

Guitar Friendly with the DGS



John Edwards DGS



Baz Boxall WSGC

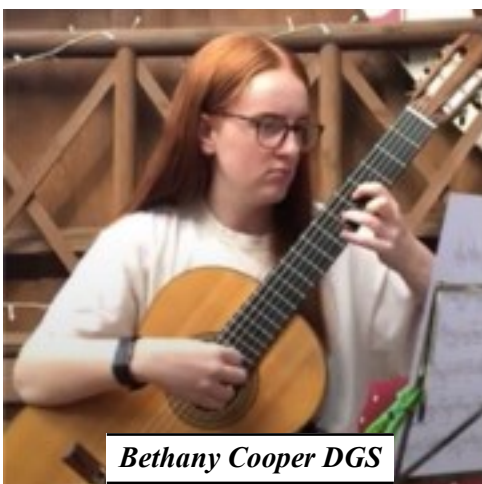
Our annual meet with Dorset Guitar Society (DGS) which was scheduled for 3rd May was yet another casualty of the Corona Virus. Fortunately Sasha managed to organise a virtual meeting whereby members of the DGS and WSGC sent in video clips of their performances which were edited into the virtual event – see <https://youtu.be/HFoF-csLNVg>

Many thanks to Sasha for coordinating the event and to members of both clubs who sent in video clips of their performances. It was so nice to see you all playing again after such a long absence. A big thankyou to the members of the DGS – Mark Armitage, Peter Kirkbride, Raymond Briars, Maurice Albin, John Edwards, James O’Neil, Paul

Thomas, Bethany Cooper, the DGS Trio (Martin Goodhind, Maurice Albin, and Bob Foss) and the DGS Orchestra. Thanks also to our club members Julian Bobak (Chairman), Jez Rogers (our webmaster guru in New Zealand), Baz Boxall (our membership secretary), Jay Huff, Harri Goldsmith and to Linda and Zoe Kelsall-Barnett. Also we must not forget our new generation of guitarists Ben Ward and Sofia Carson. Finally there were our ensembles The New Gala Quartet, the Quintessential Quintet and the West Sussex Guitar Orchestra under Linda.

All in all a most enjoyable event with some fine playing by everyone. Well done!

TW



Bethany Cooper DGS



Ben Ward WSGC



Maurice Albin DGS



Mark Armitage DGS



Harri Goldsmith WSGC

A Message From Sasha

Dear Friends,

Even in April this year none of us could imagine how much our lives would be changed due to the pandemic. As a result, all public events had to be cancelled, and in most active societies, like our Club, communication among members required a very different approach: using computers, mobile phones and emails. Surprisingly, this opened new opportunities, encouraging people to practice and even share performances with an audience, albeit a virtual audience. Thanks to the enthusiasm of our membership we even were able to conduct two events planned in our calendar: the meeting with our friends from the Dorset Classical Guitar Society and our Summer Party! Both events were produced as a collective video, shared over You Tube, and no doubt, the overall audience was even greater than we would have at our Recital Hall.

As for the next few months, we will have to hold our meetings virtually, using a similar format, and here are few practical tips to help with this "21st century" way of making music and sharing it with friends and other music lovers.

1. Recording: use a mobile phone, video camera, laptop or computer with the webcam.

2. Downloading: if using the computer, your performance is already in it! If using a mobile phone, best to download it to the computer, but it is possible to send it directly from the phone. If you use a separate video camera - transfer the recording to a computer by connecting your camera to it, or copy your footage from a memory card.

3. Sending: the best free programme by which to send your recording to anyone with an email address is "WeTransfer" (Just print these two words in your Google or other search engine)

I am sure most of you already know all this, but if anyone needs more help, please do give me a ring (01243 866462) or send me an email:

recital@tiscali.co.uk and if you don't have a camera or other device, I will be happy to record your performance in the safety of our Recital Hall!

Even in this unusual time, we have discovered the opportunity to enjoy making music: performing, learning from other players and discovering new repertoire. Let us continue to contribute to the active life of our special Club!

Thank you very much.

Regards,

Sasha

New Members

We extend a very warm welcome to:
Rebecca & Robbie Cartwright *Bognor Regis*

Barbara Westmore *Middleton on Sea*

**We hope you enjoy many happy
 evenings at the Club!**

The Online Guitarist



The pandemic lockdown has encouraged many musicians to explore the use of video and online outlets to learn, share and get creative. Early on there were several news items for enthusiastic virtual choirs and later for other ensembles. So how easy is it, or not, and what's involved? Before I begin, a useful tip for anyone new to any of the software available is that much help is available online, in the form of blog items and video tutorials. Using search terms like 'beginners tutorial' along with the name of the software should lead to a lot of help and advice.

I am going to address the three main types of video use.

1. Recording and editing
2. Live Streaming
3. Multi-image or Collaborations

The first is something that many of us can do on a digital device; smart phone, tablet, pc or laptop. Due to the popularity of the image these days, device manufacturers make it easier to record ourselves using video than audio. Don't be too harsh on yourself; we are all our own best critics. Even after sharing over 200 educational videos I still cringe at every one! Typical purposes for filming are; to find out how that new piece really sounds, perhaps with a focus on technique; 'how to' videos to help others learn a piece or skill; to share a performance or maybe three for an examination entry. Don't be surprised if nerves kick in as soon as you hit that red button!

Editing of the video is possible with resident movie editing or other free apps on many devices. Generally the bigger the device the more sophisticated the editing features even with the same software. I have recently changed to Apple

products and have certainly found this with i-Movie. One useful feature allows us to detach the audio from the video and edit this separately before re-importing it. Audacity is worth looking into for this or Garage Band (Apple devices). This is basically what sound engineers do for professional artist recordings. You can take several takes and piece together the best bits or simply replace a duff note with one from a separate recording. I've been avoiding this all lockdown as I thought it better to get a complete performance I was happy with. Sometimes after 100 takes I wondered whether I made the best choice.

Sharing Once you have a video you wish to share there are many options available. With all, you have some varying control over the audience - a topic in itself. YouTube has the greatest flexibility and videos can be shared from there to other platforms. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp are commonly used for sharing. If you wish to send a video to someone then email has never been the best option for video. Uploading to a free cloud service and sharing the link is far more efficient and less problematic. Another option which has become more popular during lockdown is by playing the video on your device and screen sharing using Zoom or Skype. You may even get an audience reaction too!

Unfortunately, editing is not an option for anyone submitting video recordings for examination as Baz Boxall and David Clarke have been finding out. Here are David's useful tips:

"I began by making repeated attempts at recording my exam pieces, stopping and starting again each time I made a mistake. Very frustrating; I was becoming increasingly tense at each attempt and making more and more mistakes. I needed to forget I was being recorded, so decided in future I would leave the recorder running while I alternated performances of the 3 pieces (not stopping for mistakes) with relaxed targeted slow practice of problem areas. I found that after about 20 minutes I'd forgotten about the recorder and had usually managed to play through my 3 pieces in succession without too many errors. By deleting the beginning of the recording I had a video I could save as a possible candidate for submission.

The lessons for me were: A video requires as much practice and preparation as a performance in front of an audience; and I need to record my practice sessions as often as possible if I want to cure my redbuttonphobia".

Baz also has an interesting and thoughtful tip for examination submissions:

"I find in a live exam it is often best to start with the easiest piece, to give yourself time to settle in before tackling the harder pieces. But with videoing, it worked best if I started with the hardest piece, so that although my tension was building as I went along, the pieces were getting easier, so it was easier to manage the tension and make fewer mistakes."

Live streaming is something anyone can do. Yes we may have been to recitals from all over the world recently, from solo artists to events with mixed live and online audiences. Anyone can do it basically with a click of a button on social media like Facebook and it's an option on YouTube too. You can restrict your audience to just a few friends or go public. I wouldn't advise the latter as there are groups of bored people out there who find entertainment in sabotaging live streams with abuse. It's a strange feeling because unlike the zoom type meetings you don't see your audience. You can see how many are watching and receive comments but you will be playing in a silent room hoping for the best! The complete live session is there for people to view later and even the live stream can be rewound while it's in progress.

So now for the tricky part of **collaboration**.

With current technology it is impossible for remote collaborations to be spontaneous (though that may change with new software currently in development). I've managed to use Zoom for duets with my students just for them to have the experience at their end. By the time the sound gets back to my end it's completely out of sync. due to 'latency' or time delay. I have to turn the volume right down so it doesn't put me off my playing.

All of those **multi-image** previews we see of enthusiastic choirs and ensembles will be the ones that were able to acquire professional help; sophisticated software; and hardware with significant processing power. There are significant challenges for the performers, which makes the choice of repertoire critical. The Virtual Guitar Orchestra recorded pieces specially written for the situation; an interesting challenge for the composer. The result was impressive and featured our very own Baz:

"The Virtual Guitar Orchestra has so far created two videos, both of which I contributed to, and there are more planned. Each video was a performance of a newly-created piece by the famous guitarist-composer, Sergio Assad. Both pieces had parts for a number of invited

internationally-known players, plus a number of parts for a guitar orchestra, open to anyone. To take part I had to choose one of the orchestra parts (they typically look for twenty or more players to each part, so you're not alone with your chosen part!), and download it along with a 'click-track' to play along to. I then had to record my part on video, while playing the click-track over headphones, so that its sound didn't get included in the recording. The usual difficulties arose of making too many performance errors when you're too camera-conscious, but at least you are permitted to edit your recording, which I duly did using Audacity software. There's a bit of a technical learning-curve involved, but it's well worthwhile if you aspire to uploading some videos to YouTube. After submitting my recording, Uros Baric is the genius who mixes the sound from about 200 individual recordings, and makes a single video which focuses mainly on the soloists, but gives everyone in the orchestra at least a few seconds appearance. The results are available on YouTube. Search for Virtual Guitar Orchestra; the pieces are called 'Kaleidokithara' and 'Scient, Safe and Sane'."

To create an event or 'lockdown concert' one of the best I've seen was the recent Vida Guitar Quartet concert. This turned out to make use of video in several different ways. The live zoom environment allowed performers and even composers to chat with the audience and have a live Q&A. Performances were in two formats. Previously recorded footage of live performances were interspersed with remote lockdown recordings. I asked Amanda what it was like dealing with the challenges of performing remotely, recording individual parts to agreed metronome settings and whether the challenges were helped by the choice of pieces.

"It was wonderful to record the remote videos with Vida and feel as though we were making music together again, even though we were spread around the country! We created a click track for each piece (in Sibelius) and then listened to that, in our headphones, while recording our individual parts. Recording pieces that we have played many times before was definitely an easier process than the newer ones, as we had each other's parts in our ears more and were familiar with the part writing and when to project or blend a particular line. But working on the new pieces was exciting as it meant the quartet were developing new repertoire for future concerts and having that opportunity was very positive for us all."

Acapella

The app I have used to create my Sea Shanties arrangement for the summer party is called 'Acapella'. It works well on iPhone and iPad and I believe there may be a version for Android devices. There is a free version of the app which is limited to a one minute recording. It's surprising how many notes you can play in a minute though! The subscription version allows for longer recordings and also to set up collaborations.

Performer 1 records a guide frame and other tracks before sending it to Performer 2 and so on. Only performer 1 has to have the paid for version. There is quite a selection of different frame layouts (more if you pay) and various mixing / audio enhancing tools. It would be too big an ask for live mixing so you just have to set your level and pan controls for the whole of each track. This means that you have to record in full takes. For me that means as many as a hundred takes for each track! Good practise I guess!

The layouts allow for up to nine separate frames. As you can upload one video to one of the frames I managed to fake a sixteen frame, which gave me four recordings of each of the four parts for the orchestra sound as opposed to a quartet. Its a very creative tool. I've been exploring it's potential to

create play along ensembles for anyone to play along with any of the silenced parts. The scores and parts are published in pdf form from score writing software Sibelius.

Summary

This article has been written to give a general idea, based on my own experience of using the mainstream resources available to all for little cost, with the exception of the professional level editing suites. There are other apps available for video and audio editing with varying additional features It can be useful to search for options specific to your device, maybe using terms such as 'video editing apps for iPad'; or also include 'top 10' or 'reviews'.

Other related topics include 'microphones', 'headphones', 'lighting', 'visual presentation - backgrounds, clothing, etc.' Then there's a whole other area of social media, self-promotion, marketing and business integration.

I hope that was of interest and wish you the best of luck with your future video ventures.

My thanks to Amanda Cook, Baz Boxall and David Clarke for their invaluable contributions.

Andrew Richardson

August 2020

www.youtube.com/user/smartscool

The Virtual Summer Party



Amanda Cook



Pam Fereday

Our last club event of the season was scheduled to be the Summer Party on 11th July. The theme of the party was to be 'A Life on the Ocean Waves' which included all things nautical or involving water. Unfortunately, Covid restrictions meant that the party could not be held at the School. Instead, members recorded themselves playing using their laptops, tablets or mobile phones. Sasha then edited the clips together to make a virtual summer party. If you have not already been to the party, it can be watched on:

First Half:

https://youtu.be/_fh-YwCAD44

Second Half:

<https://youtu.be/3k3SdxUprFY>

Thanks to all our members who sent in contributions to the party:- Andrew Richardson multitracking a *Sea Shanty Medley*; Tjeerd Vonk with a *Tarrega Study*; Leigh Boyle playing Gary Ryan's *Lost at Sea*; Jay Huff with the *Skye Boat Song*; Luigi Coste with *Torna a Surriento*; David

Clarke on mandola playing the *Drunken Sailor*; Pam Fereday on tenor ukulele also with the *Skye Boat Song*; Baz Boxall with de Falla's *Fisherman's Story*; Harri Goldsmith with a Coste *Barcarolle*; Debbie Burford on piano with *Candle on the Water*; David Roe with a *Barcarolle*. We then heard from the younger generation of guitarist: Bobbie Cartwright with Gary Ryan's *Surfrider*; Emilia Vonk with dad Tjeerd playing the *Pirate's Tune*, and finally the Carson Trio - Sofia, Lucy and dad David Carson finished the first half with the *Drunken Sailor*.

The second half of the party began with some ensembles: The New Gala Guitar Quartet with *Schubert's Serenade*; The Quintessential Quintet with *Stars*; and Linda's West Sussex Guitar

Orchestra playing a movement from Duarte's *Crystal Spring*. Then it was a return to the solos with Zoe Barnett playing a Tansman *Barcarolle*; Linda playing Regondi's *Fete Villageoise*, Paul Thomas with Albeniz's beautiful *Mallorca* and finally what must be the definitive version of Tarrega's *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* played by our long standing and popular member Amanda Cook in her garden. We could all picture the palace garden fountains.

Many thanks to all who participated but particularly Sasha who produced the videos complete with captions and also to Julie Insull who produced the art work of the Viking ship – complete with guitar oars.

TW



Debbie Burford



David Clarke



Jay Huff



Robbie Cartwright



Sofia, Lucy and David Carson



The New Gala Guitar Quartet

Editor's Piece

It is hard to believe that just two days after Amanda Cook's concert on 14th March, Health Minister Matt Hancock told the House of Commons that all unnecessary social contact should cease. A week later we were told we must stay at home and many businesses closed. Lockdown had arrived. Such unprecedented restrictions took many of us by surprise.

The restrictions have eased a little of late, although there are still localised areas of lockdown. Unfortunately concert venues and theatres will probably be the last places to relax restrictions. It is not really possible to exercise social distancing in such public venues and still put on a financially viable performance with an audience reduced to one third or less.

However, all is not doom and gloom and things are happening. It is possible to hold music lessons and still observe the Virus guidelines. Music examinations are continuing whereby the students submit videos of themselves playing their pieces. Video editing is not allowed and the three test pieces have to be played and recorded consecutively. Both oral and aural tests are currently suspended.

Videos have been made of some of our club events. We are greatly indebted to Sasha for pulling this altogether and of course we are very grateful to all our performers who have contributed to our virtual events. As time goes by many of us have had to learn new IT skills in order to outwit our stubborn computers. Not always that easy! However, some members seem to have latched on how to do this

quite quickly. Many thanks to Andrew Richardson who has written the Online Guitarist article for this newsletter. Thanks also to Amanda Cook, David Clarke and Baz Boxall who contributed to the article. Thanks also to Sasha for his contribution.

There are a number of methods to send a recording to Sasha, but the most straightforward seems to be as follows:

- i) Record and store your performance on your digital device iphone, ipad etc. The resulting file will be quite large maybe some 130Mb
- ii) Remove the start and end of the recording where you are switching the recorder on/off and settling in.
- iii) Compress the file say using a package like Compressor – it should reduce to a quarter size ie say 30Mb without any discernible degradation in picture or sound quality.
- iv) Use say WeTransfer to send the file to Sasha. You will be notified when he has downloaded it.

Meanwhile artists are putting some of their performances on YouTube. It is obviously a most difficult time for our professional performers so

please try to give generous donations where these are requested for sharing their performances. I have enjoyed recent videos of guitarists who have played at our club. Richard Smith was unable to return to the US and was stranded in the UK for a while. He played some concerts on various guitars from his mum's house in Kent. She even duetted with him in a couple of numbers. The Vida Guitar Quartet gave a very enjoyable concert followed by a Q and A session. Also the Mandolinquents have some very fine music on YouTube such as *Czardas*, *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba*, *the Minute Waltz* and the *Typewriter Song* together with many others.

Our very small, but enthusiastic committee have been very busy liaising with our club Webmaster guru Jez Rogers (now resident in New Zealand) to produce a new layout for our website.

In the meantime, please everyone take care and do not take any risks. We all look forward to the time when a vaccine that defeats Covid 19 is discovered and we can get back to some semblance of normality once again with live performances.

Forthcoming Virtual Events

Sasha will be coordinating some more virtual events for the remainder of 2020 to keep us all in contact. These will include the following with tentative dates:

- 25 Sept** AGM (via ZOOM - see Chairman's letter)
- 24th Oct** A Club Evening (virtual - collective video)
- 28th Nov** A Concert by the **New Stars on the guitar horizon (Recorded specially for the WSGC)**
- 19th Dec** The Christmas Party (virtual - collective video)

Watch out for more information nearer the time and where possible please try to contribute. It is hoped that the articles in this newsletter should help you.

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

Ackerman Music

