

Guitarist

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VOL. 8 NO. 2



THE
MINNESOTA GUITAR SOCIETY
PRESENTS

ROBERTO AUSSEL

IN CONCERT
AT
THE LANDMARK

+

IN MASTER CLASS
AT
THE MacPHAIL SCHOOL

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STEVE MARSH, Classical Guitar

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The New York Times

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JEFFREY VAN

MINNESOTA'S
GUITAR GURU



INSIDE: Is my nervousness on stage a result of reality or fantasy? See **Upcoming Forums** article on page 2. Getting those strings attached at the **Red Wing Technical College Training Program's** guitar and violin making classes—see page 4. Plus lots more.

SEE PAGE TWO

Roberto Aussel:

The Minnesota Guitar Society concludes its 1991-92 concerts at the Landmark with two spring recitals. **Roberto Aussel** will perform on Sunday, March 22, 8 p.m., Weyerhaeuser Auditorium in St. Paul's Landmark Center, 75 W. 5th St.

Mr. Aussel, born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, has won several international guitar competitions, including the prestigious Radio France Competition. Several composers have dedicated works to him, including Francis Kleynjans, Astor Piazzola, Francis Schwartz, and Jose Luis Campana. He also performs in Pierre Boulez' Ensemble Intercontemporain.

Along with Alberto Ponce, Narciso Yepes, and Alexandre Lagoya, Aussel was invited to play at the Albi Festival's Summer Music Academy of France, where he was also asked to create a yearly guitar class. He was one of the three guitarists chosen by the French government to play at Andre Segovia's 90th birthday celebration.

Don't miss this concert! By all accounts, he is truly an outstanding musician and performer.

Aussel Master Class The MGS and the MacPhail Center for the Arts are pleased to sponsor a Master Class given by Mr. Aussel at MacPhail on March 23 at 7:00 p.m. Auditor admission prices are \$8 for MGS members and \$10 for non-members. Guitarists interested in performing in the class should contact Alan Johnston at 627-4020.

Jeffrey Van:

Jeffrey Van, Minnesota's guitar guru, will present an evening of exceptional guitar music on April 24.

Since his first recitals, Mr. Van's performing career has encompassed the full spectrum of concert activity: solo recitals, concertos with orchestras, chamber music (including repertoire for guitar with lute, string quartet, and choir) voice and guitar and duo guitar concerts.

Mr. Van began classical guitar study at the age of nine with Albert Bellson, later attending master classes of Andres Segovia, and studying with Julian Bream. He received the first Master of Fine Arts degree in guitar from the University of Minnesota, where he is currently lecturer.

Although tight-lipped about exactly what will be on the program, Mr. Van has informed us that half of the concert will be music for solo guitar and the other half for flute and guitar. Flutist Susan Morris Hedling will be Jeffrey Van's partner. Ms. Hedling has been principal flute with the New Orleans Philharmonic, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the American Ballet Theater. A freelance teacher and a frequent recitalist, she has been a frequent performer with the Minnesota Orchestra. During the 1989-90 school year, she was visiting assistant professor of flute at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Mr. Van has assured us that they will be playing "Canyon Echoes: An Apache Folktale" by Katherine Hoover, a work the Van-Hedling duo premiered this fall at the Walker.

Upcoming Forums ...



MARCH Is my nervousness on stage a result of reality or fantasy?

In the next forum, sponsored by the MGS on Sunday, March 15, 2:00 p.m., MacPhail Center Auditorium; I'd (Anthony Titus) like to shed some light on my findings of how to deal with and conquer many of the anxieties of performing. How do I keep my mind from racing? Why do my hands shake? Why is it I only forget my notes when I'm on stage?

If you want to have these questions answered or if you want to be armed with knowledge that will ensure your top performance, come to this forum! We will be listening to, as well as talking with, students who have overcome these problems by the use of visualization and self-hypnosis techniques.

We'll see you there!—**Anthony Titus**

APRIL ON Sunday, April 26 forum host Tim Sparks will take us on a musical tour of the Mediterranean. Tim will perform on both guitar and oud, and his guest, Yannis Asemakes, will play bouzouki. Tim is well known to Twin Cities music lovers as a jazz guitarist in the popular group Rio Nido. He has been playing oud and concentrating on the music of the Mediterranean for the last two years or so, and this will be a great opportunity to hear him perform on a new instrument and in a new genre. The forum begins at 3:00p.m. in the jazz room at O'Gara's and, as always, it's absolutely free. ■

Letter from the MGS president

Classical Guitarathon III I'm happy to report Classical Guitarathon III was a success despite the fact that the St. Paul Winter Carnival caused the Weyerhaeuser Auditorium to be almost inaccessible by car. More than 150 guitar enthusiasts braved the carnival gauntlet and attended a performance that demonstrated the depth and breadth of "classical guitar."

A high point for many were Scott Davies and his son, Mikhail, as they brought the first half of the performance to a rousing finish with an original variation on the traditional Flamenco form: Bulerius. For me, other favorites were: Joe Hagedorn's performance of Rodrigo's "Three Spanish Pieces," Gene Swanson's demonstration of voice and guitar and an impeccable Bach Allegro performed by Tony Titus. Each performer did a great job, and the evening left us all looking forward to Classical Guitarathon IV.

MGS still in the red ... I overcame the fear of public speaking at the Guitarathon to ask for two things: money (of course) and help. Despite the success of the Guitarathon we are still a bit in the red and have been for over two years. Remember, because the Minnesota Guitar Society is a non-profit organization, your donations are tax-deductible. Send your donations to: MGS, PO Box 14986, Minneapolis, MN 55414. **Board Member Tank running on empty ... Volunteer hundredweight at record-setting zero ...** A non-profit organization also depends on the volunteer help of its members and supporters. You can help in a variety of ways from the lowly task of putting together a mailing to the more lofty project of grant proposal writing. We are now operating with only 4 or 5 board members and no volunteer help at all. We need new board members to help with the newsletter, to help put on events and to contribute new ideas to shape our future. To get involved, please call 333-0169.—**SH**

Brazilian guitar—more than Bossa

By Karen R. Nelson

In the movie *Black Orpheus*, a Brazilian re-telling of the legend of Orpheus and Eurydici set during carnival in Rio de Janeiro, the hero Orpheo makes the sun rise by playing his guitar (or so think two young boys he has befriended). After Orpheo falls to his death, the boys take up his cherished instrument to play the halting, melancholy chords to welcome again a new morning and take comfort in the sun's continuity.

While Brazilian music and culture is something better experienced than explained, this image helps convey the power, spirit, and hope that music lends to the culture and often difficult life of Brazil. Because of this, understanding Brazilian guitar is more than learning a style or technique. It's the complex intangibles of the country that are absorbed by its music and musicians. In this context, the guitar has become an essential element in Brazil's musical tapestry.

The guitar first arrived in Brazil as the *viola*, a stringed Portuguese folk instrument, brought by the sailors and adventurers who colonized the country in the 1500s. Originally, it was used by the Jesuit missionary orchestras during religious festivals. Later the standard six string guitar, called the *violao*, became popular in all parts of the country, especially in the music of the poor. As such it was scorned by the rich, and at one time even outlawed in Rio de Janeiro. The guitar began to gain respectability in the 1800s as the principal instrument for serenades and for Brazil's first popular music, the *modinha*, and other dance styles. The *cavaquinho*, a small ukelele-like instrument also imported from Portugal, was adopted too and is now often played in southeast Brazil.

In the next century, guitarists played an essential part in developing the enduring *choro*, which means weeping or crying in Portuguese. As guitarist Tony Hauser, an experienced member of a growing Twin Cities set of Brazilian music fans, describes it, "Choro is like a guy walking up to you on the street and saying, 'I just broke up with my wife' and blubbering on your shoulder. Musically, it's like that."

According to Brian Hodel in his article "The Brazilian Guitar" (*Guitar Review*, Winter 1991), "The choro was the ideal medium for the development of a com-

plex and technically demanding native guitar style ... The style was ornate and 'notey' and the harmonies often devilish." The choro, he continues, is purely instrumental, with an active improvised bass part and, depending on the ensemble, opportunities to improvise melodically. Hector Villa-Lobos himself began as a choro guitarist. Despite its popularity, however, the choro in 1917 began to be eclipsed by the samba and later by the Bossa Nova as Brazil's music of choice.

Bossa Nova led the first big sweep of Brazilian musical popularity in the United States. The wave hit in the early to mid '60s, right before the British invasion. This new beat was an airier offshoot of samba dance and rhythms with melancholy lyrics filled with what in Portuguese is called *saudade*—longing, ardent desire, or homesickness. Bossa Nova, in many ways, is the child of American cool or West Coast jazz and samba. Composer Antonio Carlos Jobim, who, with his songwriting partner, Vinicius de Moraes, wrote what became Bossa classics (including "Girl from Ipanema" and "Corcovado"), was influential in importing the sound. He collaborated often with saxophonist Stan Getz and guitarist Joao Gilberto. Gilberto used the cool stylings of American vocalist and trumpeter Chet Baker to create a sophisticated swing vocal style. Jobim, like Miles Davis and Gil Evans, was also influenced by Debussy, Stravinsky and Bartok.

Other guitarists and musicians were especially influential in this transitional period. Among the leaders were singer, songwriter, and guitarist Laurindo Almeida, a veteran of Stan Kenton's orchestra; renowned Brazilian guitarist (and father of choro) Pixinguinho; and Garoto (A.A. Sardinha), who also did arrangements (*Tico Tico*) for Carmen Miranda. Almeida helped sow the seeds of Brazilian-jazz fusion as far back as the late 1940s. Guitarist Charlie Byrd, who hung out in Brazil on State Department tours, also helped the movement along by introducing new Brazilian music to his connections in the recording industry. Kenny Burrell's name fits here, too.

Brazil's musical movement was extremely dampened after the military coup in 1964. Music and lyrics were strictly censored and singers/songwriters/guitarists risked their lives to perform music with even

subtle hints of political criticism. Two of Brazil's best-known musicians, Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, were first thrown in jail and later sent into exile. The *Tropicalismo* movement, which developed around these two artists, was marked by diverse European, African, folk and Native American influences. It drew on the rhythms of Bahia and focused on the clash between rural and urban Brazilian culture. Other key names include Milton Nascimento, Jorge Ben, and Chico Buarque de Holanda.

While this nutshell of Brazil's "guitar-related history" may pique your interest, you can't talk about Brazilian guitar without asking how Brazilians play. What makes the sound distinctive? Nilton Machado, an excellent Brazilian guitarist and teacher from the northeastern city of Recife (Ha-see-fay) who once lived in Minneapolis, offered some insights. Machado, according to Minneapolis' Mary Anne O'Dougherty, said the key to understanding the Brazilian style of guitar playing is the right hand. "It's very different because it imitates the drum—the beat of the tambourine when fingers pluck the strings all together. The thumb on the right hand imitates the *surdo* (bass drum) beat. This is where Brazilian inspiration comes from. It is very distinctive from other guitarists. It's percussion-based. Once you figure that out, it's easy to understand."

Tony Hauser adds to this explanation, "There are three elements that make Brazilian music really hip. First, the music has really nice melodies—sensuous and simple. Second, it has seductive rhythms. In early choros there is almost a pianistic effect. Later, in Bossa Nova and samba, the music took on a much more percussive influence. Third, there are many high numbered harmonic chords—dominant majors and minors, and flat 5ths borrowed from Stravinsky, Debussy, and Bartok."

Guitarists who really want to delve into *musica brasileira* shouldn't stop at this article. Music is meant to be listened to. There is a rich collection of guitarists whose talents may exceed their frame, but whose recordings are becoming more and more available with the advent of the global community. Worth checking out

Strings attached at Red Wing Tech College training program

By Joanne Backer

When most people think of Red Wing, Minnesota, images of a pleasant river town amidst the majestic bluffs of the Mississippi come to mind. Or perhaps industries such as Red Wing Pottery or Red Wing Shoes come to mind. For the musical ethnologist, there is the Goodhue County Museum, containing materials collected by and concerning Frances Densmore, who studied Native American music. But for the guitarist, Red Wing is becoming known for a unique program offered at the main campus of the Red Wing Technical College (RWTC): the Musical String Instrument Repair Course.

Sixteen years ago, the Musical String Instrument Repair course began offering both guitar and violin repair specialties. This course is unique in that it provides formal training for repair of both acoustic and electric guitars, as well as violin repair, which traditionally was taught as part of a four-year violin-making course such as those at schools in Salt Lake City and Europe.

Until 1990, these specialties were taught at RWTC by one instructor working with a ten-member advisory committee of luthiers in the area, five violin-makers and five guitar-makers. The present department head, David Vincent, joined the staff at Red Wing in 1984, becoming the third instructor to lead the program. Two years ago, as a result of increasing demand, he hired Lisbeth Nelson-Butler to head the violin section.

Both instructors are highly qualified and experienced. Vincent studied at the Roberto Venn School in Phoenix and then trained with Mark Moreland and Steve Triplett. He also worked in Wichita, Kansas for six years as a repairman. He has built at least twenty guitars. Nelson-Butler has a B.A. in music and graduated from the Violin Making School of America before working in Salt Lake City and New York. She also ran a shop in Des Moines, Iowa.

Each course is four quarters long. Since woodworking skills are not a prerequisite, the first quarter is devoted to basic training in the safe use of tools, woodworking, and simple guitar and violin repairs. Students learn about different woods and to read blueprints. Each student is assigned his/her own work bench and starts to



build a collection of basic tools. When complete, this collection will cost the student approximately \$500, since they are encouraged to buy the best tools available. They are also taught the basics of violin and guitar playing in order to test the instruments before and after repair. Most of the guitar repair students already play guitar, and their Tuesday noontime jam sessions draw students and staff members from other specialties. As a result, many students play guitar together outside of school.

In the second quarter, students study their specialty. The guitar repair students learn more advanced repair techniques and more about the woods they will deal with. They start planning the guitars they will build during the next months. Many will gain more experience in working with tools by constructing a work bench and producing some of the jigs and molds needed to build their guitars. Some opt to make (and learn to play) a mandolin, either as their main instrument-building project or for extra credit.

The excitement builds in March and April as the students finish constructing their guitars. They are free to choose acoustic or electric. In addition, there are more advanced repair courses, such as refretting and fixing and plugging holes. There is a whole course devoted to the guitar neck and one to guitar electronics. There is also a required course on refinishing and guitar finishes. Further, students take

several courses in small business management. In all, the student must complete 64 credits to receive a diploma.

The string department is spacious, consisting of a lecture area and a large workroom for each specialty, in which each student has a personal bench area. Behind the workrooms is a glass-enclosed tool room for the various power tools. Upstairs are storerooms, enclosed spraying booths and drying rooms used for guitar finishing. Safety procedures are strictly enforced.

After finishing the specialty, approximately one-third of the graduates opt for staying a second year to complete the violin repair program (and vice-versa). They do this because it enhances their employability, whether in their own or someone else's shop.

As students, they become student members of the Guild of American Luthiers and the Association of String Instrument Artisans. (Violin students also become members of the Violin Society of America.) They attend all the conferences and conventions they can.

The job prospects for the graduating students are good. Job offers come from shops all over the country, giving the graduate a great variety of prospects to suit their needs and personalities. The graduates do NOT go into factories. There are roughly three job offers per student. Starting wages are approximately \$7 to \$8 an hour, with pay increases averaging \$1 to \$2 per hour after one year. Many can negotiate working on a commission basis, getting a fifty-fifty split agreement with a shop. Ten to fifteen percent of all graduates are women and, according to David Vincent, there is little if any resistance to them in the field.

The student body is small and diverse. Currently, there are sixteen guitar repair students and thirteen violin repair students. They are a very congenial group despite the wide age range (18-46 years, average age 29) and breadth of life experience. Some come to the program right out of high school. Many have had some college, some have earned a degree. Some come to the program for a career change. They come from all over the United States and from other countries. One, from

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BRAZILIAN GUITAR, from page 3

are such Brazilian musicians/composers as Egberto Gismonte, Radames Gnattali, Hermeto Pasqual, Wagner Tiso, Sergio Assad, Luiz Bonfá, Luiz Henrique, and Baden Powell in addition to the other names mentioned earlier. This is by no means a comprehensive list—exploration is definitely encouraged.

There are also a number of Brazilian musicians and Americans who play Brazilian music to be found at various Twin Cities venues. String players worth watching for include cavaquinho player Juninho (Flavio) Ferreira, guitarists Helvecio (whose last name I never did learn), Tim Sparks, Tony Hauser, Joan Griffith, and Steve Haskin. Other artists who appear in various groups include percussionists Anibal Roche Ferreira, Joao Moreira, Alphonso dos Santos, Tim Sparks, and vocalist Mary Anne O'Dougherty. Orquesta Sabrosón even does a few hot samba numbers with Michelle Moline belting out Portuguese lyrics almost like a native.

Brazilians know something that Americans should learn. Music is a vital entity that can be an inseparable part of life's daily tickings. Just bring your guitar to the next social gathering, give everyone a shaker, strike a few rhythmic chords and see what happens. Maybe you and your guitar can even make the sun rise one more day. ■

RWTC, from page 4

Germany, studied at Red Wing because Germany has no qualified electric guitar technicians.

Many students see this work as a way to help support themselves while establishing themselves as musicians, doing their gigs at night, while others see service as a repair technician as their main goal. Some hope to settle in metropolitan areas, others in less populated places. But whatever their goals, their prospects are bright. ■



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Eduardo Fernandez: Part iii

Editor's note: This is the 3rd and final portion of an interview with renowned classical guitarist Eduardo Fernandez, conducted by Maria Olaya and Alan Johnston.

By Maria Olaya

ALAN JOHNSTON: What does your recording label have to do with the decision on what you record?

EDUARDO FERNANDEZ: I have a lot of freedom. The contract says that there must be an agreement before choosing the repertoire. Generally what we do is define general aspects ... whether it is going to be a recording of classical, romantic, Baroque or contemporary music. Then we begin to propose things back and forth, and generally we get to an agreement.

AJ: Do you find conflicts between the commercial aspect and the programmatic quality of the recordings?

EF: There must be a balance between both things. Obviously, I'm interested in my recordings being sold.

AJ: Then, with what criteria do you make your recordings?

EF: There is no reason to create a false opposition between recordings that sell, and "good recordings." When a recording that sells comes out, that doesn't mean that the recording is "bad" ... and I think that one has to balance and reach as many people as possible with good music. I did two recordings of Segovia-like repertoire, Spanish Romanticism, and I tried to organize them in such a way that the message would change: one recording consists of pieces written by guitarists Tarrega, Llobet, and Segovia, and also includes transcriptions made by the same guitarists. That particular recording shows a "picture" of a musical situation, of a specific moment, and in that sense I think it is done from a historical point of view. I think that is different from simply patching pieces together. I wouldn't have any problem with recording, let's say, music from Lennon-McCartney or Baden Powell. I would try to do it as well as possible musically because that is music that I like. However, I don't see the reason why something like that should stand in opposition to a recording of Bach, for example. That is an attitude that I don't think Bach would have ever had in his mind! I think that the criteria used for recording are as important as what is recorded. What I mean is that I wouldn't record something entitled "Pieces for a Concert Player" or something like that because musically, it doesn't make sense. But there are some "candy pieces" that I like, and those pieces placed in the right context would make sense musically.

FERNANDEZ, to page 8



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A lesson in positive imagery: Dave Lambert's Guitar Works

By Tim Dzubay

Even while engrossed in a jam, Dave Lambert can drop pearls of wisdom without dropping a note. Churning out the sound in his shop one winter day, he heard a visitor mutter, "If I had my way, I'd study the guitar for a few years." He hardly glanced up from his instrument to say, "You *do* have your way, so do it."

That seems to sum up Lambert's attitude about the direction his life has taken. After spending some time in the "school of hard knocks," as he put it, he more or less stumbled upon his present vocation: part owner and operator of Guitar Works, an international customization and repair shop. The small, white building on Raymond Avenue in St. Paul belies the station and clientele of its co-owner, as well as the history of its incarnation. I recently had a chance to meet with Dave behind the January-frosted window front of his shop to hear his story.

Lambert got off the road about four years ago after playing in a number of bands. Besides seeing a good portion of the world, he was exposed to the many problems a guitarist experiences with his or her equipment. His "formal" studies of guitar repair started long before the touring began, however. As a young guitarist in rural Flint, Michigan, he learned to improvise when his or a friend's instrument was failing.

"A lot of [repair work] I learned on my own because I lived in the country," he says. "There was no music shop nearby where you could buy parts, and I didn't feel like waiting a few days to get parts from town. I used to make saddles from brass in the garage. I'd just cut off a chunk and file it out." His training has been mostly trial and error, though he did spend some time studying at Charlie's Guitar Shop in Dallas under Renee Martinez, guitar tech of the late Stevie Ray Vaughn.

His experimental approach is not a path he'd recommend, though. "I read a lot of books and I experimented and I ruined a few good guitars," he says. "There's a good school in Red Wing (see article on page 4) that can give you the fundamentals, but after that it's just like anything else. The more you do it, the better you get at it. It's a skill." Lambert laughs, adding, "I did a banjo a few years ago by the seat of my pants. I was brailing it more than I was fixing it. That's how I did it with the guitars, too."

The road to Guitar Works began in typically unconventional fashion. After bouncing a check at a local music store, Lambert promised the owner he'd make good on the money. He volunteered to be the store's guitar tech and, since the store had none, the owner accepted Lambert's proposal. He set up shop in the back of the store, toolless and

LAMBERT, to page 7

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LAMBERT, from page 6

penniless, doing whatever work came his way. He decided to quit his then-current band and fix guitars, a move that turned out to be financially sound.

"In the first week I was there, I made more money than I did the previous two months on the road," Lambert says. He started to advertise in a local music paper whenever he made eight extra dollars in a week, and in a short time his backstore business started to alarm his patron storeowner.

"When I started to make custom guitars and sell them from my corner of the shop, they perceived that as direct competition," Lambert says. "At that point, it was time for me to leave the nest." With the help of some friends and with his earnings, he opened a spray booth on Energy Park Drive, a few blocks from his shop on Raymond.

A friend suggested advertising on a larger scale than Lambert was presently projecting. "We were driving around, and he saw this big billboard and said, 'See that sign? That could be your sign for your store,'" Lambert says. "That *could* be me, I thought. I started to look at things a little differently after that day."

At the time, Dave's store was dealing only with local traffic. He began an advertising campaign in *Guitar World* after spotting a promotion for advertisers in the back pages of the magazine. "I've been (advertising in *Guitar World*) for about two years, and it's working really well," he says. Business picked up considerably, and he was able to open the workshop on Raymond eight months ago. Guitar Works was, quite suddenly, international.

Besides doing work for a myriad of local bands and musicians—including Brass Kitten, Gemini, Impaler and a host of blues players—Dave has done work for Guns 'n Roses, Steve Miller, the Commodores and Steve Vai. "We made a half-sized performance

model of his flame guitar and presented it to Steve," he says. He also has clients in Brazil and Poland, both of whom learned about Guitar Works through the magazine ad.

Despite the initial loss of business with the location change, Dave has been working constantly in the last two months. "It's a lotta work for one guy, and I'm getting to the point where I've outgrown the one-man shop," he says. Yes, that's right. Lambert does most of his phenomenal work alone. "I have other people do the airbrushing, and I can get help from a huge list of people, but most of the work I do on my own, right down to filling out my taxes and doing my bookkeeping," he says.

Lambert showed me a photo album of some of the finishes and woodcarving feats he and his partners have accomplished. It was a very impressive sampling: the half-size Steve Vai performance flame, a flying-V lacquered to a fine sheen with real snakeskin underneath, and some incredibly airbrushed guitars that would look just as good on a wall as on a stand. His workshop is a showcase of some of the guitars he has built and acquired through the years. He let me jam on a few, including a vintage '50's hollow-body Gretsch and a built-for-speed strat he made himself. All of his work seemed flawless.

What separates Guitar Works from the pack of customization and repair shops? "The mere fact that that's all I do," says Lambert. "I do it because I love it, not because I'm looking to get rich."

It's apparent that he loves this place and his work. As Danny Gatton's version of "In My Room" drifted out of the office stereo's speakers, Lambert looked around the shop and said, "This place reminds me of me and my brother's room when I was younger. We had posters of rock heroes on the wall, and here I have guitars hanging all over the place. *This* is my room now." He works, on average, six days a week, sometimes until three or four in the morning.

He doesn't mind the hard work at all. In fact, this ethic seems to be the main component of Guitar Works' success. "My goal is working with people to ensure continuing success," Lambert explains. "The work speaks for itself, and I always stand by what I do. It's easier to keep a customer than to find a new one, so we try to get the job done right the first time.

LAMBERT, to page 10

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FERNANDEZ, from page 5

AJ: Speaking of guitars, I understand that you have one made by Friederich. Have you been playing it for a long time?

EF: Since 1986.

AJ: If I'm not mistaken, your guitar was broken in Washington.

EF: Yes, the top got cracked because probably the airline company dropped it from a second story ... you can still see the "scars." It was almost new at that time.

AJ: Would you tell us what you look for in a guitar?

EF: Basically, I look for good, natural sound. I like a guitar that is flexible and clear ... it has to be comfortable to play. I'm very interested in the transparency of texture: If I play a C major chord, I want to hear C, E, G, C and not a "spot" in C major. I like a guitar that allows me to change tone and dynamics with ease, and this is a good guitar for that. I also like the guitars made by Friederich's teacher [Bouchet] very much.

AJ: I suppose that you find a guitar-maker showing you guitars in about every city you play in.

EJ: Yes, it has happened to me. Generally what they want is an opinion about their guitars and I tell them what I think. However, about guitar-making, I know absolutely nothing. I know how to play a guitar and I can notice its strengths and weaknesses but I couldn't give any advice on the guitar-making process.

MARIA OLAYA: Do you encounter volume problems when you play with an orchestra?

EF: Yes. It depends on the orchestra, the conductor, the amount of rehearsal time, and the place. There are pieces that can be played without amplification, and that has to do with the orchestra and especially with the conductor's interest in good balance. Those are things that don't happen too often. Normally, when one plays with an orchestra, the conductor is not as interested in how that particular concert is going to turn out as he is in the symphony that comes in the second half of the program. That means that the rehearsal time is very limited and good balance demands a lot of work. I'm not against amplification in principle; if nowadays one can trust the microphones made for recording, then why not trust the ones made for performance; it is the same thing. Of

course, the equipment has to be good and the amplification has to be done with care. It really helps the orchestra to hear what you are playing; that is the reason why I'm always facing the orchestra during recording sessions. This works very well since the balance heard on the recording is more or less the same balance heard in the studio. However, if the way the concert is written keeps everything from coming out, like in the Villa-Lobos for example: ... that is the only case I can recall in which something had to be done with the console to change the levels of volume. Otherwise, the way it sounds in the studio is what it sounds like in the recording. Of course, the English Chamber Orchestra is an excellent orchestra with very good conductors that are interested in good balance.

MO: Do you use the same guitar when you record different types of music, like the recording of Bach and the one on XIX Century music?

EF: In those two recordings that you mentioned, I used different guitars simply because I had a different guitar when I recorded the disc on XIX Century music.

MO: But you didn't do that intentionally.

EF: Not necessarily. It would be interesting to do something with a copy of a guitar from the time of Sor, for example. I did a recording of Sor that is about to come out. Unfortunately, I didn't have access to a XIX Century guitar. If I had, I would probably have used it. However, I really think that the way one thinks is as important as the instrument one uses, and that is something upon which all experts agree. I have read many treatises on history of interpretation, and the authors emphasize that it is important to play an instrument of the period because it helps the player to phrase and think about the

music in another way. I think that is very true. However, one can preserve the style on a modern instrument by listening and deducing the appropriate articulation from the music. It can be done. Today's guitar is not so different from a XIX Century guitar. It is like the difference between a piano and a piano-forte, and I'm going to be a total heretic and say that there is not much difference between a guitar and a lute. Of course they are different, and the articulation is different, but that much difference should be in the mind of the guitarist, not in the instru-

FERNANDEZ, to page 9

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No choice but to sing

By Tate Ferguson

Singing: it's a dirty job, but somebody has to do it. It would be great to be a pure guitarist—strictly and solely a manipulator of the electric guitar for the people who hire the bands I play in. But circumstance and necessity forced me to sing.

I can carry a tune—no problem. So when I was jamming in the basement with my buddies twenty years ago, and we grew tired of playing blues instrumentals, somebody had to bite the bullet and belt out some Beatles tune or another. Joe didn't want to do it ... Al didn't want to do it ... I sure didn't want to do it—but somebody had to do it, so we plugged that cheap Shure mike into Channel 2 of the old Fender Bandmaster, and I opened my mouth and sang as best I could. That's how I started, and that's how thousands of other guitarists started to sing.

What is it about singing that is so difficult? Why is it so easy and fun to play your guitar, and so hard to sing in front of people?

There's something extremely personal about singing. There's a certain quality about the act of singing that is totally different than the act of playing an instrument. The vocal sound comes directly out of your body—there is no object between you and the audience. The vibrations come out of your gut, literally from your inside, and audiences sense and respond to this. You can play your guitar in an impersonal, mechanical manner, but it's hard to sing without getting very personal.

Classical or pop, the celebrated singers of the world command far more money and respect than do the greatest guitarists. People respond far more deeply and more powerfully to a soulful voice than they do to any but the most skillful instrumentalists. The highest compliment you can make to a player is that his playing has a singing quality.

So why is it so hard to sing? What is it that causes your throat to close up and your stomach to sink and your knees to tremble at the thought of opening your mouth in front of a crowd? Why is it so easy to hide behind your guitar, and so hard to open your mouth and make music?

It's because you're totally exposed when you sing. If you dress neatly and play in tune, chances are you'll make a good impression. But when you sing, you are making a personal, individual statement: you are naked to your audience. When you sing, your audience is hearing the sound of your body, not of your expensive guitar. You can play your guitar in such a low-key way that people can use your music as a backdrop for their talking, eating, and drinking—but open your mouth to sing, and people will stop talking, look hard at you, see what you are, hear your voice, and take note of your clothes, face and expression. If you're a shy or retiring person, this can be some kind of torture. But if you can get over this, singing can make the difference between working and not working.

It's not critical that you be a great singer. Guts and chutzpah are far more important. We all know the names of guitarists who have hardly any singing voices to speak of, but whose voices we hear on the radio every day.

So when a new bandleader calls and asks if I sing lead, I say, "Yes." I'm not great, but I try to do a good job: I'm on-key, anyway. Because I can belt out fifteen or twenty rock oldies, I have a real advantage over the players who don't sing at all—even if they're better guitarists.

If you sing, you can work more. It's worth trying. ■

FERNANDEZ, from page 8

ment itself. I think that one can get perfectly acceptable results playing pieces written for vihuela or lute on a modern guitar. That doesn't mean that the lute or the vihuela should be forgotten, of course. It seems to me that now there is a tendency to value the instrument more than the interpretation, which is typical during a time of materialistic tendencies ... the object is more important than the subject. One must have a musical mind to study ornamentation and "rules" of interpretation. These can't be studied as though they are a legal code. The important thing when one is studying Bach is not to see if a trill was done this way or that way even though this is relevant. It shouldn't be studied as if it were the "criminal code" ... to see how many years one gets to spend in jail for playing an appoggiatura here or there. It all depends on the music, and music is something that happens in the moment, and there is an empty element that we can't reproduce no matter how much we study; that is the audience. The Baroque audiences are all dead!, we can play exactly what was played in the Leipzig Cathedral or in the Saint Thomas Cathedral but it is not going to sound the same because the ears that are listening are different. Anyway, that is not an excuse for not knowing everything we can about it. Obviously, the more one knows, the better. Antique instruments are a fashion right now, and that is important because it is going to leave scholarship behind it that is very much needed. However, as with every fashion, it will pass. ■

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CareerFest in Akron

The Univ of Akron School of Music will host a seven-day event this summer entitled "Classical Guitar CareerFest '92." Festival dates are 6-26 to 7-2-92. Aimed at students and young professionals, CareerFest will focus on a wide range of practical issues in discussion sessions, clinics, master classes and workshops. Concerts will include Benjamin Verdery, John Holmquist, Lily Afshar, Morel and White Duo, and GARIMBA. Additionally, a major guitar competition will parallel the event and add to the excitement (see below). Topics to be covered include college teaching, gigging, corporate consulting, publishing, private studio teaching, composing, retail businesses, concert touring, management, competitions, grant writing, teaching children, instrument building and repair, guitar societies, overseas travel, chamber music and more. Special attractions are a photo session, a resume workshop, a press-kit analysis workshop, a new equipment demo, an information center, and daily master-classes. In addition to the performers listed above, the CareerFest faculty will include Stephen Aron (director), Sylvie Morel (co-director), Loris Chobanian, Clare Callahan, William Gangel, Don Verdery, Laurel Favreau, Bob Ferguson, Roger Thurmon and Matanya Ophee. Inexpensive registration and housing costs will make this an affordable as well as valuable event. For more information contact Stephen Aron, Chair, Guitar Dept., U of Akron School of Music, Akron, OH 44325 (216) 972-6188.

Great Lakes Classical Guitar Competition

Hosted by the U of Akron School of Music "Classical Guitar CareerFest '92," the first annual Great Lakes Classical Guitar Competition will be held during CareerFest on the Akron Univ. campus, 6-26 to 7-2-92. Prizes will include large cash awards (to be announced), a Takamine electrified classical guitar donated by the Kaman Music Corp., valued at \$1,500; a first class guitar case donated by the Mark Leaf Case Co. and valued at \$550; \$200 merchandise from Guitar Solo; \$200 merchandise from Editions Orphee, and strings from both D'Addario and GSP. Entry deadline is April 1, 1992. Eligibility: any guitarist, regardless of age, who is either a student or at the beginning of his or her career. Required repertoire is the "Homenaje" by Manuel de Falla. For complete competition guidelines, contact Sylvie Morel, Competition Director, 2241 Oakdale Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118, (216) 397-9213.

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includes music by Brower, Boccherini, Jorge Morel and Ian Krouse, is the only in-town performance by the MGQ this season. Quartet members, Joseph Hagedorn (winner of the 1990 Guitar Foundation of America International Competition), Alan Johnston, David Crittenden and O. Nicholas Raths, recently taped a program for American Public Radio's St. Paul Sunday Morning. The MGQ recently received funding from the Minnesota Composer's Forum to commission a new work from the noted American composer, Eleanor Hovda. Tickets are \$7, \$5 for MGS members. ■

LAMBERT, from page 7
get the job done right the first time.

"It's a hard road. I've been out there, and although I'm not out there now I may be again. If there's a local guy who's got a guitar that won't stay in tune, chances are we'll be able to fix it. I know what it's like to have somebody make it a little easier for you. It's a good feeling."

The last three years have brought changes to Lambert's liking. He went from being a penniless musician to being co-owner and operator of an international business. "I wouldn't have been able to do it

without my friends. I thank them dearly," he says soberly.

Before I left, I asked him what his plans were for the business. "I've considered a production line—developing guitar styles and parts—if the business continues to grow," Lambert replied. "That might happen in six or seven months, or maybe in a year. I'm not in any hurry. I'm comfortable with where I'm at and what's happening. I can play with the things that I love.

"But I'm not limiting myself to *just* this," he was quick to add. ■

Left hand technique: an overview

By Scott Fraser

In determining a format for a series on guitar playing, I thought it might be appropriate to open with an article dealing with the proper form and positioning of the left hand. This seems to be one of the most neglected areas that I encounter when dealing with a new student. Although there are no hard-and-fast rules in this regard due to the tremendous variety of styles and approaches on the instrument, I have featured 14 guidelines for the left hand in hopes that these will help improve your performance. These guidelines are based on the principles of kinetics and the findings of past and present masters of the instrument. I usually see a significant improvement in tone, technique, speed, and overall performance when a student applies these principles. Whether you are a beginner or an advanced player, you will benefit from this information.

Fourteen Guidelines for Guitar Playing: The Left Hand

1. For classical players, the guitar neck should be raised at about a 30° angle from the horizontal position with the crest of the tuning head at shoulder level or slightly above. For plectrum players the guitar neck should be raised at about a 15° angle from the horizontal position with the crest of the tuning head at chest level.

2. The left shoulder should be in a relaxed position at all times. Avoid raising the shoulder.

3. The left arm should be totally relaxed and suspended from the shoulder and chest muscles with the elbow as close to the body as comfortably possible. Avoid supporting the weight of the arm by clinging to the guitar neck.

4. The wrist of the left arm should be relaxed and have a slight bend or curvature. This provides enough leverage for the fingers to have a complete command of the neck, reaching all areas of the fingerboard with ease.

5. (A) The left thumb should be centered behind the second finger or midway between the second and third fingers whenever possible. Avoid dragging the thumb behind the hand as one moves up and down the neck.

(B) The location of the left thumb when making contact with the back of the neck can vary, but is usually found from slightly above midpoint to the lower treble side of the neck.

(C) The bass side of the neck should be forbidden territory, with one possible exception. *Note: Figure illustrating the use of the thumb in playing the bass or root of a GMajor9b5 (G9b5) chord. When playing in the higher positions or fingering extreme stretch formation, the thumb should drop to the treble side of the neck for greater ease and less strain in fingering. Avoid leaving the fingers unsupported

in any position (especially in the higher positions—above the XII position) with the thumb dangling in midair.

6. The left thumb should be bent slightly backwards with the fleshy pad of the thumb making contact with the neck. The sole purpose of the left thumb is to act as a brace in providing a counter force to the pressure of the fingers on the fingerboard. Avoid using the left thumb to support the weight of the neck by cradling it. Avoid bending the thumb forward using its tip or worse the nail, resisting the pressure of the fingers.

7. The palm of the left hand should, generally speaking, be free of contact with the neck. Avoid hugging or choking the neck with the left hand.

8. The fingers of the left hand should be gracefully curved, with the tips of the first finger joint making contact with the string at an approximate 90° angle. Avoid pressing the string with the softer pad of the finger instead of the finger tip. The use of the finger tip will not only improve the tone and duration of the note, but will give extra strength and additional leverage to the fingers.

9. Picture the fingers of the left hand as small pistons. When raising the fingers, minimize the lift required, so as to cut down on both the time and distance involved in making recontact with the strings. Remember, the less distance that comes between your fingertips and the fingerboard, the greater the increase in speed and precision in executing musical passages.

10. When fingering the left hand, only use the amount of pressure that is necessary to obtain a clear tone. This will enable a smooth and relaxed transition between fingering positions. Avoid too much pressure between the thumb and

the fingers, as this will cause undue fatigue and strain on the muscles, impeding the speed and execution of the fingers and tiring the thumb.

11. Primary attention should be focused on the angle of contact and form of the fourth or little finger of the left hand, as it acts as a gauge in determining the proper form and balance of the entire hand, as well as the athletic performance of all other fingers.

12. The nails of the left hand should be filed or cut below the fingertips, so as not to interfere with string contact.

13. When pressing the strings, the fingertips of the left hand should press as close and possible to the fret itself. This contributes greatly to the clarity and duration of the tone and prevents buzzing of the string.


14. In determining whether or not the left hand and fingers are positioned properly, check to see that the upper ridge of the left palm is aligned parallel to the outer edge of the fingerboard. ■

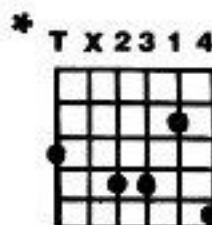
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