

# NEWSLETTER

## Plan to restart meetings

**C**ovid-19 has put a stop to all ensemble music making over the past 4 months but for now at least it seems that it's safe enough to resume rehearsals at Kinson Community Centre— with some adjustments to meet regulations. Many thanks to those that have replied with your thoughts on attending a meeting on August 16th 2020. It seems that we have enough players for this meeting to go ahead but please do let me know your thoughts if you have yet to do so. I will confirm by email if the meeting is going ahead.

## Repertoire for August

We'll begin with 3 of Grant's new arrangements at the meeting:

- Seville
- Comptine
- Liberty Bell

I sent these out by email some time ago— let me know if you need me to resend.

## Future Dates

**AUGUST 16th 2020**  
MEETING 1.30pm-4.30pm

**SEPTEMBER 20th 2020**  
MEETING TBC

**OCTOBER 18th 2020**  
MEETING TBC

**NOVEMBER 15th 2020**  
MEETING TBC

**DECEMBER 20th 2020**  
MEETING TBC

### **Danish Royal Library**

I have come across a vast resource of guitar music at the Danish Royal Library. You can find on this site more than 1200 works by 19th century composers such as : Aguado, Carcassi, Carulli, Coste, Diabelli, Giuliani, Kuffner etc...

Click [here](#) for more information and to access the music

## Virtual Ensemble and Guitar Friendly



**T**he Lockdown and banning of group gatherings should have put a stop to our music making and in terms of the usual meetings and concerts it did. However technology has allowed us to still have a purpose to our playing and give us reason to dust off the guitar. We should have met with our friends at West Sussex Guitar Club on the 10th May for our

annual playing day but as this was not possible, Sasha at WSGC managed to edit together our recordings along with some archive footage to create this year's Virtual Guitar Friendly! Many thanks to Sasha for taking the many hours of editing to make this possible.

As well as this we have also managed 2 split screen recordings. Both were rather experimental as I had not tried anything like this before but I think they were a success— many thanks to those members that took part and likely spent more time setting up the tech and sending to me than the actual playing! It was nice to see everyone together again! Thanks to Chris G for organising the parts and Midi file for the second Bach performance. Both these can be viewed [here](#)



## Pujol's Escuela

Many thanks to John Edwards for writing a review of Pujol's Escuela Method— this can be found on Page 2

Look forward to seeing you all again soon and keep playing!

## Recitals

Obviously recitals are not possible at the moment in the usual sense but I have attended some live zoom concerts and live streams over the last few months.

Visit [www.stage-hub.com/](http://www.stage-hub.com/) for details of some upcoming concerts online.

Guitartopia have given a live concert this evening ( 26/7) featuring guitarists Michael Poll, Amanda Cook, Cecilio Perera and Duo Tandem who performed a special concert of classical guitar works, followed by a group interview.

You can watch this concert back at any time by clicking [here](#)



## Guitar School (Escuela Razonada) Emilio Pujol(1886-1980)

As DGS members probably know Pujol was for a long time the last surviving pupil of Tarrega, as a boy, having lessons with the master from 1900 until his death in 1909. The four books that make up the School were published over the years from 1934(Books 1 and 2) Books 3 and 4, 1952 and 1975 respectively. All carry an introduction by no less a person than Manuel de Falla.

Over the years I have used the studies from Book 2 in my teaching, and although with the help of my schoolboy French and slightly better Spanish (the original text is in parallel Spanish and French), I was always able to understand the meaning, but recently having acquired the English translation (Bk 2 –Brian Jeffery and Bk 3 Peter Siegal) I decided as one of my periodic revisions I would work through the Books from the beginning and paying much closer attention to the text than previously. Although Book 1 deals with many basic things to do with hand positions, history of the guitar, early tablatures etc Book 2 is where the work starts. I have to say I think most teachers would not dare to start a beginner on such physically difficult material and I dare say Pujol in his private teaching, would have probably provided a good deal of preliminary work for the pupil in order to start to develop some strength and coordination. Although the book begins with a good deal of detail on tuning, playing open strings with the thumb, then i and m fingers followed by the fingers and thumb in close proximation, soon one is into chords of C and G7 and holding them while the i and m alternate across the strings. Probably much too challenging for all but the most dedicated beginner?

I should say there are several important differences between Tarrega/Pujol approach to basic technique compared to that probably used by most teachers today. The main difference being the almost exclusive use of the Rest Stroke(Apoyando)and not just for a beginner. Tarrega is known for developing this stroke, especially in his last years when he played without nails, and Pujol, under this influence himself, was a life-long advocate of flesh over nail (see his short essay-The Dilemma of the Timbre of the Guitar). So the exercises and studies in these books do not lend themselves, without adaptation, to a long nail approach, but work perfectly well using a short nail technique. I have a couple of small quibbles with the English translation. Pujol describes the right hand's action as 'pulsacion' I don't think the word--'pluck' really gives the correct impression, probably me indulging in semantics, but it seems to me that unless 'pulsate' is used, the word 'sound' would be closer, or maybe stroke or strike, since he is referring to the rest stroke. The free-stroke is rendered as 'tirando'(from Spanish-- throwing, etc.),a term Pujol would probably not have recognised. In situations requiring the free-stroke he usually says 'sin apoyar'. So in some respects if you can live with the Spanish text then you get a better flavour of what he is about.

The book is very systematic, and basic right and left hand development all unfolds gradually, using simple exercises followed by short, quite musical studies(called exercises). Pujol recommends that anything that uses i and m alternation should also be practised using m and a( strange that he does not mention i and a! which some of us, myself included, favour for scale passages) The free stroke (sin apoyar—without resting) is introduced for situations that are impossible to rest stroke ie, notes on adjacent strings, which combined with the thumb produce some little pieces in arpeggio style. Simple ascending arpeggios are played free-stroke by preparing, or planting, the fingers as if to sound all the notes together, but he recommends using the fingers rest-stroke for the descending arpeggio. I think this



is one of the main divergences from modern practice, but I think it is well worth working on as part of rest-stroke development generally. The section on the barre introduces us to the half barre first, arguably more difficult than the full version? and it is recommended we practise it up and down the fingerboard fret by fret alternating i and m in a triplet rhythm. This section is quite hard work and unless you already have a strong left hand, should be approached cautiously.

Part one finishes with the introduction of scale technique, he gives one octave of major and minor scales in all keys, and via some preparatory studies recommends that not only should left hand fingers remain on the strings before moving to the next string, but that LH fingers should be placed together when descending. This approach is perhaps also at variance with modern teaching, but in preparation for descending slurs to follow in the book, is a habit well worth acquiring I think.

The second part of the book takes us up the fingerboard, and the author just tells us to memorize the notes up to the twelfth fret. I should have said that these are books primarily concerned with the technique of the guitar, music reading pretty much taken for granted.

Needless to say technical demands increase from here on and some of the work for the left hand will be quite challenging. As far as the right hand is concerned we have the introduction of thumb free-stroke simultaneous with fingers rest stroke, with some good studies to develop fluency with this, as well as some effective short pieces putting this to musical use.

The next section introduces the 'a' finger in four note chord situations, and then in two arpeggio pieces, the first, ascending preparing the fingers each time, and the second descending and with the fingers in rest-stroke. A third study uses the familiar pimami arpeggio and is quite demanding on the left hand. Although Pujol recommends the practise of rest-stroke in these situations, he seems to be suggesting that as the tempo increases it may not be always possible.

The final sections of the book cover slurs—firstly ascending and then descending, next combined in triplets. I think this part of the book especially masterful, and would provide a good workout for even the most seasoned performer! The following chapter is a very thorough treatment of natural harmonics. Anyone who has doubts about where these are to be found on the fingerboard should be much clearer having worked through this section and the little piece in harmonics that follows.

Book 2 of the Escuela finishes with twelve more substantial study pieces ranging in difficulty, I would say from about Grade 4 to 8. Anybody already familiar with Pujol's music will know that it is always attractive, tuneful and well-written for the instrument with harmonies mostly classical, but spiced up with occasional mild dissonances! The techniques developed in the earlier parts of the book will be found in this section but it is not always possible to see exactly which is used at any one time.

For further study Sor's op 31 and 35 are recommended, as well as the duets of Carulli.

I would recommend this book for anyone dissatisfied with their technical skills, or is in the mood for some remedial work, or would simply like to bring more order into their daily practice routine. The books can all be found on the internet, with the Spanish/French originals probably cheaper than the more recent English versions, but all represent incredibly good value for what you get.

Books 3 and 4 await!!

John Edwards