ukrainian folk song", with a beautiful lyricism. Mark suggested bringing singing into playing as this helps shape the phrasing. He encouraged everyone to breathe using their diaphragm and to sing the melody at

the same time as plucking. One last comment was to use her thumb nail



but unfortunately, she did not possess one! Isabel Darby followed with "Fiesta" where the main theme or idea was played well with a strong grasp of what she wanted to achieve. In contrasting mood, she then played "Winters Story" by Mioslaw Drozdowski with a lovely rich thumb sound. The thumbnail is an essential accessory for advanced guitar playing and the absence of one curtails the development of a rich sound. Mark then described the intricate anatomy of the ideal guitar thumb nail; shorter left side and a longer right side. Vakariss Silaikis



then gave a wonderful performance of "Sound of Bells" by Pernambuco and "Forgotten" by Madame Sidney Pratten. Mark commended him but said in desperation "A singing melody cannot be achieved by flesh alone. You need nails!" Vakariss then lamented the sorry fact that his nail broke only the day before. Nails aside, Mark gave many other helpful suggestions. Concentrate on the non-melodic or "bridge" sections which are often overlooked and wrongly construed as not being so important.

There then followed a much needed tea break and a declaration by Sasha that “Much energy is consumed hearing and playing music” and a successful charade



Seth

of “two coffees, white, no sugar for Mark and Debbie. (The hiatus in the proceedings was also marked by a cacophony of nose blowing, resembling a French horn, by Anna Swain causing us all to laugh.) Duet playing is double the enjoyment of solo performance. Lucy and Robbie commenced with the Brazilian piece “Chorrino”. They started with a great introduction, showing great promise by playing by memory. Vakariss and Sofia then played “Gavotte” by J.S. Bach and Waltz by Blois. Knowing that the Gavotte was in split common time was important in order to capture the feel of the dance. Duets require each player to know when to be kind to their partner and to hold back. Never be shy and always face the audience.

Hazel and Isobel then played “Jackaras” by Santa

Cruz, “Senora Pastora” and Opus 120 by Carulli. Mark advised practising with the metronome at a speed agreed upon and known to both. Also, not to rush from one piece to another, take your time and enjoy the applause.

The Ditcham Trio, (WSGO nemesis !!!) comprised of Cody and Kit Dunning and Ben

Ward were next to grace the stage with rather sombre faces as if they were about to face a firing squad. After being encouraged to smile by Sasha, their faces lit up and they launched convincingly into “Into the Andes” by John Whitworth. Ben seemingly did not receive the memo to wear the obligatory chequered shirt, but they were encouraged by Mark,



Vakariss & Sofia

Hazel & Izabel

Lucy & Robbie

and the audience, to continue playing together as a trio as they showed great promise. The advantage of belonging to a musical family is that you can form a trio with your siblings, as did Seth, Hazel and Anna Swain, their coat of armour being the distinguished purple antislip cloth that adorned their laps. They played an interesting arrangement of Scarborough Fair and a Scottish dance in 5/8. Anna, the youngest of the three was able to know how to correctly group the 5 quavers and which beats to emphasise. The guitar quartet Regis Harmonics, comprising Vakariss Silaikkis, Robbie Cartwright, Lucy and Sofia Carson, played a Bach Chorale, “Pavanne” and “Brazilia”. They were given the



“They can almost form an orchestra!”

advice to elect a “Last note officer” to announce the end of the performance and to inform the audience on when to applaud. Another musical family, namely The Carson Trio, ended the Ensemble section. Dad, aka David Carson, was loud and proud as he performed with his two talented daughters. The pressure is on the Swain parents to join their children and form a septet.

Ten children plus David took to the stage at the end for a final bow, they could almost form an orchestra.

The final class was the precipitous and perilous Technical Perfection Class, comprised of scales and studies. Not for the feint hearted, Anna,