



November 2017 NEWSLETTER

October meeting

In contrast to last month's rather modest attendance, it was a full house this month with a couple of dozen members and a lot of music on offer. The ensemble group continued to work on Mark Houghton pieces including the tempo-challenging Tango. After the coffee-break Penny Candlin began the evening's performances with an interesting mystery piece with flamenco touches by a composer of unpronounceable name, and then Martin Slater played his own sprightly Country Dance No 4 ('Jolly Jack') before heading off later to begin a night shift. Hazel Inskip and Gill Robinson next took the stage with William Lawes' Suite for Two Guitars. (There is a great YouTube 70s video of this by Julian Bream and John Williams, both with sideburns and quite a lot of hair.) Next, Steve Town played the *Gran Vals* by Tárrega – a piece which has been called the most famous guitar tune in the world since Nokia appropriated a bit of it for a ringtone. Brian Tait and Dave Rawlinson then gave us a measured and lilting arrangement of the *Largo* from *The Four Seasons - Winter* by Vivaldi, followed by *Spanish Dance No. 2* by Granados. Continuing in duo mode, Malcolm Levitt (guitar) and Gilly Slot (flute) played two pieces composed by Malcolm: *By the Falls* with some unexpected rasgueado and percussion effects, and *Country Parable* with a long flute solo at the start. Nina and Frederek (see below) next took the stage, playing an unpublished piece called *I Love You* by the contemporary Dutch composer Maria Linnemann, and then a Russian arrangement for two guitars of the well-known *Sound of Bells* by Pernambuco. The mood turned more classical as Chris Thompson played the Bach Prelude BWV 998, and Bill Hayter gave a beautiful rendition of Frescobaldi's air and variations *La Frescobalda* despite escape attempts by at least one of the variations. Back to Bach as Peter Collinson played another Prelude (from the Lute Suite No.4), and Tim Rushworth rounded off the evening with a *Vals* by Lauro.

Nina and Frederek

A reminder that Nina Rideout and Derek Hasted are performing 'an informal concert of music across the centuries and across the globe' on **Saturday 4 November** at 7:30pm in St Thomas Church, Bedhampton: for more details see last month's Newsletter.

Irina Kulkova

Turner Sims Concert Hall, 21st October 2017

The concert leaves a trace, something given, taken in. The programme reads... 'Art lights up my path'. Attributed to Barrios, my curiosity hangs on this phrase a few days later..trying to work out what was so touching about it. Did she play very beautifully? Oh yes, for sure, but that doesn't really get to it. What does she tell us? Mother a cellist...the rich artistic landscapes of Russia..a child prodigy of sorts...I expect the Ural's just east of where she grew up would have nodded acquaintance to the mountain of musical work that she must have done on in her developing years... Irina Kulikova has an intriguing biography. But while all that might have lead up to, it doesn't describe how in concert she seems to conjure a musical alchemy with her guitar. I usually try to write up a concert as if to someone who was not there, but in this case, sorry, I can't. You had to be there. I don't remember there being any children at the Turner Sims, which seems a shame.

Opening with a startlingly flawless Sonatina in A by Torroba, and then to Bach, a 'cello suite of course, I suspect this was most talked about in the interval. The familiar stream of quavers of BWV 1007's Prelude seemed to bubble up with an uncommon joy while at the same time her left hand moved with such accuracy and economy. Captivating. Irina told us about how Jose Maria Gallardo Del Rey had given her a Contreras guitar as a child, handmade guitars being hard to come by in Russia at the time. She returned the favour by playing his thoughtful Night in San Lorenzo suite, before closing the first half with a Chopin Waltz (Op. 64 No 2 in C# minor), on one of the guitars from Stuart Christie's workshop. Irina had been staying with Stuart and family, so this was a rather nice touch. Especially from a player with such a very fine touch, and tone.

The second half opened with a tremolo piece, Una Limonsa por el amor de Dios, then La Catedral, both by Barrios, who needed no introduction. I enjoyed the way she could execute her idea of Barrios, apparently unimpeded by questions of technique such as might hamper most of the rest of us. Then Irina told us more about being from Russia as well as becoming a mother herself, before playing The Old Lime Tree by Sergei Rudnev. This demonstrative and evocative

work, popular in its homeland, was followed by the more reserved and perhaps jazz influenced Three Lyric pieces by Konstantin Vassiliev. It seems Segovia toured Russia in the 20s and had a similar impact as most places else, eliciting a resurgence of interest in the classical guitar. The concert closed with Viktor Kozlov's simple Ballad for Beautiful Elena, as an encore. Stuart tells me he made a simple i-phone record of Irina playing this again on one of his guitars the next day...which when uploaded to the interweb attracted several thousand 'views' in short order. I'm not surprised anything she does elicits a good deal of interest from around the world. I hadn't heard her play before, but I suspect this concert will stay long in the memory. In spite of modern communications technology, I think you need to be in the same room as the player and her guitar to feel the full effect of the artistry we enjoyed. I don't know how quite how she does what she does, but I venture this...Irina Kulikova is an artist of rare ability. And so, wow, what a guitarist.

Graham Cleaver October 2017

Barrios not Llobet

It has been kindly pointed out by an alert reader (yes, there is one) that, contrary to assertions in last month's Newsletter, it was not Miguel Llobet who was the first classical guitarist to make a recording (1920s) but was actually Augustin Barrios in 1913. Apologies.

HAGO Concert

On Saturday 18 November at 7:30pm, Hampshire Guitar Orchestra (HAGO) are playing a fund-raising concert at Weeke Community Centre, Taplings Road, Weeke, Winchester SO22 6HG. Featuring HAGO, led by Derek Hasted, and featuring also Arne Brattland, it will be a feast of music from Praetorius to Chicago. Tickets on the door £8 in aid of The Fusion Fund.

BMG Festival 2018

The BMG Federation Festival in 2018 will take place in West Sussex, at Davison High School for Girls, Selborne Road, Worthing during the weekend 2-4 March. SCGS members are invited to take part in various contests and workshops. For full details of the weekend events, please follow this link www.banjomandolinguitar.org/ and scroll down the page to download a Festival Syllabus Booklet and booking form. The President of the BMG, who will be giving out the prizes, is author and guitarist Louis de Bernières.

Fake strings alert

Stuart Christie reports that he and Tim Rushworth recently bought strings online, and were supplied with fakes. Both sets were D'Addario, one ordered from eBay and one from Amazon, and the price was similar to what you would expect to pay, if slightly less. The packaging was very convincing, but there were slight differences in appearance of the strings. In one example the E6 string didn't have the usual looser windings in the last inch or so, and the G string was opaque. They were useless, sounding horrible and not playing in tune. (Amazon quickly refunded the cost.)

Next meeting: 7.30pm Wednesday 29 November 2017 at St Boniface.

The November meeting is, as is now customary, the annual Composers' Night. The theme this year is: Latin America.

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