

Good Vibrations for Wintertime



SoloDuo will perform on a Sunday afternoon in February 2024.

The winter concert lineup for the MGS's 40th anniversary is sure to please the discerning ear and warm the heart of every music lover. We begin on December 9, 2023, with the annual **Classical Guitarathon**. This concert will feature performances by young guitarists Miloš Sočanin, Jared Waln, Daniel Volovets, Cassius Stein, Samuel Hines, and Henry Johnston. The program will include music by Sergio Assad, J.S. Bach, Barrios, Garoto, Giuliani, Jobim, Domenico Scarlatti, and others.

Miloš Sočanin is a Serbian guitarist who is studying with Maja Radovanlija at the University of Minnesota in pursuit of his second Masters degree in Classical Guitar Performance. **Jared Waln** is the director of the award-winning guitar program at Southwest High School (also see

page 5), and is director of guitar and a music professor at the University of St. Thomas. In addition to being a guitarist, composer, arranger, and educator, Dr. **Daniel Volovets** balances careers in medicine and music. **Cassius Stein** has been teaching since studying music at the University of Minnesota and earning his Doctorate of Music degree from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. **Samuel Hines** has won many awards and is currently completing his Doctor of Musical Arts degree with Maja Radovanlija at the University of Minnesota. Finally, **Henry Johnston** studied guitar in Paris and, in 2022, graduated from The Juilliard School with a Master's degree in Classical Guitar Per-

formance. To read more about these talented individuals, please visit mnguitar.org and click on the "Concerts" menu tab or scan the QR code at the end of this article.

On the afternoon of Sunday, February 25, 2024, **SoloDuo** will bring their unique musical style to the stage at Sundin Music Hall. SoloDuo's program will be entitled "Italian Concerto" and will feature music by J.S. Bach, Ottorino Respighi, and Domenico Scarlatti.

As SoloDuo, Matteo Mela and Lorenzo Micheli have performed throughout Europe, Asia, the USA, Canada, and Latin America, and have been acclaimed everywhere – from New York's Carnegie Hall to Seoul's Sejong Chamber Hall, from

(continued on page 2)

MGS Mission Statement

MGS is a non-profit organization that promotes the guitar in all its stylistic and cultural diversity through sponsorship of public forums, concerts, and workshops. We serve as an educational and social link between the community and amateur and professional guitarists of all ages.

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Good Vibrations

(continued from page 1)

Kiev's Hall of Columns to Vienna's Konzerthaus. About one of their performances, *The Washington Post* wrote: "The duo's playing was nothing less than rapturous – profound and unforgettable musicianship of the highest order." MGS president Joe Haus saw SoloDuo perform at the 2023 GFA Convention in New York City in June, and said that they "brought the house down with a fabulous program!"

SoloDuo's most recent CDs were released in 2019 (*Beethoven for Two*) and in 2014 (*Metamorphoses*), both with Decca-Universal. In addition to touring and recording, the duo edits the *SoloDuo Collection* for the Canadian publisher Productions d'Oz, teaches masterclasses worldwide. Mela resides in Geneva, Switzerland, where he teaches at the Conservatoire Populaire, while Micheli lives in Milan, Italy, and teaches at the University School of Music in Lugano, Switzerland. Since 2015, they have been Artists in Residence at the University of Colorado Boulder.

We look forward to each of these concerts, and to seeing *you* in the audience!



Scan the above QR code for more detailed information about the upcoming Classical Guitarathon.



New Member Spotlight: J. Curtis Thompson



By Annett Richter

MGS is growing! We recently passed a significant membership milestone and, to celebrate, want to tell you about one of our newest members: J. Curtis Thompson.

Thompson is an active performer, instructor, arranger, educator, and recording artist. He has performed classical, modern, and popular music as well as musical theater throughout the United States. As a multi-instrumentalist with a deep love for music, Thompson's goal is to perform and record classical guitar works of the early to the mid-20th century.

As an educator, Thompson served as the guitar instructor at Idaho State University in 2018. As a strong advocate for music education in public schools, he visited local schools in rural towns of Idaho where he instructed students and teachers in practical approaches to learning the guitar. At ISU, he also developed a curriculum for guitarists entering the Commercial Music program; this focused on classical approaches to modern pop guitar. A highlight of his tenure at ISU was his performance of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *Guitar Concerto No. 1* in October of 2021 with the Idaho State Civic Symphony. Besides major works for orchestra, Thompson has performed chamber music with string quartets and flutists.

Thompson holds two degrees in classical guitar performance—a Bachelor of Music degree from ISU (where he studied with Bill O'Brien) and a Master of Music degree from Northern Arizona University (where was a student of Tom Sheeley's). One of Thompson's core beliefs regarding musical interpretation is the inextricable connection between music and nature. During his graduate work, he coordinated the NAU Ensemble, which was comprised of multiple duos,



Curtis Thompson is a classical guitarist and one of MGS's newest members.

trios, quartets, sextets, and octets of varying skill levels. Thompson has performed in masterclasses with Scott Tenant and Vladimir Gorbach, and he competed in the Guitar Foundation of America's 2014 Symposium.

Since moving to the Fargo-Moorhead area in August 2022, Thompson has had the pleasure of performing with the Big Band Jazz at Side Street, the Fargo-Moorhead Community Theater (*Miracle on 34th Street*), Moorhead High School (*Rock of Ages*), Sheyenne High School Summer Intensive (*Mamma Mia*), as well as with Post Traumatic Funk. This upcoming winter season, he will perform with the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra, in addition to various productions of musicals.

Thompson's debut album, *Tonada*, released in April of 2023, contains some of his favorite pieces, including works by Barrios, Lauro, Ponce, and Villa-Lobos.

Thompson joined the MGS because he wants to be a part of a community of guitarists with whom he can share his passion for the classical guitar repertoire, history, and performance.

MGS NEEDS YOU! Funding from our generous donor has run out, leaving us unable to continue recording our International Artist Concert Series and share the performances on our YouTube channel. Will you help? For more information, contact our Paul Hintz at mmdir@mnguitar.org.



The MGS Endowment Fund is a Sound Investment

For 40 years, the MGS has hosted affordable, intimate concerts, community events, and guitar education programs for music lovers across the state of Minnesota. And every year, the volunteer board of our

small, nonprofit organization faces the challenge of balancing the annual budget in order to continue this valuable programming.

On the eve of our 40th season, we have found a way to not “fret” the next

40 budgets. An anonymous donor has generously given the MGS an Endowment Fund (EF) of \$50,000. Additionally, this anonymous donor has stipulated that they will match, dollar for dollar, all donations to the MGS EF by **December 1, 2023**, to a maximum of an additional \$50,000. This means the MGS EF could potentially be worth \$150,000 by December!

If this timing isn’t convenient for you, please know that any donation made after the December 1 deadline is still valued and greatly appreciated.

Because MGS is a 501(c)3, every EF donor will receive a tax receipt, and should notify their employer since many organizations offer a donation matching program of their own.

Donors aged 70-1/2 or older can make a year-end gift from their Individual Retirement Account (IRA) by directing funds to the EF. This IRA withdrawal is called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). Individuals can legally transfer tax-free up to \$100,000 per year to organizations qualified by non-profit status like MGS. A QCD from your Traditional IRA (rather than a Roth IRA) means you won't pay taxes on your IRA withdrawal for a QCD. If you have a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), the QCD also counts toward your annual RMD.

QCD check requests should be made to "Minnesota Guitar Society Endowment Fund" and mailed to: Minnesota Guitar Society, PO Box 14986, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

Endowed funds differ from others in that the total amount of the gift is invested. Each year, only a portion of the income earned on this investment is spent while the remainder is added to the principal for growth. In this respect, an endowment is a perpetual gift.

Want to do even more to support guitar music and education in Minnesota? Consider naming MGS as a beneficiary of your IRA. Your IRA has provided security during your retirement. Let it secure musical education and enjoyment for future generations of Minnesotans!

On behalf of the volunteer board of directors and music lovers statewide, *thank you for your support!*

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Scan this QR code to donate to the MGS Endowment Fund.



Mark DelCogliano: Teacher, Student, Secretary



DelCogliano on a family vacation in 2022.

Board secretary Mark DelCogliano is chair of and a professor in the University of St. Thomas’s Department of Theology. His scholarship is focused on the history of ancient Christianity.

DelCogliano was raised in upstate New York. In 2009 he relocated to St. Paul, where he lives with his wife and children, aged nine and 12.

DelCogliano has played guitar, off and on, throughout his life, starting in his teen years. Since 2018, he has been taking classical guitar lessons with Jim Flegel, following Julio Sagreras’s guitar lesson book series and exploring the classical guitar repertoire from the Renaissance to the 20th century. He is also currently preparing for the Royal Conservatory’s Level 5 guitar exam, learning pieces by or arranged by Chilesotti, Guiliani, Yukich, Tansman, and Carcassi.

“I returned to playing guitar to help improve my work and life balance,” he says, adding that he doesn’t perform publicly.

DelCogliano discovered and joined the MGS in 2016 when he was searching online for opportunities to see classical guitar performances and make connections with other guitarists. He was already serving as a faculty secretary at UST and, when in 2022 he saw that the MGS board was recruiting a secretary, he volunteered.

“I see my position as board secretary as a way that I can serve the organization,” he notes.

DelCogliano says his favorite International Artist Concert Series performances to date have been Raphaël Feuillâtre’s in March 2023 and Rovshan Mamedkuliev’s in March 2022.

Youth Guitarathon Recognizes Tomorrow's Talent

By Paul Hintz

When the MGS was founded in 1984, Steve Haskin (a keen volunteer and original MGS member, more on page 6) coined the word "guitarathon" and organized the inaugural event. It was so popular that the venue had "standing room only."

Minnesota has always boasted a vibrant community of musicians and mentors, producing internationally-known classical guitarists such as Sharon Isbin and Xavier Java, among others, as well as guitarists playing a host of other styles.

In 2007, long-time MGS member Brent Weaver, then on the MGS board, proposed that we recognize and encourage Minnesota's young, up-and-coming guitarists by hosting a special, annual event just for them: the Youth Guitarathon. With the assistance of fellow board member Christopher Becknell, Weaver organized and presented the "YG" until 2012, when the program went on hiatus.

But the interest in presenting student performers in a concert setting remained strong. We brought the YG back in November of 2022, supported in part by a grant from the MN State Arts Board. While funding continues to be a challenge, we are determined to make this once again an annual part of our season. To better coincide with the school year and allow participants ade-



quate time to prepare with their guitar mentors, the YG has been moved to spring.

Guitar students of any style, age (6 to 21), and level, solo or in an ensemble, are invited to audition. Auditioning itself is a learning experience that can generate excitement about the possibility of performing for a live audience, provide valuable feedback from the MGS's panel of judges, and experience a way to self-evaluate in a uniquely focused environment.

If you are, or know, a young guitarist who might be interested in being part of this year's YG, please apply or encourage them

to apply. Details about the audition process and the concert itself are being finalized as we go to press. Visit our website in January or contact Paul Hintz at mgsdir@mnguitar.org for more information.

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Events of Note

December 2023	January 2024	February 2024
9 <u>Classical Guitarathon</u> at Sundin Hall, Hamline Univ.	9 <u>Jazz & Fingerstyle (J&F)</u> at MetroNOME Brewery	11 <u>OpenStage</u> at Amore Coffee, W. St. Paul
10 <u>OpenStage</u> at Amore Coffee, W. St. Paul	14 <u>OpenStage</u> at Amore Coffee, W. St. Paul	13 <u>Jazz & Fingerstyle (J&F)</u> at MetroNOME Brewery
13 <u>Jazz & Fingerstyle (J&F)</u> at MetroNOME Brewery	(Note: In 2024, J&F shows will take place on Tuesdays.)	25 <u>SoloDuo</u> at Sundin Hall, Hamline Univ.

Printed Matters

Vice President Annett Richter's interview with The Kupinski Duo has appeared in the latest issue of *Soundboard Magazine* (Oct. 2023). The Duo performed during our 2022-2023



concert season, and they graciously agreed to tell us more about their lives and careers. Richter is on the faculty at Concordia College in Moorhead where she teaches music history, music iconography, and lute.

Stephanie Jones Impresses Students in Private Concert



As part of our Guitars in our Schools (GIOS) program, Stephanie Jones played a concert for students at Southwest High School in Minneapolis in September.



Jones (front-left) with the high school class and their teacher, Jared Waln.

Thank you to our GIOS sponsors:



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MGS Member David Epstein Makes Memories at Senior Centers



Epstein brings the gift of music to senior centers.

Long before COVID-19 struck, guitarist and MGS member David Epstein was recruited by friends to bring the gift of music to senior care facilities across the Twin Cities and sometimes out of state. Epstein obliged and, although things slowed down considerably during the pandemic, he hopes to add more engagements to his monthly schedule this winter.

Epstein says he enjoys singing *and* playing the guitar, but he's perfectly content to accompany a friend.

"It's a lot of fun playing music," he comments. "Sometimes we do sing-a-longs, where we'll get a lot of requests for country tunes like Johnny Cash and Hank Williams. But I also sometimes play sets of classical or liturgical music."

Epstein says that playing for seniors often feels more rewarding than playing in cafes, for example, even if there is no financial reward.

"An audience of seniors focuses on you. They're not there talking to a friend; they're engaged," he explains. "And they're very appreciative. I once had a guy come up to me after a set and say that I'm the best guitarist he's ever heard. That was pretty extraordinary!"

MGS at 40: Original *Guitarist* Editor Steve Haskin Helped Write the Script for Our Guitar Society



Steve Haskin was the original editor of *Guitarist* in 1984.

Steve Haskin, a founding member and former president of the MGS, may live in Austin, Texas, but his heart still belongs to Minnesota.

“In 1984, when I heard that Tony Hauser was founding a Minnesota Guitar Society, I jumped at the chance to be the editor and creator of its newsletter. *Guitarist* was based on *Guitar Review*, a guitar magazine published by the New York Society of the Classical Guitar starting in 1946,” Haskin recalls.

As its progenitor, Haskin describes a labor of love creating the MGS’s first issue of *Guitarist*. “I chose the name *Guitarist* and even the same font used in *Guitar Review*. That first issue was created using the cut and paste method since I didn’t have access to a computer. It took thirty hours to put it together! Then a woman named Pat McCarty

took charge and continued to produce it for years. I remained its editor and wrote an article about a local guitarist in every issue, for ten years or so.”

In addition to producing the first issue of *Guitarist* and later serving as a MGS president, in 1984 Haskin planned and named the MGS’s first guitarathon.

“That first guitarathon and all the subsequent shows were instant hits. They always attracted big audiences because it was unusual to have so many performers at once,” he notes. “The Folk Guitarathon featuring Adam Granger, Bill Hinkley, Judy Larson, and Pat Donohue was wildly successful. Standing room only! These were all folks who had been on *A Prairie Home Companion* so they had a huge draw. We also did a singer/songwriter show that was very successful.”

In 2012, Haskin moved to Austin for “a change of pace and weather” and quickly became active in the local music scene.

“Austin is a great town for a musician like me. It’s much smaller than the Twin Cities, yet there are hundreds of venues featuring music. It is truly the ‘Performing Music Capitol of the World,’” he explains. “I prefer diversity in my private playing and listening and, if still involved, I would lobby for other styles. In Austin I’ve played nothing but jazz. Ten years with Sarah Jane Hargis in our band Rio Trio and now with my vocal jazz band, Songbirds. It’s jazz I love the most.”

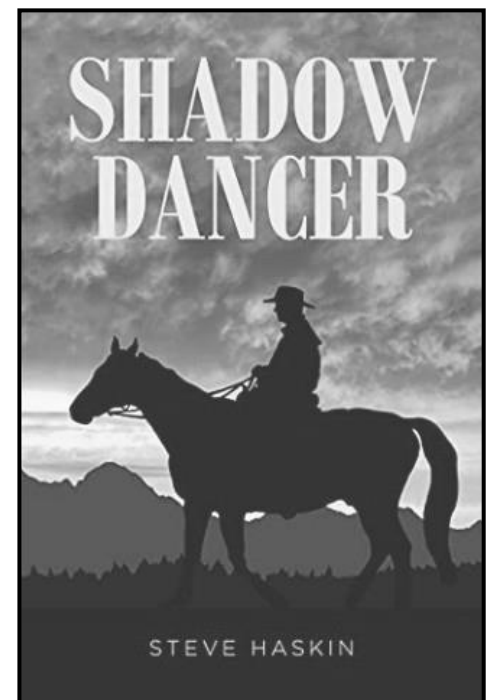
Despite his appreciation of Austin’s music scene, Haskin says he hasn’t become involved in Austin’s own guitar society, preferring instead to stay connected to the MGS.

“I have remained an MGS member and donor. I still receive the newsletter and it still has the appearance and feel of the publication I created forty years ago,” he says appreciatively. “And although I love it here, I’m still a Minnesotan at heart. I miss my canoe and I miss my friends in the Minnesota Guitar Society, so I’ll return next year for

the celebration of the fortieth anniversary. See you then!”



Above: The cover of the very first issue of *Guitarist*. **Below:** Haskin’s first published novel, *Shadow Dancer*, was selected by DreamBooks Media Professionals for a film adaptation.



MGS Members' Classified Advertisements

Free classified ads are a benefit available to MGS members.

Ads run for up to one year and can be renewed. Email mgdir@mnguitar.org for more information.

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CDs FOR SALE: 155 classical guitar CDs as one lot. All in excellent condition. For a spreadsheet with details, email bachtobach@charter.net.

GUITAR FOR SALE: 2008 Litchfield C600 concert classical guitar. Cedar top, Indian rosewood back and sides. Asking \$4,500. For specs/interest, email nickverriet@gmail.com.

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GUITAR FOR SALE: Cordoba F7. "Paco Flamenco." Solid cedar top, laminated Indian rosewood back/sides, mahogany neck, pau ferro fingerboard. Sound is characteristically flamenco with the added warmth that cedar imparts. Neck is Cordoba's "C" shape "fusion" style. Mint condition. Original shipping boxes and protective film still on the tap plate. \$550. Call or message Michael at (612) 787-8196.

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