



Guitarist

Minnesota Guitar Society Mission Statement

Promote the guitar in all its stylistic and cultural diversity through sponsorship of public forums, concerts, and workshops.
Serve as an educational and social link between the community and amateur and professional guitarists of all ages.

The Minnesota Guitar Society • PO Box 14986 / Minneapolis MN 55414 • Vol. 37 No. 1 / Spring Issue 2021

Special Lute-athon Friday, March 26



Above, clockwise from top left: Annett Richter, Thomas Walker Jr., Phillip Rukavina, Edward Martin and Paul Berget. Right: Sarah Jackson.



Thu Le Saturday, April 24



Classical Guitarathon Saturday, June 5



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Visit www.mnguitar.org to sign up for our email list and reserve your virtual ticket for the upcoming concert each month. All concerts this season are streamed at the MGS YouTube channel.



Above, L to R: Milena Petković and Ben Kunkel, Wade Oden, Samuel Hines.

We Got Lutes, Lots and Lots of Lutes

We regret that Manuel Barrueco, who was scheduled as our March concert artist, was unable to provide a video-recorded performance for us. We hope to reschedule him in person next season. We are happy to announce that five members of the thriving community of lutenists in Minnesota have agreed to present a concert that we will stream on March 26. Extra thanks to Phillip Rukavina for doing the video recording as well as assembling the artists (and performing!). We are also grateful to St. Paul Conservatory of Music, and their Executive Artistic Director Cléa Galhano, for providing the space for the recording.

Paul Berget received his BFA from the University of Minnesota in 1972. After graduation, he continued his studies with the legendary Diana Poulton at the Royal College of Music in London, where he also studied with acclaimed lutenist Nigel North. In 1973, he appeared on Broadway in a musical production of *Cyrano* starring Christopher Plummer. In addition to playing early music, he has also performed in a variety of other musical styles: modern classical and steel string guitar, and world music. Recently he has been performing as the lutenist in the internationally acclaimed ensemble Minstrely!, a group that records on the Lyra Chord label. Other early music collaborations include the Rose Ensemble, Ensemble Polaris, the Minnesota Lute Quartet, and performances with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Edward Martin (Renaissance and Baroque lute, and vihuela) studied with Donna Curry, Toyohiko Satoh, and Hopkinson Smith. He held the position of Adjunct Professor of Lute at the College of Saint Scholastica in Duluth from 1984 to 2016. In 1984, he played in the First International Lute Competition in Toronto. He has performed throughout the US, made recordings for Minnesota Public Radio for broadcast on the American Public Radio network, and performed in Belgium, Scotland, Spain, and the Netherlands. He has been a member of various ensembles, including the Minnesota Lute Quartet and Chambure Vihuela Quartet, and regularly performs in duos with tenor William Bastian and lutenists Paul Berget, Phillip Rukavina, and Thomas Walker. In 1997 and 2001, he was Renaissance lute instructor at the San Francisco Early Mu-

sic Society's Renaissance week at Dominican College (San Rafael, CA). He has been a frequent guest lecturer, teacher, and performer at the biannual summer seminar of the Lute Society of America and was a member of its board of directors for 12 years. He studied the canon of Johannes Fresneau (1615/16–ca. 1696) after the discovery of this first and only extant music for the Dutch Baroque lute, and toured the Netherlands and Belgium, giving solo performances of it. He is widely known for his critically acclaimed recordings on the Magnatune and Gamut Music labels, and received a 5-star rating for *Courante* (Gamut Music) in *Early Music Today*. He authored the program notes for a recording of music by Sylvius Leopold Weiss performed by Eduardo Egüez, which won the prestigious "Grand Prix du Disque" award in 2011.

Annett Richter, a native of Halle, Germany, is on the faculty at Concordia College (Moorhead) and North Dakota State University (Fargo), teaching courses in music iconography, history, bibliography, and criticism, sharing with students her passion for early music, and collaborating with choral conducting and voice majors in performing Renaissance and Baroque music for voice(s) and lute. For the past 15 years, she has been an active lutenist and guitarist, appearing in concert on lute with sopranos Linh Kauffman, Candace Wagner, Dawn Sonntag, and Kim Sueoka, mezzo-soprano Holly Janz, flutist Deb Harris, and lutenists Richard Griffith, Phillip Rukavina, and Thomas Walker, as well as with Consortium Carissimi. She has given guitar recitals for the MGS and has performed with flutist Tiana Grisé as Duo Fluitarra. Richter has conducted interviews for this newsletter and *Classical Guitar Magazine* online with internationally known classical guitarists as well as lutenist Lucas Harris. As a musicologist, Richter has explored intersections between music and painting, delivering conference papers nationally and internationally and publishing articles in *Grove Music Online* and elsewhere. She holds master's degrees in musicology and in guitar performance from the U of MN and a BA and MA in British and American Studies from Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Germany. She studied guitar with Jeffrey Van, Todd Green, Petra Burmann, Ursula

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Klein, and Peter Gollnast. She received her PhD in musicology from the U of MN. During the pandemic, she has revived her interest in painting. Her image *Follow the Light (or Windy Path)* was shown in the online exhibition *Foot in the Door 5* at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Phillip Rukavina performs as a lute and vihuela soloist and as a continuo lutenist. He has appeared at many major festivals specializing in early music, including the Utrecht Early Music Festival (2013) and the Boston Early Music Festival (2015). In 2017, he was invited to perform as a soloist at the European Lute Festival in Füssen, Germany and at the Lute Society of America's WestFest in Victoria, BC Canada. He is a founding member of the Venere Lute Quartet and has performed with many prominent ensembles, including the Newberry Consort, the Texas Early Music Project, the Rose Ensemble, and the Bach Society of MN, as well as with renowned sopranos Emma Kirkby and Ellen Hargis. He has served on the faculty of the Lute Society of America's LuteFest in Cleveland and the Amherst and Vancouver Early Music Festivals. He has recorded on the Lyrichord, LSA, Magnatune, Gamut, and Naxos labels. His fifth Studio395 solo release, *Dutch Light: The Lute Music of Nicolas Vallet*, was issued in 2017.

Thomas Walker, Jr started classical guitar lessons at age 10. Not long thereafter he became interested in the 12-string guitar stylings of Leo Kottke and spent much of the next decade playing and composing in that style. Realizing that Kottke was and is *sui generis*, he returned to classical music in college, studying both classical guitar and music theory. Theory classes provided his first introduction to the earlier musical vocabulary of counterpoint. After college, he studied jazz guitar independently, but was increasingly captivated by early music, particularly polyphony. He bought his first lute in 1992 and began studies with Phillip Rukavina soon after. Since then, Walker has performed with Rukavina, Ensemble Polaris, Consortium Carissimi, the Rose Ensemble, and the Venere Lute Quartet, as well as with lutenists Paul Berget and Edward Martin. Walker served a term as treasurer for Lyra Baroque from 2003–06, and currently serves as treasurer for the Lute Society of America. In regular hours he works as a consulting economist for small, privately held companies.

Sarah R. Jackson, soprano, is a Twin Cities native. She has been devoted to Early Music since falling in love with the music of J. S. Bach as a child. From her first opportunity to collaborate with Early Music colleagues in 2011, she has dedicated herself to the Renaissance and Baroque. Her repertoire includes French, Spanish, and English Renaissance songs, as well as French and German Baroque airs and early opera. Prior to the suspension of live performances, recent projects have included Dowland recitals with lute and viol consort, solo Italian Renaissance madri-

gals with winds, viol, and lute, and the title role in Bold North Baroque Opera's production of the early Baroque opera *La Daphne*. She is a graduate in Voice Performance and Pedagogy from St. Catherine University in St. Paul. She studied with master teacher Elizabeth Mannion.

Program Order and Summary of Repertoire to be Performed

Annett Richter. Music of the late Renaissance by the brilliant English lutenist-composers John Dowland (1563–1626) and Thomas Robinson (fl. 1589–1609), and early Baroque lute music by Michelagnolo Galilei (1575–1631), brother of famous astronomer Galileo Galilei.

Edward Martin. Lutenist Johann Gottfried Conradi (d. 1747) was the son of the most famous musical Conradi, Johann Georg (1645–99), director of music at the Bavarian court at Oettingen-Oettingen. Johann Gottfried was a prolific publisher of learned works at the Viadrina University in Frankfurt an der Oder. His own compositions are filled with enchanting melodies and beautiful harmonic textures.

Phillip Rukavina. Music by the virtuoso lutenist Giovanni Kapsberger, one of the first lutenists to compose entirely in the musical style of the Baroque era. He often incorporated basso continuo accompaniments into the publications of his often "quirky" lute, theorbo, and ensemble music. While he was considered a hack by the 18th-century music historian Charles Burney, Kapsberger's reputation has been redeemed since the revival of his works in the 20th century. He has a uniquely beautiful musical voice.

Thomas Walker Jr. The lute in the 17th century acquired a predominantly French accent. Regional/national distinctions were becoming apparent in music, yet with an eagerness to adopt fashions from abroad. Lutenist and composer Nicolas Vallet, a Huguenot, was French by birth but fled to Amsterdam around 1613. While there, he taught lute, founded a dancing school, and published several volumes of music of astonishingly high quality.

Soprano **Sarah Jackson** will join Walker in presenting *airs de cour* by the Baroque composer Pierre Guedron, a famed singer and composer who published copiously in this distinctive 17th-century French song form.

Paul Berget. Music by the most outstanding composer/lutenist of the later Baroque era, Sylvius Leopold Weiss (1687–1750). Weiss was not only a contemporary of J. S. Bach, he was a personal acquaintance and musical friend as well. Bach thought so much of Weiss's music that he created a violin sonata in which Bach's violin part is mated with a lute piece composed by the lutenist. Berget will perform portions of Weiss's late Sonata 39 in C major from the Dresden Manuscript.

Thu Le, Saturday, April 24

While we are sorry that it has to be a “virtual” introduction, we are glad to bring Thu Le to Minnesota for the first time. She is an international award-winning classical guitarist and one of the world’s leading female proponents of her art. The Hanoi-born guitarist is currently living in Bahrain. She brings to her mesmerizing performances a unique blend of passion, color, and personality that perfectly complements her musicality and technical virtuosity. Her love affair with the guitar began at the age of four thanks to her father, Le Hanh. At the age of five, she gave her first public performance in Vietnam under his tutorship.

Thereafter, her relationship with her guitar blossomed, and her journey continued at a relentless pace. She passed the entrance examination for the National Conservatory of Music, Hanoi at the age of only seven, making her the youngest ever student to be admitted to this prestigious establishment. Her teachers included Nguyen Hai Thoai, Vu Bao Lam, Nguyen Nhu Dung, and Nguyen Quoc Vuong.

To enhance and develop her talent, she took master classes with world renowned guitarists such as Manuel Barreco, Nikita Koshkin, Hubert Kaepfel, Pavel Steidl, Thomas Offermann, Denis Azabagic, and Judicael Perroy.

Thu Le’s passion for guitar has led her to perform in many countries, including Austria, Bahrain, Bulgaria, England, France, Germany, India, Italy, Malaysia, Nepal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, the US, and Vietnam.

In 2018, she was selected to perform and conduct master classes at the prestigious Guitar Federation of America convention held in Louisville, KY. Thu Le has been a jury member and given master classes and performances at many international guitar competitions and festivals.

In addition to her solo career, she collaborates and performs with orchestras, string quartets, vocalists, violinists, and flutists. She also performs internationally in a guitar duo with the Italian guitarist Lorenzo Bernardi.

We will be streaming a prerecorded interview with Thu Le, conducted by MGS member Ben Abrahamson, just before her concert on April 24. Her program for that concert consists of the following:

Serenata Espanola by Joaquin Malats (1872–1912)

Two Sonatas (K 466 & K 15)
by Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757)

Introduction y Rondo, Op. 2, No. 2
by Dionisio Aguado (1784–1849)

Loi Lo (Vietnamese traditional tune, arr. Hai Thoai)

The Edge of the Moon (variations on the Vietnamese theme *Beo Dat May Troi*) by Daniele Fabio

El Choclo by Angel Villoldo (1861–1919)
(arr. Roland Dyens)

Porro from *Suite Colombiana* No. 2
by Gentil Montana (1942–2011)

Cavalcade by Mathias Duplessy (b. 1972)

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Classical Guitarathon, Saturday, June 6

Our annual concert series would not be complete without its usual grand finale, the Classical Guitarathon. We're delighted that four wonderful performers have agreed to share their artistry with us. Ben Kunkel and Milena Petković will play some duets as well as solo pieces while Wade Oden and Samuel Hines will each present solo sets. The repertoire choices haven't all been made yet, so please plan to visit our website page for this concert in May, to learn what they will play.

We thank Steve Kaul of Wild Sound recording studio in Minneapolis for his generous assistance and expertise in video-recording both this concert and the Acoustic Guitarathon in January.

Classical guitarist **Ben Kunkel**, a native Minnesotan, began playing guitar at the age of nine. He received his BM degree from the U of MN, studying with Jeffrey Van, and his MM degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music, studying under Jason Vieaux. Kunkel is an active solo and chamber musician and has given many concert appearances in a variety of ensembles, most recently as part of a guitar duo with Milena Petković. As a member of the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet since 2014, he has toured throughout the US, Europe, and China. A busy and dedicated teacher, Kunkel is currently on the faculty of Century College, St. Joseph's School of Music, and Kramer's School of Music.

Born in Prizren, Serbia, guitarist **Milena Petković** has performed in Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Serbia, and the US as a soloist and chamber musician. She has received awards in competitions at the International Guitar Festival in Bulgaria and Guitar Open Festival and Naissus Festival in Serbia. Milena received a Bachelor of Music in guitar at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad, Serbia. She holds a Performer's Diploma and MM from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where she studied with Maestro Ernesto Bitetti. Milena is currently in her final year of doctoral studies at the U of MN, studying Guitar Performance with a minor in Music Education. Since 2017 she has been on the faculty of the Saint Paul Conservatory of Music and St. Joseph's School of Music, and has been working for the Minnesota Guitar Society in the Guitar In Our Schools program since it started.

Wade Oden holds a BM and MM in Guitar Performance from the U of MN and is currently pursuing his DMA there. He has been a member of the Minneapolis Guitar Quarter since 2010 and has toured and recorded exten-

sively with them, including an appearance on Minnesota Public Radio with local composer and pipa virtuoso Gao Hong. Oden himself is an active composer and arranger whose works have been premiered by the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet, the duo Voce y Cuerdas, and his experimental pop ensemble, Space Station Alpha. His guitar teachers included O. Nicholas Rath, James McGuire, and Jeffrey Van. As a member of Voce y Cuerdas he has performed a widely varied repertoire, including new works by Minnesota composers Chris Gable, Libby Larsen, Carol Barnett, and Todd Harper. In 2008, Oden toured with the Rose Ensemble vocal group to the Festival d'Île de France. This performance was recorded live and broadcast on Radio France. In 2015, he toured again with the Rose Ensemble to present their program of Hawaiian music. His piece "Aquam Effunde" for piano, bass clarinet, and marimba won first prize in the 2005 Eric Stokes song writing contest. He continues to arrange music for the guitar ensemble at Normandale Community College, where he is on the faculty.

Samuel Hines is an award-winning guitarist from Southern California. He has been a prize-winner in over 35 competitions. Recent first prizes include the 2020 Texas International Guitar Competition, the 2020 Schubert Club Competition, the 2019 Houston Guitar Festival, the 2019 Gohar and Ovanes Andriassian Competition at Cal State L.A., the 2019 New Orleans International Guitar Festival, the 2019 Appalachian Guitarfest, and the 2017 Florida Guitar Festival. Hines was selected as one of 15 competitors from around the world to participate in the Parkening International Guitar Competition in 2012, 2015, and 2019. He was awarded a 2020 Mid-Career Artist Grant from the East Central Regional Arts Council, through the McKnight Foundation. Hines is a doctoral candidate and teaching assistant at the U of MN. He holds an MM from the U of WI-Milwaukee, where he studied with René Izquierdo. Hines plays a 2014 Antonio Marin Montero guitar with Augustine Regal Blue Strings and is an Augustine Strings Artist.



Dear Friends,

Grants. We're happy to announce that we've received two grants, one in December for \$15,000 from the Augustine Foundation and one in January for \$15,000 from the MN State Arts Board Creative Support for Organizations program. The grants will fund expenses for our Guitar In Our Schools and Guitar Opportunities for All Learners programs, for all of 2021. Also, as we went to press, we learned that we have received a grant from the D'Addario Foundation, a credit for product purchases, which will allow us to re-string all the guitars that have been used in our GIOS/GOAL programs this school year! We have submitted a grant to the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council to support two more programs: the relaunch of the Youth Guitarathon (an annual project that ran from 2007 to 2012) and the launch of a Community Guitar Orchestra. The awards will not be announced until June. In the interim, we will be looking for additional funding sources for these new initiatives. Look for more information about these programs in the next issue.

Fundraising. As always, we're pursuing grant sources of support. But the pandemic, the economic hardships so many face, and the social unrest of the past year have caused many funders to revise programs and guidelines. The MGS needs a many-sided approach to fundraising. That's where you can help. We need a Fundraising Committee to plan and implement events and activities to sustain the MGS, make new friends, and connect with our members. Contact me if you'd like to put the "fun" in fundraising.

Memberships. Memberships are what keep us strong. When it's time to renew yours, please consider the monthly-payment option now available through our website.

Concerts. Please join us. All the artists are providing special, pre-recorded, high-quality video-recordings. Look for more information about each concert on our website. We ask for donations for each concert, but the concerts themselves are free to anyone. And each concert is available on our YouTube channel for a full week after the initial streaming.

Guitars. An essential part of our Guitar Education Programs is providing guitars for schools, classes, and students who need but cannot afford to buy them. We thank Steven Gordon and David Epstein for recently donating instruments. This generosity is wonderful, but the need is ongoing: More guitars. In playable condition. For more information, contact me.

Stay safe. Stay well. Every donation matters. Every membership matters.

Thanks.

—Paul Hintz / Email: <mgdir@mnguitar.org>

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Guitar Opportunities for All Learners (GOAL)

Last fall we launched this program to work with students in the Special Education Department at **White Bear Lake High School** and their full-time teacher David Melvin. Jared Waln is our visiting teacher. He works with students twice a week for two hours, some using standard guitars and others using adaptive guitars and a methodology developed by Ruth LeMay, head of the Guitar Department at Southwest High School in Minneapolis and the founder of GuitarsUnlocked. We have secured funding to guarantee a second full year (2021–22) at White Bear Lake, and hope to identify a second partner school as well.



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Guitar In Our Schools (GIOS)

In GIOS, we work with un- (or under-) funded music programs at metro area K-12 public schools to support guitar classes where they exist and help create them where the full-time music teaching staff and school administration have identified a need. We provide visits by visiting international artists to give masterclasses or mini-concerts, residencies by skilled and experienced local teaching artists, and material support (curriculum, guitars, accessories). We are currently working with three schools and have received grants to fully fund all of 2021.

Southwest High School in Minneapolis has been a key partner from the start. We can't support their Guitar Orchestra class with visits by concert artists this season, but next fall we hope to be back in-person, and even send another teaching assistant to work with Ruth LeMay and learn about LeMay's amazing approach to adaptive guitar education for students with special needs.

We are glad to be working with **Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis** for a second year. Teacher Nick Wilson (band, orchestra, general music) has built a strong two-

semester program of guitar classes. We hope that we can help Nick start a guitar orchestra at Roosevelt in the near future, and we're looking forward to working with his guitar class next fall.

Our newest partner school, **Parkway Middle School in St. Paul**, is one of the few Montessori middle schools in Minnesota. This creative, student-focused model is well-represented by Parkway music teacher Denae Olson, who single-handedly launched a guitar class with some duct-taped-together instruments and only a basic knowledge of the guitar herself. The class always fills, even when it's online! We couldn't provide a new supply of duct tape, but we did send more than a dozen new guitars, and an energetic visiting teacher (Ben Abrahamson) who is doing wonderful work online with the students and has created special video lessons for them to use. He'll be in-person with them this spring, if possible, and certainly next fall.

Distance learning has presented challenges for everyone in both our education programs this year but our teaching artists, and the teachers at our partnering schools, are problem-solvers one and all.

New Project: "Let's Hear You!"

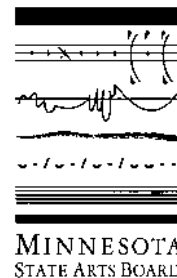
We received a Minnesota State Arts Board grant to launch this project. We will video-record students in both the GIOS and GOAL programs playing music they've learned, and music they create. The videos will be shared with the students, with their families and friends, and with the wider world on the MGS YouTube channel. Look for more details in our summer issue.



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