

Lauderdale Guitar Society NEWSLETTER

by Avron Goss

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January roundup

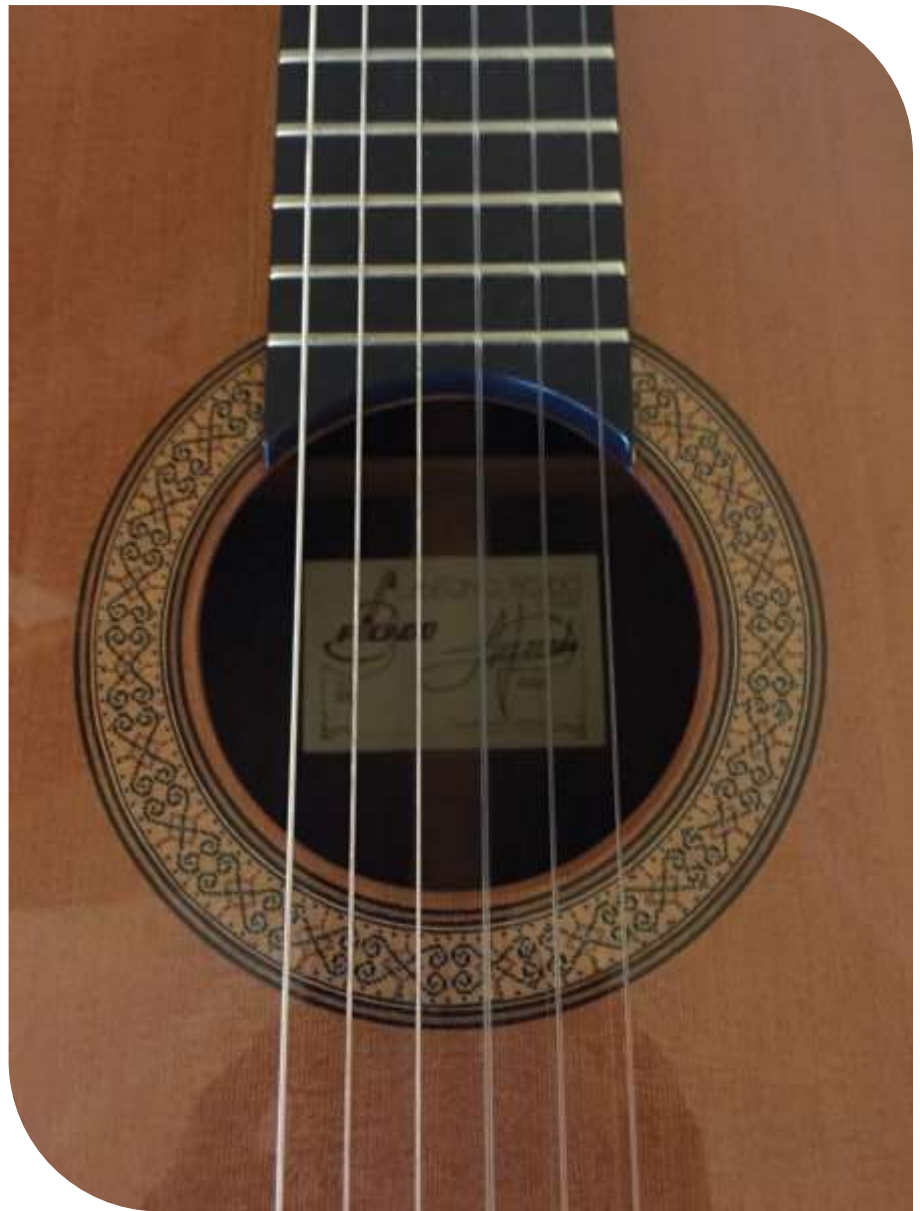
January was a strong start to the year, with a fantastic turnout and some delightful playing.

Practice corner

How do we fix a problem when we do not know we have a problem?

Housekeeping

Meetings continue on zoom.



I've suffered for my
music, now it's your
turn.

- Neil Innes -



A STRONG START TO A HOPEFUL YEAR

January's started with a fantastic turnout. While zoom has had its benefits; it has allowed meetings to continue and the participation of those further afield (from the tip of Africa to the blizzards of Frankfurt). We are all looking forward to the day when meetings at Lauderdale House can resume. We will return stronger, vaccinated and a little more international.

January roundup



Programme

We were treated to the following delightful range of pieces, in order of performance:

13th January

- | | | |
|---------|--|---|
| Nick H | Antonio Lauro waltzes, Maria Luisa and Angastura | <p>"Maria Luisa" is romantic sounding Venezuelan waltz named after the Maestro Lauro's wife. As Nick reflected, we can only speculate if the difficulty of the piece was inspired by his wife too.</p> <p>The second section was inspired by Chopin's Waltz in A flat, Op. 69, No. 1. Here are links to Lauro's and Chopin's waltzes:</p> <p>Lauro, Maria Luisa: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNb9-kgONuM
Chopin, Waltz in A flat: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDN4xSKBUa</p> |
| Steve Y | Self-Composition, Music for an old photograph | <p>This somewhat simple and rather innocent sounding piece was inspired by an old primary school photograph of Stephen and his erstwhile fellow pupils at the little village school he attended in Devon in 1970. The image was charming and at the same time poignant as several of those smiling children are no longer with us. The music suggested itself as he looked at the photo and he wrote down what had occurred in his mind.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5M6LF61D9Yw</p> |
| Andrew | Lennox Berkeley, Op77 Theme and Variations | <p>Sir Lennox Randal Francis Berkeley was one of the major English composers of his time. Op.77, written 1970, was dedicated to the Italian guitarist and composer Angelo Gilardino, who gave the first performance in 1971 in Italy.</p> <p>The theme is followed by six variations. Gilardino said of the work, "Theme and variations is a very subtle essay of sheer musical wisdom and of mild, peaceful poetic memory: the work of a great old artist."</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7guyNkybl8</p> |

Adrian Azuelo	Rice	
Avron	Johann Kaspar Mertz, Adagio in Em	This simple piece beautifully captures the musical language of the piano through the simple technique of accentuating the melody and playing the base softly, mimicking the differentiation of the left and right hand of the piano player.
Sara	Fernando Sor, Study in E ^m	
Richard B	Fernando Sor, Opus 21 Fantasia in E ^m (“Les Adieux”)	<p>Sor’s Fantasia is filled with introspection, pathos and musical drama. Beethoven, 15 years earlier, had composed his Sonata for Piano No 26 in E flat, Opus 81a which he also titled “Les Adieux”.</p> <p>While Sor is not quite Beethoven, this work is still worth listening to. For those that missed Richard playing it, you can hear it here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iC3VItVF_U</p>
Sheryl	Antonio Vivaldi, Concerto in D major for guitar, RV.93	<p>Vivaldi wrote a series of chamber concertos. The lute concerto in D major, RV 93, was one of four works featuring the lute and is now frequently played on guitar.</p> <p>On a personal level I have always loved this piece, having first heard a recording by John Williams.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBJ8BmFPt3U</p>
Stuart	JS Bach, Gigue from the Suite in D ^m	<p>I was not able to find a recording of the Gigue from the Suite in Dm, but here is a recording of Avi Avital playing the Gigue from the Partita in Dm: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ea-zla-2VA8</p> <p>Request: Stuart can you play the Chaconne for us on the mandolin? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFV5dUNLjwQ</p>
Alan F	Alexander Tansman, Polish Suite	Tansman is well known for his guitar pieces, most of which he wrote for Segovia.
Alan J	West Side Story, Somewhere and Maria	
Richard W	Arrangement for guitar – Breakfast at Tiffanies	
Martin B	Self-Composition, Desparado	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVRwskdYsB0

Martin B	Self-Composition, Kirkmichael De Falla, solo version of La Vida Breve	Composed after going to the Kirkmichael Guitar Festival: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnZ6JzXVBzs
Nick H	Eduardo Sainz de la Maza, Campanas del Alba	One of the more delicate tremolo pieces for the guitar, expertly played by Nick: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yypci2qB_ml
Avron G	Joaquin Turina, Fandanguillo Fernando Sor, Study No 2	
Alan F	Cesare Negri, Il Bianco Fiore	Cesare Negri (c. 1535 – c. 1605) was an Italian dancer and choreographer. He was nicknamed il Trombone, a jocular name for someone "who likes to blow their own horn". Negri composed Bianco Fiore for the Lute which was transcribed by Segovia. Unrelated to Negri, Alan also suggested we listen to Birds Tear Drops, here it is smoking: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hn10okvX19E&list=RDcQF9hQ7Bk9E&index=24
Steve Y	Self-Composition, Io Pan	Composed with the poem "Hym to Pan" by Alistair Crowley in mind, the first four lines quoted below. <i>Thrill with lissome lust of the light, O man ! My man ! Come careering out of the night Of Pan ! Io Pan .</i> You can hear Steve play his composition here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttGkOSbPkyM Of interest, Crowley designed the tarot deck which we are all so familiar with (yes the one famously used by Jane Seymour in the Bond Movie, Live and Let Die).

Richard W	Eduardo Sainz de la Maza, Habanera	Eduardo Sáinz de la Maza was born in 1903 in Spain. His brother, Regino, was an established and accomplished guitarist.
		Eduardo, who played both he guitar and cello, is best remembered for his composition and his guitar works are acknowledged as being among the finest 20th-century contributions to the repertoire.
		The Habanera, or contradanza, is a style of Cuban popular dance music of the 19th century. For those unfamiliar with the style, think of the well-known aria, "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle" ("Love is a rebellious bird"), from Bizet's Carmen.
		We are thoroughly enjoying Richard taking us through tour of Eduardo's repertoire and hope to hear more
David M	John Dowland, Queen Elizabeth's Galliard	
Stuart M	Georg Philipp Telemann, Fantasy No 2	Stuart debuted his newly acquired mandolin, and it was pleasing to see Stuart create a wonderful sound out of it.
Sheryl	Lauro, Waltz	
Dennis	Fernando Sor, Op. 6 Study No. 4 in G	
	Joaquín Rodrigo, En Los Trigales	Composed in 1938 on Rodrigo's return to Spain from France, En los Trigales, Spanish for "in the wheat fields," is the first of a series of impressionistic pieces referring to Spanish landscapes which Rodrigo eventually collected into the suite Por los Campos de España.
		You can enjoy hearing it hear again played by Karmen Stendler: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_FfURYuVXk
Oswaldo	Self-composition, Haunted	Inspired by binge watching on Netflix. Bingeworthy in its own right!



If you liked that then try this

Turina's music often conveys a feeling of rapture or exaltation. His guitar works, which include the Fandanguillo played by Nick were written for Andrés Segovia.

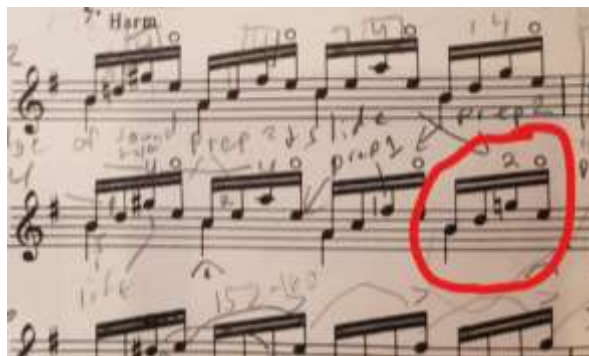
If you would like to try more Turina I would suggest playing Ráfaga, Op.53, played here by Tariq Harb <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfOum1wOChw>.

Practice corner



SELF CORRECTING

While recently browsing through a well-known social media platform, I was reading a post where the person was asking how long we had been playing Villa-Lobos Prelude No 4 before realising that the G# in measure 14 changes to G natural.



This made me think of a recent discussion with Alan, he quietly gave me pointers in playing Sor Study No 2. After complementing me on the quite smooth playing he suggested I should build up the speed to 92 crochets per minute to bring out the beat in the melody a little more. He then encouraged me to build up to the speed rather than attempt it immediately. The discussion continued to our common enjoyment of Sor's Study No 6 in D major, where he pointed out that one needs to work on stopping the lower bass notes. I remarked that that even the seemingly easy studies had tricky bits and Alan sagely responded, "and it's why they are clever studies!"

Needless to say, I have played Sor's Study for years. It was probably one of the first ones I tackled. And I have always played it in the same way until recently. So how do we identify problems and mistakes, and how do we begin to correct them.

"A sum can be put right: but only by going back till you find the error and working it afresh from that point, never by simply going on."

– C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* –

The simplest method of correcting mistakes is to study under the watchful eye of a competent teacher who can point out mistakes and lead you on a path to improvement. But what about those of us that do not have teachers?

This is when I fall back to my studies as a Masters student in Biomedical Engineering. The maths was horrendous, and physics was beyond comprehension. We did not have the luxury of civil engineers, who we quipped could just work out a number and multiply by 1,000 to be safe. We need to know our answer was right which meant, after each and every calculation, asking if the answer made sense intuitively, double checking the process and calculations and then submitting to peer review. Is studying music any different?

So here is my advice when tackling a piece (even an old favourite):

- **Take time to do the background research**, who wrote the music, what was their style and what period was the music written in? Bach and Barrios, for example, present very different challenges. Bach may be a little more precise in style, but ornamentations were not necessarily always written as they could be assumed, while Barrios's scores were created by his students.
- **Take time to get an overview of the piece**. What is the key and time signature, and does it change? What are the sections and repeats?
- **Deconstruct each part**. Play the melody, harmony and base separately. Definitely make sure you can sing or hum the melody. Segovia, in a master class, firmly asserted that if you cannot sing the piece you cannot play it.
- **Now practice each section**. Always play slowly at first and then increase tempo over time. Pay meticulous attention to the detail of notes, the rests, the fingerings (your left and right hand), the phrasing and the colouring of the music. Now is the time to remind yourself that the score is not sacred text and should be written on. But remember the advice of Reception year teachers – do not be scared to cross out your scratchings and write over them when you need to correct something. Gohar Vardanyan has great advice here – when you practice a phrase set the metronome to something slow that you believe to be achievable and attempt to play the phrase 3 times without a mistake. If you do not succeed slow down a notch. If you do succeed go up a notch until you reach the desired tempo.
- **Listen to yourself**. Tape or video yourself playing. Each has its benefits – video can allow you to watch your technique but focussing on the sound alone can force you to really listen to the music.
- **Submit yourself to peer review**. If you do not have a teacher, find someone who can listen to you play and offer advice. I personally do not recommend using your dotting family and friends who are more likely to offer words of encouragement and express delight then provide constructive criticism. Indeed, one of the best things you can do is throw yourself at the mercy of the fiercest critics I know, fondly referred to as the Lauderdale Guitar Society.

Of course, for this process to work, we should all take a note out of Alan's book and should all speak up words of motivation and nudges to help each other become the musicians we want to be.

Housekeeping



Next Meeting

At present we will continue with zoom meetings on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month, 8:30 - 10PM.

For further information and contact details please visit our website:

www.lauderdaleguitarsociety.org