



Colorado Springs Guitar Society Newsletter

September 2010

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Last Month's Meeting

Last month's CSGS meeting was held Monday, **August 9th**, at ASUUC. The performers and pieces played were:

- Group ensemble (dir. Mike Zimmerman): "Wind from the South" (Irish trad.), "Follow me up to Carlow" (Irish trad.), "German March" (Gottlieb Baron von Düsseldorf), and "Brian Boru's March" (Irish trad.)
- Foothills Guitar Studio Ensemble (Joshua George, Dena Zimmerman, Chelsea Smith, and Mike Zimmerman, director): "Ronde/Tripla" (Susato); "Goddesses" and "J'ai un bon Tabac" (traditional, arr Derek Hasted); "TuTu Tango" (Derek Hasted; and "Milongueo del Ayer" (Abel Fleury, arr Mike Zimmerman)
- Bert Bradford: "Amazing Grace" (trad.) and Estudio no. 14 (Fernando Sor; from the Andres Segovia edition)
- Rock Goldberg: Zamba (Julio Sagreras) and Allegretto (Ferdinando Carulli)
- Jim Bosse (guitar) and Charles Rann (voice): Two songs composed by Jim Bosse, "Lullaby for Mirabai" and "Air for Chiara"
- Tom Stringer: Prelude no. 3, "Tangotriste" (Maximo Diego Pujol), and "Misionera" (F. Bustamante)

CSGS Officers:

- **Mike Zimmerman**, President
- **Jim Bosse**, Vice President
- **Bruce Downs**, Secretary
- **Greg Playle**, Webmaster
- **Tom Stringer**, Newsletter Editor
- **2010 Student Coordinator:**
 - **Ashley Lutton**

Contact information: <http://www.coloradospringsguitarsociety.org/>

The Next Meeting of the CSGS

Meetings are always the second Monday of each month, at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church (ASUUC), 730 North Tejon, at 7:30 PM. The next meeting is **Monday September 13th**. All guitarists that wish to may join in playing a set of easy ensemble pieces, attached with the newsletter:

- "Follow me up to Carlow" (Irish trad.)
- Minuet in G major (G. F. Handel)
- "Wind from the South" (Irish trad.)
- "Brian Boru's March" (Irish trad.)
- The Pavane of Welburn (Anon.)

Some of these pieces are bit more difficult than previous ones, because a few of the notes require higher positions on the fingerboard; but if you can read through and practice them before the meeting they should be manageable. This will be a group activity at the start of the meeting. If you are going to join in on these, please pick and practice the parts you would like to play, if possible please print and bring the sheet music, and please have your guitar tuned to standard pitch before the meeting begins.

The CSGS presents classical guitarist Michael Anthony Nigro, in concert

The Colorado Springs Guitar Society, presents, as part of the 2010 Concert Series, a concert by classical guitarist Michael Anthony Nigro. The concert is at **7:30 PM on September 25th at All Souls Unitarian Church**, 730 North Tejon Colorado Springs. Ticket prices: General Admission is \$15, \$10 for seniors and CSGS members, \$5 for students



Michael Anthony Nigro, Classical Guitarist

His program titled, "*A Journey Through Latin America*" features solo guitar pieces as well as duos with Colorado Springs guitarist, Jim Bosse. Some of the composers featured on the program are Jose Luis Merlin, Jorge Cardoso, Leo Brouwer, José Paredes, and Máximo Diego Pujol.

After a recent concert in his native Long Beach the local paper wrote "*Nigro is an excellent guitarist, drawing a multitude of tone colors from his instrument and displaying great technical*

dexterity. He has a wide dynamic range, a very pretty sound, and an ability to vary his articulation for expressive purposes. Guitarists have to be able to play melody and accompaniment at the same time, while differentiating the two, and also provide their own percussive effects. All of these tasks Nigro performed with ease and a sense of style." (Jim Ruggirello, Long Beach Gazette)

As a soloist and as part of Noteworthy Duo (flute and guitar), Michael has given performances and master classes at many esteemed colleges, universities, libraries, and guitar societies. In the last 2 years he has given over 96 concerts in 27 states. Bates College in Lewiston Maine writes, "*Nigro's sound was warm and smooth on certain sections and became more pronounced on fast sections requiring physical dexterity. These pieces from Villa-Lobos demonstrated Nigro's greatest strength: his ability to create varying tones of both warmth and brightness using the full range of the instrument.*" Nigro's discography includes two solo recordings and a recording with flutist, Lisa Schroeder; *Homage to Piazzolla* (CD 1149), *Guitar Sudamerican* (BCR 62607) and *Noteworthy Duo: Between Flute and Guitar* (ND001). Under the direction of Ernesto Bitetti, he received a Bachelor degree from Indiana University and a Master of Music degree from California State University, Fullerton under the tutelage of David Grimes. Michael is on the faculty at Vanguard University in Costa Mesa, California. For more information on this artist, see his web site at www.nigroclassicalguitar.com.

Music Quotes

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! it had a dying fall:
O! it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.
--*Shakespeare*, "Twelfth Night"

"[Music and scientific research] are nourished by the same source of longing, and they complement one another in the release they offer."
--*Albert Einstein*

"The late Renaissance provides a most fruitful and enjoyable source of music for the guitarist. The tunes were lively and straightforward; the forms uncomplicated; and most important of all, some of the best composers of the period were writing for plucked strings"
--- *Frederick Noad*

"Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy. Music is the electrical soil in which the spirit lives, thinks and invents." - *Ludwig van Beethoven*

"Music is well said to be the speech of angels."
--*Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)*, *British historian, essayist*

Upcoming Concerts

- Thursday, September 23: 6:30pm: Michael Nigro (guitar), Abe Minzer (piano), David Stoller (horn) and Jim Bosse (guitar) at Classically Alive Concert Series in the Broadmoor area of Colorado Springs. The CSGS Guitar Quartet (Mike Zimmerman, Tom Stringer, Bonnie Clark and Jim Bosse) will open this concert. \$25 includes dinner and the concert. Call Abe at 719-229-2239 for reservations and directions.
- Sunday, September 26: 2:00pm: Michael Nigro (guitar) plus 4 duets with Jim Bosse at Hazlerig Music House in Crestone. Call Sylvia at 719-256-4376 for information.
- Saturday, September 11: 7 to 9 pm: Take Two Acoustic Rock Duo (Rudy Melena and Jim Bosse) at Providence Tavern, 5280 West 25th Avenue, Edgewater, Colorado (near Sheridan Blvd and West 25th in Denver metro area).

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Musicians wanted for Sunday Services at ASUUC

ASUUC occasionally requests classical guitarists for their Sunday services. The agreement is that the CSGS is allowed use of the church facilities for the meetings in exchange for providing music during their services. Solos, duets, etc are welcome. Please contact Mike Zimmerman if you would like to perform occasionally at ASUUC services. (*Editor's note: if you play for a service, we will, if you wish, include a photo and a brief note about the pieces you played.---TAS*).

Status of the New CSGS Website

Greg Playle continues to work on and update the CSGS website. He has placed several back issues of the CSGS newsletters on the site, as well as some recent photos of members, concerts, etc. If you have any ideas about what you would like to see added to the website, please contact him at Webmaster@ColoradoSpringsGuitarSociety.org or discuss them with him at the next meeting.

Reynolds Guitars visits Sharon Isbin's Master Class in Aspen

By Randy Reynolds, Luthier

In August I visited Sharon Isbin's Master class at the Aspen School Of Music to show her and her students my double top classical guitars and explain their construction and demonstrate their sound.

Ms. Isbin is in charge of the guitar program there and teaches and concertizes through the summer during the Aspen Music Festival. It is a terrific place to be as the classical music theme and beautiful surroundings are very inspiring. I would recommend a visit highly and you can investigate the Festival by visiting www.aspenmusicfestival.com Isbin is of course head of the guitar program at Julliard as well as a leading recording artist and international level touring concert guitarist. She also won the 2010 Grammy for her recording "Journey to the New World" which is her second such award. You can visit her website at <http://www.sharonisbin.com/>

Her Master Class was held at the Castle Creek campus and during the day I attended included about 12-15 students and several audience members who were welcome to attend. I use the term students lightly as everyone there seemed to be highly evolved guitarists possessing quality instruments. The acoustics of the room were excellent. Each student came to the front of the room and played a piece for Ms. Isbin and then received a series of suggestions as to how to improve either their fingering or technique and usually both. This is very instructive to observe, and one can learn a great deal about music on the instrument when attending such session. I recommend them highly. I would have to comment that Isbin is a creative and determined hard worker as a teacher, and the students needed a good deal of stamina to stay up with her.

At the end of the three-hour class I was invited to give a brief presentation on the double top guitar concept and I used a soundboard showing the interior before completion for that purpose as well as two other smaller samples that I passed around to the class. Everyone seemed very interested even though it was a very warm Friday afternoon, and I'm sure they could have been off elsewhere enjoying the day. I answered a great number of excellent questions from the audience.

Ms. Isbin then began to sample each of the two instruments I brought in comparison to her excellent Irish made solid top guitar in Cedar. Each guitar was tuned identically before she started to play inviting the students to evaluate what they were hearing.

Sharon was very democratic and open to commentary during these sessions and then began a very dynamic exchange.

I brought two guitars that demonstrated two ends of the design choices I offer. The first guitar was loaned to me by Cliff Bryant and is East Indian Rosewood with Chocolate Cedar double top. It's original objective was to be a warm guitar and to sound very different than his other Reynolds guitar which is identical except for being Brazilian/Spruce. This guitar has a conventional fingerboard over a Spanish Cedar neck and no acoustic port. Cliff's guitar is about a year old and has an excellent big sound that is indeed typical of the Cedar soundboard over this species of rosewood. Here is a picture:



The second guitar was specially built for this presentation and I used a set of black Brazilian Rosewood and European Spruce from Switzerland. The Brazilian is an excellent set I have had for close to 15 years and I often joked to clients that it was my "Sharon Isbin set" reserved for the day when she ordered a guitar from me. Since this was as close as I was apt to get to that reality, I chose it for the presentation guitar. (This set has most expensive acquisition cost of any wood I have ever purchased) The guitar has a low profile elevated neck with an acoustic port and Rodgers tuners. The bindings are a highly figured hard Cocobolo rosewood and offer a stunning accent point to the black Brazilian as well as contributing to the power of the instrument I believe. The sound of this guitar is very powerful and open even though it had only been strung up for two days before the presentation. Here is a picture of that guitar:



The Evaluation (where Randy's Heart Moves to his Throat!): Sharon began by playing passages on each guitar and she seemed pleased by the Reynolds's Spruce guitar with its power and was very surprised by how good it sounded having been strung up only for a couple of days previously. As she had been during the Master Class she was very thorough and exercised each guitar to its maximum potential. I must say sitting next to her that I was shocked by her powerful attack. Her tremolo was so accurate and clear that I will never hear the Recuerdos again without that image coming to mind.

Next Sharon wanted to hear the guitars from the back of the class and invited several students to come forward and play the guitars while she listened. She also inquired of both the audience and the player(s) as to their opinion. Finally she asked to have three students play passages on each guitar while she closed her eyes and attempting to identify which instrument was which and what she preferred. During this phase several students did the same. I would suggest that while I have been a participant in several listening sessions of varying thoroughness, this one stood out for its energy. Further it may not have been science according to acousticians but it was practical and did generate conclusions for most of the attendees.

As one might expect it would be difficult for any luthier to be accurate as to conclusions given the inherent conflict of interest and the importance of having an exceptional artist evaluate your lifelong work in front of an audience. In addition I hold the view that a guitar is a personal choice and that there is no "good, better, best" index for all of the features in any instrument. In the end as I have said many times.....if you like an instrument, you're not wrong.

That said I'll give my opinions as to what I thought might be a general conclusion. There could be no consensus obviously. Also I'm equally certain that Sharon Isbin isn't capable of not giving her opinion honestly. If my guitars were not up to her standard she would certainly have said so in no uncertain, albeit diplomatic terms.

I felt that all three guitars were strong performers with no substantial differences in power with the Reynolds Spruce guitar being most projecting to the audience. It was also the clearest and both of these characteristics were noted often by both the student audience and by Sharon. Sharon's own guitar has obviously been well played in by her strong and varied attack so I felt good about that. Cliff's Reynolds's Cedar guitar was preferred on some passages and it seemed to compete better near the end of the evaluation. I felt like the Isbin guitar had a wonderful midrange and the tone quality overall was impressive where I preferred it in some but not all pieces. During the blind test each guitar had varying placements depending on individual pieces and players and I couldn't really choose an obvious winner although my ear is certainly groomed to hear a spruce guitar.

Sharon was certainly interested in the Spruce guitar and she might have been tempted by it however she told me that she promised herself that she wanted what she heard in a Cedar guitar. She wanted to know if I could make a Cedar guitar as powerful as my Spruce example and we agreed that I would make one to show her next year. She does have a Cedar double top from another maker coming to her in December.

In the end I believe that my Double Top Grand Legacy guitar proved it has the ability to perform at any concert level. As to tone production each individual player is going to make qualitative choices that vary by instrument and what may be their choice will not work for everyone else. This in a nutshell is why I believe it is important for me to ask the right questions with each client in order to stand a better chance of making the right guitar for that person. For Sharon Isbin it was important to evaluate what the audience will hear and that is what she did with my guitars both thoroughly and creatively. I certainly appreciated the opportunity and the session was important to me in my growth as a luthier.



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By Randy Reynolds

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