

Chairman's Welcome



At our AGM and Club Evening on 21 September, we were pleased to welcome two members onto the Club's Committee, Chris Jones as Archivist/co-photographer, and Chris Small as Photographer. Since then, Judith Ratledge has also agreed to be our Hospitality Officer. Our thanks to them. We started our 32nd season with a well-attended visit to us by the Dorset Guitar Society in October. In November, we had our annual WSGC Festival, and though rather low in number, it gave our adjudicator Gary Ryan more time to give helpful pointers to the performers. Gary always laces his adjudication with much humour, for example, he quoted a famous guitarist who said guitarists spend 90% of the time tuning up and the remaining 10% playing out of tune. Gary also gave a professional performance on the Friday before the Festival, starting with Bach's Cello Suite no.3 and finished with a thrilling performance of Benga Beat. In December, two other stalwarts of the Club, Amanda Cook and Mark Ashford, gave a professional concert of Spanish music, including Capricio Arabe and many other popular pieces. In spite of Storm Darragh, it was very well attended. At the time of writing this, we are preparing for our Christmas party on 21 December. The christmas theme will include a 'pantomime' performance by the West Sussex Guitar Orchestra of 'In a Persian Market' a piece arranged by Debbie Burford and featuring on stage a princess, a professional juggler and a snake charmer. I hope you had a good Christmas, and wish you a Happy New Year.

Julian Bobak Chairman

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The First Club Evening and AGM

The first club evening and AGM of the new term was held on Saturday 21st September. Over the summer months the foliage covering the front of the Regis School of Music had been given a haircut by Sasha such that the gold signage of 'Recital School' above the beautiful arched window was visible for walkers by to see.

Guitar Harmony were to start the ball rolling but were without their leader Andrew Richardson! The hands of the clock moved closer to 7.15pm when suddenly Andrew burst through the doors and in under two minutes was calmly poised at the front of his ensemble ready to start. Guitar Harmony already have a pretty impressive repertoire but managed to play a new piece; 'Carillon' by Herbie Flow-



ers and Ian Gomm, arranged by Andrew. Andrew will also be running the guitar section of the Portsmouth Music Festival in February 2025.

The AGM commenced with slightly fewer numbers present than the previous year. All committee members were re-elected and unanimously approved, with Julian Bobak as Chairman, David Clarke as Treasurer, Baz Boxall as Membership Secretary, Debbie Burford as Secretary, Sasha Levtov as Artistic Director and Teresa Henley as Publicity Officer. Jez Rogers and Leigh Boyle

agreed to continue to manage and upload information onto the website. The post of archi-

ivist/photographer remained unfilled and when offered to the audience, with a barely a hint of persuasion from Sasha, Chris Small and Chris Jones agreed to jointly hold the position. Chris Small has experience as a professional photographer through his work which places him in a good position to capture performers, club events and update the club notice board. Chris Jones was a librarian and archivist for a university and so is well equipped with the necessary skills for the job in hand. The committee are grateful to the two Chris's for taking on these important roles.

The club is in a strong financial position, assisted by the generous sponsoring of the Sam Muir and Lara Taylor concert by David Alexander and Equilibrium. Baz Boxall informed us that Member Mojo was operating smoothly and that we now have 115 paid up members. However, with increasing expenses and fees requested by performers Julian Bobak stressed that the club still needs more attendees at recitals in order that we break even. The AGM was succinct and drew to a swift close as everyone headed towards the buffet.

Seven members of the West Sussex Guitar Orchestra then played 'Morenita', 'Farewell to Stromness' by Peter Maxwell-Davies and 'El Gato Montes' by Penella. Evelina Kisliak opened the solo section of the evening. Evelina is now studying at Guildford university but made a sterling effort to return with a number setbacks; rail disruptions, no guitar and a terrible cold. Nevertheless, she gave a good performance of 'Tarantella' by Coste and 'Bolero' by Arcas on Vakaris's guitar which posed another problem of having no dots. Evelina has played an essential part in the club from relieving people of their monies at the door, preparing the table laden with food, clearing everything away and also performing. We wish her every success in her new life and hope that she will manage to find time to visit us again.

Vakaris Silaikis then played 'Grand Vals' by Tarrega, a tricky grade 8 piece. David Alexander opened the solo adult section by stating that his guitar had been neglected recently in favour of his new acquisition, a Harley Davison motor bike! However, he played two of his own new compositions entitled 'Gypsy Caravan' and 'Forest Glade'. Andrew Richardson then performed his own version of the Welsh National Anthem 'Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau' using the CGDBGE tuning, which ignited a kindred spirit in David Alexander who is also of Welsh heritage. Chris Jones followed with an arrangement of the song 'Le Badinage' by Marin Marais and Teresa Henley played the operatic 'Prelude in D minor' by Molino. Linda Kelsall-Barnett brought the evening to a close with 'Moderato' from 'Four Ballad Stories' by Milan Tesar. Digging deep into her guitar memory bank she plucked out 'Fandanguillo', the first movement of Suite Castellina by Federico Moreno Torroba and played this from memory. Her performance was accompanied by the gentle clinking of glasses from the kitchen as Judith Ratledge single-handedly washed up the crockery which should have received a standing ovation!

Teresa Henley



Three Counties Guitar Friendly - West Sussex/Dorset/Kent

The West Sussex Guitar Club and Dorset Guitar Society gathering at the Regis School of Music on Sunday 13th October was a special occasion. The two guitar societies celebrated their 10th anniversary of this annual union but also with the special addition of two new participants; Wealden Guitar Society (Tunbridge Wells) and Canterbury Classical Guitar Society. The Dorset Guitar Society is also celebrating its 40th anniversary this year making them nine years older than us! A total of thirty members from the three counties united to journey by caravan to the exotic sights, sounds and smells of a Persian market. This colourful piece written by Albert Ketèlbey and arranged by our club secretary Debbie Burford evoked images of camel-drivers, jugglers, princesses and snake charmers. Linda Kelsall-Barnett, in her debut role as conductor of this joint orchestra, led us through the winding streets filled with beggars, beautiful princesses and caliphs until the camel caravan reached the coffee urn where we paused for some much needed refreshments after our rehearsal.

Revived by beverages and biscuits, the Dorset Guitar Society began the solo section with Bob and Peter playing the latter's own composition entitled 'Green'. Mark performed Catharina Pratten's 'Forgotten' embellished with his own 'harmonically altered ornamentation'. Richard then tackled the deceptively difficult Carcassi study no.3 op 60, confessing that it was daunting playing a piece most people can perform better than himself, although Chris Jones' 'Don't bet on that' probably summed up what we were all thinking.

Bob, Sue and Martin, who meet once a week but have no designated name, played the beautiful 'Flower Duet' from the opera 'Lakme' by Delibes (arranged by Andrew Forrest) and also commonly known as the British Airways signature tune. This was followed by Cees Hartog's 'Let's Take The Flip Side' and by the end of the performance they were given the name 'The Thursday Night Group'. Paul and James played Villa Lobos' 'Danza Cubana' and finished dead on time according to Jim the time keeper.

Malcolm from London joined in with the Kent brigade and changed the scene from Spanish to French playing Faure's 'Prelude pour une enfant defunte' and 'Le Visiteur', an energised piece of medieval heritage with sounds of jousting and slaying of dragons. He was joined by Rod Protheroe, chairman of the two Kentish guitar societies, to play Vivaldi's Andante in E minor ('By the fireside') and Bach's 'Arioso'. The full bloodied Kent contingency began with Tom Rimmer playing 'Aria' by David Kellner and 'Villanos' by Josquin des Prez. Rod admitted to being a compulsive arranger of music and, following in the footsteps of Tarrega and Barrios, came up with the West Sussex-Kent-Dorset arrangement of Capriccio Arab. His performance contained a few non deliberate changes i.e. mistakes which he would point out mid flow. The Carcassi op.6 no.20 was free of changes deliberate or otherwise. The morning ended perfectly on time as the table laden with food and drink in our own Bognor market beckoned.

West Sussex Guitar Club started the afternoon sessions with Teresa Henley playing Vincent Lindsey-Clark's 'Rio by Night'. Chris Jones followed with 'Sunburst' by Andrew York, confirming that Bognor is a sunny place, more so than Brazil. Elaine Foakes waved the flag for two composers well known to the club and played 'Eclipse' by Vincent Lindsey-Clark and 'Down by the Salley Gardens' by Gary Ryan professing that every recital should contain a piece by our club patron. The four Kentish guitarists performed the sea shanty 'Soon may the Wellerman come', which was filled with an abundance of 'Oohs and 'Arss' at the horror of whale hunting.

The twelve-strong Dorset Guitar Society orchestra, lead by Jim Kirk, wooed us with Astor Piazzolla's 'Libertango' and 'Palladio' by Carl Jenkins but the final compilation of 'We are the Champions' and 'We will rock you' by the rock band Queen involved audience participation of clapping and thumping of feet on the wooden parquet flooring and brought the house down.

West Sussex Guitar Orchestra were the last to step onto the stage and Debbie reassured all that there would be 'no clapping in our performance, not even at the end!' With only five mem-

bers participating, they squeezed themselves onto the stage with Julian Bobak taking a back seat in the position customarily occupied by the drummer. They performed 'Rondeau' by Purcell, 'Morenita' and 'El Gato Montes' by Penella. Sasha applauded enthusiastically and graced them with the ambiguous title of 'Noble Remnants'.



The three counties coalesced as one to give a sterling performance of 'In a Persian Market' to conclude what had been a most enjoyable day. And so the market was dismantled, the chairs put away and Elaine Foakes washed up what seemed like a never ending line of crockery, assisted by Debbie, Linda and Teresa. We would all like to thank Linda for so successfully taking on the conducting role of the 'Guitar Friendly' orchestra for the first time and to Sasha for his warmth and hospitality in providing the setting for this wonderful community event.

Club Evening 26 October

The second club evening of the season, held on October 26th, was an evening of exemplary music-making and congeniality. For many it was seen as a dress rehearsal for the WSGC festival the following weekend, for others just an opportunity to perform and enjoy music making. Unusually tonight our fourteen club members shared the Regis School of Music with local Bulgarians who were setting up a polling station in the back room for casting their vote on the 27th after three previous attempts to form a government in Bulgaria had failed.

The All-Join-In orchestra sight-read through 'Danish March', where we definitely won the battle, followed by 'Marchina de Carnaval', often played during carnival times in Rio de Janeiro. ('Marchina' according to Wikipedia, is a comic genre of music which satirises the seriousness of military marches).

The WSGO, plus welcome stand-in Conor Miles, ran through their pieces as a preliminary to the festival with Conor excellently sight-reading the pieces and adeptly swapping to guitar part two mid-way through 'Farewell to Stromness'. Sasha congratulated them on the synchronisation of their bows and they agreed to follow Churchill's example and write their own history by saying that it was a strong performance.

Harri Goldsmith and Sasha then played 'Siciliana' by Robert Schumann followed by 'Swiss Air' by Carulli with a second performance at an even faster tempo leaving performers and audience in need of refreshments kindly organised by Evelina Kisliak and her grandmother 'Stanislava'. Fully revived, everyone returned to their seats for more music making and Teresa Henley soon had the audience swaying to her 'Rio by Night'. David Alexander, equipped with his new eco-friendly wooden footstool, employed first a two finger banjo-picking style, then performed another of his own compositions entitled 'Dappled'. The audience applauded and Sasha announced the potential for a new adult festival class for those who are unable to read music but who have improvisatory skills.

The Tatum Trio were announced and Conor Miles nudged Yvonne Scott into action by saying that 'Trio means three Yvonne'. And so with a combination of guitar, clarinet and harmonica they performed a Fugue by Handel and the jazz standard 'Morning of the Carnival' from the film 'Black Orpheus' demonstrating their musical versatility. Jay Huff and Conor finished with a superb performance of the pensive and brooding 'Agua and Vinho' by Gismonti.

Peter Russell was given the accolade of publicly saving the adult section of the festival by entering five classes and certainly his performance assured the audience that he would win at least one. Robin Burgess elicited cries of hooray by announcing that he was still analogue and used paper music rather than an I-pad. A round of applause rippled through the audience after performing Scarlatti's Sonata no.322 followed by some reassuring news from Sasha that, out of the five hundred written by Scarlatti, he still had a few more to learn.

This evening also welcomed two new members to the club, Gary Boatman and Linda Wyatt, and we wish them both many more happy evenings with WSGC.

We are grateful to Evelina who had travelled from Guildford to help on the door tonight and we congratulate her for recently passing her Grade 7 with merit. She announced, following her performance of Tarantelle and Bolero tonight, that they were 'Not as good as in her exam but good enough' which was met with Sasha's reply of 'Well, we shall see, but with a few more claps you would have received an encore'. To round off the evening Linda Kelsall-Barnett performed from memory the epic ten minute long 'Fantasia' by Legnani, capturing all the drama and expansiveness of an opera normally conveyed by an orchestra and singers on her Torres-based guitar. The evening ending in rapturous applause fit for the Royal Opera House!

Teresa Henley

Gary Ryan Concert 1st November

The West Sussex Guitar Festival traditionally starts with a Friday night recital given by the adjudicator and is generally accompanied by torrential rain, gale force winds and flooding of the Shripney road. We were privileged that club patron Gary Ryan was able to perform (and adjudicate) for the second consecutive year and that the weather was uncharacteristically merciful. Extra chairs were required to seat a capacity audience of members past and present but also those new to classical guitar recitals.

As with his festival concert in 2023 he began with a Bach cello suite and ended with his trademark 'Benga Beat'. In between lay an eclectic programme including, amongst many other pieces, his arrangements of traditional folk songs, his own compositions of scenes from the 'Wild West', and seminal pieces by Brazilian and Cuban composers Heitor Villa-Lobos and Leo Brouwer. All were introduced with an interesting prologue and entertaining anecdotal stories that augmented rather than overshadowed the music.



Bach wrote six cello suites all of which had the same series of dances; either two Minuets, as with Cello Suite No.1 in G major performed last year, or two Bourrees, as with Cello Suite No.3 in C major performed this year. The suites were not widely known before the early twentieth century but were popularised by Pablo Casals in the late 1930s and have been transcribed for a number of solo instruments. The projection of sound of a guitar is far less than that of a cello but the instrument suits the more modest range in dynamics and the understated temperament of baroque music. Gary gave each dance its own character and there was a distinct clearness of the individual notes in both melody and underlying bass, such that the suite almost appeared to be played on a piano. The audi-

ence remained mesmerised, as if in a trance, for a few seconds after the music stopped. Once the spell was broken the applause simply flowed.

Gary's arrangements of the folksongs 'Down by the Salley Gardens' and 'The Water is Wide', with their beautiful Celtic melody lines singing over lilting accompaniments spoke achingly of the changes in love with the passage of time. The arranging of folk tunes was one of Gary's lockdown projects and he indulged himself by working on the well known folk song 'Linden Lea' whose lyrics were written by Dorset poet William Barnes and set to music by Vaughan-Williams. Following on from this bucolic idyll, there was a sharp hand-brake turn in style to the raucous 'Rondo Rodeo', an affectionate tongue in cheek tribute to American composer Aaron Copeland. This was the first piece Gary ever wrote and one that the composer confesses to, and apologises to guitar teachers everywhere for 'breaking every written rule on technique in the classical guitarist's bible.' 'Railroad', also from 'Scenes from the Wild West', required re-tuning the 6th string to a C and the fifth to a G to capture that hill-billy, bluegrass feel. The piece was influenced by the band 'Bruce Hornsby and the Range' and evokes the freedom of travelling across the prairies of America by train.

The programme travelled from North America to South America and Gary performed the 'Valse-Choro No.3' from Suite Populaire Bresilienne by Heitor Villa-Lobos. Composed in every guitarist's dream key signature of E minor the melodic line contains elements of the lyricism found with the cello, reflecting Villa-Lobos' proficiency as a cellist. Considering the date of the concert, 'Una Dia de Noviembre' by Leo Brouwer had to be included. Originally part of a film score the damp air and autumnal leaves could be felt and seen in his performance of this romantic guitar version.

Turlough O'Carolan was an Irish harpist around the time of Bach but sadly made blind by smallpox. His gift for writing a good tune (rather like Gary), allowed him to swap trades from blacksmith to musician. The Chieftains, The Dubliners and Planxty have all paid homage to O'Carolan's compositions. The Concerto is short by normal standards, required re-tuning, which 'is a useful decoy when you are trying to remember the next piece' and evoked the loughs, landscape and laughter found in Ireland. This bucolic sentiment spilled over into Gary's own 'Lough Caragh', one of his three landmark pieces marking the near end of tonight's concert. The ever popular 'Hot Club Français' written for Manus Noble and inspired by the music of Stéphane Grappelli and Django Reinhardt (plus snippets of Villa-Lobos' Prelude No.5 thrown in for good measure) and Benga Beat made up this holy trinity. Benga Beat is Gary's signature tune, took eight months to write and is the ultimate piece for utilising every square centimetre of the guitar as a percussive as well as a stringed instrument.

The applause was enthusiastic and prolonged, begged for, and was granted an encore, this time of the Swedish Folk Song 'Värmlandsvisan'. There are few areas of the world whose mountains, lakes and forests have not been captured, as if on film, by Gary's visionary guitar arrangements and compositions. The magnitude of the applause were our words of thanks for such an imaginative and evocative recital. WSGC would like to thank our sponsors for supporting and attending the concert; Deputy Mayor Councillor Gillian Yeates and her husband Andy and Ursula Watts, senior partner at George Ide LLP and her husband Simon. And not forgetting The Regis School of Music and Little Florist for their wonderful bouquets that adorn the stage. And finally to Sasha and Nina for all their hard work and enthusiasm on and behind the scenes in hosting the concert and festival.

Teresa Henley

Club Evening 23rd November

As 'Storm Bert' swept across the country causing widespread disruption and most members wisely stayed at home, a few did venture out for the November Club Evening. As ever Sasha had been busy preparing a feast fit for 30 people and setting out many chairs, but in the end just eight were needed.

At 7.10 pm, as the "all-join-in" orchestra (made up only of Linda Kelsall-Barnett, Elaine Foakes, Julian Bobak, Robin Burgess, David Clarke and Debbie Burford) were poised to play their first note, the doors blew open and the somewhat bedraggled figure of Baz Boxall entered. He had braved the train and very much in the manner of *Reginald Perrin* announced stoically '10 minutes late – signal failure at Barnham'.

The orchestra began with Bach's Aria and then two dances 'Der Liebe Augustin' Waltz and

'Windmüller' Polka, both by Konrad Wölki. Sasha painted a picture of the gentleman wooing the lady during the first dance but made us laugh during the second by saying "the lady has put up the price...for the dance lessons of course", he added hastily. Linda asked if there had been a second date to which Julian quipped, "He couldn't afford it by the sound of it!" Merriment aside, the orchestra's sight-reading went so well that Sasha produced a fourth piece, his lovely arrangement of 'Don Quixote's Serenade' by Kabalevsky.



The interval provided some very generous helpings of food and drink and a chance to admire Teresa Henley's colourful new display of photographs on our noticeboard. Despite a second break later on, the eight just could not manage all the food but nothing was wasted, as much was taken home.

Linda's orchestra was reduced to four, including Linda herself filling in the missing parts, but they still managed to play 'Morenita' and 'El Gato Montes'. Elaine followed with the very moving 'Shenandoah' arranged by Gary Ryan. Even Debbie played a solo - 'Austin's Allegro' (also by Gary Ryan), which Sasha reminded us is named after Chris Stell's car. Julian entertained us with one of his favourite pieces 'Tango Esta Noche' by Vincent Lindsey-Clark. Baz was allowed a reprieve as he had just moved house and hadn't had much chance to practice. David joked that he'd done loads of practice but still couldn't play his piece, however he played beautifully from memory 'Julia Florida Barcarola' by Barrios. Robin's first piece was one he'd liked since the 1970s when he heard it on a John Williams LP. Back then it was called 'Lots of Hair' but it was not until its Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis published it in 2005, under the rather more promising title 'My Perfumed Lips', that Robin finally got to play it. He followed this with the energetic 'Danza Brasileira' by Morel.



No club evening is complete without a solo from Linda and this was no exception. We were treated to the captivating 'Suite Castellana' by Torroba in three movements, all from memory. Sasha said he had heard many performers play this piece over the years but Linda's playing, with so much poetry and poise, was the one he liked the best. And what a lovely way it was to end the evening. Thanks go to Sasha for leading the merry band of eight and putting on such a fine spread and to the clearer-uppers Linda, David and Debbie. So despite his best efforts, 'Bert' managed not to dampen our spirits!

Debbie Burford

Amanda Cook and Mark Ashford Saturday 7 December 2024

Storm Darragh did its best to keep the audience away but was no match for the capacity crowd who were treated to such a wonderful concert on Saturday evening. Amanda and Mark, introduced by Sasha as both special and long-standing friends of the club, presented a variety of music from Spain. As well as several duet performances each performer brought some great solos to create this well-balanced programme. Mark pointed out that his solos were arrangements of pieces originally written for other instruments whereas Amanda's tended to be original guitar compositions. Regardless of their origin, all pieces are now well established in the classical guitar repertoire and we were treated to outstanding performances of them all.

The opening duet gave us an immediate flavour of the quality of performances ahead, with a great range of exquisite colour, precision and stylish rhythmic interpretations worthy of the best from the region. Subtitled 'Malagueña', Rumores De La Caleta by Isaac Albeniz took us instantly to Andalucia with its flamenco rhythms and tonality. The second duet items were of two dances from Manuel de Falla's ballet El Sombrero de Tres Picos. The dances being the fast minuet of el Corregidor (the magistrate) which contrasted powerful chords with sweet melodic ideas played between the two instruments, contrasts of colour with chords played with nails and then with flesh in places. The farruca of el Molinero (the miller) continued our Spanish journey with its use of rasguado epitomising the flamenco style.



Amanda then treated us to two absolute Spanish classics of the guitar repertoire by Tarrega. Stylish performances bringing out the subtleties of Tarrega's amazing capacity for contrasting melancholic minor with the happier major in his strong melodic ideas. In Capricho Arabé his deliberate use of Moorish intervals and decoration that influenced the music of the region and in Recuerdos de la Alhambra the romantic melody brought out with such expression. I was reminded of the lockdown video of this piece that Amanda gave us from her garden - what great tremolo. We were once again transported to the historic palaces of the Alambra.

Mark chose to end the first half with a collection of piano pieces by Albeniz. Adopted by guitarists and far more frequently heard on our superior instrument. I may be biased but how well they are suited to the guitar and perhaps less so to the piano on which they are infrequently heard. These were individual pieces often written while on tour (Asturias in London I believe) which were put together and sometimes even given titles by his publisher. How well they capture the flavours of Andalucia in particular. With Asturias the eager anticipation of hearing this giant of a piece was fully met with a cleanly executed interpretation with a well judged tempo and gradation of dynamics, the mystery and fire of the outer sections perfectly contrasting with the more exotic middle. We were then transported back to Granada with a piece that to me sounds more like the world of the everyday people a warm and serene depiction, a siesta perhaps. Mark's mastery of balance between the often complex parts in these pieces continued through Sevilla enhancing the dance-like qualities of this piece.



The second half of the evening began with a delightful performance of the lyrical Valses Poeticos by Granados. Introduced by Amanda as 'a beautiful journey of colours and characters' these are a set of

eight waltz miniatures with an introduction in 2/4 time. This delightful performance really brought out the challenging and exciting intricacies of the complex rhythmic interplay in the 'finale' waltz before the recap of the memorable main theme. Impressively mature music from the young Granados in the form of Danzas Españolas Nos 5 and 10 were presented by Mark. A set of 12 pieces written again for piano by Granados, possibly around the age of 16. In No. 5, Andaluza, the composer even imitates the guitar on the piano. Tonight we had the real thing with Mark's convincing flamenco inspired playing. No.10 was a perfect pairing described by Mark as being a more introspective but uplifting piece.

Moving from the palaces of the Alhambra to some of the many castles spread across the nation, Amanda's final solo group were four of Torroba's Castillos de España. Torroba's music demonstrates romantic melodic invention with quirky enharmonic twists. Our brief tour of four out of the fourteen castles depicted by Torroba began with Alba de Tormes, a romantic love song; then Manzanares de Real in which the knight gallops in to gallantly rescue the fair maiden; Torija, is an elegy with a beautiful and engaging melody; and finally, Zafra, using tremolo and dissonant tension to depict phantoms and ghosts. Needless to say, Amanda's performances were full of nuances of expression and colour so we couldn't help being drawn into the journey to each castle to relive every story.

La Vida Breve by Manuel de Falla was the final programmed duet; another Danza Español from the hour long opera written in the impressionist style, rarely performed today unlike the Danza which is well-loved and familiar to many. The Andalusian style lends itself so well to this transcription for two guitars with the powerful opening chord diving immediately into the alternating arpeggio accompaniment. ~Tonight's performers certainly captured the excitement of the Danza! Encouraged back to the stage the evening was perfectly rounded off with a beautifully crafted performance of the Catalan Carol El Noy de la Mare (The Child of the Mother). All in all the audience were rewarded with a joyful evening; a rich tapestry of well-loved repertoire from Spain from the golden era of the 19th Century that spilled over into the 20th. For the many guitarists and guitar enthusiasts in the audience every performance was a masterclass demonstrating such varied use of colour and technique to bring each story to life. I was left wondering about the journey our performers had taken to have such great affinity with a whole programme of what is essentially nationalistic music. Dedication and talent over many years - and some great old teachers I guess!



Andrew Richardson

Guitar Harmony concert Saturday 26 October 2024

For a number of years we have been invited to join the Rustington Community Choir & Sussex West Guide Choir in their annual charity concert. This year's charity was the RNLI who presented information and even one of its volunteers to promote the event. Well over £400 was raised through the generosity of the audience inspired no doubt by the joyfulness of the singing and the contrasting sounds of our 9 guitars. We enjoyed performing two short sets of varied music from 17th Century Spain right up to a piece entitled Regis Rock written especially for the group by director and arranger Andrew Richardson. Our rendition of Sailing, made famous by Rod Stewart, added to the many pieces and songs with a nautical theme. We also performed La Bamba and Eliza Aria, from the ballet Wild Swans (recognised for its use in a long running Lloyds/TSB advert campaign. We also transported the audience back to the 1970s with

the beautiful melody of Carillon by the crossover band Sky. One of the best things about this event is how everyone seems to enjoy themselves whether audience or performer and Guitar Harmony were no exception to this!



Quote from event organiser and choir director Juliet Robinson:

"You gave a wonderful contrast to the singing and a number of people commented on how much they enjoyed listening to you, as I don't expect they get to hear a guitar ensemble very often! Your arrangements are really quite complex and I thought you performed the pieces extremely well - I expect it will be difficult choosing which ones to play in the festival as they were all played to such a high standard."

Andrew Richardson

Christmas Party 2024

The WSGC's successful social calendar of 2024 ended with the Christmas party held on the Saturday before the 25th December. The timely emailing of invitations generated by 'membermojo' brought forth a healthy number of replies to Sasha and a quick stocking up of paper plates and serviettes. The Christmas tree was set against a deep purple velvet curtain and both were adorned with snowflakes. The aroma of rich spices rising from Sasha's punch warmed the cockles of everyone's heart and hinted, for those in the know, at the theme of the entertainment that was to come.

The celebrations began with the nine-strong Guitar Harmony directed and led by Andrew Richardson. They performed a wonderful medley of Christmas songs, some new to us, and all arranged by Andrew. They began with the poignant 'Carol of the Bells' which is based on the Ukrainian New Year song 'Shchedryk' and composed by Mykola Leontovych in 1914. This was followed by 'Walking in the Air' written by Sussex born Howard Blake and featured in the popular Christmas animated film 'The Snowman'. They ended with two of their favourites, 'Feliz Navidad' and 'Frosty the Snowman'. Andrew, demonstrating the full range of his musical skills, proceeded to play three of his own arrangements of 'Stille Nacht' finishing with one written in a blues-infused syncopated style.



The food table beckoned and as every one hurried into the other room to sample the gustatory delights, the stage was set for a performance with a difference from WSGO. Linda Kelsall-Barnett directs and conducts the orchestra and on this occasion, with the help of Sasha, Julian, David and Debbie, she turned her artistic skills to theatre production. The seven-strong orchestra began with the courtly 'Prelude and 'Chaconne' from Purcell's 'Fairy Queen' and the traditional 'Sussex Carol' arranged by Derek Hasted.



Dressed in a flowing green velvet dress, shawl and a feminine fez, Linda announced that their final piece was 'In a Persian Christmas Market' which encouraged heckles at the back from husband Ian Barnett of 'Oh no it's not'. But the snake basket, Persian water jug and the pizzicato melody depicting the shuffling of the camel drivers most certainly conjured up images of a bazaar. As the orchestra played, the various characters from this mini operetta emerged onto the stage behind them. Linda's brother Steve Kelsall, resurrecting a past side-line as a professional juggler, wowed the audience by throwing soft balls in a carefully-constructed pattern in perfect time to the music.

The beautiful princess, played by Joanna Wellwood-Froud dressed with head scarf, long pleated skirt and jacket gracefully walked onto the stage to join the juggler. The tranquil scene and lyrical melody was abruptly interrupted by a rasping four chord drone with an overlying chromatic sliding scale which musically depicted a snake. WSGC's well-known impresario, previously dressed as a Christmas elf, emerged from the curtains, now sporting a kaftan, turban and armed with a pungi. The snake, puppeteered by club treasurer David Clarke, was a little hesitant about leaving its comfy basket, but once hypnotised by its charmer it raised itself high up into the air and danced. The snake then receded back into the basket as the beautiful princess peered in, said her goodbyes and walked off the stage and back through the audience. The audience's laughter at the snake and the charmer's antics made everyone in the orchestra wish that they had eyes in the backs of their heads. However, thankfully Chris Small underwent a baptism of fire on videoing (as well as chopping up fruit for the punch) and captured the performance digitally. Albert Ketèlbey no doubt would have enjoyed the performance of his beloved 'In a Persian Market' as much as we did.



The market disbanded and we were reminded of the sufferings of the world as David Alexander performed two of his own haunting compositions ('Dark Water' and 'Snowfall') written for the Ukrainian Red Cross and sent to President Zelensky. Jay Huff then played Liona Boyd's arrangements of 'Joy to the World' and 'Good King Wenceslas' and 'A Christmas Carol' by Gordon Giltrap. Jay admitted that it was difficult playing on a stage previously inhabited by a snake! Sasha,



now minus kaftan and turban and back to Christmas elf, announced the 'Long-standing and Everlasting New Gala Quartet' who were playing their 30th Christmas party gig. Debbie introduced two carols (arranged by herself) 'Christmas Eve' by Arthur Godfrey and 'Cradle Song' by Ethelbert Nevin.





The penultimate performer was Linda Kelsall-Barnett who, after playing the Catalan Christmas song 'El Noi de la Mare' by Miguel Llobet and 'Romanze' (anon.) was offered a glass of wine by Sasha. Of course the ultimate performance was the All-Join-In-Choir led by Linda and proficiently accompanied by Debbie Burford (who had warmed up with a solo 'Feliz Navidad') on the piano. Somehow the repertoire was extended by the addition of 'Good King Wenceslas' at Ian Barnett's request, something to do with the men singing the low voices and the women singing the high...or possibly the other way round ?!



We all extend our gratitude to Sasha and Nina for so beautifully decorating the hall, preparing the food and hosting the party. As is customary, we thank this year's 'afternoon helpers' Julian, David and Debbie for assisting Sasha in the setting up of the tables and stage, and the 'late night washer-uppers' Phil and Fenella Sowden who, after a five year hiatus from club events, made a return and successfully took on the challenge of washing up the never ending line of glasses.

Teresa Henley

Librarian's notes: Manuel De Falla

Manuel de Falla was one of Spain's greatest musicians of the 20th century, composing such classics as the *Ritual Fire Dance* from *Love, the Magician* (*El amor brujo*), to the ballet *The Three-Cornered Hat*, and arrangements of music by Debussy and Rossini. Born in Cadiz on 23 November 1876, Falla received his first piano lessons at the age of 9, but his teacher soon went off to become a nun. At 15, he became interested in journalism and founded two magazines, however, he was inspired by attending a Grieg concert to follow his vocation - music. In 1899, he started the use of 'de' with his surname, making Manuel de Falla the name he became known as. He was passionately interested in Andalusian music, particularly flamenco, which strongly influenced many of his works. His first important piece was the 1905 one-act opera *La Vita Breve*. In 1907, he moved to Paris. There, he met a number of composers who greatly influenced him, including Ravel, Debussy and Dukas, and in 1910 he met Stravinsky. Shortly after World War 1 began, Falla entered his mature creative period, composing several of his best known works including *Nights in the Garden of Spain*, and the ballet *El amor brujo* with its "Ritual Fire Dance." His Ballet *The Three-Cornered Hat* was produced by Diaghilev with the set design and costumes by Picasso. From 1921 to 1939, Falla lived in Granada where he wrote the first concerto written for harp-sichord in the 20th century. Falla considered his large-scale orchestral cantata *Atlantida* - about Atlantis - to be the most important of all his works, but it has hardly ever been performed. In 1936, he tried but failed to prevent the murder of his closest friend, the poet Frederica Garcia Lorca. Falla died of cardiac arrest on 14 November 1946, and his remains were entombed in the cathedral at Cadiz.

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