

Amanda Cook

It is always a pleasure to hear Amanda Cook play. She always engages her audience with her charm, humour and obvious passion for her music. No wonder she is a favourite with WSGC audiences.

Amanda's programme opened with *Junto al Generalife*, a lesser known solo work by Rodrigo, who is more often associated with his *Concerto di Aranjuez*. The piece comprises a number of different scenes which describe the beautiful gardens of the Alhambra Palace in Granada in southern Spain. Amanda demonstrated a number of techniques, in this piece, the tremolo section being particularly evocative of running water in the garden. A wide dynamic range contributed to the audience experience.

The next piece was *Sonata K309* by D. Scarlatti. Originally a keyboard sonata, this piece works really well on the guitar, and was lightly and brightly played by Amanda, whose enjoyment at playing this rather jolly piece certainly rubbed off on the audience.

Amanda's next set of nine pieces was *Cantos Yoruba de Cuba* by H. Angulo. Amanda explained that the pieces were inspired by a group of Nigerian slaves, whose culture became entwined with their imposed homeland. I didn't find these pieces as enjoyable as the



opening two pieces. They were all very contrasting, but some were perhaps a little too esoteric for my taste. Amanda herself remarked after she had played them that it was easy to get lost in them. One or two of the pieces seemed to lack the quality of execution of the opening pieces, but then, this may have

been what the composer intended. Amanda is intending to record these pieces on a forthcoming CD of Latin American music. Perhaps the more abstract pieces might be omitted?

Amanda's final piece prior to the interval was intriguingly entitled "Anonymous Item" in the programme. This was as Amanda explained, because, the official world premiere was to be at the Wigmore Hall in a few weeks time (17th March) but she wanted to try it out first among friends. The covert nature of the programme and Amanda's desire for no formal

documentation (not withstanding the video camera!) was a source of much amusement for all concerned. The piece, a one movement Sonata by the Brazilian composer, Nato Lima did not sound like a typical Latin American piece, but was more in keeping with a 19th century romantic sonata. Amanda had mentioned that it was a bit of a work out for the hands, and I have to say that Amanda's articulation wasn't 100% in a few places, but this didn't detract from what was a very lively and enjoyable piece played with passion and enthusiasm. It can only get better with a little more polish and I'm sure its debut at the Wigmore Hall will be well received. I will look forward to hearing it on the CD.

Following the interval, Amanda played us *Adagio K540* by Mozart, arranged by Ben Verdery. It is always a treat to hear Mozart and this was no exception, delicately played. A long piece to listen to, but thoroughly enjoyable.

Amanda's next three pieces, *El Decameron Negro*, were by the Cuban composer Leo Brouwer and are based on African folk tales. All were atmospheric, the last of the three, *Doncela Enamorada (Ballad of the Maiden in Love)*, being more melodic than the others, with a lovely theme that recurred throughout the piece. All were played in an engaging manner which drew you in the more you listened.

Amanda's final pieces she described as "Typical Latin Fare" from Peru. These were arrangements of popular Peruvian tunes. Both were lively, with lots of ponticello and rhythms that changed dramatically as if trying to catch you out if you were foolish enough to

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New Members

We extend a very warm welcome to the following new members:

Michele & Christopher

Janman, Runcton

Martin Mason Portsmouth

Julie Insul, Bognor Regis

Malcolm & Carol Anderson,

Felpham

We hope you enjoy
many happy evenings at
the Club!



A Festive Matthew Farrant



Julian Bobak's Debut



Kate Morris

The Christmas Party 2006



Novice Age 9 and under



India Walker



Family Class



Novice age 9 and under

Chichester Festival 3-4th February 2007

Amanda Cook...

(Continued from page 1)

think you might know where the piece was going next. Both were highly enjoyable and entertaining and would work well on her forthcoming CD.

There's an old adage that says "Always leave 'em wanting more", and this has to be the case with Amanda's encore, *Gnossienne no. 1* by Eric Satie. This is a fabulous and unusual piece of music which in its quieter moments had the audience straining to hear,

such was the delicate touch that Amanda demonstrated. I'm sure it's impossible to play that quietly, yet she managed it. Superb!

Overall Amanda's performance was very enjoyable, but it was let down in places by the choice of programme. For me, the Satie was fantastic and I would love Amanda to record it.

Jez Rogers

The Christmas Party

The musical life of Bognor is a well kept secret, except for those in the know – like members of WSGC.

Under the guidance of Sasha and the committee the West Sussex Guitar Club had a most successful year in 2006, promoting professional concerts of the highest calibre and giving a forum to amateur guitarists to gain playing experience. This was in the air when many members and their families filled the Recital Hall to overflowing on December 16th. Families and friends were warmly welcomed by Sasha and directed to sit at tables where all ages were represented. On my table there were three generations of guitarists. Within minutes the poppers were popping and the very agreeable punch was being served, as the younger members and a few of the older ones cast greedy looks at the buffet tables groaning under their magnificent spread.

We had to play and sing for our supper and Sasha summoned the artists using numbers drawn from a hat. The musical feast was provided throughout the evening by many well known club members. The Chairman Richard Prior played a charming piece depicting Christmas Bells and Linda Kelsall-Barnett gave us the delightful *Christmas Villancico* by Barrios Mangore. Our own Gala Quartet entertained the audience right royally with *Sleigh Ride*, *White Christmas* and a *Christmas Medley*. The Arcadia Duo gave their own distinctive rendition of Derek Hasted's arrangement of *The Teddy Bears Picnic*, which ended in a fusillade of poppers! Under Sasha's expert direction the Guitar Orchestra treated us to *Pinzgauer Landler* and the *Schmetterlings-*

polka. The Christmas flavour was maintained with the lute song, *The Lute Book Lullaby*. And how could one forget the display of virtuosity on the harmonica shown by Johnny or the inimitable Caribbean version of *The Twelve Days of Christmas* by the Burford family. The surprise item was the appearance (on film!) of Charlie Chaplin, giving an object lesson in how to overcome stage nerves when you forget your words.

At last it was time to attack the feast. My own grand-daughter had to be restrained from taking yet a third slice of cream gateau! Hearty thanks should go to all who contributed in any way to providing such a splendid repast! As a comparatively new member I have always been most impressed by the attention to detail shown by all who work both in front of and behind the scenes, especially on the gastronomic front.

The high point of the evening was the carol singing accompanied by Debbie Burford, when the more vocally forthcoming members flooded the stage – yet again a splendid mixture of ages – to lead the entire company in rousing performances of such favourites as "The Twelve days of Christmas."

One member remarked to me afterwards what a splendid occasion it was – so friendly and so warmly inclusive. Sasha recalled how things have grown since the first WSGC Christmas Party in 1993, which was attended by just six members! Perhaps our Christmas Party in 2007 should remain a well-kept secret, otherwise we will not be able to fit everybody in. Happy New Year WSGC!

Tom Jeffers

Len McCormack

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Len McCormack who passed away on the 9th January at the age of just 63 years. Len was a member and supporter of the club for a number of years. He will always be remembered for his great sense of humour and his resonant playing of Baroque music on his self made guitar. He was a skilled luthier who had made a number of guitars – some for club members. We offer sincere condolences to Len's family.



Chichester Festival 2007 Under 18		1st
664	<i>Guitar Orchestra</i>	Oakwood Ens/WAMC Intermediate Ens 1
650	<i>Novice age under 9</i>	Non Competitive
650a	<i>Beginner age under 9</i>	Zoe Barnett
659b	<i>Novice Duo</i>	"P" Duo
659a	<i>Family Duet</i>	Lord of the Strings Duo
651	<i>Solo Novice age 10-12</i>	Emma Thurgood
651a	<i>Solo Beginner age 10-12</i>	Perry Emerson/George Robinson
652	<i>Novice age over 13</i>	George Kinigopoulos
664b	<i>Intermediate Orchestra</i>	WAMC Int Ensemble 2
653	<i>Solo age 12 & under</i>	James Branchflower
659	<i>Duet age 12 & under</i>	Butterfly Duo
665a	<i>Self acc song</i>	Zoe Barnett
665b	<i>Self acc song age 10 & over</i>	Tamzin Barnett
656	<i>Guitar Solo Bach age 12 & under</i>	James Branchflower
668	<i>Technical Perfection age 12 & under</i>	Zoe Barnett
666	<i>Junior Recital Class Age 12 & under</i>	Tamzin Barnett
666a	<i>Intermediate Recital Class Age 12–15</i>	Zack Franklin
655	<i>Solo age 12-15</i>	Adam Lack
668a	<i>Technical Prefection age 12-15</i>	Adam Lack
660	<i>Duet age 13-15</i>	Adam Lack & Peter Hopkins
657	<i>Bach Class age 13-18</i>	Karim Bedda
654	<i>Family Ensemble</i>	The Burford Family
665	<i>Guitar + other instrument or voice</i>	Fantasia Duo
663	<i>Guitar Trio or Quartet Age 12 & under</i>	Bishop Luffa Quartet
658	<i>Guitar Solo Open Age 18 & under</i>	Ross Barnes
661	<i>Guitar Duet Age 18 & under</i>	Sora Duo
668b	<i>Technical Perfection Class Age up to 18</i>	Felix Kellaway
667	<i>Advanced Recital Class Age 18 & under</i>	Felix Kellaway

Chichester Festival 2007 Over 18		1st
670	<i>Adult Novice</i>	Chris Childs
671	<i>Solo Intermediate</i>	Roy Barron
672	<i>Intermediate Duet</i>	Andy Clarke & Tom Emery
677	<i>Solo open</i>	Victoria Walker /Chris Sweatman
676	<i>Guitar Orchestra</i>	Unisemble
674	<i>Guitar + other Instrument/voice</i>	The Dowland Duo
680	<i>Song accompanied by Guitar</i>	Tom Jeffers
673	<i>Advanced Duet</i>	Arcadia Duo
675	<i>Trio or Quartet</i>	Gala Quartet
678	<i>Bach Open</i>	Linda Kelsall-Barnett
679	<i>Recital open</i>	Linda Kelsall-Barnett

Chichester Festival

The three day guitar section of the Chichester Festival has yet again had more entrants than ever before. The Solo Novice under 9 years class had an unprecedented 30 entries!

The adjudicators for the Festival represented 2/3 of the Segovia Guitar Trio. Vincent Lindsey-Clark judged the under 18s and Roland Gallery the seniors. Vincent is a prolific composer who has written a wide range of music from the Simply Guitar series for early players through to more demanding works. The examining boards use Vincent's music extensively and some of his pieces were played at the Festival. He recently conducted one of his works written for 90 guitars at the Royal Albert Hall.

Roland is currently Professor of Guitar at the Trinity College of Music and he also teaches gifted young children at the Purcell School of Music. Roland is a prolific arranger and has produced over 300 arrangements mostly for guitar ensembles. We were very fortunate in having such prestigious musicians to adjudicate for us.

Both adjudicators have to be congratulated for their long hours of dedication and their valuable comments both oral and written. Surely they both required new pens after such weekends. They both went to great pains to put the contestants at ease. Why should you be nervous? You play the guitar to enjoy it – it should not be an ordeal. Smile when you play and let the audience know you are enjoying it, then the audience will also feel more relaxed. Tell yourself that you can play the piece at home and you are going to play it at the hall. Think through the first few bars, take a deep breath and go for it. Have confidence in yourself. Events like the Chichester festival are intended to encourage performers to play, not to dissuade them.

Once you can play the notes correctly, that is just the beginning of the process in giving an accomplished performance. Aim for a good sound. Vincent gave a convincing demonstration on how just turning the right hand through a few degrees thereby altering the angle of attack of the fingers can make the sound change from a thin raspy sound to a rich mellow tone. Polished, smooth finger nails are essential. The book 'Pumping Nylon' gives advice on finger nails. It is well known that playing near the bridge –ponticello- gives a thin sound whereas playing over the fingerboard –tasto- gives a warmer, yielding sound. All have their uses. Experiment with the positioning of the right hand. Bring out the full colours of the instrument. The guitar can be like an orchestra with the main tune and possibly a bass and chordal accompaniment. Always let the tune sing out, do not let it be drowned by the accompaniment. Play the tune in isolation so that it can be given the full expression required without being cluttered by

the accompaniment.

Everything springs from good posture. Once the guitarist is sitting correctly, the hand movement and everything else follows on naturally. Beware of a little Sootie puppet (viz the LH thumb) popping up over the fingerboard. This can make finger movement difficult and slurs not so sharp. Pluck the guitar strings sideways. Plucking the string from underneath can give an ugly 'Bartok Slap' as the strings strike against the frets. Sometimes such a technique is required, but this is only rarely. Beware of 'Technical Rubatos' where the tempo slows down in order to accommodate difficulties in the piece. Tempo is all important. An odd erroneous note may well go unnoticed as long as the tempo is intact. Do not wince, nor upset the pulse as you attempt to rectify the mistake. That will only make matters worse – play on. All players make mistakes; try to become a master at camouflaging them.

Both adjudicators would prefer to listen to a simple piece played well and confidently rather than a difficult piece played badly, so always choose a piece that is well within your capabilities. Communicate the piece to the audience; do not hide timidly behind the music.

Singing, while playing the guitar is difficult. A tip given was to let the voice always lead and the guitar has to catch up as best it can should the going get tough. Ensemble playing can be difficult because of limited time when all parties are free to practice together. For this reason, family members can sometimes make the best players, since they live in the same house and so can more readily practice together. Some of the best duos are brothers – The Katona Twins and the Assad Brothers. Certainly the Family Ensemble demonstrated the fun that can be had from playing together. All different pieces, but well honed and such a joy to listen to.

Roland said that he preferred tuning the guitar from bass string first, since if tuning from the high string first, a final adjustment of the bulky bass string can then affect the neck thereby upsetting the tuning of all the other strings. Always recheck the tuning after fitting a capo.

Roland recalled that Bartok once said competitions are for horses, not musicians. I always feel it is a shame that someone is declared a 'winner', after all, everyone's playing has some strong points and some weak points. It is rather like marathon runners who train for months and run the 26 miles race. Someone is first past the post, but the others who have made the amazing achievement a little behind are also winners in their own right. And so it is with the festival. The long periods of practice have all made us better players. We cannot all be declared winners, but losers we certainly

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Chichester Festival ...

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are not.

I know that Vincent was very impressed with all the young players, many of whom gave very mature performances. This is certainly a compliment to the players, but also to their teachers and long suffering parents who chauffeur their charges to their lessons and Festivals and who clearly encourage their children. Thanks to everyone who made it such a successful Festival – the adjudicators, the entrants, the parents, the helpers, but above all to Sasha and Nina who were the first to arrive and the last to leave and who both made the Festival run so smoothly. As always Sasha is to be thanked for his tireless contribution to the Festival –

Master of Ceremonies, videoing the event, taking the still photographs, tuning the instruments, conducting the orchestra, playing in the orchestra, recording the results etc. Where does he get the energy? Volunteers are always required to help at these events so please try to spare an hour or so if you can. If not, please come along and watch. For an entry fee of just £1 there was some superb playing to be enjoyed.

At the end of the adjudicating, we were privileged to have Vincent play a few pieces for us. This whetted our appetites for a future concert from the Segovia Trio which will be part of next seasons programme. Do not miss this event.

Irina Kulikova Concert ...

(Continued from page 8)

comment I once heard from a fine player, who told me, “Everybody knows I can do the flashy stuff. It’s when I play slowly that an audience can see whether I can really play or not.” How true this is of Irina!

But the “flashy stuff” was on display again in her last piece, *Fantasia Hongroise*, by J.K. Mertz. Her virtuosity here was breathtaking – rich cello sounds and furiously quick arpeggios, tempered by rubatos totally true to nineteenth century Austro-Hungarian style. A real crowd pleaser!

Her two encores, *Waltz No. 4* by A. Barrios and *Sound of Bells* by Pernambuco were warmly appreciated by the vociferous audience and summed up the strengths of Irina’s playing – marvellous technical accuracy, a warm tone, a well judged sense of the music and a passionate intensity, bordering on savagery, when the music demands it.

Her concert was another triumph in this season’s series.

Tom Jeffers

Editor’s Piece

We have just had the most successful guitar section of the Chichester Festival ever with a record number of entries yet again. It was wonderful to see an unprecedented 30 novice entries under 9 years of age. With such enthusiasm it is reassuring to know that the guitar is increasing in popularity and has a very promising future. Well done to all who entered and to those who helped out at the event. It really was a most enjoyable 3 days with some wonderful playing from everybody.

The children all have to be congratulated for their impeccable behaviour during the course of the Festival. With so many children in one place, it could well have been a recipe for mayhem, but their behaviour is a credit to both them and their parents. Well done.

This season has certainly been the turn of the lady players. The season started with Margarita Escarpa and this year we have had professional concerts from Amanda Cook and Irina Kulikova. On March 10th we have a club evening combined with a short Young Professional Concert given by Maud Laforest who lives in Paris. On March 17th we are arranging a coach to see Amanda’s second solo concert at the Wigmore Hall. Our next professional concert is on Sunday (*note not the usual Saturday*) 29th April when we welcome the return of the Brazilian guitarist Fabio Zanon. Both these events are not to be missed.

Finally a big thank you to all who contributed to this Newsletter. Please keep the articles coming in either by e-mail or snail mail – address on foot of page 8.

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Gala Quartet



Club Secretary Vicky Walker

Chichester Festival 3-11th February 2007

Irina Kulikova Concert

The concert given by Irina Kulikova at the Club on 17th Feb 2007 was eagerly awaited by those of us who had heard her at West Dean in 2005. It was clear to us then that she was a rising star amongst the new generation of virtuosos. She did not disappoint the large, enthusiastic audience. It was a welcome return to Irina who last played at the WSGC 10 years ago when she was just 16 years old.



arpeggios were played with scarcely a note out of place.

She ended the first half with Legnani's *Fantasia*, a piece of less musical value, but an opportunity to dazzle with her technique. Her playing of fast octave passages did not go un-noticed by those among us in the audience who attempt this technique and fail miserably. Unfortunately a lapse of memory caused her to falter and to have to refer hurriedly to her music, which broke the spell. It was surprising that a

Not for her a safe, easy start! She hurled herself into the virtuosic *Sonatina Meridional* by M. Ponce. This work with its fast passagework, especially in the last movement, owes much to the flamenco tradition and Irina succeeded in making the virtuosity an integral part of her interpretation, rather than an end in itself. The beauty of her richly resonant, cello-like thumb strokes in the second movement occurred again throughout the evening and will remain one of the most memorable things about the concert. They made her Simon Marty guitar sing.

The well-known *La Catedral* by A. Barrios showed to perfection the essence of Irina's art. She induced in her audience a stunned silence as she invited us into the religious world of the first two movements. Her singing tone up in the highest positions was of an intensity almost too beautiful to bear. The final movement by contrast showed Irina's incredible virtuosity. The fast

soloist of her talent needed to have her music close to hand, which creates a barrier between player and audience.

Sonata by A. Jose, which opened the second half, makes passing reference to the works of Debussy and Ravel and Irina gave it a beautifully shaped interpretation. With eyes often closed and with her body gently swaying, she produced in the *Pavana Triste* those velvety *tasto* sounds, which, with her beautifully timed rubatos, mark her out as a very special player. The final movement contained fast passagework, ringing *campanellas* and savage *rasguados*, judged to perfection.

Autumn Song, a simple and beautiful arrangement by V. Chlopovsky (one of her teachers), of a piece by Tchaikovsky was rich like an autumnal poem by Keats or Rilke and was played in a way only a Russian can respond to Russian composers! This made me think of a

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Dates for your Diary

Mar 10th Club Evening & Maud Laforest
Mar 17th Amanda Cook Coach to Wigmore
Apr 21st Club Evening

Apr 29th Fabio Zanon Concert—note a Sunday
May 19th Club Evening
June 30th Aquarelle Guitar Quartet Concert

Most events take place on Saturdays at 7.30pm in the Regis School of Music, 46 Sudley Road, Bognor Regis. For details phone 01243 866462. For concert tickets phone 01243 841083 or visit the **Ticket Hotline** at www.westsussexguitar.com

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