

The Tirando

Newsletter of the New Jersey Classical Guitar Society

January 2019

January Meeting

Our meeting this month will be the Fourth Annual Lasagna Meeting at the home of Robert and Irene Ey in Hopewell Borough on Sunday, January 13, at 4:00 p.m. Like the Annual Picnic, the Lasagna Meeting is a potluck. We'll provide a choice of meat or vegetable lasagna. Please bring something to share, such as a side dish, salad, drinks, dessert, or the like. We will try to start promptly at 4:00 so that everyone will have a chance to perform before breaking for dinner around 6:00.

The lasagna brings some warmth to a usually very cold time of the year, but this still basically is a regular meeting, so please don't be shy about coming if you haven't come to a meeting before or recently. A reminder, and directions will follow. If you are coming, an RSVP to njguitarsociety@yahoo.com as soon as you are able would be appreciated. ♪

Giving the Upbeat for the NJCGS Ensemble Project.

By Jeffrey Wilt

With 16 members indicating that they would like to participate in a New Jersey Classical Guitar Society ensemble, we are off to a remarkable start!

As reported in last month's edition of *The Tirando*, a recent membership poll conducted by Gary Lee, NJCGS's delegate to a national convocation of guitar societies held at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and sponsored by The Augustine Foundation, uncovered a desire of many members to participate in an ensemble with other members. The 16 members who have signed up to date represent more than 10% of NJCGS's membership of about 130 (that is, our email list...anyone on the list is considered a member).

Those in attendance at the December 15 meeting at Gary Lee's home in Wayne further discussed the project. It was decided by consensus that we should create three "quartets" based on geographic proximity. We have placed the word *quartets* in quotes because there will be more than four participants in each. This will enable some parts to be "doubled" in each ensemble. It was decided that this would enable players with less confidence to feel more comfortable

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The State of Guitar Societies in North America

A Report on the 6th Guitar Society Summit

By Gary Lee

In September 2018, I had the privilege of joining representatives from over 26 classical guitar societies and concert presenting groups from around the U.S. and Canada. Held at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and organized by Asgerdur Sigurdardottir, the 6th biennial meeting continued its goal to provide an intensive networking and training opportunity for all interested organizations.

All North American societies that maintain a web presence were invited, and the meeting and accommodations were generously supported by a grant from Augustine. The conference has its origins with John Olson of the New York City Classical Guitar Society and Asgerdur Sigurdardottir of the Baltimore Classical Guitar Society who acknowledged that societies and presenting groups face great challenges and could greatly benefit from the sharing of knowledge and experience.

Topics

Presentations and discussions centered around:

- Society mission and vision statements
- Administration and organizational structure
- Outreach and community service
- Fundraising and partnerships
- Programming
- Marketing and communications
- Artist relations

3 days, 4 featured speakers

The featured presenters were:

- Matt Hinsley, Executive Director of Austin Classical Guitar, who devoted 8 hours on how ACG operates one of the largest community-based non-profit arts organizations in the country. He literally wrote the book on the subject: *Creativity to Community: Arts Nonprofit Success One Coffee at a Time*.
- Blair Jackson, editor of *Classical Guitar*

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State of Guitar Societies, continued.

Magazine, who delivered a short presentation on how his magazine reports what is happening in the classical guitar community.

- Dan Wiznitzer, digital marketing specialist at Himmelrich PR, who was hired by the Baltimore Classical Guitar Society to develop their web, social media, and email platforms.
- Manuel Barrueco, renowned concert guitarist, who discussed how societies should treat their concert artists, from visas, contracts, accommodations, backstage environment, soundchecks, concert halls, travel, and contact with the public.

But wait a minute. The New Jersey Classical Guitar Society doesn't present concerts.

As one can see from the above lists of topics and speakers, most of the Summit's topics were aimed at concert-presenting organizations. Since the New Jersey Classical Guitar Society does not present concerts or have a budget, the discussion that follows is limited to those topics that are pertinent to our society. For a more comprehensive review of the Summit, please read the article written by Blair Jackson in the Winter 2018 issue of *Classical Guitar Magazine*. Also refer to the agenda in the Summit's webpage here: <https://www.bcgcs.org/guitar-society-summit/>

Why attend on behalf of the NJCGS?

Although the NJCGS was the only organization in attendance that does not present concerts, the following were my goals followed by what I learned.

Goal 1: Take the pulse on guitar societies around the country. How are they doing and who is running them?

What I learned: The number of classical guitar societies is growing in North America and are being run by extremely committed, capable people. From large organizations with impressive outreach programs like Austin Classical Guitar to the newest and smallest with only a couple concerts per year, classical guitar is being showcased and made available to the community like never before. The challenge societies face is filling seats and raising money. As Matt Hinsley explains, the vision of every successful non-profit arts organization should first be focused on service to the community, not self-service. Communicating why, not what or how, is

important. Figure out who your constituents are and decide how to best inspire them. I observed that the majority of leaders in societies seems to fall into two groups: 1) professional guitar performers/teachers younger than 40 with a vested interest in fostering music in their communities, and 2) amateur enthusiasts older than 50. Many of the organizations that are flourishing have a combination of both.

Goal 2: Find out if informal societies/players' circles like those in New Jersey are common around the country.

What I learned: Having polled nearly all the representatives from other societies, I found that the occurrence is surprisingly rare. Although many established societies may have started this way, most societies progress toward presenting concerts and fill the need for members to play by providing open mic opportunities during meetings. However, the more formal open mic environment is drastically different from that of the safe and nurturing atmosphere of members' homes. I suspect the existence of many players' circles in New Jersey arises from the proximity to societies in New York City and Philadelphia, which fulfill the need for concerts and other events.

Goal 3: Investigate how informal societies or players' circles like the NJCGS fit into the larger classical guitar community. Gain a clearer picture of what our role is.

What I learned: Players' circles are highly complementary to the concerts produced by larger societies. As Matt Hinsley commented, some people will be enthusiastic to attend both, and some only one or the other. An individual—no matter how passionate about classical guitar—need not participate in both to be fulfilled, so don't try to push them to do everything because everyone is different and inspired by different things. Based on the insights from **2** and **3** above plus the recent survey we conducted, the NJCGS should treasure the fact that we are unique and excel in providing a fun and nurturing environment for (primarily) amateurs to play for and socialize with one another.

Goal 4: Gain ideas on how we can better serve our members and possibly beyond.

What I learned: As Matt Hinsley points out, it's key to first identify and define your community/constituents and then organize

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State of Guitar Societies, continued.

activities and resources that inspire them. For larger organizations, the “community” may include non-musicians in your city, state or even worldwide. For smaller organizations like ours, “community” may only be classical guitarists who want to play.

Prior to attending the summit, we conducted a survey to better understand who the NJCGS members are and what motivates them. The findings are reviewed in the December newsletter. The survey revealed that our constituents are primarily amateur classical guitarists over 50 years old. They are inspired by playing for, and with, others, and the player circle format provides them the opportunity work on their playing and share it with others.

Some potential areas for growth and refinement:

- Develop a mission statement that better communicates who we are and why we do what we do.
- Expand our constituency beyond classical guitarists, such as seniors at nursing homes. Hold a performance at a senior center.
- Expand the activity beyond solo playing for others. Form ensembles. Thanks to Jeff Wilt as the coordinator, this is starting.
- Assign coordinator roles in order to ensure consistency, longevity and transition planning. Ask if members are willing to serve. ↓

Ensembles, continued.

as they wouldn't necessarily have to be solely responsible for one of the four parts.

We now have established three ensemble groups: a North Group administered by Jeffrey Wilt in Glenwood; a Central Group administered by Ray Butler in Short Hills; and a South Group administered by Bob Ey in Hopewell. From this point forward, each ensemble will chart its own course in terms of what to play, who plays what part and how their ensemble rehearsals will work. We would expect that each ensemble would consider conducting two rehearsals each month in order to increase both familiarity with each other and proficiency with the chosen scores.

Any members who have not yet signed up but would like to should email us at: njguitarsociety@yahoo.com ↓

December Meeting

These pieces were played at the December 16 meeting in Wayne:

Kevin Lutke

- Prelude and Variations 1 and 3 — Kevin Lutke
- Suite in Em — “”

Gad Berger

- Opus 60, No. 3 — Matteo Carcassi
- Brasileirinho — João Pernambuco

Roberta Wallis

- Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming — Trad., arr. Rafael Scarfullery
- Blott en Dag — Oscar Ahnfelt, arr. Jan-Olaf Eriksson

Jeffrey Wilt

- O Christmas Tree — Liona Boyd
- Silent Night — Per Olaf Kindren

Ming Chao

- Prelude No. 1 from Well Tempered Clavier — J.S. Bach
- Arioso — J.S. Bach, arr. David Russell

Mike Topolski

- Linus and Lucy — Vince Galdi
- Bagatelle No. 4 — William Walton

David Graessel

- Capriccio in D — S.L. Weiss
- Jingle Bells — arr., Thomas Poore

Jeff Griesemer

- Here, There, and Everywhere— Beatles, Arr. Jeff Griesemer
- Because — Dave Clark Five, Arr. Jeff Griesemer

Jim Tosone

- Blind Mary — Turlough O'Carolan
- Vincent — Don McLean

Parvathi Kumar

- Evocacion (Suite del Recuerdo) — Jose Luis Merlin
- Preludio (Serie Americana) — Hector Ayala

Gary Lee

- Prelude — Tarrega
- Etude — Regondi
- O Come, O Come Emmanuel — Arr. Douglas and Elizabeth Niedt

Robert Ey

- Bouree from Lute Suite in Em — J.S. Bach
- Tarleton's Resurrection — John Dowland ↓

UPCOMING EVENTS

PHILADELPHIA CLASSICAL GUITAR SOCIETY PRESENTS HAO YANG

SETTLEMENT MUSIC SCHOOL, 416 QUEEN STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19147

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6, 2019, 3:00 P.M.

ADMISSION: \$15.00 - \$25.00; PCGS MEMBERS, FREE

Hao Yang studies with renowned guitarists David Starobin and Jason Vieaux. She has won top prizes in numerous guitar competitions.

More information: <http://www.phillyguitar.org/event-3047697>



December 16 meeting in Wayne, photo by Jeff Griesemer.