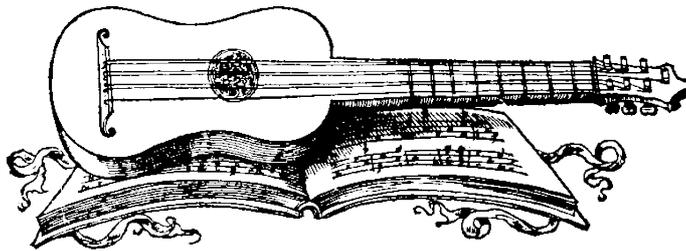


Dorset Guitar Society

Newsletter



June 2009

CRAIG OGDEN RECITAL, 9th MAY

We were fortunate enough to have one of the most exciting guitarists of his generation perform in a DGS-promoted concert at Kinson on 9th May, and a large audience went home delighted with the evening. Craig Ogden presented a varied programme, avoiding playing too many works he felt might be over-familiar to Guitar Society members, which gave us the chance to enjoy substantial new pieces by young composers **Callum Dewar** and **Wyn Pearson**. Craig explained that Dewar (a guitar pupil of his), in writing his entertaining Sonata, was influenced by Lennox Berkeley and the other British 20th century composers who were inspired by Julian Bream to write for the guitar.

Dorset composer **Paul Coles**, whose works are featured on Ogden's latest CD recording, was in the audience to take his share of the applause for **Habanera**. Another of the less familiar works that stood out for me was Walk Dance by **Miroslav Tadic**, a lively and very catchy Macedonian piece in 11/8 time, with vigorous strumming techniques that required Craig to re-buff his nails before Sor's Mozart Theme and Variations, taking the opportunity to start his masterclass (see separate review) a few hours early by holding forth on the subject of nail care and every serious guitarist's obsession with

it! Indeed, his amusing and informative introductions to all the pieces were an engaging feature of the evening.

Craig gave sparkling and subtle performances of well-known works like the Sor and Asturias (Albeniz), but that could be said of the entire set, with Barrios' great tremolo piece **Una Limosna por el Amor de Dios** being a delightful way to leave the audience buzzing at the end a first half which also included the same composer's Vals Op. 8 no. 4 and a stunning rendering of the four movements of Bach's Lute Suite no. 4 in E major, BWV 1006. It was a memorable privilege to listen spellbound as one apparently effortless performance followed another - Dowland's Lachrymae Pavane and Fantasia no. 7, the Allegretto from Torroba's Sonatina and Turina's Soleares were yet more highlights. Finally, Craig was loudly applauded back onto the stage to show that his virtuosity even extends into the field of jazz, with an intricate arrangement (by Roland Dyens) of Django Reinhardt's Nuages.



Julian

DGS Summer Concert

Sunday 7th June saw the annual outing for the DGS black fashion parade - otherwise known as the **Summer Concert**. After many months of sweat and toil (just how many notes did Purcell manage to squeeze into The Fairy Queen...), it all came down to a couple of hours on a warmish afternoon.

However, there was no need to worry. Firstly, the orchestra seemed to swell significantly as everyone made the effort to be there. Secondly, Stephen's usual pre concert rehearsal technique of not allowing us to run through the entire repertoire, but just to focus on starts and ends meant we nailed the key moments pretty well. And, of course, we were all dressed in black - which makes you feel as though it's all somehow rather more

significant than merely a normal meeting rehearsal.

2.30 pm - audience in place, we kicked off with **Purcell**, and straight into the Prelude and an enormous run of semi quavers - and it all (more or less) seemed to work. Rondeau, Entry Dance, Air, Dance for the Fairies (and they did sound like fairies rather than miners with hob nails on, so Stephen succeeded there) and Jig followed in a bit of a whirl. But it all held together, over almost as soon as we'd started it seemed.

A breather for us mere mortals as **Andy, Margaret, Chris** and **John** celebrated Tarrega. There followed Capriccio Arabe, Lagrima, Adelita, a Vals (actually quite pleasant despite Chris' assertion that it was astoundingly 'dull'), and a couple of Preludes, plus a Chopin Nocturne

transcribed by Tarrega. Great nerve and great playing all round.

Cakes and tea were followed by some wonderful playing from **Pete** (who had managed to maintain his claim to another Tarrega Prelude despite John's attempts to play it under another name), **Stephen** (with a Turina piece written in homage to Tarrega - although where the Hommage actually was, Stephen couldn't say) and **Maurice**, who finished with an atmospheric rendition of Recuerdos...

And then back to the orchestra, and **Houghton's** Cheshire Suite. As the strains of Old Knutsford faded away, another DGS concert came to a successful end, and we all felt a sense of accomplishment that's difficult to replicate. And so on to next year ...!

Stuart

Craig Ogden - Masterclass

The morning after Craig Ogden's wonderful recital to the DGS on 9th May, twelve of us attended Craig's masterclass in our Kinson rehearsal room. I was one of the six who had come to play – in my case with a mixture of fascination and apprehension at this new experience. But there was no need to worry: Craig, Principal Lecturer in Guitar at the Royal Northern College of Music, has a typically relaxed Aussie informality which somehow allows him to be bluntly honest and hugely entertaining at the same time – even if you're the butt of the bluntness!

The format was that we each performed an entire solo piece, immediately followed by our half-hour impromptu lesson, with Craig troubleshooting specific problem bars in the music or highlighting more general areas for each player to work on – for example in terms of posture, tone production or 'shaping' the music.

Maurice kicked us off with an enjoyable Recuerdos de la Alhambra (rather him than me!). Inevitably we were then all treated to some valuable thoughts on tremolo, a technique which Craig says didn't come easily to him when he first learnt the guitar. He recommends simple exercises (with the thumb on open G and fingers on the open 1st string) based initially on slow repetitions of 'pam', then 'pmi', then starting the full tremolo pattern ('pami') from each of the four fingers in turn (still slowly at first), listening carefully to ensure that no finger plays too early or late – or too prominently, the thumb being the usual culprit here. Craig also pointed out that good tremolo can't be achieved with tension in the body. He said that, compared to players of other instruments, all guitarists actually do physically is 'twiddle our fingers', and that it's amazing what contortions some of us

seem to require of our bodies to make these small movements possible! He mentioned great players who look as if they could just as easily be 'washing the dishes' when they play, or at the other extreme seem to be 'chewing bricks' (no prizes for guessing the two very famous guitarists he was referring to!). He advised us to sit in a way we would find comfortable even if the guitar was absent. I think he's cured me (and maybe others) of pointlessly raising the right heel – seemingly innocent habits like this can be the surprising source (or symptom) of tension and anxiety in performance.

I played Tarrega's Gran Vals, and this gave Craig the chance to remind us not to use too much pressure with the left hand, a good exercise to counter this being to play a simple major scale (preferably one with no open strings) aiming to make all the notes sound damped, then buzzy – then clean, but with only very slightly more finger pressure at each stage. He said only barre chords require any real physical effort, and he avoids them whenever possible.

And there were plenty more gems of advice for the four players who followed: **James** with Carcassi's Pastorale, **Andy** (the slow movement from Torroba's Suite Castellana), **Margaret** (the Prelude from Bach Cello Suite No. 1) and **Terry** (Julia Florida by Barrios). I learnt as much from the other lessons as from my own, so I'm sure all the non-playing observers were glad they came.

Craig made the point that one minute spent isolating a problem area can bring about more progress than eight hours spent just playing pieces. One should enjoy the process of getting better, rather than use off-putting words like

'discipline'. He said the feeling that you are overcoming a technical problem can give you even more of a buzz than playing a piece well. I was left with the impression that, as long as you can identify your weak areas in a piece, it can be surprisingly easy to fix a problem by isolating the crucial bar, trimming it down further into a slow practice loop, gradually working it up to speed and then carefully integrating it back into the piece. This is a guaranteed way to overcome those 'moments of panic' at crucial position changes that Terry referred to and the rest of us immediately identified with! And as Andy discovered during his session, that may even mean isolating just the notes immediately before and after the position change and turning that into a repeated two-note loop. Craig recommended practising these loops slowly and forte, with the encouraging words: "there's nothing you can't play on a guitar if you take it slowly enough".

A couple of other points he impressed on us were the vital importance to a guitarist's sound of frequent nail buffing with fine 'wet and dry' sandpaper, especially on the finger-tip side of the nail; and the fact that the often melodically important 'a' finger naturally tends to be nearer the bridge, which may not give us the ideal tone, so we have to compensate for that when we decide where to place the right hand.

Thanks to Craig Ogden's generosity with his time the session went on for about 3½ hours, so we left with our heads buzzing with ideas and positive intentions. It was a lot of fun and a rare privilege to spend time with such an approachable and enthusiastic guitar maestro.

Julian

Blandford jottings ...

On Thursday 18th June, you are warmly invited to come and play or listen at the monthly Guitar Evening in Blandford (details from julian@renrag.co.uk). At the **April** and **May** events there were some fine highlights and also plenty of DGS members – the two facts being not entirely unconnected! So, thanks to **Pete** for an amazing performance of JS Bach's Fuga (BWV 1001), two Brouwer studies and also for playing Julian's new set of variations While The Sun Shines; the **Edwards-Gillson Duo** (better known as John and Chris) with various Preludes and Fugues by Castelnuovo-Tedesco and two Renaissance pieces; **Andy**

with Cancion Cubana (Roque Carbajo) and La Melanconia (Giuliani); and **Julian** with Giga (Weiss), Here There and Everywhere and yet another new composition.

We've been celebrating the Tarrega anniversary, too, with Recuerdos (**Chris Cuthbert**), Gran Vals in A (Julian), Capricho Arabe (**Andy**), Two Sisters Waltz (**Chris G**) and Homenaje a Tarrega by Turina (**Bryan Phillips**). We also enjoyed works by Louise Walker, Guido Santorsola, Weiss (Passacaglia), Barrios and Spanish song duo arrangements by Raymond Burley. Hope to see some of you there on the 18th, with the next opportunities being Thursdays 16th July and 20th August.

Julian

Tea and talent ..

Well there was definitely loads of TEA on April 29th and, yes, loads of TALENT as well! It was an excellent afternoon, except we did all eat too much cake!

Tea & Talent is open for all our members to play and we try to encourage the less experienced player to take part; in fact it was initially designed to give a platform to those who don't usually get the chance to play to an audience. Not that we actually had a huge audience! One person from our database and two family members. Not that it mattered. So if you didn't play this time but feel that you would quite like to next time, please don't feel intimidated, just have a go.

I was responsible for working out the programme order and I have to say it wasn't a coincidence that I put **Ann** and myself first. As we were playing flutes we wanted to warm them up beforehand and then play straight away before they went off (so to speak). We played the party pieces that we played at Christmas, **'Late Vacation'**, **'Swinging Sister Blues'** and **'American Patrol'**.

Stephen accompanied us on the guitar. It was a bit unfair of us, as he had only just walked through the door, when we handed him the music that he hadn't seen since Christmas! However he rose to the occasion and played brilliantly.

The rest of the programme was in fact worked out more mathematically than anything else. It depended on the length

of the piece and trying to keep the two halves of the concert more or less equal.

Julian went next and played his own arrangement of **'Here, There and Everywhere'** by Lennon and McCartney. Brilliant, lots more Beatles please Julian. This contrasted nicely with his next piece **'Prelude No 1'** by Villa-Lobos.

Andy and **Peter** both played Torroba pieces; Andy played **'Suite Castellana'** and Peter **'Sonatina'**. Lovely pieces and well played by both. Peter also played **'Sonatina Meridional'** by Ponce.

Tea and Cake and more Cake came next. As the hall was booked for the whole afternoon it was lovely to be able to have a really long interval and relax and have a good chat.

Always good to hear duos, and **Chris** and **John** started off the second half with **'Two Preludes and Fuges'** by Castelnuovo-Tedesco. **James** played **'Bagatelle no 2'** by W. Walton. I can't ever remember anyone playing any of the Walton Bagatelles at DGS, so that was good to hear. He also played **'Study in A, Opus 6, no 6'** by Sor. **Terry** played **'Julia Florida'** by Barrios (which he subsequently played equally beautifully in the Craig Ogden masterclass and was told by Craig that he had lots of good musical ideas).

Lastly **Stephen** played **'Opus 47, nos 3.4. & 5'** by Sor. Everyone played brilliantly. Well done ALL.

Then we had another cup of tea!

Margaret

Devon twinning tour planned for 2010

Please make a mental note (at this stage) of plans for exchange visit to **Devon** on similar lines to the Derby trip of 2003. In consultation with **Steve Gordon** from Exeter, at present the idea is to plan consecutive weekends around about this time of year. Being rather closer geographically, it is appreciated that some might rather travel back after concerts, personally I would very much hope we would do the same as the Derby exchange and host and be hosted. We will have to see!

There is also the possibility of an extension into Cornwall. There is no established Cornwall Guitar Society but of course there are players down there. There is also **Alison Smith**, who we

had visit recently, in Plymouth and she may be able to be part of this too.

For those unsure what this is all about: the Derby trip entailed each society joining together for one large ensemble piece which was rehearsed separately and then on the day of the concert. They also contributed one ensemble separately.

John Mills was involved as soloist in the large piece and also played a half programme. We went there in a minibus, played the concert and were hosted overnight. The following weekend they came here, we played in Bournemouth on Saturday night, Dorchester Sunday afternoon and had a huge party afterwards! So - details will of course change but that was the blueprint last time. Watch this space!

Stephen

New Omega Players - Penzance 2009



Under the direction of Omega Players founder **Gilbert Biberian**, the New Omega Players gave their debut performance after a week of intensive residential rehearsal in Bolitho School, Penzance. The concert took place in **St Marys Church Penzance** on Friday 29th May before an appreciative, if occasionally startled, audience of respectable proportions. The works performed were; **Anerca** by Elizabeth Lutyens, **Prisms no II** by Gilbert Biberian, "...but then, face to face" by John Lambert, and **Concerto Breve "Omnis Terra"** by Reginald Smith-Brindle, and included variously the soprano **Evelyne Beech**, and two percussionists in addition to the guitars.

The picture shows the ensemble in the venue at the end of the final rehearsal: from left to right - **Stephen Kenyon**, **Leo Turner**, **Fran Griffin**, **Gilbert Biberian** (front), **Steve Gordon** (behind), **Gerald Garcia**, **Stuart McGowan** (behind), **Patrick Avery** (front), **Chris Susans**, **Luke Dunlea**, **John Draper**.

Interesting footnote: among all the other things that have changed since the Omega Players started in the early 1970s, it was interesting that the only Spanish instrument in the ensemble was the **Bernabe** played by **Fran Griffin**. The rest included; 1 **Semple**, 1 **Cohen**, 2 **Ambridges**, 3 **Fischers**, and other assorted English makers I can't now recall!

Stephen

Guitar wanted ...

If anybody has a 2nd hand guitar they would like to sell, worth around £300, please let me know, I have somebody interested!

Stephen

We meet at: Kinson Community Centre, Pelhams Park, Millhams Road, Kinson, BH10 7LH
Registered Charity No. 1101122

Committee Members

Terry Robinson - Chairman	01305 834 774	terrydgs@fsmail.net
Stephen Kenyon - Musical Director	01305 257 099	sbk@jacaranda-music.com
Margaret Tredwell - Secretary	01425 613 739	secretary@dorsetguitarsociety.org.uk
Bill Eggleston - Treasurer	01202 824 066	
Chris Gillson and Valerie Evans		

Member of **The Federation of Guitar Societies** (www.federationofguitarsocieties.org.uk)
& CADArts (www.cadarts.com)

Future Meetings and Diary Dates

21 June	5.30 pm - 9.30 pm	18 October	2.00 pm - 5.30 pm
19 July	5.30 pm - 9.30 pm	15 November	2.00 pm - 5.30 pm
16 August	5.30 pm - 9.30 pm	20 December	2.00 pm - 5.30 pm
20 September	5.30 pm - 9.30 pm	17 January 2010	2.00 pm - 5.30 pm

Second Friday of the month

CODA Acoustic Night, CODA Music Trust, New Milton
An opportunity to build experience in public playing in an informal, friendly setting. All acoustic instruments welcome. 7.30 pm. Call **01305 257099** to confirm.

Third Thursday of the month

Regular playing opportunity organised by Julian Garner
Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion, Blandford Forum
7.20pm. email: julian@renrag.co.uk
or tel: **01258 830334** for more details

Sunday 28 June - FGS Guitar Day, hosted by Enfield Guitar Soc.

Highlands Village Hall, 5 Florey Square, Winchmore Hill, London, N21 1UJ. For all DGS members who wish to participate. Large group sessions conducted by Cornelius Bruinsma

6th Waltons Guitar Festival of Ireland 2009

From Wednesday **1st July 2009** to Sunday **5th July 2009**.

With Los Romeros, David Russell, Tap Ole, Flavio Cucchi, Alec O'Leary, Krzysztof Pelech, John Feeley, Andy McKee and many more.

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Make Cambridge part of your plans this summer! There are still spaces in most sections on the **Lute Society Baroque and Renaissance Music Summer Schools**.

The Baroque week (**26 July - 2 August**), coached by members of The Parley of Instruments, concentrates on music by Handel and his contemporaries in 18th-century England.

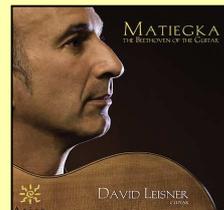
The Renaissance week (**2-9 August**), coached by Philip Thorby and friends, focuses on the music which Lassus wrote and directed for the 'wedding of the year' in 1568, including works by Rore and Striggio.

Full details are at www.CambridgeEarlyMusic.org

New CD from David Leisner

Azica Records has released his latest CD, *Matiegka, the Beethoven of the Guitar*. It is an introduction to the solo music of the little-known Wenzeslaus Matiegka (1773-1830), who David believes to be possibly the most important 19th-century guitar composer.

www.davidleisner.com for more details



Editors bit

Thanks to Julian, Stephen and Margaret for sending in material for the June newsletter - I appreciate it. So, a plea to one and all - **PLEASE** send me items (concert dates, recommendations, reviews, etc) for the July newsletter as soon as possible after the next meeting - Ideally by e-mail to:

Stuart@nundy.fsworld.co.uk

Many thanks, **Stuart**