

Chinese Revelations

The familiar hall of the Regis School of Music was practically full to overflowing for the recent Xuefei Yang concert.

There were many in the club still talking about her all too brief performance last season, so expectations for this return concert were high. I don't think anyone left the hall with any of their expectations unfulfilled as her performance was mesmerizing, flawless technically and artistically.

An extraordinarily varied programme opened with 4 recreations of Chinese paintings by Dietmar Ungerank, and set the oriental scene with simplicity and some very eastern tuning that delighted the ear. Played with a loving delicacy they were a magical tribute to the music of Xuefei's homeland.

I cannot remember an audience pausing breathless for so long before the applause broke out.

Turning to the more familiar with the Barrios pieces (*Villancico de Navidad* and

Vals Nos. 3 and 4), Xuefei showed both the stunning technical brilliance and extraordinary delicacy of touch and tone that marks her out for greatness; well thumbed these pieces may be but I have never heard them



Xuefei Yang

better played, the vivacity of the waltzes particularly capturing the very essence of these gay dances.

The especially commissioned *Equipose*, a very contemporary work by Tim Slater, displayed a dizzying panorama of tempo and texture changes and vast range of dynamics, a composing tour de force handled with consummate poise by Xuefei, it needed a master to play it, and in

Xuefei it found one.

So onto the *Fantaisie Hongroise* by Mertz, and from one terrifying and difficult piece to another, a little more well known but strictly to be attempted only by the confident and brave, a delightful piece played with great charm and an ease which left the audience momentarily stunned. I cannot remember an audience pausing

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All Aboard for Amanda!

"The perfect end to Christmas " was how I heard one member of our coach party describe the trip to see Amanda Cook at the Wigmore on January 23rd.

Not only was the concert a new triumph for Amanda and held in a grand setting, but the coach trip was a grand adventure. Everyone enjoyed the coach party - and it really was like a party for 40 or so of us with wine and sandwiches and cakes, as someone else had the worry of driving in and out of London and we could all relax and enjoy the sightseeing.

Most of us came

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New Members

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

Roger Ainley,
Crawley

Pam Buchanan,
Felpham

Eric Clark,
Aldwick

We hope you enjoy many happy evenings with us.

Chichester Festival 2003 - Another Triumph for the Club!

For a good number of years after each festival we have said - "This one was bigger and better than last year's." This year it's true again! The number of participants was once again higher than last year, the average standard of performance, according to our adjudicators, was very good and the number of spectators who came to support the performers, to enjoy the music and the thrill of the competition exceeded two hundred - the highest ever.

The number of children taking part in the Beginners and Intermediate classes promises a most exciting guitar life for the Club in future years.

The junior day started with the Guitar Orchestra class, where four guitar ensembles performed in a packed hall, each of them enjoying a most enthusiastic reception. Each ensemble played an interesting selection of music ranging from traditional melodies arranged in several parts to contemporary music which was arranged by the ensemble conductors. The **Chichester Intermediate Guitar Ensemble** was chosen the winner and received the J. H. Cooper Trophy. Congratulations to all its participants and to the Ensemble's tutors, **Mitch Callow** and **John Mason**.

It must have been difficult for **Amanda Cook** - our adjudicator - to choose the best guitarist among the



Sam Allen

fifteen entries in the Novice 9 & Under class, but everyone agreed that **Sam Allen** was a worthy winner and we extend our congratulations to him.

The Solo Novice 12 & Under class had six entries and **Joe Dunn** was the winner.

Duos were well represented

in the Festival: altogether there were ten duos in three categories. In the 12 & Under class the **Chimes Duo** was the winner - congratulations to **Simon Keet** and **Jayson Cook**. In the 13-15 class the **Manju** duo from the Rikkyo School won a well-deserved first place, and in the Duet Open class



Joe Dunn

two Japanese boys - the "Mario" duo, received the trophy.

Kenny Tanner won the Bach Trophy in the Bach class. Well done to **Kenny**, who has taken part in several festivals before. Although the 12 & under Trio class had only one entry, the **Crescendo Trio**, everyone who came to listen to this class will agree that they played with enthusiasm and real spirit and well deserved their prize. Congratulations to the **Crescendo Trio** - **Francesca Gerard**, **Karim Bedda** & **Jack Fry**!

The Solo 12 & Under class was very interesting. Again, **Amanda** had a very difficult task choosing the winner from among twelve performers. Everyone held their breath, waiting for the final adjudication, and again, we all felt that **Amanda** was just and fair having chosen **John Sawyer** as the winner of the class, with **Jack Fry** in second place and **Justin Kingshott** sharing third place with **Jayson Cook**. But everyone received praise for their good effort!

One of the most interesting classes was the Family Ensemble class. Five different ensembles took part: a duo by two brothers, a family trio - brother and sister with their Mum, another family trio - two young sisters and their Mum played a trio on the guitars and then one of the girls played guitar duet with Mum and followed it by a song accompanied by

Mum on the guitar. In another family trio **Dad** played with his two sons, and one more Father and son duo arranged and performed on two guitars the theme from **Rodrigo's** famous *Fantasia* for guitar and orchestra. The experience was very special - to the participants and of course to the audience. Our congratulations goes to the **Barnett** family who were chosen by the adjudicator for their musicality and the versatility of their ensemble. Let's hope this class continues to grow.

In the Guitar with Other Instrument class we had a singer, who accompanied herself on the guitar, the harp with guitar duo, and a trio of two violins and guitarist. All the performances were well prepared and very musical. The winners of this class were the harp and the guitar duo of - **Francesca Barsby** & **Sam Allen**. We hope to hear all the performers of this class again in the future.

The class of Solo Novice 13 & Over had as many as ten performers. All of them showed good ability despite learning to play for less than two years. **Crystal Briggs** came first in this class, closely followed by **Tim Whittaker** in second place and **Philip**



Crystal Briggs

Hendy in third place. Without a doubt many of the performers of this class will be playing in more advanced classes next year.

In the Junior Recital this year we had only one competitor. **Jason Cook** played three pieces, with real sensitivity—very good for his age and technical ability, and all from memory. Everyone agreed that he very well deserved his first place! With so many budding guitarists around we should have more entries in this difficult but really exciting class next year.

The first day of Junior classes finished with another well populated class: Solo, 12 - 15. The standard in this class was higher than usual - many pieces played were of Grade V to VI standard. Congratulations for winning this class go to **Nicholas Gibbs** and to **Robbie Tew** who shared the second place with **Lara Emerson**.

The more advanced Junior classes started on the morning of the next day. The Bach class had five competitors and the winner was **Felix Kellaway**, who later that day performed in duet with **Kenny Tanner**, in Tabora trio who received the First prize, with **Kenny** and **Cameron Bradshaw** and in the Junior recital class. Well done Felix!

The most advanced solo class - Junior Recital - had five entries. All five performers displayed good technical ability and played with real awareness of the style. But the one who impressed our adjudicator most was **Kay Hepworth**. She played three challenging pieces and Gary Ryan praised Kay's sensitivity, technique and good tone.

Congratulations to Kay!

The Senior section this year had balanced number of performers in every class. We would like to extend our congratulations to all who took part and especially to the winners of each class; **Alison Vickery** - for her performance in the Novice class, **Camilla Hessenberg** for winning the Solo Intermediate, **Ian Burt** and **Debbie Burford** for coming first in the Duet class, to **Alex Iles & Lydia Hepworth** for their excellent performance in the Advanced Duet class, **George Williamson & Patrick Cashman**, who played delightful pieces on mandolin and guitar, to the "Accidentals" quartet for their superb interpretation of Bach's Prelude from the 48 Preludes & Fugues, to **Terry Woodgate** for his great performance in the Bach class, to **Linda Kellsall-Barnett** for her exceptional performance in the Solo Open class and to **Alex Iles** for winning the Recital class.

Congratulations to all the teachers, whose hard work was so well rewarded by the results of this year's festival. Much of the success was

owed to our adjudicators. Everyone will remember Amanda's goodwill, and the smile she gave to every single performer! Gary's direct, enthusiastic approach, often with a slice of good natured humour, was most effective for the more advanced players and made an impact on the performers and audience alike.

To organise such event and to see it run smoothly requires a lot of help - we must be very grateful to all our members and friends who gave their time and energy to sort out numerous trophies, to help on the door, to assist the adjudicators and to help with tuning and arranging the stage. This festival is now an integral part of the life of the Club and together with our own West Sussex Guitar Festival brings much inspiration to hundreds of guitar enthusiasts. Here's to the next Festival in November!

Sasha Levtov

A full list of winners is available on our website at www.westsussexguitar.com/chich03_winners.htm

hago hits the high notes!



On March 22nd, our Club Evening featured a visit by the Havant Area Guitar Orchestra, or 'hago' for short.

This twelve piece ensemble, under the leadership of their director, Derek Hasted, took the Club by storm, playing music from three centuries in an immaculate performance that showed just how entertaining the guitar can be en masse, when played with precision, colour and careful attention to dynamics. The inclusion of alto, bass and contrabass guitars added greatly to the depth and range of sound they produced, but the credit must go to the players, who not only performed with great professionalism,

but also with evident enjoyment.

After supper, WSGC members joined with hago and had a taste of life under Derek's baton, working on his arrangement of *La Bamba*, which was both demanding and great fun. I think we were all surprised to see how much we could achieve in 45 minutes!

All in all, the evening was hugely enjoyable, and a wonderful opportunity to make friends with one of our closest neighbours.

Our thanks go to hago and to Derek for their friendship, hard work and good humour - do come again soon!

Richard Prior

A message from hago - to everyone at West Sussex Guitar Club.

Dear Players

From everyone in hago, please accept our thanks for the warmth of your welcome and the enthusiasm of your applause at our mini-recital and workshop on March 22nd. This was as new a venture for us as it was for you, and we enjoyed it immensely. We hope you did too.

Thank you so much for the donation to our chosen charity - I know that your generosity will be thanked by The Rowans, and I thank you too.

On behalf of all my players, thank you for the little surprise presents, and, as importantly, for the food and friendship that greeted us - well, almost overwhelmed us - at half-time.

Our abiding memory will be of the warmth of the whole occasion - what a wonderful Club you are.

Sincerely
Derek Hasted

Chinese Revelations...

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breathless for so long before the applause broke out.

The mood changed for the second half, less contemporary and more a delight of 19th and early 20th century pieces, many well known and as such with well established benchmarks against which a young player is often judged. *Bird Bridge*, by Domeniconi, was a delight of sound pictures, for this tale, as much a visual as an aural treat, was played by an ethereal poet with great delicacy and a dazzling left hand technique, all the more surprising for being played off the page.

Next came the Albeniz pieces (*Mallorca and Sevilla*), so Spanish, so culturally steeped in Andalucia, as well known as Jazz standards and, like such jazz pieces, any new player is measured against the finest exponents from the past. Xuefei was not found wanting - I have heard many great

masters play *Sevilla*, but I have never heard it played by anyone as well as I heard it this night; it was transporting in its feel, its mood and delicacy and in its speed, played a little slower than many and benefiting from that, closer to Andalucian life rhythms than many well known concert hall players ever achieve - artistry of the highest order.

In contrast Ginastera's *Sonata* was played with a brightness, a brilliance of tone that was far more South American in feel, more dissonant, a piece that proved to be a technical tour de force, and yet my only criticism might be that it came too late in the programme. If it was played to impress it did not need to do that, for by that stage few could doubt that Xuefei had all of a great performer's skills at her disposal, from great technical accuracy, speed, delicacy, feel, a surety of tone and dynamics and most importantly passion and a

true insight into her material.

All this, of course, was displayed in her encore after long and hard applause; the *Caprice No. 24* by Paganini was staggering, a glimpse of greatness played by a performer whose career will be stellar. I feel honoured to have seen her at such an early stage in her career.

Graham Bengo

Calling all Players! Club Evening 3rd May

The Committee has given some thought to balancing the needs and interests of both junior and adult members during Club Evenings, and we propose to try out the following format on May 3rd.

The juniors will start at 7.00pm and then play in ensemble for the adults when they arrive at 7.30. About 7.45 the adult and junior orchestras will join together and we'll work on some pieces until around 8.30, when there will be time for some junior solos etc. before breaking no later than 9.00 for the buffet. After the buffet there should be plenty of time for the adults and any remaining juniors to perform solos etc.

We hope this arrangement will ensure that everyone has their guitar in their hands for the maximum possible time!

Richard Prior

Amanda at the Wigmore...

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prepared with a lunchbox just like a school trip, but Nina had made a huge number of delicious sandwiches, enough to feed an army. We got excellent door to door service from our driver Hugo and arrived in good time for a drink before the start of the show and a fairly leisurely departure after the show had ended, many of our

party going backstage to congratulate Amanda.

A great night out, a relaxing coach trip, an opportunity to meet people we hadn't met before, a chance to discuss the concert with other members - great! ... thanks to Nina and Sasha for organising and can we do it again soon ... please.

Helena Bengo

Dates for your Diary

May	3rd	Club Evening
	10th	London Guitar Trio - concert
June	7th	Club Evening

June	28th	Ramon Ruiz and Manuel de Cadiz - concert
July	12th	Summer Party - details to follow

All 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 528573 or visit the **Ticket Hotline** at

www.westsussexguitar.com

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