

Gary Ryan's Festival Concert

The WSGF now lasts for two full weekends with the first weekend being for under 18s and the second weekend being for the seniors. Between these two full weekends we were privileged to have the senior's adjudicator – Gary Ryan – give this year's festival recital. The hall was filled to capacity as this ever popular player showed how it should be done with a truly stunning performance. Gary is Professor of Guitar at the Royal College of Music (he was appointed to this post at the age of just 27 years!) He has given concerts all over the world and it was a great honour to have him come and play for us.

The recital covered the whole period of the guitar repertoire from the earliest – Mudarra, through Dowland, Bach, Giuliani and Albeniz to the modern composers Richard Rodney Bennett, Bruce MacCombie and even Gary himself. All were executed with great precision and musicality. The *Impromptus* by Richard Rodney Bennett



was in fact a study depicting birds soaring on thermals around a church spire. However, Gary deplores the use of the word 'Study' since students tend to play such pieces mechanically and lose all creativity. His compositions *Rush* and *Metropolis* were very busy pieces depicting his

frantic journey to work in London - beginning with the dash for the train.

The second half of the concert began with some real fireworks from Giuliani. Gary explained that Giuliani was the Rossini of the guitar and in his performance of the *Grand Overture* the guitar indeed sounded like a small orchestra. Gary's *Songs From Erin* (an early poetic name for Ireland), recalled some of his childhood (and later) holidays in Ireland. His *Scenes From The Wild West* is becoming very well known now. The movement *West Coast Breeze* is based on Kenyan rhythms and pays respect to the Jazz guitarist Pat Metheny. Gary thought the second movement *Rockweed* was somewhat funky for a recital, but needless to say it was very well received. The final movement *Rondo Rodeo* is a firm favourite at the club. Gary explained that it was written with the composer Aaron Copeland in mind.

Thunderous applause from the audience was rewarded with two encores – A Tango by Piazzolla and *My Lady Hunsdon's Puffe* by John Dowland. As always Gary demonstrated complete mastery of the guitar, but further showed that he is modern composer who can write tuneful pieces that totally captivate the audience.

New Members

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

Yvonne Skelding from *Bignor*
Adam, Nicholas, Marysia,
Isabelle & Mary Lack from
Chichester

We hope you enjoy
many happy evenings at
the Club!

caused some puzzled looks from the audience, but then the piece did not last for too long. Some may have enjoyed it but it may have driven others even closer towards their own favourite composers. Gary's composition *Birds flew Over the Spire*



Initial Class Age 9 & Under



Initial Class Age 10 -12



Junior Recital



Ian's Debut with Zoe



Helen gives Advice



Ross Barnes



Sam Brown



Recital Class with Helen



The Pink Ensemble (Jez, Imogen Rhiannon Rogers)



Louis & Alstair Jenkins

WSGC Festival 10-18th November 2007

West Sussex Guitar Festival 10th –18th Nov 2007

For the first time, there were so many entries that the Senior guitar classes ran for a full weekend – now the same as the Junior Classes. The WSGF must surely be unique. Although there are music festivals which cater for a range of instruments, surely we must be alone in having a whole four days plus a concert dedicated to just our one instrument - the guitar. The Junior Classes were adjudicated by Helen Sanderson who was wonderfully encouraging towards the children whilst always pointing out where improvements can be made. The senior classes were judged by Gary Ryan, professor of guitar at the Royal College of Music. A more atypical professor it would be hard to find. Both adjudicators made the whole festival fun. It was no ordeal and felt just like playing to old friends. No wonder the performers played their best when they were made to feel so relaxed. It is a shame the audience to these events was not larger, because there were so many pearls of wisdom and advice on improving your technique. Even non-players would be entertained by the music and the sparkling wit. Every entrant was a winner really – they certainly won over the audience by producing some very enjoyable music and what is more important they came out of the closet and played in public!

There were many memorable moments in the festival. For example Gary tuning Ian Burt's left hand strung guitar and then checking the tuning by perfectly playing part of Rodrigo's *Concerto d'Aranjuez* as a mirror image of the usual fingering. Gary dueting with Oliver Duce in a Renaissance piece (now that is something to put on your cv!) Gary's perfect playing on the fly of a member's arrangement of Handel's: *Lascia ch'io Pianga*. We heard guitar played with flute (what a

superb rendition of Ibert's *Entr'act*), recorder, violin and voice. We heard a lute duo and guitar with alto guitar duo. We heard a refreshing new repertoire played on guitar – Ketelby's *Bells Across the Meadow*, Leroy Anderson's *Waltzing Cat*, Debussy's *Girl with the Flaxen Hair* and many others. It was wonderful to see so many newcomers (both young and old) making their debut and having a go. The S & A duo (Andy Smith and Sue Evans) made their debut with a wonderful blend of steel and nylon string guitars – a la Acoustic Alchemy.

The final class of the festival was for the 2008 West Dean International Guitar Festival scholarship. This was sponsored by West Dean and was open to players aged between 15 and 18 years old. This was well subscribed with 6 entries. The scholarship was awarded to the player who would benefit most from such an award. A very difficult decision for the judges since all contestants played to such a high standard. Karim Bedda was declared the winner of the class, with Sam Brown the runner up. It was later decided that all contestants should be awarded £100 contribution from the WSGC towards the course should they wish to attend

As always an event like this does not just happen and has to be planned well in advance. Many thanks are due to Sasha for his multi-tasking as compere, movie maker, still photographer, keeper of results, tuner of guitars and also conductor and player in the orchestra. He was ably supported in all this by Nina who got the paperwork and trophies in order. Thanks are also due to Jez Rogers, our treasurer, who had the headache of sorting out the timetable for such a marathon event and also to those who manned the door, made the refreshments and washed up and swept up!

Gary Ryan's Festival Tips

Gary explained that there are two processes involved in performing – the first is to learn to play the piece, the second is to learn how to play it in public. This is the difficult part since not many opportunities present themselves. All credit therefore to Sasha for his encouragement in arranging such festivals where closet musicians can come out of their shell and perform. When first on stage, there is an adrenaline rush where the normal instinctive reaction is to want to run – under more primitive conditions one would

experience the same symptoms when confronted with a bear. However, one must learn to confront this situation and it does get better with experience.

Gary had much useful advice for the players. It is most important to maintain the pulse when playing a piece of music. This is even more important than playing the correct notes. Practice slowly in order to avoid hesitation in the tricky parts. When changing position look to where you are heading in advance and then when your hand

(Continued on page 5)

WSGC Festival Junior Class Winners 2007		1st
1	<i>Initial Class Age 9 & under (Non-competitive)</i>	---
2	<i>Initial Class Age 12 & under (Non competitive)</i>	---
3	<i>Age 13 - 18 (Non competitive)</i>	---
4	<i>Age 12 & under I</i>	Torben Winther
5	<i>Age 12 & under II</i>	Tamzin Barnett
6	<i>Age 12 - 15 Intermediate I</i>	Matthew Farrant
7	<i>Age 12 - 15 Intermediate II</i>	Adam Lack
8	<i>Technical perfection Class I</i>	Patrick Sowden
10	<i>Bach Class I Age 13 and under</i>	James Branchflower
11	<i>Bach Class II Age 13 - 18</i>	Karim Bedda
12	<i>Advanced Open Class</i>	Ross Barnes & Sam Brown
13	<i>Junior Recital I Age 13 & under</i>	James Branchflower
14	<i>Junior Recital II Age 18 & under</i>	Tamzin Barnett
16	<i>Guitar duet I Age 12 & under</i>	Zoe Barnett & Lucy Haynes
17	<i>Novice Guitar Duet</i>	Sora Duo (Hiroaki Ishizuka & Kazutoshi Tsuboy)
18	<i>Guitar duet II Age 15 & under</i>	Peter Hopkins & Adam Lack
19	<i>Guitar duet III Age 18 & under</i>	Inazuma Duo
23	<i>Guitar with any other instrument</i>	Zoe & Tamzin Barnett
25	<i>Voice & guitar I Age 12 & under.</i>	Peter Hopkins
28	<i>Guitar Ensemble (age 18 & under)</i>	Ryosei Ensemble
29	<i>Family Ensemble</i>	James & David Branchflower
WSGC Festival Senior Class Winners 2007		1st
50	<i>Newcomers' Class (non competitive)</i>	-
51	<i>Intermediate Class I (Up to Grade III)</i>	Roy Barron
52	<i>Intermediate Class II (Up to Grade VIII)</i>	Chris Childs
53	<i>Renaissance Class</i>	Oliver Duce
54	<i>Bach Class</i>	Paul Thomas
55	<i>Music Around the World</i>	Victoria Walker
56	<i>Advanced Class</i>	William Punter
57	<i>Virtuoso Class Test: Any study by Villa-Lobos & any technically challenging piece</i>	Lydia Hepworth
58	<i>Guitar duet</i>	Linda & Tamzin Barnett
60	<i>Guitar ensemble</i>	Regis Guitars
61	<i>Guitar ensemble with any other instrument</i>	Linda & Tamzin Barnett
62	<i>Voice with Guitar accompaniment</i>	Tom Jeffers
63	<i>Plucked Instrument Other than Guitar</i>	Arbeau Lute Duo
64	<i>Recital Class — open</i>	Lydia Hepworth
65	<i>Arrangement Class</i>	Debbie Burford

West Dean International Guitar Festival Scholarship

1st—Karim Bedda

Runner up Sam Brown

The scholarship, for 15-18 year olds, was kindly sponsored by West Dean for non-residential attendance at the West Dean Guitar Festival during August 2008. Many thanks to Marcus Martin from West Dean and our fund raising officer Tony Poulett for arranging this. The standard was so high, that in line with our policy of encouraging youngsters to perform, the WSGC decided on this occasion to contribute £100 towards the cost of the 2008 West Dean Festival to all the entrants, should they wish to attend.

Gary's Festival Tips ...

(Continued from page 3)

moves, you will know when to stop. Also say to yourself the positions when you change e.g. III, VII, V. This will help to reinforce where you are going to next. Gary has found that students are familiar with the 1st position and to some extent with the fifth and even the ninth position (where the hand hits the stock of the guitar). However the seventh position remains largely unknown territory and students suffer from guitar vertigo in this position.

If there is too much going on at once, try playing any upper and lower parts separately. Use the left and right hands separately to work out the rhythms – try tapping the rhythm. A metronome can be of great help. Try singing the tune, this will help determine where the overall phrasing is going and also help with pauses whenever a breath is necessary. Gary thinks not enough singing is done at school or at home these days and such a fundamental instrument – the voice – can help inspire your guitar playing. If possible, try to memorise the music. This allows more contact with the audience rather than hiding behind the music. Also, greater expression can ensue if one is not concentrating on reading all the time.

Where possible, try to tune your guitar before going on stage. However, the guitar may have been in tune in another room some minutes earlier, but changes when brought into the concert hall at a different temperature. Do not rush your tuning, you may think it is taking a long time, but in reality it is not that long. The result of playing a guitar out of tune can be quite devastating. Beware that sometimes the manner in which the left hand falls upon a fret, can affect the tuning. Sometimes, however, this can be used as a technique to correct for the tuning of the guitar until there is a pause in the music and a quick correction can be made to the tuning peg. I find tuning a guitar under pressure is rather like levelling a wobbly table by sawing the pieces off the legs. It can be an iterative procedure that never converges (and the table getting shorter and shorter). The use of an electronic tuner can help considerably.

Posture is important; errors are caused by not sitting in a relaxed position. This was particularly so with the junior competitors. Adapt the guitar to your body; do not let the guitar dictate how you sit. Do not be so tense that you do not breathe properly. A shaky right hand or dysfunctional tension (e.g.

grimacing with the jaw) are often the result of not breathing regularly. Do not emphasise any errors by grimacing, just continue as normal – the error is over and done with and the audience may not even notice. Appear to be serene and calm all the time, even if you are not.

With regard to technique, Gary advised that the effect of squeaky strings can be lessened by playing out louder. The noise from the squeaks remains constant, but relatively, this effect is reduced when compared with the louder notes. Some guitar strings (e.g. La Bella) are extra smooth and especially made to minimise string squeak. Always play single note passage with alternating fingers on the right hand i.e. i,m not i, i all the time. Once a note on the guitar is played, its decay is fixed unlike a piano or organ. The decay can be controlled by the use of vibrato. However, the vibrato has to match the speed of the piece. Too much vibrato and the piece can sound somewhat Hawaiian. Performers were encouraged to play out loud – your editor was likened to a bonsai tree where everything is present, but in a very diminuendo form!

As always, eye contact was mentioned for the ensemble players and I think the message is now getting through. This can be helped by the positioning of the music. For example if playing with a wind instrument, keep this player and your music to your left. In this way you can maintain eye contact with your partner, read the music and watch your left hand without turning your head like a spectator at a tennis match. Consider subtracting sound rather than playing louder. If the accompaniment is played quieter then the tune can be clearly heard without the need for playing out loud.

The new class of guitar arrangement had four entries – a quartet, a duo and two solo arrangements. It is proposed to keep the music for these arrangements in the club library, so that members can see what has been done and maybe try out the pieces if they wish. Much more can be learnt from writing out a piece of music rather than merely reading it. Gary said that when arranging music, the first question to ask is what grade of player is the music intended for? This will determine how complicated the piece becomes. The arranger does not have to adhere strictly to the original music – use your imagination.

Introducing Your Committee

We continue our series of introducing the committee to you. This time it is the turn of our enthusiastic artistic director Sasha Levto, without whom there would certainly have been no guitar club. He is the inspiration behind our wonderful summer and Christmas parties. It is he who encourages us all to be brave and play in front of an audience. He arranges our superb guitar concerts (and other concerts on Sundays). This article is conducted by



way of an interview with Sasha.

Did you grow up in a musical home?

Both my parents loved music very much and were naturally musical. My father could play mandolin by ear and my mother dreamt of playing the piano, which she started as a young girl, but could never continue because of the war and the hardship. She was the one who took me to my first concerts in Leningrad (Saint -Petersburg once again!)

What were your first musical influences?

My parents and my uncle, who had a wonderful tenor voice and sang at the family gatherings. Later on - his daughter who sang and accompanied herself on the guitar. Lots of music was played on radio: patriotic songs and marches, but also classical music. Then the composers: Paganini, Beethoven, Mozart.

Was the guitar your 1st instrument?

My mother had a dream to make me a famous violinist. Around 6 or 7 I was taken to the music school and my very short career as violinist began with a series of lessons. I hardly remember anything from this period, but according to my parents

I was not at all interested in the wonderful proposition of becoming a famous violinist and quite soon my primeval resistance overpowered the efforts of scores of people who discovered musical abilities in me. The attention of my parents was diverted to making a musical genius of my sister who was born when I was 7. I was then left alone with my considerable curiosity which urged me to explore the world and to discover what is really valuable in it by myself.

How long have you been playing guitar?

I started very late, I am afraid - when I was 14 or 15. I was fascinated by its sound from hearing my cousin and her friends. The guitar was a very popular instrument in Russia. Particularly as an accompanying instrument. If you could play three chords - you could accompany lots of songs. The guitar is intimate yet passionate with its unique ability to express lament and has become a favourite instrument of many generations who never had an access to musical education. The much tormented Russian soul always needed music to express its longings, sorrows and dreams. Russian folklore is remarkably rich and many wonderful poems by Russian poets were well known through songs, often self accompanied on the guitar.

Where did you study?

My first guitar lessons I had at the evening classes in so called Palace of Culture in Leningrad. The system was a truly Soviet invention: a kind of musical conveyor belt. The teacher would sit at a table in one of the classrooms from 5pm until 9pm. In turn, the students would come to the class and play for as long as the teacher allowed (sometimes as long as teacher could bear the playing!) You played whatever you had prepared, were given advice and instructions and if you were lucky - perhaps allowed to play your piece again. Then the next student came to take your place. At the next table there were a few hand written music albums. Music books were very difficult to buy in those days and these ½ inch thick albums, written and copied by the teacher, were the only source of guitar music for many of us. We could sit and copy any of the music in our own manuscript books, thus learning another useful skill - writing the music by hand. However, outside of the room in the

(Continued on page 7)

Introducing Your Committee ...

(Continued from page 6)

corridor or in an adjacent class, if it was empty, sat those who were waiting for their turn, all practicing their pieces. Here one can learn a great deal and of course fall in love with a particular piece. Despite this industrial arrangement the system was quite effective, as you can be an observer and participant and the audience and the manuscript writer, all in one evening. I do not think I was able to study for more than several months at this place, but became very friendly with the teacher - Galina Nikolaevna Garnishevskaya, with whom I had intermittent lessons in the next few years.

We already had a family and Nina was in her third year at the Music College, when I decided to continue my formal education and pass the entrance exams to the same college. I had to work in several places and it was a correspondence course, where twice a year I was required to attend lectures and do tests and exams. I completed the first year with good marks but in the following year our life changed dramatically. We took fate in our own hands, left everything behind and emigrated to the West. Since then I continued on my own: I learn from every artist I meet, at every concert I go to, from every student I teach and of course from my own mistakes.

Do you play any other instruments?

Regrettably – not, however I love singing

What instruments does Nina play/teach?

Nina plays and teaches piano, but she also special-

ised in music theory.

How many children do you have and are they all musical?

We have four children. They all are musical, and their music was always our pride and joy. For several years they could play as a piano trio:

Joe, our oldest son plays piano, Ilya is a good cellist and Inna who was born the year we came to this country played violin. Our youngest son, Yuli, who is now 18 started as a guitarist but changed his mind after leaving home for a boarding school and became... a drummer! They all love music, but only Ilya, the cellist, and Yuli, who has his own group are playing regularly.

What guitar composers do you like?

I do not think of any composer as a “guitar composer”. Composer speaks through music and the particular instrument may be incidental and not even final choice. Just think of Bach who adopted his music for different instruments, or Albeniz and Granados who never wrote for the guitar yet the guitar was an inspiration to them. But of those who wrote most successfully for the guitar, music by Paganini, Mertz and of course Villa Lobos touches me most.

Do you have any time for any other interests?

I love doing things with my own hands, but nowadays even simple things have to wait until half term!

Left Handed Guitarists

I was interested to read an article in the Bognor Observer in November concerning a young left handed lad who was learning to play the guitar. Apparently the council has introduced an initiative for all children in his year to have guitar lessons. The council rejected calls from his mother to buy any left handed guitars (of course there is no such thing as a left handed classical guitar) and they were accused of being Victorian in attitude. In the end a compromise was reached and his school restrung his guitar for left handed playing.

This set me wondering. Right handed people who are most dextrous in their right hand attempt to finger the fretboard with their clumsy left hand.

Would they not be better playing the other way around. I know a number of superb left handed guitarists (including Richard Smith) who play conventionally so maybe there is something in fingering the fretboard with your most dextrous hand. In this case the young lad could have done very well playing the guitar in the conventional way despite being left handed.

This set me wondering further – have you ever seen a left handed violinist and are there any left handed pianos that are strung with their bass notes to the right. Maybe this would not work however because human hands do not mirror image. Any left handed guitarists care to comment on this article?

Editor's Piece

A Happy New Year to all our readers! Here we are, already over one third of the way through our season – where has the time gone? Every successive year seems to be our best ever and I was worrying about how we can hope to maintain such high standards. However, this season is already surpassing all we could have ever dreamt of. We have had some veritable giants of the guitar world come to grace our concert stage with the likes of Xuefei Yang, Craig Ogden (with Paul Tanner), Gary Ryan and Richard Smith. Our West Sussex Guitar Festival has again been our most successful with a record number of entries. We also have introduced new classes including The West Dean Scholarship award, the Arrangers Class and the World Music Class. The standard of playing truly increases each year thanks to the dedication of the entrants, their teachers and our wonderful adjudicators who make everyone feel so much at ease.

Do not forget our next major guitar event

which is part of the Chichester Festival. Under 18s on 9/10th February and Seniors on 16th/17th February. The adjudicator for both weekends will be Charles Ramirez, professor of guitar at the Royal College of Music. Charles also teaches at the College's Junior Department for talented children of school age.

Make sure you do not miss any of our future concerts which include Morgan Szymanski on 19th Jan; The Vida Quartet (with Helen Sanderson our festival adjudicator now in a playing role combined with the Eden/Stell duo and Mark Ashford) on 1st March; the Solo Duo (Lorenzo Micheli and Matteo Mela) on 10th May and finally Charles Ramirez returns on June 14th.

Finally, a big thank you to all our members and friends for your support with our concerts and festivals. It really does make it all so worthwhile knowing that you are behind us in what we do.

The Christmas Party

Father Christmas is alive and well and living in Spain - how appropriate for aficionados of the classical guitar! To their surprise and delight, the members and friends of WSGC who gathered at the Recital Hall on Saturday 15th December for the annual Christmas Party welcomed "Padre Noel" to the stage. The Guitar Orchestra under Sasha's direction had opened the evening with *O der liebe Augustin* and a Polka, followed by the Gala Quartet, who entranced us with some of Debbie's arrangements, including Howard Goodhall's *The Lord is my Shepherd* (Vicar of Dibley's theme), Ketelby's *Bells across the Meadow* and Leroy Anderson's *Syncopated Clock*.

And then, clad in traditional costume Father Christmas performed *Malaguena* and a dance by Antonio Lauro. Later, strangely reminiscent of Santa, Santa's companion, Roberto Gonzalez Alvarez from Granada, took to the stage and played Gershwin's *Summertime* and one of his own evocative compositions. Yet again the guitar and its music brought people from different countries together.

Members, young and old, needed no second invitation to do justice to the superb buffet and heart-warming punch. Grateful thanks are due to all involved in catering for our gastronomic needs!

Then we were treated to more music. Sasha

and Patrick Sowden gave a rousing performance of a Valse by Jose Ferrer and George Williamson entertained us with *Speak Softly my Love* (Godfather Theme) and some Gershwin. As ever the Barnett family strutted their stuff! Linda, Tamzin and Zoë sang delightful pieces that caught the spirit of Christmas. And how good it was to hear all the Barnett family, including dad, playing together. Then the Arcadia Duo was joined in Joplin's *The Entertainer* by Kate's children Jonathan and Rebecca Morris with their party poppers!

The Christmas Quiz was an eclectic mix of the silly and the abstruse and George's table just won over Linda's! (How can a piece of music start with a sneeze?¹)

Tom led carol singing with Nina at the piano with Zoë and Alex Burford singing the first verse of *Away in a Manger*. Finally Nina played Percy Granger's beautiful arrangement of J.S. Bach's *Sheep May Safely Graze*.

The Hall was dominated by a huge, magnificently decorated Christmas tree, 14 years old, just like the Club. Sasha compèred the evening in his inimitable style. How lucky we are, as a club, to have such an artistic director to encourage even the most humble beginner to believe that music is a performing art and that even a flawed performance is special to us all. A Christmas card from

members was presented to Sasha and Nina by Stella Clarke, appropriately in Russian, learnt specially for the occasion.

With Sasha's words of thanks to all involved in the club and his encouragement to make 2008 an even more successful year for the WSGC in our ears, it just remained to say to Santa: "Feliz Natal!"

Tom Jeffers

Many thanks to Tom for his support in both the recent Festival and the Christmas party. Tom set the Christmas quiz, conducted the carols and played both guitar and piano.

¹The answer to Tom's question is Zoltan Kodaly from his suite 'Hary Janos'. Apparently, a Hungarian sneeze signifies disbelief and an orchestral sneeze starts the work!



Tomas Jimenez, Paul Gregory, Pablo Requena & Gary



Gary's Young Fan Club



Gary with Adam Lack



A Relaxed Richard Smith



The huge Christmas Tree with Party Revellers



Father Christmas Plays Guitar

Richard Smith Concert...

(Continued from page 12)

words (sheer poetry not written these days and best said in a Southern drawl!) were

Nashville Cats, play clean as country water

Nashville Cats, play wild as mountain dew

Nashville Cats, been playing since they's babies

Nashville Cats, get work before they're two

There's thirteen hundred and fifty two guitar pickers in Nashville

And they can play more notes than the number of ants on a Tennessee anthill

And anyone that unpacks his guitar can play twice as better than I will

This is as true today as it was forty years ago; save the number of pickers has probably increased ten-fold since then. The player who presides as king over all these Nashville Cats has surely got to be Richard Smith. OK, so he was not born in Nashville but he moved there 8 years ago (he was born in Beckenham in Kent). Also he was not quite playing as a baby and he was little older than 2 when he got his first gig, but the song is still very apposite.

Nashville has become a Mecca for the world's greatest guitar players. Imagine how inspirational it must be to work and live in such an environment – and no wonder the standards of playing there excel year on year. From being the Country and Western Capitol of the World fifty years ago, Nashville has now become the guitar capitol of the world, encapsulating the whole spectrum of guitar music.

Richard played a staggering 40 pieces for us in his concert from Bach to The Beatles. That works out at just 20p a piece – less than feeding a jukebox – but supremely better value! When you consider that the Scott Joplin Rags have four different sections (always good value for money!) and the Irving Berlin and Sousa marches had different tunes being played simultaneously that represents a truly amazing performance. I am sure Richard could play seven nights a week for us and never

repeat a piece! Those who have entered the recent WSGC Festival will appreciate how difficult it is to hold together a two minute piece of music without making a mistake. However, Richard must have played a hundred thousand notes in his 2¼ hrs concert but never made one mistake!

Richard brought a refreshingly new repertoire to our concert stage. Certainly he cannot be categorised as a player because he is master of the whole guitar repertoire. It is difficult to select favourites from the concert because it was all so good – no make-weight fillers at all. However, some of the exceptional pieces have to be Gounod's *Requiem for a Marionette* (Alfred Hitchcock's old TV theme); the Sousa marches – *Semper Fidelius* (complete with snare drum percussion from crossed 5th and 6th strings) and *Stars and Stripes Forever* (with a little piccolo on the top string simultaneously playing counter melodies to the big band on the lower strings); the delicate *When You Wish Upon a Star* (played with alternate artificial harmonics which sounds as if the whole piece is played in harmonics) and Berlin's *You're Just in Love* (complete with the love duet of Ethel Merman's voice on the top strings and the man's voice on the lower strings). We must not forget *Sweet Georgia Brown* where Richard was like a kitten with a ball of wool – unravelling the piece, pulling the harmonies apart experimenting with different styles of playing and when he had finished playing with it, he rolled the ball up again and played it straight once more. With Jerry Reed's piece *Jerry's Breakdown*, Richard managed to produce the sound of a bluegrass banjo with his cross-picking of the open strings. It was wonderful to hear *Little Rock Getaway* – the piece Richard played on stage with Chet when he was just 11 years old. If you missed the concert, or would like to see more of Richard, you can check him out on www.richardsmithmusic.com where you will find youtube clips of him playing when aged 11 and now.

Thanks to Richard Prior

After some 13 years of sterling service, Richard Prior, our club chairman, is temporarily standing down from his duties because of other commitments. The club is greatly

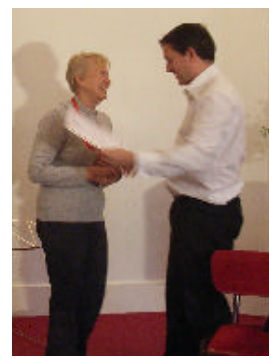
indebted to him for raising the profile of the club and for the high standing the club has achieved during his chairmanship. During his absence, your editor — Terry Woodgate will be acting chairman.



Gary Accompanies Oliver Duce



Andy Smith & Sue Evans Debut



Judith Ratledge



Regis Guitars



Patrick Butcher receives the Ensemble Cup



The Arbeau Lute Duo



The Guitar Duet Class



Lydia Hepworth



The West Dean Class



Debbie receives the Arrangers Cup

WSGC Festival 10-18th November 2007

Richard Smith Concert: Nashville comes to Bognor Regis

We were very fortunate indeed to be able to secure a booking for Richard Smith whilst over in the UK as part of his European Tour. After the UK he then tours France and Germany before returning to his home in Nashville. This is the first time the WSGC has put on such a concert and judging by the rapturous applause and much foot tapping both in the audience and on stage, this was a very successful concert. Richard was a child prodigy who has played the guitar from the age of 5. He played with the great Chet Atkins on stage at the age of 11 years where he bowled the audience over. I often wonder what becomes of child prodigies – eventually they grow up and compete with other gifted musicians in a hard world. Richard however has managed to remain streets above many other guitarists. He has an amazing repertoire and with his photographic memory he never seems to forget any piece he has ever learnt. Many of us are taught how to hold this unwieldy instrument, correct posture, efficient fingering etc. but it



is still alien to many of us, no matter how well we play. A very few people like Richard take to the guitar without any teaching and it is as natural to them to play as it is to breathe. The instrument is just another part of their body. I wonder what proportion of the population has such a superb ear for music, has such

incredible manual dexterity, a photographic memory and such a feeling for interpretation of the music. Certainly fewer than 1 in a million I would suggest!

Richard plays a Kirk Sand's amplified nylon strung acoustic guitar. He has had the guitar built to his specification at Laguna Beach California and not surprisingly the instrument is called a Richard Smith Model. The equipment made a really beautiful sound which was powered along with the use of a driving thumb pick.

More senior members of the club may recall a very apt song from the 1960's which was dedicated to the guitar pickers of Nashville. Some of the

(Continued on page 10)

Dates for your Diary

Jan	19th	Morgan Szymanski Concert	Mar	1st	Vida Quartet Concert
Jan	26th	Club Evening	Mar	15th	Club Evening
Feb	9/10th	Chichester Festival under 18s	Apr	26th	Club Evening
Feb	16/17th	Chichester Festival Seniors	May	10th	Solo Duo 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 822965 or visit the **Ticket Hotline** at www.westsussexguitar.com

Please send contributions for the next edition of *Good Vibrations* by **15th March** to Terry Woodgate, 3, East Ave., Middleton on Sea, West Sussex PO22 6EG
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