

The Solo Duo Concert

The Italian Solo Duo flew over from Europe to play just for us, bringing some fine Italian sunshine with them. Lorenzo Micheli is no stranger to our club, having given two concerts and a master class in 2001, but it was



the first visit for Matteo Mela. Both had left home at 4:00am on the day of the concert – Lorenzo from Milan and Matteo from Geneva. After a practice session, the concert and a late night, the Dynamic Duo were up and away the following morning and caught the 7:00 am train from Littlehampton to Gatwick. Lorenzo had to fly to Bulgaria to give a concert that Sunday evening. Let no one be under the illusion that being a musician is an easy life!

finishes the run which can sometimes sound like one exceptionally skilful guitar. However, that is not why they are called the Solo Duo. In Italian, Solo means ‘only’ or ‘unique’ and they are indeed a very unique duo.

The

concert hall was filled to capacity as an enthusiastic audience awaited their recital. The duo sit very close together and watch one another like predator and prey each anticipating the others moves, with seemingly total disregard for their instruments which they rarely look at. The playing was always very smooth, yet fast when required and even the difficult notes above the 12th fret were reached with consummate ease and speed despite the arm having to reach over the whole body of the guitar.

Not surprisingly, the concert mostly had an Italian theme and it was good to be drawn into the music with Lorenzo’s anecdotes. The recital began with the very well known and popular piece the *Barber of Seville* written by the Italian composer Rossini which was transposed for guitar duo by another Italian and contemporary of Rossini, Mauro Giuliani. Then we heard another Italian composer Castelnuovo-Tedesco who was a successful Florentine composer. He left Italy for the US in 1938 where he wrote a number of successful film scores. The Duo played a Prelude and Fugue from Tedesco’s *Well Tempered Guitar Duet* virtuoso work written for the legendary

(Continued on page 3)

New Members

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

Carl Marshall from Bognor

John Parsons, Era & Victor Smith from Bognor

Antony Buckwell from Brighton

David, Joanna & Nick Crane from Petersfield

We hope you enjoy many happy evenings at the Club!

Lorenzo and Matteo first met in 2000 and in 2003 they formed the famous duo which has performed throughout Europe and North America. Both play guitars made by the Italian luthier Roberto de Miranda. There is therefore a similar sound – one can start a run & the other overlaps and maybe



The Gallop Duo meets the Solo Duo



Lorenzo tries one of Pablo Requena's guitars



The Duo relaxes on the Bognor Riviera

Solo Duo Concert 10th May 2008

Solo Duo...

(Continued from page 1)

Presti-Lagoya duo. The first half concluded with the Argentinean composer Piazzolla's *Tango Suite*. Piazzolla has written for all numbers of guitar ensembles but here we heard his duet and observed the guitar used as a very impressive percussive instrument.

The second half began with the *Tonadilla* by Rodrigo. Here we were on more familiar ground with characteristic Rodrigo phrases. Then Pierre Petit's *Toccata*. Petit was a composer and conductor of the French Radio Orchestra. He was inspired by the Presti-Lagoya guitar duo and wrote this piece for them. It encapsulated the styles of French music that could be heard during the 1950s. It was very busy music, reminiscent of fast moving traffic circulating around the familiar Parisian

landmarks. The Final piece of concert was again composed by an Italian - Giuliani. He lived in SE Italy, but later moved to Vienna where he became a most famous guitarist. The *Variazioni Concertanti* was written in the last years of his life and he played the duet with his 13 year old daughter Emilia who must have been a very competent guitarist!

Rapturous applause produced a wonderful encore – *Le Cou-Cou* by Luis-Claude Daquin (1694-1772) usually played on the harpsichord, but here played as a guitar duet arranged by that very clever and often overlooked guitarist/composer & arranger Miguel Llobett. What a wonderful evening – they cannot get much better than that. Let us hope it is not too long before this Italian Duo return to perform for us again.

Congratulations Chris



Anyone watching the recent BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition could not fail to be impressed by the young guitarist Jadran Duncomb who won the string section of the competition, but did not win

the overall final. If you missed his performances, see http://www.bbc.co.uk/youngmusician/sites/competition/video/jadran_perf.shtml

It is probably not surprising he was not overall winner since how can our quiet, intimate, parlour instrument compete with say the grand piano which can be a whole loud impressive 10 piece orchestra. However, member Chris Sweatman has just proved that it can be done by winning the **Robert Headley Award** which is part of the annual Funtington Music Society Competition.

The competition is only open to students studying music at Chichester University. Over 30 entries took part and only 6 were selected for the showcase final on 23rd April. Chris was competing against piano, cello, recorder and voice. He played *Gavotte en Rondeau* by Bach, *Asturias* by Albeniz

and *Etude no. 11* by Villa Lobos. None of these pieces are for the faint hearted. The final was a close fought affair, but the judges eventually awarded Chris the first prize of £500 (which apparently is to be earmarked for driving lessons). Chris was then privileged to later perform *Asturias* at the Chichester Cathedral Gala Concert.

Chris feels that although he won on the night, anyone could have won, as the competition was very good and everyone played extremely well. He has been studying with Sasha for 3 years now. Chris says Sasha has been a great inspiration in all aspects of his playing. He always has ideas on how a piece should sound and how you can improve upon it. Chris feels very indebted to Sasha for all his help over the years. Chris has also had lessons from Roberto Gonalaz who has helped in terms of tone production and quality and how to view the pieces he plays.

Chris plans to continue with the guitar by studying for a Masters Degree at Chichester University. We all wish him well and are glad that he will still be around for at least another year. Well done Chris and very well deserved.

Inside The Guitar

The club evening on the 26th April was a very special evening. Club member and luthier Pablo Requena gave a brief history of the guitar and revealed the secrets of his trade to a packed hall. This was cleverly interspersed with Paul Gregory playing and demonstrating the range of guitars on display. We were also indebted to James Westbrook who kindly allowed us to see and hear his priceless 1890 Torres guitar. James is author of a number of books and articles on the classical guitar. His latest book is *The Century that Shaped the Guitar*.

Pablo explained that drawings of early plucked instruments exist from Egyptian and Greek times, but the guitar shape as we know it first came into prominence in the 1500-1600s. It was originally a 4 stringed instrument and the name guitar actually means 4 strings. Later 5 strings in pairs appeared and finally the 6 string guitar which we know today first appeared in the early 1800's. The guitars were made all over Europe – not just in Spain. They were made in France and England, but the vast majority were made in Italy. Pablo showed the soundboard of James's 1840 Lecompte guitar where the lateral strengthening strutting could be seen.

Paul played two of Pablo's guitars and the 1890 Torres guitar. The Torres was the last guitar made by Torres. There are a few later Torres guitars, but they are thought to be finished by someone else. The small Torres has a spruce top and cypress sides and back. It was shown that it was not made of the finest timber available since the back had two knots present and the spruce top was made of sections glued together. Nevertheless, the tone was very sweet and mellow and there was no shortage of volume. Pablo explained that Torres, who was originally a cabinet maker, was championed by two giants of the early classical guitar – Tarrega and Llobet. Paul played appropriate pieces on the Torres – 3 Catalan folk songs by Llobet and *Capriche Arabe* by Tarrega. What a wonderful sound from an instrument that is nearly 120 years old. Torres later became known as the father of the modern classical guitar.

Paul then played his 2007 Pablo Requena spruce top. He showed that this lattice reinforced guitar had wonderful separation of the notes not found with fan strutting or cedar models. That is not to say that any one instrument is inferior – they are

just different instruments and some are better at producing certain sounds. Paul also played two movements from Bach's 4th *Lute Suite* and a very moving arrangement of the Irish folk song *Shenandoah* by Chris Dumigan.

Pablo showed his tools of the trade. This included an electric tube for bending the sides of the guitar. The wood is first watered and then flexed over the hot tube. The ensuing steam permeates the wood and makes it flexible. As it dries the curved shape becomes permanent. Pablo selects old dry wood for the manufacture. He showed some timber that had been seasoned 25 years ago. This would be completely stable and not distort. The wood should be tapped to ensure it resonates well before being selected. A wooden former was shown that holds the back and sides of the guitar for assembly. This had a domed back to give more strength. The soundboard is also slightly domed for the same reason.

Pablo explained that Torres made some guitars with a kind of papier mache back and sides to demonstrate that the soundboard is the most important part of the guitar. However, Pablo believed that the sides and back do have an influence on the sound produced. He prefers Brazilian Rosewood for this, but is aware that if an incorrect grain is chosen, the wood could crack. Indian Rosewood is cheaper and more predictable. Pablo said that each guitar body has a natural resonance and that this can be modified to some extent by placing a tight fitting tube (a *tornavoz*) within the sound hole and adjusting its length. Most guitars he makes resonate at G or E.

The formal part of the evening finished with Paul playing a flamenco *Zapadeado*. Then question time followed where guitar strings and glues were discussed together with the playing life of guitars. It was thought that spruce guitars would have a longer life than cedar guitars – cedar being a relatively new wood in the construction of guitars. We were then encouraged to try out the guitars on display. There were replicas of a Fleta and a Dominique (priced at £1300 compared with some 8 times this cost for the original guitars), and a top of the range hand made guitar for £4500. If you are contemplating a new guitar, give Pablo a ring on 01273 487919 or visit his website at www.spanishguitar.org.uk. He has a complete range of guitars in his shop at Lewes, but please ring first.



Pablo Requena, James Westbrook & Paul Gregory



Pablo's former and early soundboards



Paul plays one of Pablo's Guitars



A mouth watering selection of guitars – from left to right Replica of the Fleta & Dominique, Pablo’s two guitars and the 1890 Torres

STOP PRESS

The WSGC Plays at SELSEY

There are two events involving the WSGC coming up at Selsey

On Sunday 15th June 10:00am – 4:00pm on the Green behind the Selsey Centre, we are invited to take part in a family fun day - the Doorstep Green Event. We should have a chance to play in a couple of sets in the morning and also in the afternoon.

On Friday 22nd August at the Selsey Centre 7:30 – 9:30 pm, as part of the Selsey Festival, the WSGC is presenting an evening dedicated to the Art of the Classical Guitar. Tickets are £6 each (children free), to include refreshments.

Please come along and support both of these events either as audience or performer. If you would like to play at either event, please ring Sasha on 01243 866462 We require junior, senior, solo and ensemble performers.



Don't shoot the composer! Adam Lack draws his finger pistol after an exciting Rondo Rodeo ride



Linda & Gary discuss Mompou



Gary & Sami play Tarrega's Capriche Arabe



Gary and Kate Morris jam to WC Handy's St Louis Blues

Introducing Your Committee

We continue our series of introducing the committee to you. This time it is the turn of Patrick Butcher who is in the process of obtaining charity status for the club:



I am a recently co-opted member of the committee who has taken up the task of achieving charity status for the club. Charity status will enable the club to apply for financial assistance from a broad range of sources such as the Arts Council and other organisations in addition to our much appreciated current sponsors. It will also allow the club to set up a Gift Aid system for membership fees which will result in a tax refund on that element of the membership fee. These additional sources of funding will greatly assist the club in its annual activities.

My interest in music started with taking piano lessons in my early teens and at this time I took possession of an orphaned home made banjo/guitar type instrument which comprised of a square wooden box with an attached smooth unfretted neck and lathe turned wooden pegs. The square box had a thin plywood soundboard and back, bridge and an elegant copper fan to which the strings could be attached. My late father, who was an accomplished amateur musician, calibrated the fret board using glued on match sticks. It made a terrific sound, to my ears at least, and we

were soon into chord shapes and accompanying songs such as *Swanee River* and *De Campdown Ladies*. Then came Lonnie Donegan and his *Tom Dooley* big skiffle hit. So at school I formed a skiffle group with Tea Chest double base, washboard, guitar and banjo. At about this point I upgraded my simple box to a five string banjo. But I soon took a greater interest in the Spanish Guitar and bought myself a Tatay. I attempted to master this guitar through Ferdinand Sor's seven volumes of graded studies and other guitar tutors along with a good element of folk tunes and techniques.

In 1966 I found myself assigned to a British Far Eastern Naval Task force based in Singapore where I had the role of a watch keeping communicator. It was in Singapore that I had my first classical guitar lessons and became a founder member of the Singapore Guitar Society. The task force's duties extended as far as Japan and it was here that I managed to purchase my first Kohno in Fukuoka on Kyushu Island. My next trip to Japan saw me visiting the main island of Honshu where I met up with Masaru Kohno's retail agent Arai Music in Nagoya. Here I was able to inspect a whole range of Kohno guitars and purchased my No12.

On my return to England I took a degree in Agricultural Engineering and on completion relocated to Southampton where I joined the Southampton Guitar Society and became their treasurer for a while. At this time I married Lydia whom I had met whilst studying. After gaining my Chartered Civil and Water Engineer status, Lydia and I actively sought a route back to the Far East. I spent several years working on irrigation and drainage projects in Nigeria, Bangladesh and Australia before arriving in Indonesia where we remained for some 8 years. My earlier involvement with the Singapore Guitar Society lead to making musical contacts in Indonesia where I further developed my interests in guitar playing.

Then we decided to return to England to bring up our two children in a more stable environment. This resulted in getting back into the UK's Land Drainage/Flood Risk Management

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Industry, further part time studies and home maintenance. During this period of about 15 years the guitar took a bit of a back seat.

Three years or so ago I joined the West Sussex Guitar Club which has triggered a keen revival of my earlier guitar activities and I enjoy the Monday guitar ensemble group at the Regis School

of Music. Last year I attended The International Classical Guitar Festival and Summer School at West Dean and since then I have taken weekly guitar lesson with Steve Higgs in Worthing.

Thank you Sasha for getting me back onto the right strings and also to the other club members for their encouraging interactions.

Editor's Piece

And so another successful season is drawing to a close. We have the Charles Ramirez concert (on 14th June), the Summer Party (on 12th July) and two events at Selsey (15th June and 22nd August). Charles, who is Professor of Guitar at the Royal College of Music was our adjudicator at the recent Chichester Festival. Do not miss his concert which will, as always, be most memorable and inspiring. The theme for the Summer party is quite undemanding this year – 'From Foreign Lands and People' (courtesy of Schumann) – thus any music from across the world can be played. See the STOP PRESS items on our Selsey events on p6.

We keep saying that each year is the best so far and clearly it is not possible to sustain this indefinitely. However, it is a fact that year on year our member's performances are continually improving. Our festivals have more entries each year and furthermore each year we have world class concerts from world class performers – this season from China, USA, Mexico, Italy, Gibraltar and of course the UK. Some of our events are now on youtube – check out the following links to the Vida and Gala Quartets playing at your club.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=im0oH1ABPFw>

<http://video.aol.com/video-detail/gala-guitar-quartet-burglar-bill/3928012990>

<http://video.aol.com/video-detail/gala-guitar-quartet-algerian-scene/3068971892>

The success of the club is due to your support and also to the unstinting dedication of your committee for which we are all grateful. Jez Rogers has done a wonderful job in setting up, improving and maintaining our website in addition to being our treasurer. Patrick Butcher is liaising with the Charity Commission to obtain Charity Status for the club. This will improve our financial standing and also help us when seeking grants and sponsorship. You will be asked to vote on this soon. Tony Poulett is actively seeking sponsors and grants for the club. Alison and David Stonestreet have been beavering away at our library – cataloguing all the music, CDs, videos and DVDs onto a computer. You will be able to interrogate the library database from the comfort of your home. Vicky Walker is our secretary and keeps the committee paper work in order. If you would like to help the club, then please let us know, there are always ad hoc tasks to be done and any help with tidying up or washing up after an event is always welcome.

Please enjoy the rest of this season and do not miss out on next season because we have some more world class performers coming to play for you all.

Instruments for sale

Quality spruce top guitar, hand made by local luthier Richard Slack in 1994 (no.90). Excellent condition with hard case. £400 ono. Middleton-on-Sea. Tel. 01243 582024.

Cuenca Classical Guitar Model 10 (cost £250 new in 1998). Very Good condition £100 ono. Rose Green. Tel. 07711 251045

Gary Ryan's Workshop...

(Continued from page 12)

of playing (the record lasts for the whole of one side of an LP), the elderly lady slumps exhausted across the organ keyboard. After half an hour of ever increasing tempo and reading notes on ledger lines higher than Everest, we all slumped over our guitars. A fact not unnoticed by our mentor. One wonders as with Bart Simpson, had a mischievous Sasha surreptitiously slipped the *Sabre Dance* score onto our music stands.

For the solo master classes we were treated to a whole range of fine guitar music played by performers encompassing all ages. We heard Gary's own *Rondo Rodeo*, *Capriche Arabe*, Tarrega's arrangement of *La Paloma*, the *St Louis Blues*, *Choros no. 1* & some Mompou. In Gary's *Rondo Rodeo* composition, we heard how some unconventional techniques are used – like playing strings with the back of the thumb. We heard how the starting glissando was inspired by a cross between the crowing of an early morning French cockerel and the theme from *The Good the Bad and the Ugly*. It is worth noting that without exception, everyone played so much better after just a half hour session with Gary. Truly he is a magician. Imagine what it must be like if he was your permanent teacher – surely the sky would then be the limit.

What fun we all had. We had Gary impersonating a guitar orchestra whereby the members tune their instruments at full volume and then play the music very quietly since they are not so sure how to play and are fearful of making a mistake (not at all like the Regis Guitar Orchestra!) We heard how the old time blues players do not mistakes – what they play is what they intend and they are so relaxed when playing. Classical players should roughen up their performances when playing the blues – scratch those finger nails with some gardening before playing. We learnt about rubato and the technical terms for two types of pauses – the romantic eyebrow moment and the granny moment ('Ah, wasn't that lovely!').

We also had a very educational day. We learnt about the Graphic Equaliser of the guitar viz. the method of attacking the guitar strings – at 90° or at 45°, from above or from the side and ponticello or tasto with all stations in between. We learnt about sound projection. We were told to use the lazy fourth finger of the left hand. This little finger hangs around with the bigger, tougher guys and is

rarely used either in everyday life or for playing the guitar. It will only get stronger and help your playing by being used. We were taught that consistency with the right hand is just as important as consistency with the left hand. Playing a piece with different right hand fingering each time is just asking for trouble. Each time fingers are placed on the fingerboard there is the potential for errors. It is therefore better to place as many fingers as will be used as one event rather than place fingers when they are required leading to many events each capable of leading to a mistake.

The day concluded with a question and answer session with Gary where we learnt about guitar strings, composition, sight reading, open string trills, tremolo exercises, arpeggios etc. Finally Gary ended as the day had begun with a piece of Bach this time a Prelude.

Without exception everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable day we all came away much the wiser and had a fun day to boot. Here are some of the e-mail plaudits we received afterwards.

'Congratulations on the most successful workshop to date'.

'One of the most enjoyable days I have ever spent making and listening to music'.

'There was such good, well-prepared playing from the master class "guinea pigs" and every contribution was a joy to hear. Gary added so much with his comments and advice. A wonderful mixture of seriousness and fun'.

'Thanks so much for arranging yesterday with Gary Ryan which was a brilliant experience - he's a phenomenal guitarist and brings such humour and warmth to teaching, playing, and composing'.

Many thanks to Nina and Moyria for their hard work in preparing a sumptuous feast for some 25 people - there was sufficient food over to hold a small informal party after the workshop. Thanks also to the players both orchestral and solo who all made the day so enjoyable and we must not forget the audience whose applause encouraged us to reach such dizzy heights. It only remains to add my sincere thanks to Gary on behalf of the club and hope that it is not too long before he can oversee another workshop. In the meantime, Gary is to be adjudicator for 3 days at the Regis School of Music Summer Festival (a forum for all instruments – not just the guitar). The junior sessions are on 28th and 29th June and the senior sessions are on 5th July. Please try to come along or, even better still, take part in what is guaranteed to be another educational fun day.



Gary conducts the Regis Guitar Orchestra



It's a Gas – Classical Gas - as Gary counsels new member Nick Crane

Gary Ryan's Workshop 25th May 2008

Gary Ryan's Workshop

The Club tries to put on a Guitar Workshop from time to time so that we can all improve upon our ensemble playing, sight reading and our technique. Generally it is very difficult to anticipate how popular these workshops will be. However, when we invited Gary Ryan, Professor of Guitar at the Royal College of Music, there was no doubt at all that this event would be extremely popular and everyone would have an educational fun day. (Do not forget that we all play the guitar for enjoyment and fun – it is not some serious religious ceremony). So popular was the event that names for the solo sessions had to be democratically drawn from a hat since only 7 master classes could be accommodated during the day.



step your feet take, but look at where you are aiming for. You build up to this point and enjoy the view when you reach there.

With *Quebra Queixo* by the Brazilian composer Mochado, we started off quite slowly – what Gary terms ‘playing on the moon’ – everything in slow motion. This gave the impression that we were playing a slow Russian piece rather like Gary’s own composition the *Russian Bear*. However, once we became familiar with the piece the temperature and the tempo

A 16 piece orchestra had four half hour sessions of four part harmony during which time we became quite competent at playing three pieces. We started with a Bach Choral, which was reasonably easy to play, but sounded so much better after Gary’s comments. Gary explained that playing Bach is like going for a walk. You do not look at each

increased and we were transported from sub zero Russia, to the tropical jungles of Brazil. Gary quipped how at the conclusion of the piece, as with a marathon run, there were a few stragglers who limped in a few bars behind the majority.

The other orchestral piece we played was Khachaturian’s *Sabre Dance*. I was immediately reminded of the 60’s speed-crazy heavy rock version recorded by Dave Edmund’s group Love Sculpture. There were also parallels with an episode of the Simpson’s where a mischievous Bart had replaced the elderly lady church organist’s music with a copy of the heavy metal band Iron Butterfly’s rock anthem *In A Gadda da Vida*. After 20 minutes

(Continued on page 10)

Dates for your Diary

| | | | |
|----------|------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|
| Jun 14th | Charles Ramirez Concert | Jul 12th | Summer Party |
| Jun 15th | Selsey Event with WSGC (Sun) | Aug 22nd | Selsey Festival WSGC Concert (Fri) |

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 822965 or visit the **Ticket Hotline** at www.westsussexguitar.com

Please send contributions for the next edition of *Good Vibrations* by **15th August** to Terry Woodgate, 3, East Ave., Middleton on Sea, West Sussex PO22 6EG
Tel: 01243 583355 or e-mail to: terry_woodgate@btinternet.com



West Sussex Guitar Club is grateful for the continued support of:

