

Magnificent Marchionda

November's welcome return by the fine American guitarist Stephen Marchionda was one of the highlights of the season so far, although few will know that for so few members turned up. That's their considerable loss for those that made the effort witnessed one of the finest displays of 19th and 20th Century guitar music this writer has seen, a challenging programme from Aguado to Jose via Ponce and Britten all performed by a consummate artist blending considerable technical skill with great intensity and feeling, a heady brew!

Leading with the Introduction and Rondo by Dionisio Aguado the pieces, dating from the 1830s, were played at blitzkrieg speed with a stunning right hand particularly showing in the bass parts of the Introduction, worthy of a Stanley Clarke, the more well known Rondo proved equally as fresh and strong.

Fresh from recording the 24 Ponce Preludes for his new CD Stephen performed all 2 dozen of the technically difficult pieces with absolute mastery of the instrument, at times the



Stephen Marchionda strikes a chord

breathtakingly quick left hand runs were akin to watching a great high wire artist working without a net, a Blondin of the fretboard, the sensitivity of some of the fleeting pieces contrasting with the attack of some of the more Flamenco like, folk music inspired, sections. All 24 Preludes were played with obvious enjoyment by the artist -

an impish grin evident in some of the more brio sections - and received in like manner by an awed audience.

The 8 pieces of the Britten Nocturnal, some of them just seconds long, proved an absolute delight and were played with as much skill and involvement as the Preludes with some of the most rapid re-tuning

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Animal Crackers

A jovial crowd defied the floods on 16th December to attend 'Animal Crackers', the Club's Christmas party.

After we had been welcomed with a glass of hot punch, Regis Guitars began the entertainment by playing 3 pieces of music with animal connections (nightingales, horses and cockroaches)! Linda's ensemble then gave a spirited performance of several Christmas carols (including Little Donkey) and Tamzin charmed us with a song, accompanied by her mother.

Debbie's competition, held between tables, involved naming the animals

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New Members

We extend a warm welcome to the following new member:

*James Botham,
Midhurst*

We hope you enjoy many happy evenings with us.

Magnificent Marchionda ...

(Continued from page 1)

between sections I have ever seen. Perhaps each section needed to be slightly more discrete but while some pieces were stunningly simple yet others hugely complex and strongly rhythmic, all were invested with intensity and a deep understanding of the score which brought out to the full the great contrast inherent in the work.

With the Antonio Jose Sonata we returned to the music of Spain but in this case a composer strongly and evidently influenced by his teacher Ravel, a composer who died before attaining the stature this youthful work hints at. Embedded with fragments of Arabic, Andalusian and north Spanish folk music Stephen revelled in the variety of the

Sonata's sections, a Sonata that could only have been Spanish, fiery, passionate, achingly sad, arid at times, lush at others and all drenched in sun. Stephen juggled the fierce light and umbral shade with a rare skill and depth of feeling and, at the last, the Finale, an Allegro con mucho Brio.

Graham Bengie



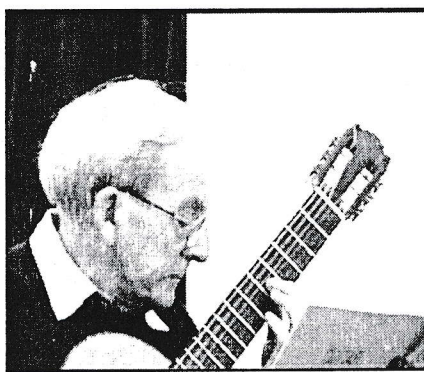
Improving Higher Position Sight Reading

by Geoff Lunn

A professional musician told me "It doesn't matter how good or experienced we are, when we are sight reading we are all on the edge of our chairs". It is not easy, and it is particularly difficult for guitarists faced with making fast decisions about where on the fretboard to play a note, and with which left hand finger.

Higher positions we find more difficult because many of us were taught in such a way that we have "first positionitis" and because the upper reaches of the instrument are relatively less used, and so we don't get the practice. We could probably all improve simply by spending more time above the seventh fret, putting up simple song tunes or hymn tunes an octave.

But if you are like me, the problems go deeper than that. Fretboard knowledge for one. Point to strings and frets at random. How quickly and accurately can you name the note? Given a random series of notes on the page, how quickly and accurately can you name the fret(s) and string(s) on which it can be found? Jack Duarte produced a booklet of



Geoff Lunn

paper and pencil exercises to remedy this. I don't know if it is still in print (Novello).

Then it's a useful exercise to go round the fretboard identifying all the C's, say. There is a C 2nd string 1st fret, 5th string 3rd fret, 3rd string 5th fret, 1st string 8th fret, 6th string 8th fret, 4th string 10th fret, 2nd string 13th fret, and so on. Learn where they are. Play them in octave pairs, practice moving from one C to another without looking. Do the same with other notes and see the same patterns emerging. 'Pujol's Guitar School Book 1' (Orphee) has a section on fretboard knowledge which goes beyond recognising octaves to other intervals as well.

When we know where the notes are, how do we skip from one position to another (without looking) to hit them accurately. You can practice position skips by playing one octave major scales on one string e.g. C scale 2nd string: C 1st fret 1st finger, D 3rd fret 3rd finger, E 5th fret 1st finger, F 6th fret 2nd finger, G 8th fret 4th finger, A 10th fret 1st finger, B 12th fret 3rd finger C 13th fret 4th finger – and back down again. Without looking.

We can develop this further by using the broken chord exercises in Jack Duarte's 'Foundation Studies for Classical Guitar', which consist of three-note chord inversions played up and down the fretboard. As an example played on the top three strings, 1st position A, C, F, 5th position C, F, A, 8th position F, A, C, 13th position A, C, F. There are ten sets of exercises of this sort in the book involving common chords on the inner strings as well. Learning the finger patterns first, then playing the exercises whilst looking at the music not only improves position skipping but speeds up recognition of chords at a glance rather than spelling them out note by note.

Since most music is built on melodic fragments taken from

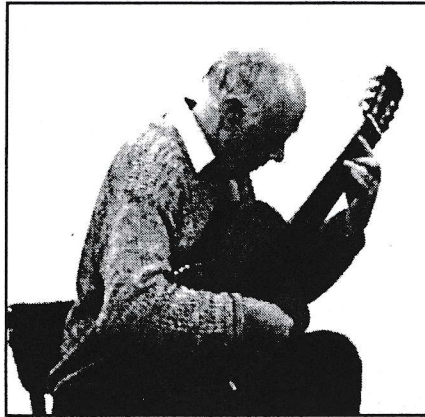
First West Sussex Guitar Festival a Great Success

The first West Sussex Guitar Festival, held on 11th and 12th November, was extremely successful with over 100 entrants.

The whole weekend was thoroughly enjoyable and many thanks must go to Sasha and his band of helpers for making the whole event run so smoothly and providing much encouragement to the entrants. We had some very fine amateur playing, a wonderful concert and some Flamenco dancing all fitted into a very busy weekend.

Saturday was the turn of the 'Under 18s' with Helen Sanderson as adjudicator. Helen was a most charming judge who was able to encourage, praise and offer constructive advice to the competitors. She never seemed rushed and yet reviewed a large number of classes. No one can fail to be impressed by the high standard of performance and confidence displayed by all the youngsters. By starting out early in life, unlike us adults they do not know the meaning of fear and furthermore have been taught all the correct techniques of playing from the start. It all says much for their teachers who inspire them and of course for the children themselves. No one is born with an innate ability to play the guitar – it only comes with a great deal of hard work in practice and dedication. Even the most gifted child still has to put in the hours, it is just that they achieve more in a shorter time. There is no easy 'Sparkey's Magic Piano' with music! All credit to the youngsters – keep it up so when you are famous we can proudly boast 'we saw them play first at Bognor'.

Saturday evening saw a recital of Craig Ogden (guitar) and Claire



Terry came first in the Senior Bach Class

Bradshaw (mezzo soprano). Because of the rain and fear of flooding (or frantic last minute practicing), the attendance was somewhat less than usual. However, those who did come had a wonderful evening with some amusing and interesting chat between pieces. Craig played some brilliant solo pieces and was then joined by Claire for their own

'You win by improving your performance skills and losing those inhibitions'

arrangements of a varied repertoire sung in English, French and German.

Sunday saw a new class of performers in the Flamenco section. Unfortunately, there were no flamenco guitar entrants, but that will hopefully be rectified next year after a few more workshops with Tomas Jimenez. However, the flamenco dancing was enjoyable, culminating in a dance from our own Helena. Rosario Serrano (the adjudicator) explained the origins of Flamenco and interpreted some of the movements for us. You would

have to go along way to see Flamenco dancing and yet there it was on our doorsteps!

On Sunday it was also the turn of the adults to display their artistry to John Mills, the adjudicator. Again there was some praise and highly constructive advice to the players which is equally applicable to us all, since we are all guilty of the same faults to some degree or other. Special mention must go to Alex Iles who is now competing in the adult section and despite his young age (14 years) gave very polished performances of some very complex pieces and managed to win first prize in 3 categories. Perhaps we will need a veteran's class say for over 40s once these youngsters start competing with the adults!

However, the old adage 'it is not the winning that counts, but the taking part that matters' is very true. After all, in theory, there can only be one winner, but by taking part, everyone is a winner. You win by polishing up those old pieces you have been playing incorrectly for years or perhaps even learn a new piece. You win by improving your performance skills and losing those inhibitions. You win by avoiding going on a downward spiral of always finding something else to do rather than play the guitar. Look upon your session as a short lesson from a highly prestigious player. I am sure there are many 'closet' players amongst us who did not compete this time. Please try to play at the next festival. We all suffer from nerves, but don't worry, you will not be taken out and shot if all goes wrong. There are classes for all levels, so don't be intimidated, go for it and help make this an even bigger event next year.

Terry Woodgate

West Sussex Guitar Festival

Studies in Concentration



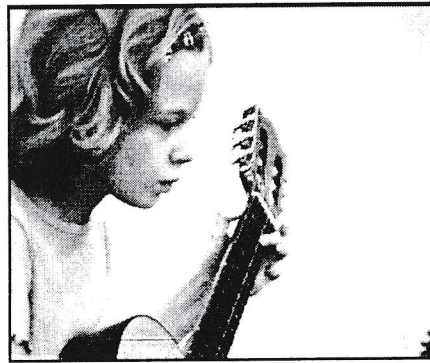
Alex Wells



Natasha & Andrew Walker



Anna Dewhurst



Christina Carr



Felix Kellaway



Tamzin Barnett & Linda Kelsall-Barnett



Harry Smithers



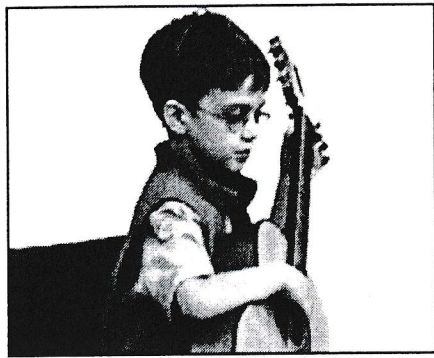
Ivy Kenny



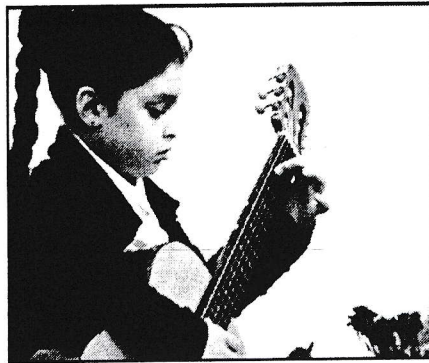
Helen Sanderson with Initial Class 1



Jason Cook



Lanty Bunning



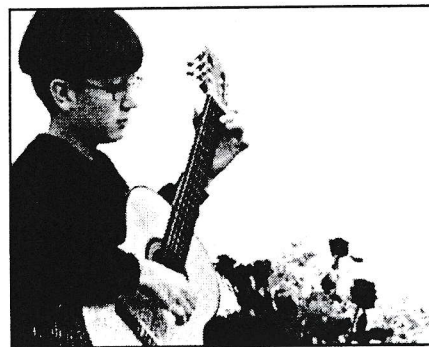
Lara Emerson



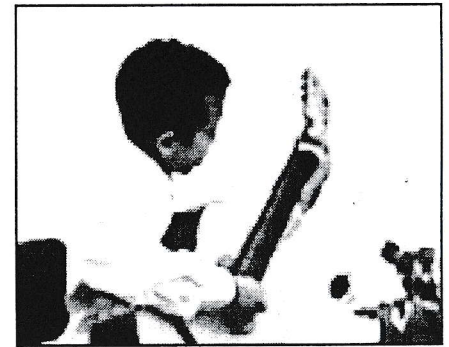
Teppei Kobayashi



Simon Keet



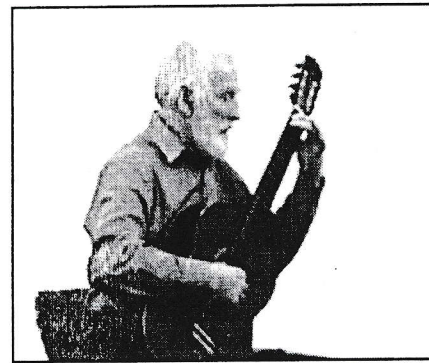
Oliver Detrey



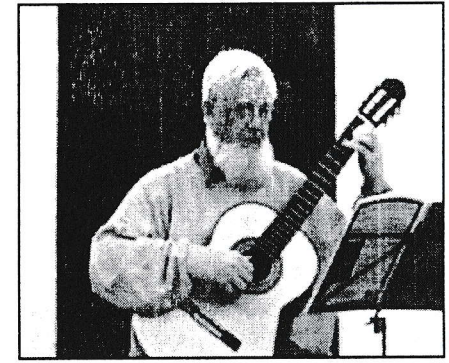
Nathan Mhuto



Alex Iles receives the Senior Recital Cup from John Mills



Alastair Ridley



Len McCormack



John Mills with Regis Guitars



Library Notes

We are very grateful to Robert Bennett who recently donated over forty items of guitar music (books and sheet music) to the library. These have been catalogued and are now available for members to borrow. A visit to the library is recommended, especially if you have been searching for a

particular piece of music. It might well be found amongst these new additions. Many thanks, Robert!

The CDs have been experiencing a very inactive life, sitting on their shelf wondering why so few of their number have been borrowed this year! They form a comprehensive collection of guitar music and are there for

everyone to enjoy. They are easy to borrow, there is no charge and no specific time limit is imposed. I would like to encourage more members to take advantage of this wealth of wonderful music during the 2000-1 season.

Pam Davis

Higher Position Sight Reading...

(Continued from page 2)

scales, it helps to know your scales as well. Take C as an example once again. We have already located all the C's on the fretboard and the octave intervals they form. Now join them up with C major scales. We all know the one which starts 5th string 3rd fret, 3rd finger. We probably know the 'Segovia' one which starts at the same place with the 2nd finger. What about starting at the same point with the 1st finger? Or in 5th position 6th string 4th finger? The 8th fret, 6th string, 2nd finger is another common form, but how about two octaves from the same point starting with the 1st finger? Exploring the fretboard slowly in this way rather than playing memorised patterns at speed all over the fretboard will consolidate your familiarity with where the notes are. Sing out the note names as you go (it's OK, nobody is listening). Of course, the same patterns crop up from key to key, and that helps, but we need to know what it is we are playing and what it looks like on the printed page rather than automatically reproducing learned patterns. A very good source for scales is 'Scales and Modes for Guitar' in the

Alfred Handy Guide series. It's intended for jazzers, who need to know ALL the scales, but it's equally useful for us.

Well, now we can see any note on the page and hit it fast and accurately first time (?), but what about rhythm? Rhythm is what holds together and when reading we have to keep going. If we have the rhythm wrong the piece will falter and collapse. Some people argue the best way to approach a new piece is to count out the rhythm first – aloud. Alfonso Monte applied this in his West Dean workshops last year. The books 'Musicianship and Sight Reading for Guitarists' (Oliver Hunt) and 'Progressive Reading for Guitarists' (Quine and Dodgson) are very good and both include a lot of exercises counting out rhythm. If you are really feeling adventurous try reading the rhythms in Lennie Niehaus' 'Developing Jazz Concepts'. For practice, you obviously need a lot of music to look at – keep playing the same pieces and you learn them, not read them. Useful are cheap collections from folk music shops e.g. '100 Best Irish Fiddle Tunes' etc.

We need also to check

mistakes and why they happened. Was it a misreading or was it fingers which knew where to go but couldn't make it? A stumble could be a stretch problem or finger independence or whatever, in which case books like Carlos Bonell's 'Technique Builder', Scott Tennant's 'Pumping Nylon' or Alice Artz's 'The Art of Practising' can probably provide a cure.

I'm convinced that musicianship and sight reading are not improved by slavishly memorising every piece from the outset. Paul Gregory advises that we don't begin to memorise a piece until we can read it slowly, perfectly. I have certainly noticed that as my own reading has improved, my ability/willingness to spend hours learning pieces by heart has deteriorated.

Checking this through, it occurs to me that if I know all this stuff, why am I not a better sight reader? I'd better go and practise. And if you have any advice to share with me, it is very welcome.

P.S. Some of these books are in the Club library plus stacks of music for reading practice.

Geoff Lunn

Animal Crackers...

(Continued from page 1)

found in 25 pieces of music played on the piano by Debbie. There was a prize which could be shared by all seated at the dining table. At this point Sasha proposed a toast to the Club and we made our way toward the enticing feast displayed at the back of the Recital Hall. The food, contributed by members, was greatly appreciated by everyone.

Following the feast we were entertained by Gala Quartet, who played three pieces and then it was time for the children. A Lucky Dip and 'Pin the Tail on the

Elephant' caused much amusement amongst both adults and children.

Helena delighted us with an exciting flamenco dance (but where was the bull?) and Sasha gave a review of the season's concerts with pictures of the artists shown on a big screen. Next the words of three animal songs (Old MacDonald, The Hippopotamus Song and How Much is That Doggie?) appeared on the screen and we all joined in to the accompaniment of Barry playing the accordion.

Following this example of

audience participation Richard called out the winning raffle numbers and John gave us the answers to his cleverly designed 'guitar music' crossword which had been distributed around the tables for members to solve during the course of the evening.

By a myriad of twinkling lights on the great Christmas tree we ended the party singing carols, once again accompanied by Barry, before setting out for home through the bleak midwinter night.

Pam Davis

Don't miss Amanda Cook's Recital - 7.30pm, 3rd February at the Regis School of Music



It's always a great pleasure to welcome Amanda back to our stage as her sensitive and musical playing make her deservedly popular. Most readers will know her well but, for the benefit of newer members, Amanda was born in Bognor in 1976, started playing the guitar at the age of seven and at fourteen won a scholarship to study at the junior department of the Royal College of Music, following which she carried on to gain her Bachelor of Music degree studying under Charles Ramirez. She has now established herself as one of the brightest stars in the galaxy of young English performers, having won the Admira Young Guitarist of the Year award at the Bath International Guitar Festival in 1995.

Amanda had a busy year in 2000. She came 3rd in the International Guitar Competition in Krynica, Poland and reached the semi-finals of the Tarrega Competition in Benicasim, Spain.

In between visiting Hawaii with Ben Verdery, performing at several international guitar festivals and performing the Aranjuez Concerto in Arundel Cathedral, Amanda has been teaching at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. This year sees her recording her first CD, and giving recitals for the Lausanne Guitar Festival in Switzerland and the Brighton Festival.

Her recital on 3rd February will include works by Mertz, Dowland and Verdery et al. – further details on our web-site as soon as they become available.

Workshop with Professor Gary Ryan

Please note that this workshop will now take place on **Sunday, 25th March** not Sunday, 18th March, as previously published. Details will be circulated shortly.

Alex Iles plays at the Club Evening - January 13th

Alex Iles began playing the guitar at the age of nine. From the very beginning he has shown great dedication, natural musicality and superb power of concentration. Alex's first public performance was at the stage of then newly formed West Sussex Guitar Club.

Ever since his first performance at the Club Alex has hardly missed any opportunity to take part in the Club's events, and his musical progress has attracted the special attention and admiration of many of the Club's members. Almost from the beginning Alex began taking Grades with Trinity College of Music and in about four years achieved his excellent Grade VII. Alex has always been very keen to take part in the Music Festivals, often playing in several classes including duets with his close partner for many years - another talented youngster - Jack Enticott. Among the Festivals where Alex has gathered much valuable experience and has often attracted most encouraging comments from the adjudicators have been the Worthing and Chichester Festivals, Arun Young Musicians Festival and the prestigious Malcolm Sargent



Alex Iles

Festival where for the last three years he has been the youngest competitor and where last year he became a finalist. In our own West Sussex Guitar Festival in November 2000 Alex played in both junior and senior sections and came first in several categories. In the last few years Alex's musical gift and the charisma of his stage presence have attracted numerous invitations to take part in concerts, often organised in support of various charities.

Alex is a pupil of St. Andrews School in Worthing, where he is one of the brightest students and where, amongst other subjects, he is studying GCSE Music. Alex is a very keen sportsman and his other interest in

music... is an electric guitar, which he has learned to play himself!

Our series of "Young Professionals' Recitals" is usually dedicated to young musicians who have attended the Music Colleges and are engaged in building a professional career. Alex says that at the moment he has no ambitions to become a professional musician. He has studied for the last five years just with one teacher, but his musical gift, his superb ability to work and his charming personality helps him to win everyone's attention the moment he touches the strings. His music radiates warmth and confidence. He has a beautiful tone and his technical ability allows him to approach the truly virtuosic repertoire.

Over the years we all at the Club have become admirers of his art and the Committee unanimously decided to offer this engagement to Alex in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the musical life of our area. Alex's programme on 13th January will include music by Tarrega, Villa-Lobos, Albeniz, Lauro and surely one or two pieces from his "light repertoire"!

Sasha Levto

Dates for your Diary

Jan 13 **Club Evening with Alex Iles** - 7.30pm
The Regis School of Music

Feb 3 **Amanda Cook recital** - 7.30pm
The Regis School of Music
£5.50 (members) £7.00 (non-members)
Full-time students half price, Under 16 free

Mar 10 **Chichester Festival** - All weekend
Mar 11 *The Regis School of Music*

Mar 17 **Gary Ryan recital** - 7.30pm
The Regis School of Music
£5.50 (members) £7.00 (non-members)
Full-time students half price, Under 16 free

Mar 25 **Workshop with Prof. Gary Ryan**
The Regis School of Music
Details to be announced

Apr 7 **Club Evening** - 7.30pm
The Regis School of Music

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