

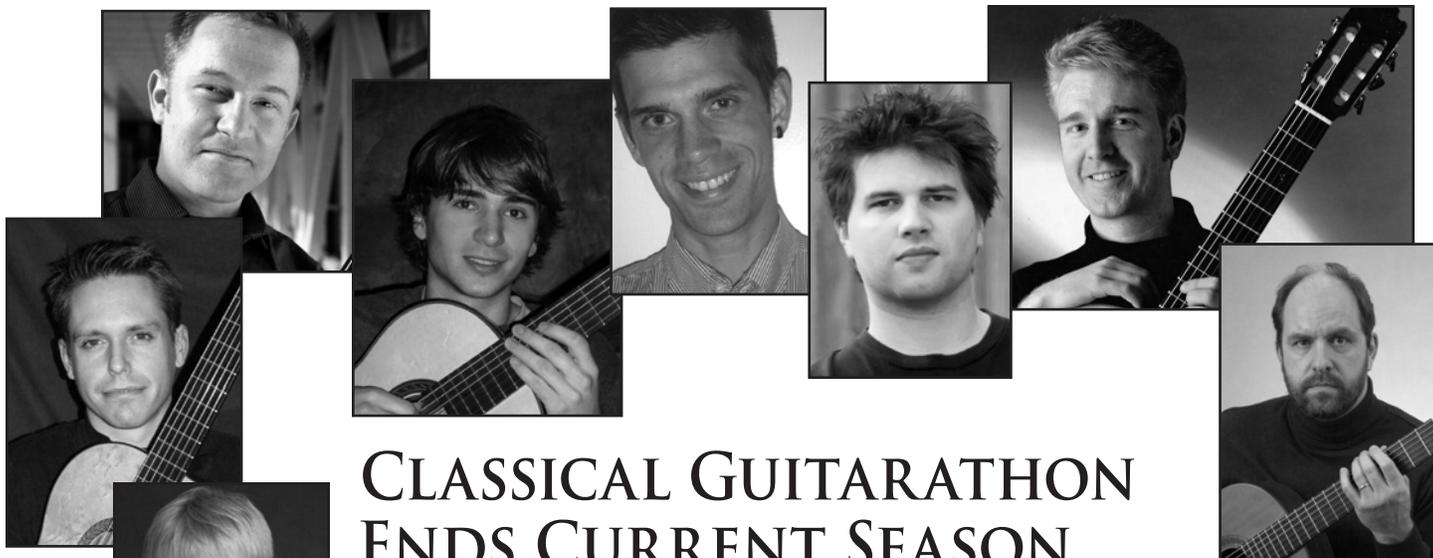
# Guitarist

A Publication of the Minnesota Guitar Society • P.O. Box 14986 • Minneapolis, MN 55414

MAY / JUNE 2009

VOL. 25 NO. 3

## Spring Toward Summer at Sundin Hall with Great Music!



### CLASSICAL GUITARATHON ENDS CURRENT SEASON

The Minnesota Guitar Society's very first event was a classical "guitarathon" concert featuring many of our area's finest performers. That event was so successful it became an annual season-ending tradition. The tradition continues this year, and as always the concert will feature great performances by long-time friends of the MGS as well as artists new to our area. Make plans now to join us on Saturday, May 23rd, at 8 pm in Sundin Hall. Read on to meet the performers!

#### Kristian Anderson

Minnesota native Kristian Anderson (DM, Florida State University; MM, Arizona State University; BM, University of North Texas) is an accomplished concert classical guitarist with over twenty years of playing experience. He has performed throughout Europe and North America, and has appeared live on various NPR affiliates. Critics have hailed his solo performances as "show stopping" ([www.dallasmusic.com](http://www.dallasmusic.com)) and encompassing "prodigious virtuosity" (*Soundboard*). A three-time first prize winner on the U.S. competition circuit, he now adjudicates various guitar competitions. As a founding member of the internationally renowned Tantalus Quartet, Kris has been invited to perform at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, the Guitar Foundation of America Festival, the Iserlohn Guitar Symposium, and the New York Guitar Seminar, as well as for other festivals, guitar societies, and colleges around the globe. The quartet has commissioned and premiered several new works from today's leading composers, including Grammy nominated composer Apostolos Paraskevas, whose piece "The Feast" was premiered by Tantalus this season with the

turn to page 3 for details

#### Also In This Issue:

News and Notes; Special Feature by Dan Sturm; Masterclass article by Mike Cramer

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## Minnesota Guitar Society Mission Statement

To promote the guitar, in all its stylistic and cultural diversity, through our newsletter and through our sponsorship of public forums, concerts, and workshops.

To commission new music and to aid in its promotion, publication, and recording.

To serve as an educational and social link between amateur and professional guitarists and the community.

To promote and help create opportunities for Minnesota guitarists and players of related instruments.

To reserve tickets for any Sundin Hall concert, please call our phone line at 612-677-1151 and leave a message.

### Directions to Sundin Hall on the Hamline U. Campus:

From I-94, head north on Snelling Avenue in St. Paul, past University Avenue to Hewitt Avenue. Turn right, Sundin Hall is on your left, a half-block east of Snelling. Free parking is available one block past the hall, in lots off Hewitt (on your right) or off Pascal (1 block north).

## Join the Minnesota Guitar Society!

As a member of the Minnesota Guitar Society, you receive ticket discounts on all MGS-sponsored events, a year's subscription to the *Guitarist* and the opportunity to place free classifieds in each issue.

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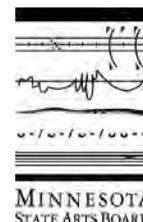
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The Minnesota Guitar Society concert season is co-sponsored by Sundin Hall. This activity is made possible in part by a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Matching funds have been provided by General Mills, AT&T, and Ameriprise Financial.



# Sundin Spotlight: Classical Guitarathon

Classical Guitarathon, *continued from p.1*

Albany Symphony Orchestra. Tantalus is also proud to be an official artist for D'Addario Strings. An experienced educator, Kris has lectured at such institutions as Florida State University, St. Mary's College in South Bend, IN, and the Loudoun County Guitar Festival. He has been published by the journal *Soundboard* and has held the position of Adjunct Professor at the University of North Texas in Denton, and Thomas University in Thomasville, GA. He is in demand as a teacher at festivals and workshops, including the Guitar Foundation of America Festival, the Iserlohn Guitar Symposium in Germany, and the Darton Guitar Workshop. Currently, Kris teaches at MacPhail Center for Music and performs as a freelance musician throughout the Twin Cities. He recently joined the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Guitar Society. Visit <[www.TantalusQuartet.com](http://www.TantalusQuartet.com)> for more info.



## Christopher Becknell

As a guitar teacher, Christopher Becknell passionately believes in helping to spread a love of the guitar to the next generation. He runs a Suzuki Guitar program for children and their families, as well as courses in Fingerstyle and Rock and Roll guitar at Northern Pine School of Guitar and Banjo in Lino Lakes. Christopher

holds a Bachelor of Music degree in guitar performance from Bethel University where he studied with Dr. David Crittenden as well as a Bachelor of Arts in History, with an emphasis on music history. In addition, he is active as a performer on both violin and guitar.



## Evan Everist

Evan Everist has been playing various styles of guitar for over 13 years. Beyond having performed in countless settings as a jazz guitarist, Evan received his BA in classical guitar performance in 2006 from Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA. While completing his undergraduate degree he performed as a soloist with both

the Gonzaga Symphony Orchestra and the Spokane Symphony. This spring he will complete his graduate studies at the University of Minnesota under the direction of Jeffrey Van and Dr. James Flegel. Evan has also studied with guitarist/composer Dusan Bogdanovic in San Francisco and participated in masterclasses with Sharon Isbin, Manuel Barrueco, and Ana Vidovic. He currently teaches guitar at The Minnesota Valley Conservatory of Music in Burnsville ([mnvconservatory.com](http://mnvconservatory.com)) and at St. Joseph's School of Music ([stjoseph-schoolofmusic.net](http://stjoseph-schoolofmusic.net)) in St. Paul.

## Ian Hodges

Ian Hodges established himself as "Manitoba's Premiere Classical Guitarist" (*Winnipeg Free Press*) through his work as a soloist and with outstanding ensembles such as the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Musik Barock Ensemble, and the Brandon Chamber Players. The recording *Canciones*, a CD of Spanish music with soprano Charlene Pauls, has received airplay across North America. CBC Radio has featured this recording and many of Ian's live performances in national broadcasts. Having fulfilled the academic residency requirements last spring, Ian is now working from Winnipeg to complete the Doctor of Musical

## GUITARATHON PROGRAM

**Kristian Anderson plays Preambulo by Manuel M. Ponce and Aquarela do Brasil by Ary Barroso**

**Christopher Becknell plays "Blue Shift" by Ryan Smith and "Marley's Ghost" by Andrew York**

**Evan Everist plays "Jazz Sonata" (1993) by Dušan Bogdanovic (b. 1955)**

**Ian Hodges plays "Two Sketches for Guitar" by Glenn Buhr (b. 1954) and "Fantasie pour Guitare Seule," opus 40 (ca. 1830) by Fernando Sor (1778--1839)**

**Jeff Lambert plays "One More For Wallace Hartley" by David Crittenden**

**Wade Oden and Steve Newbrough will play Menuet from Le Tombeau de Couperin and Menuet Sur le Nom D'Haydn. Both pieces by Maurice Ravel, ranged by Wade Oden.**

**Joseph Spoelstra plays "Variations on a Theme by Scriabin" by Alexandre Tansman (1897--1986).**

**Anthony Titus plays La Catedral by Agustin Barrios Mangore (1885—1944)**

Arts in Guitar Performance at the University of Minnesota, where he studies with Jeffrey Van. He enjoyed working as a teaching assistant at the U of MN from 2006 to 2008, teaching guitar classes and private lessons under the guidance of Dr. James Flegel. Previous study led to a master's in Guitar Performance at Florida State University in 2003, where he studied with renowned pedagogue Bruce Holzman. Outstanding work in music research and performance at FSU led to initiation into Pi Kappa Lambda, a national honorary musical society. Additional training included extensive private study with Canadian

guitar virtuoso Norbert Kraft, a Bachelor of Music in Classical Guitar Performance from the University of Manitoba, and jazz studies at Humber College in Toronto, Ontario. Ian began his career as a jazz and commercial guitarist, and toured across Canada for many years with top professional groups. He performed with the University of Minnesota Jazz Combo during the 2007/08 season, and is currently active as session/studio player in Winnipeg. His musical versatility and interest in composition have led to opportunities to write musical scores for film and theatre, including three feature-length documentaries (including Peabody Award winner *Fat Chance*) and many shows for Prairie Theatre Exchange. A teacher for over 25 years, Ian has taught at the University of Minnesota, the Canadian Mennonite University, and the Preparatory Division of the School of Music (University of Manitoba). His students have won scholarships, medals, and trophies in local competitions and exams, and have been accepted at music schools across Canada and the US. Many have gone on to professional careers in music.



Classic Guitarathon *continued on p.4*

# Sundin Spotlight: Classical Guitarathon

Classical Guitarathon, *continued from p. 3*



## Jeff Lambert

Guitarist and composer Jeff Lambert has recently released his second solo classical guitar CD, *Sadko and the Ocean King*, which features David Crittenden's new work of the same title. Their collaboration on the piece began in 2006 when Jeff was awarded an Artist Initiative grant by the Minnesota State Arts Board for the commissioning and recording of a new piece. The CD also includes cornerstones of classical guitar repertoire by Ginastera and Britten, as well as a short piece for (gasp!) electric guitar that is representative of Jeff's roots as a musician. As a soloist, Jeff has captured top prizes in guitar competitions in Minneapolis and Chicago. But he is also noted for his prowess as an ensemble musician, having performed with members of the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and with the Minnesota Contemporary Ensemble. He has also been a member of the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet (MGQ) since 2001. Notable MGQ events include several commissions and premieres of new works, recitals and masterclasses around the US and concerto performances with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, and Austin Symphony. Radio appearances include WFMT Chicago (classical FM) and Minnesota Public Radio. The quartet's latest CD, *Dances of Spain and Argentina*, includes two of Jeff's original compositions. As a composer, Jeff's works are regularly performed by the MGQ. His music is published by Doberman-Yppan, and a full-length CD of his compositions is currently in production.

Jeff began his study of the classical guitar with Joseph Hagedorn at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. He continued his studies in Chicago with Denis Azabagic, and attended Northwestern University as a student of Anne Waller, earning Master of Music and Doctor of Music degrees. Visit: <[www.jeffguitar.com](http://www.jeffguitar.com)> and <[www.minneapolisguitarquartet.com](http://www.minneapolisguitarquartet.com)>.



## Wade Oden

Wade Oden has been an active performer, arranger, and composer for the last decade. He has directed the guitar ensemble, applied studio, and beginning guitar classes at Normandale Community College since 2002. He received his B.M. and M.M. in Guitar Performance from the University of Minnesota in 1999 and 2002, respectively, and is currently pursuing his doctoral degree in the same field. As part of his doctoral dissertation project, he is pioneering the use of extended techniques—namely, fretting with the left thumb and/or right hand index finger. He has recently performed and recorded with the Rose Ensemble and the Voce y Cuerdas duo. In September 2008, his performance with the Rose Ensemble at the Festival d'Île de France in Paris was recorded live for national rebroadcast on Radio France.



## Steven Newbrough

As an active soloist Steven Newbrough has performed across the country, on television, and on the radio. An eclectic musician, he has played the guitar in many venues and in vastly different styles. Some of these include playing the electric guitar with gospel choirs, playing abstract twentieth-century music with dancers,

and playing classical guitar on the concert stage as a soloist and as a member of varied chamber music groups. He enjoys collaborating with choreographers, and has worked with Brenda Daniels, Kristen O'Neal, and Shawn Bowman-Hicks. He received his Bachelor of Music from the North Carolina School of the Arts as a student of Joseph Pecoraro. During his time in North Carolina he performed widely, including in many recitals and recital tours such as the Illuminations Series in Manteo and the 2003 NCSA Flute Tour, and as a guest soloist with the Wake Forest University Choir. Since moving to Minnesota for further study, Steve has continued to perform regularly despite a busy academic schedule. At the University of Minnesota he has studied with Jeffrey Van and has held a graduate assistantship. Steve received his M.M. in Guitar Performance from the University of Minnesota. He will join the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet in the 2009–10 season.



## Joseph Spoelstra

Joseph Spoelstra holds a Master of Music from the University of Southern California and a Bachelor of Music from the University of Minnesota, where he was awarded the John Chatterton Scholarship. His primary teachers have been Jeffrey Van, William Kanengiser, and Brian Head. In addition, Spoelstra has had the opportunity to study in classes and privately with guitarists such as David Russell, Scott Tennant, Sharon Isbin, Dusan Bogdanovic, and Pepe Romero. As a performer, he has enjoyed accompanying singers and choirs, playing in guitar and non-guitar ensembles, and collaborating with choreographers, in addition to his solo recitals. While in Los Angeles, he had the opportunity to participate in a film project, give a premiere of a new work, *The Speaking Silence*, by composer Matthew Brown, and play in a live performance of Steve Reich's *Electric Counterpoint* for the composer on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. In addition to performing, Spoelstra taught at the South Pasadena Conservatory. After graduating from USC, he is happy to be teaching and performing in the Twin Cities once again. He currently teaches guitar at the International School of Minnesota and has a private studio.



## Anthony Titus

Anthony Titus earned his B.A. from North Carolina School of the Arts and his M.A. from San Diego State University, studying under members of the Los Romeros guitar quartet. Currently, Anthony has set his sights on completion of a D.M.A. in guitar with Jeffrey Van at the University of Minnesota. Among the recitals and concertos Anthony has performed throughout the U.S. and Europe, highlights include a performance for Miguel de la Madrid Huratado (former President of Mexico), and for Patricio Silva Echenique (Chilean Ambassador to the United States) and premiering the *Variations on a Theme by the Doors* by Hiram Titus for guitar and string quartet. Teaching distinctions include several student winners in both the Schubert Club and Thursday Musical competitions since 1988. Anthony has adapted a college guitar curriculum for the blind with M.T.A.T. (Multi-Tracking Audio Transcription), a procedure of his own design that translates musical notation. He is currently a full-time faculty member in music at Inver-Hills Community College, where he recently co-developed the curriculum for a new A.F.A. degree in Music Industry that will begin next fall.

## OpenStage

We hope you'll mark your calendars for the OpenStage End-of-the-Season party on Sunday, May 3, at 2 pm at the Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts. What makes it a party you ask? We're not sure, but send us your thoughts and ideas, and we'll make it a good time! As always, all styles are welcome (but all must be "unplugged" at BLCA). Players of all abilities are welcome and encouraged to participate. Listeners welcome too. For more information about OpenStage, email [editor@mnguitar.org](mailto:editor@mnguitar.org).

## Trivia Question

A reader asks: "During the concert by Paulo Bellinati and Monica Salmoso last year, at one point she encouraged the audience to sing along with her on the chorus of a song that didn't have words ("la la las"). Does anyone remember what this song was? I don't think it was listed in the program, it may have been an encore, but it was familiar." Anyone remember the song and know the name? Send your reply to [editor@mnguitar.org](mailto:editor@mnguitar.org) and win a free piece of sheet music from our "Music XChange" table at next September's concert!

## GFA Bound?

Going to the GFA Convention in June in Ithaca, NY? Want to save some money? Consider sharing a ride! If you live in the MN/Wis area and are interested contact Steve Ulliman at 715-748-2457 or [<kabuslu@tds.net>](mailto:kabuslu@tds.net).

## Music Xchange

In the lobby at Sundin Hall concerts, we have a table of donated new and gently used sheet music and books. All proceeds benefit the Society. Be sure to check out the selection. And before you come to the next concert, look at your bookshelves. Consider donating to the Xchange. Doesn't that still-new copy of the Bach Lute Suites deserve a home with someone willing to work on them? How about that arrangement of Pachelbel's Canon in D for guitar and harmonica?

## Support Our Friends

See the display ads on pages 10 and 11, and the classifieds on pages 11 and 12. Please support our advertisers and friends, and thank them for helping the MGS! We also appreciate the support of music stores and schools throughout the metro area who help distribute our newsletter. Wherever you see copies available, please take a minute and thank the people in charge.

## The Southern Theater and FUEGO Flamenco present "Flamenco, Heart and Soul"

FUEGO Flamenco director and accomplished choreographer/dancer Colette Illarde brings to the stage an alluring program blending traditional and contemporary flamenco. With guest artists from Spain and New Mexico alongside local luminaries, "Flamenco, Heart and Soul" features dramatic movement, percussive precision, and passionate live music. Performing with her company, noted for its exciting sound and outstanding choreography, Illarde debuts FUEGO Flamenco at the Southern. "Flamenco, Heart and Soul" showcases new choreography by Illarde, traditional flamenco standards, and Illarde's encore performance of *Volar*, commissioned from Manuel Reyes especially for her McKnight Fellowship Solo spotlight. The program is a cathartic exploration that guides the audience toward the mystical experience called *duende*, or connection to the spirit. *Duende* is the goal of every flamenco event, and it is flamenco's heart and soul.

Performance times: Thurs–Sun, May 7–10. Thurs. at 7:30 pm, Fri. & Sat. at 8 pm, Sun. at 7 pm. Saturday May 9: Post-show Fiesta with live music, dance lessons with the artists, Spanish tapas, and beverages. Tickets for the fiesta: \$10 with concert ticket, \$11 at the door. Tickets for the concert: \$22. Southern Theater box office: 1420 Washington Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN 55454. Phone is 612-340-1725.

FUEGO Flamenco's goal is to make flamenco accessible and genuine to the community. In traditional Spanish style, there will be a *juerga* (flamenco hootenanny) after the concert on May 9. Join the company for an up-close and personal experience: ask questions, clap and sing along, enjoy wine and Spanish tapas, and take a mini dance class. Meet the artists and other *aficionados* (flamenco fans) and become part of the spirit.

## Summertime—Time to Go to Camp!

Want to get out of town and go to grown-up camp? Here are a couple of non-classical options we've heard about...

- **Midwest Banjo Camp** offers highly specialized classes in bluegrass and old-time banjo taught by masters in the field, featuring hands-on classes, demonstrations and two faculty concerts, and still leaves lots of time for jamming with fellow banjo enthusiasts. This year, more classes than ever before will be offered for old-time fingerstyle banjo (with plans to offer banjo set up); classes in old-time guitar, bluegrass guitar, and bass; the opportunity to jam with camp faculty and in your own groups; and for the first time, a full fiddle program.

The Midwest Banjo Camp will be held June 5-7, 2009 at Olivet College, Olivet, Michigan (about 30 miles southwest of Lansing). Registration opens 11 am on Friday. Camp ends 3:30 pm on Sunday. Pre-Camp Program, June 4, is available for those students who wish to jump start their weekend of banjo immersion. For info, email: [<info@midwestbanjocamp.com>](mailto:info@midwestbanjocamp.com), or visit their web site: [<www.midwestbanjocamp.com>](http://www.midwestbanjocamp.com).

- **Peach Bottom Farm Music Camp** is a rare opportunity to experience Appalachian music and heritage while receiving intensive and fun-filled music instruction by a staff of local, national and world-renowned professional instructors. Bring your favorite stringed instrument, (we're not just for fiddle), and/or dancing shoes. All ages and levels of motivated strings players welcome. You'll have ample opportunity to interact with outstanding teaching staff, while immersed in the heart of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains. Instruction includes theory, technique, improvisation, note reading, good practice habits, improving tone and intonation, and new repertoire. This year the camp runs from June 15th through the 19th.

Styles taught may include Appalachian, bluegrass, Canadian, classical, contest-style, Irish, old-timey, Scottish, Swedish and swing. This year's schedule includes:

- five hours instruction per day
- a Ceilidh/Barn Party/ bar-b-que
- a concert by instructors
- an evening(s) at local "Crooked Road" destination
- JAMS and other "surprises."

Three healthy meals, snacks and drinks are included each day. Accommodations include; reserved off-site R.V. camping, shared vacation rentals, local hotel, bed and breakfast's or local host families, depending on your needs and/or budget. For info, email: [<peachbottomfarm@yahoo.com>](mailto:peachbottomfarm@yahoo.com), or visit their web site: [<peachbottomfarm.com>](http://peachbottomfarm.com).

# Three Steps to a Great Right-Hand Workout for Pick-Style Players

by Mike Cramer

For the pick style player, developing an accurate and proficient right hand is very important. To improve the right hand you can always practice exercises found in any of the many technique books available. But wouldn't it be great to have right-hand exercises that applied directly to the music you want to play? Before you run out and purchase another technique book, let's create challenging, relevant exercises from the repertoire you currently play. When playing the following examples, observe strict alternating of the right hand: down strokes occur on the beat and up strokes occur on the "and" of the beat.

## Example 1

Let's get started. **Step 1:** Select a piece. I've chosen the A section of the traditional fiddle tune "Soldier's Joy" for our discussion. It's a fun tune full of opportunities to challenge your pick accuracy.

## Soldier's Joy

Capo 2  
(Key of D)

Traditional  
Arr. Mike Cramer

**Step 2:** We're going to dissect the song measure by measure, creating unique right hand exercises. Starting with the first full measure, convert the measure to an open string exercise by removing the left hand from the picture. It's easy to make this conversion; look at the TAB and make every fret number a 0, while keeping the string assignment the same. Example 2b is the result of the conversion of measure 1 (Ex. 2a). Now we have an exercise that focuses on the right hand only.

Masterclass *continued on p. 7*

# Masterclass

Example 2a

Musical notation for Example 2a, showing a treble clef staff with a melody and a guitar tablature staff below it. The melody consists of eighth notes with accents and slurs. The tablature shows fingerings: 0, 2, 3, 2, 0, 2, 3, 2.

Example 2b

Musical notation for Example 2b, showing a treble clef staff with a melody and a guitar tablature staff below it. The melody consists of eighth notes with accents and slurs. The tablature shows fingerings: 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0.

**Step 3:** Loop the new exercise; focus on pick accuracy and keeping the right hand relaxed. Use the metronome when playing the exercise; slow the tempo if you notice any tension in the hand. Then, transfer the exercise to as many string groupings as possible, Examples 2c-d.

Example 2c

Musical notation for Example 2c, showing a treble clef staff with a melody and a guitar tablature staff below it. The melody consists of eighth notes with accents and slurs. The tablature shows fingerings: 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0.

Example 2d

Musical notation for Example 2d, showing a treble clef staff with a melody and a guitar tablature staff below it. The melody consists of eighth notes with accents and slurs. The tablature shows fingerings: 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0.

Here are the remaining unique picking exercises we can pull from “Soldier’s Joy.” Transfer each measure to as many string groups as possible and you’ve got plenty of material to help sharpen the right hand.

Example 3a-g

Measure 2      Measure 3      Measure 4      Measure 6

Measure 7      Measure 8      Measure 9

Musical notation for Example 3a-g, showing seven individual measures of music. Each measure includes a treble clef staff with a melody and a guitar tablature staff below it. The measures are labeled Measure 2, Measure 3, Measure 4, Measure 6, Measure 7, Measure 8, and Measure 9.

In just a few simple steps we’ve created new material to challenge our right hand. By stripping away the left hand we don’t have to concern ourselves with fingering problems, and can focus on gaining security in the right hand. Mine the music you’re already playing for a great workout; you’ll improve your right hand and gain more confidence in the piece itself. Enjoy and have a great workout!

*This article is copyright 2009 by Mike Cramer, an instructor and performer in the Twin Cities. He is co-owner of All 12 Notes, LLC, a music instruction studio located in St. Paul. Please visit [www.all12notes.com](http://www.all12notes.com) for information on lessons and workshops. He would love feedback on the article and can be reached at [mike@all12notes.com](mailto:mike@all12notes.com).*

## Performance Anxiety

by Daniel Sturm

The good news about the subject of performance anxiety is that each of us suffers from this malady in one form or another.

What adds fuel to the fire though is that there are many reasons for becoming anxious before or during a musical performance. Yet, no matter the reason, the symptoms are always the same: a sensation of fear comes to us that ranges from mild fear to grave fear, and some performance disaster occurs.

I am not a physician or psychologist, yet I am able to offer many years of performance, teaching, and observational experience regarding performance anxiety. I want to stress that a two-page article is not going to be the cure-all for this most unwelcome affair, but it can serve as a stepping-stone to a more relaxed performance situation.

Let's begin in the thick of the matter where a guitarist experiences the worst: Everything is wrong. Nothing or very little can be remembered. The performance nose-dives to a fiery crash, or the piece is played from beginning to end with little resemblance to what the composer wrote. This is a horrible point of arrival for someone who has worked so hard on mastering a piece of music. However, it can be a good point of arrival when the performance occurs under a different guise. I'll return to that "good point of arrival" soon, but before I do let's look at fear.

Performance fear is an overwhelming experience because, more often than not, we are rendered unable to predict any part of the near future, be that future a few seconds ahead in time or several minutes ahead in time. Nothing seems to make the situation better because we have absolutely no idea of what is going on. The best remedy then would be to not get in this particular situation.

### Become used to the habit of playing your pieces before an audience.

What if we turn the tables on fate and have our performance anxiety occur in a controlled situation, such as at an MGS OpenStage event, playing for a few trusted friends, or simply videotaping ourselves performing pieces that make us anxious? Odd as it sounds, it would be a wonderful learning experience to crash a musical performance in front of trusted friends and colleagues. One could immediately record what went wrong or one could receive guidance from other players. Then the piece could be performed once again, and again so that the guitarist can begin to feel "I have been here before. I crash-landed a piece of music, yet no one hates me, and no one died. In the future, if this happens again, I will have been there before, and just maybe this knowledge will permit me to land the piece safely."

### Learn to listen and begin to stop the *fear* thoughts.

While we spend countless hours perfecting a piece of music by practicing the most difficult parts, very often we forget the importance of rehearsing the opening notes of a work. What goes on in your mind the instant before you begin to play a public performance?

Take a piece of music you have been working on, sit and tune, get in a ready position by checking both the right and the left hand, then stop, and with either eyes open or closed "hear" the very first sound that will soon occur. Now breathe in, then as you exhale play that sound, whether it be just a note, a chord, or a few notes—

nothing more than that, then stop. Wait. Stand up, walk slowly around the chair, sit, and repeat the above ten times.

Are you able to consistently produce a very beautiful opening and are you consistent, each time, in sound, tone, and musicality, ten times out of ten times? If you can't then your new bit of homework is to work toward ten out of ten times, in the practice room, each time producing a beautiful sound, tone, and achieving a musically consistent phrasing, and the ability to maintain tempo. Later, up the ante to fifteen out of fifteen times.

When you have found success there move on to the next small bit of music and apply the ten out of ten rule. (Standing and walking around your playing chair is only needed for the very opening bit of the piece.) Ultimately you will have a patchwork quilt, so to speak, and in time you will most likely be able to perform any selected measure of the work quite well. The next task would be to play the piece through, yet play as though you were walking through a museum and enjoying separate lovely works of art. You will quickly begin to stop thinking about the audience, stop thinking "terrible" thoughts, and you'll find yourself mostly thinking of nothing at all yet feeling very lucky to be only the person in the room that gets to hold such a lovely wooden box that is producing such enchanting vibrations, timbres, and tones.

### Fear breeds very strange thoughts.

Often fear goads us into thinking such things as, "They think I am a terrible guitarist..." or, "Why did I ever program this piece..." or worse yet, "Who am I kidding?" The worst part of this situation is that the performer has made themselves the single most important person in the room by their own choosing, and this is not a good ego dynamic to be a part of. It is a selfish choice we have all, at some performance time, decided to make.

Take a mundane situation: Have you ever felt nervous or anxious purchasing a jug of milk at the grocery store? Most likely you have not—because you weren't in competition with anyone. You didn't make yourself to be the most important person in the store.

I mentioned feeling "very lucky to be only the person in the room that gets to hold such a lovely wooden box..." At a performance everyone in the room is there to share in their own particular way. Some are there to listen to what will be a very enjoyable performance, some are there to learn and enjoy, all are there sharing a common sense of community, and one is there to hold the guitar for everyone. The next time you go on stage think of the experience as being around a cozy campfire that belongs to everyone.

### What have we come to know about a piece of music?

Motor memory allows us, at any given moment, to slam out a chord, some notes, or a splendid little riff. It's good to have this ability, but in fear-based mode even the simplest of musical passages can be forgotten.

Visual motor memory is nearly the same as the above, except here our eyes also help us, yet failure may also occur here in a fear-based mode.

A consistent right- and left-hand fingering, developed in the practice room, aided by motor memory, is a most welcome backup

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Performance Anxiety, *continued from p. 8*

when we get nervous. In fact, when a passage is flubbed in live performance, nine times out of ten it is because we have never learned one and only one fingering for that passage. In the case of the right hand, we most likely have unknowingly learned at least two different fingerings for any given passage, or worse yet we may have, again unknowingly, learned to repeat a finger where finger alternation would be the common sense rule. In the case of the left hand, we may have been so busy watching the right hand that we are not even aware of left hand fingering consistency.

### **Always knowing where you are on the fret board.**

Take the first octave of, say, Segovia's fingering for the C Major scale. Sit and tune, get in a ready position by checking both the right and the left hand, then stop, and while looking up to the ceiling "hear" and "see" that very first octave being played by you. Wait. Relax. Breathe in, then, as you exhale, play, in a slow tempo, that first octave while looking up to the ceiling. Repeat this exercise, but now look to the wall on your left, and another time while looking at the wall to your right, or another time looking straight ahead of you. Can you now do the same with the complete two-octave scale, up and back down?

Eventually you will want to do this with fragments of the pieces you already know and the ones you are learning. The point is not to do this in performance, for now it is a feat to be accomplished only in the practice room, so that one day during a live performance your eyes can dreamily watch the fingers of the one "very lucky to be only the person in the room that gets to hold such a lovely wooden box..." Relax. In your study you have properly learned the correct right hand and left hand fingerings and you have taught yourself to navigate the fret board with a "third eye," your mind.

### **Using a safety net by flagging certain measures.**

Go through a piece that you are currently learning or one you intend to play in public in the future (far enough ahead in the future for this project to be learned). Using Post-It Notes, Post-It flags, or whatever, place a "flag" about every 15 to 20 measures. If the piece is complex and in running-sixteenth notes, you may want to "flag" by smaller sections, say, every 5 to 10 measures.

Now memorize these "flagged" areas. Your goal, over the period of one week, will be to be able to "begin" the piece from any of these "flag" points. You could number or name these "flagged" areas, write those names/numbers on small pieces of paper, toss them into a bag, chose one, then begin playing the piece from that "flag" point to the end. Learn the piece this way now, rather than learning this memory device on stage in real time.

A common mistake some performers make is that of repeating and replaying a "botched" measure, or section, several times during a live performance. Repeating the "botched" figure seems to make sense to us, on stage, because we possibly have not dealt with this issue while in the practice room.

Now that we are safe in our own personal practice area and we have no fear, let us look at the issue of mishandled passages during a future live performance. First, let's change our attitude, opinion, and belief about "wrong notes." Let's rename those spots something less venomous, such as, mishandled passages or mismanaged passages. You don't have to tell a soul about this if you feel you are being prudishly politically correct, yet I don't feel it that way at all.

The American guitar virtuoso Benjamin Verdery, at the 2008 Suzuki National Conference, gave a one-hour talk on, "I played a wrong note—now everyone hates me." He opened the talk by asking, "What's the problem with wrong notes? I think we're being too hard on them." He made a very strong case and well demonstrated the negativity we put upon ourselves when we say, "I completely blew that passage."

Sure, everyone desires to play a flawless performance; however, most likely, it won't happen now. But, to get to the point of playing extremely well in public, do not negatively judge the "wrong" notes you play. Make note of them and work on them as soon as possible. Feel good about what you played well.

Today learn to let "wrong notes" go by when test-running a piece of music. Immediately withdraw any negative thoughts you may have when "wrong notes" occur. Fix those notes during the proper practicing moment, and know that no one is going to die because of the way you play. Learn to know exactly how you play "at this moment in time" and walk out on stage with that knowledge. If you can do this, then one day you will find yourself in a live performance thinking only about "how fun it is to play this piece" and I am "very lucky to be only the person in the room that gets to hold such a lovely wooden box..." Relax.

Choose a program of pieces you play well in public and perform it at OpenStage, in church, at your community center, or for relatives, and play that program often.

### **Thoroughly knowing a piece of music.**

Put your guitar in its case, set all your sheet music aside, take out a blank sheet of staff paper and get a pencil. Take, for example, one of your old warhorse pieces, one you can always play, and see how much of it you can write out from memory. Include right and left hand fingerings—even include string and position numbers. If you can do that move up the scale of difficulty until you can accurately write out fragments, especially problem areas, of pieces you are working on.

No one has the time for writing out every note, fingering, string number, etc., for every piece they know or are working on, and that is not the point. The point is to be able to write out any given measure of a piece you play or are learning.

### **Be there yourself.**

Unless a physician has recommended that you need medication for your nerves never take anything, such as beta blockers or similar medications that slow pulse, blood pressure, or heartbeat. While it may seem logical to take such medication, one risks the problem of "becoming the most important one in the room," and that means risking a loss of the calm we have been so patiently training ourselves to achieve.

Come to view live musical performance as a true gift, for indeed a true gift it is. Think of all the people you personally know and how many of them cannot or do not play a musical instrument. Consider yourself honored to be the one "very lucky to be only the person in the room that gets to hold such a lovely wooden box that is producing such enchanting vibrations, timbres, and tones."

**EXTRA:** Do a Goggle search for "music performance anxiety" and "free online music paper."

*Daniel Sturm is a guitarist, composer, and Suzuki Guitar instructor, with an MFA in Classical Guitar Performance from the U of M, Minneapolis, under Jeffrey Van.*

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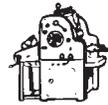
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