

CGSUNY Newsletter

Classical Guitar Society of Upstate New York www.cgsuny.org

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Plans are already well underway for the 2011 CGSUNY Fall Classical Guitar Festival. This year's festival will be held on Saturday, September 24 and Sunday, September 25, 2010 at the Anderson Center for the Arts on the campus of Hartwick College in Oneonta. Directions to Hartwick College can be found on the web at hartwick.edu. Click on the 'About Hartwick' button. You can also find directions and additional information about the festival at the CGSUNY.org website. In this edition of the newsletter you'll get an overview of festival events. The time schedule is similar to last year. You will also find an article about our featured performers, *Presti* and *Maria Zemantauski*.

Overview of Events for CGSUNY Fall Festival 2011

Saturday, September 24, 2011

11 a.m. – Registration

Morning Recitals & Programs

CGSUNY Members Recital

Informal Ensemble Playing (TBA)

If you would like to perform in the Members' or present a Lecture/Demonstration please email Sal Salvaggio as soon as possible but no later than September 9 at: vaggio@yahoo.com

Dinner Break

7 p.m. – Concert by *Presti* (A Reception will follow after the concert)

Sunday, September 25, 2011

10:00 a.m. – Master Class @ Anderson Center

1 p.m. - CGSUNY Collegiate Honors Recital @ Unitarian Church

Students wishing to perform should email Paul Sweeny as soon as possible but no later than September 9 at bpsimplegifts@earthlink.net

3 p.m. - Concert by *Maria Zemantauski* @ Unitarian Church



CGSUNY is very excited to feature **Presti** (seen here at left) as the headline performers for the Saturday evening program at the 2011 CGSUNY Fall Festival. **Presti** is the first professional all-female guitar trio in the United States. Their name pays homage to the legendary Ida Presti, considered by many to be the greatest woman guitarist to date and one of the best performers in the history of the guitar. Members of the ensemble are **Olga Amelkina-Vera, Valerie Hartzell and Lynn McGrath**. Their most influential teachers include Manuel Barrueco,

Robert Guthrie, Ako Ito, William Kanengiser, Alexander Lagoya, Matteo Mela, Pepe Romero, Douglas Rubio, James Smith, and many others who have given us advice and inspiration throughout the years. Collectively they have an array of undergraduate and graduate degrees from such prominent music schools as the Peabody Conservatory, University of North Texas, and University of Southern California. Each of them brings to *Presti* their own unique experiences and talents. Each is an accomplished performer in her own right, Valerie and Lynn as soloists and Olga is a member of the Kithara Duo. Their performing careers have taken them all over Europe, United States, Canada, and South America. They also have a gifted composer among them—Olga—who has been inspired by this opportunity to contribute to the original guitar trio repertoire. We'll take a moment here to introduce each of the performers and a bit about their namesake, Ida Presti.



Olga Amelkina-Vera grew up in Belarus and moved to the United States in 1997. She holds a Bachelor's of Arts in Music, Summa Cum Laude, from the University of St. Thomas in Houston. She also holds Masters of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from the University of North Texas in Denton. Olga has also been greatly influenced by her lessons and masterclasses with Robert Guthrie and Matteo Mela. Olga is an active performer and award-winning composer of works for guitar. She has received commissions for solo guitar and guitar ensemble music, as well as

compositions for guitar with other instruments and voice. Olga's solo composition *Ex Tenebris*, commissioned by Valerie Hartzell, has recently been published by the Productions d'Oz as part of the Frank Koonce Series. In 2009, Olga was named the winner of the Austin Classical Guitar Society's Guitar Ensemble Composition Competition for her quartet *Ninotchka*. As a soloist, Olga was a prizewinner in the Eastfield Collegiate Guitar Competition and a finalist in the University of Texas at Dallas International Guitar Competition. Olga is a recurring member of the "Classical Minds" Guitar Institute & Competition faculty, and has been invited to teach and perform at numerous festivals such as the Fort Worth Guitar Guild Festival, Mesquite Guitar Festival and the Guitar Orchestra Workshop. The Kithara Duo is made up of Olga and her husband, guitarist Fernand Vera.

The duo was formed in 2002 and since then has performed in Europe as well as North and South America. Kithara Duo strives to expand the guitar repertoire through their many arrangements and Olga's original compositions. Olga's interest in early music has led her to play in a viol consort. She studies and arranges for guitar seventeenth-century English Lyra viol music. Her doctoral dissertation on the subject was recently published in Soundboard Magazine. Her article on Dionisio Aguado's Variations on the Fandango is scheduled to be published in an upcoming issue. Olga's other interests include fine arts, literature, and foreign languages. She currently lives in Denton, TX.



Valerie Hartzell began her classical guitar studies on a half-size Ramirez at the age of three. At the age of six, she studied with maestro Akexandre Lagoya at the Académie Internationale d'Été in Nice, France. She has performed in Europe, Canada, the U.S., and has appeared on television in Nice, France. From September 29 to October 5, 2002 she toured the Carolinas. This tour helped promote her first cd, *Fuoco!*

She has performed in many festivals, including the Eastfield College Guitar Festival and Competition in Mesquite, the Tennessee Festival at MTSU, the East Carolina University (ECU) Competition and Festival in Greenville, NC, the MANC Guitar Competition Festival in Greensboro, NC and the Pennsylvania Academy of Music Festival, where she shared the stage with Eliot Fisk. In March of 2007, Valerie performed with studio members of the Houston Grand Opera at the Rienzi Recital Series. Valerie has also performed as a guest soloist for the New York City

Classical Guitar Society, the Troubadour Series at Wofford College, The Charlotte Guitar Society, Arizona State University, Austin Classical Guitar Society, Appalachian University, Texas State University, the Elon Guitar Society, and Auburn University.

She was a prizewinner at the Portland Guitar Competition, the ECU Competition and Festival, and the Appalachian Guitar Festival and Competition. She has won 1st prizes at the 10th International Guitar Competition "Simone Salmaso" in Italy and at the Concours de Guitare Classique Heitor Villa-Lobos in France.

At the Peabody Conservatory, Valerie studied with Manuel Barrueco on scholarship earning her Bachelor's Degree in 1997. She was awarded a Graduate Teaching Fellowship at Radford University and was placed as Adjunct Faculty while studying for her Master's Degree in Music, receiving her performance degree in May of 1999. Currently, she is Adjunct Faculty at the Houston Community College. Recently, Valerie was featured in the 2010 ChamberArt Music Festival in Madrid, Spain where she was a featured soloist in a six-concert tour. This included performances in Madrid's Ateneo Theater, Calatravas Cathedral and the Nicolas Salmerón Culture Center.

In September, Valerie will be performing the *Fantasia para un getilhombre* by Joaquin Rodrigo with the Kingwood Pops Orchestra. Valerie is the creator and Director of the "Classical Minds" Guitar Institute and Competition as part of the Texas Music Festival at Moores School of Music in Houston and is the director of the Greater Houston Guitar Guild.



While studying Spanish as a foreign exchange student in Mexico, **Lynn McGrath** bought a guitar on a whim and asked a visiting professor, Alfredo Sanchez, for lessons, never imagining that years later she would be invited back as a professional musician. Since then, Lynn has performed in multiple international festivals including the XIX Festival Internacional de Guitarra in Lima, Peru, the Guitar on the Mediterranean Festival in Italy, the Nikšić Festival in Montenegro, the III Muestra de Guitarra Ajijic in Mexico and for the 2009 Guitar Foundation of America Convention. In her unique rendition of *Platero y yo* by Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Lynn has astounded audiences and received critical acclaim by performing the role of guitarist and narrator simultaneously.

Lynn has performed and given masterclasses for prominent guitar programs including The University of Veracruz in Mexico and Oberlin Conservatory, and has appeared on a number of arts series and for colleges across the United States. In 2008, she completed a 6-concert tour

of Peru, and has been an outreach artist for organizations such as the Austin Classical Guitar Society and the Da Camera Society in Los Angeles. She has appeared as a soloist with the Northern New York Guitar Society and has adjudicated a number of international competitions, and in 2009 was selected as the clinician and conductor of the Albuquerque Honors Guitar Group.

After having received degrees in Spanish Language and Literature, Education, and in Music, Lynn received her Master and Doctorate of Musical Arts Degree from the University of Southern California. She has studied with some of today's most prominent guitarists, including William Kanengiser, Pepe Romero, as well as James Smith and Douglas Rubio. Lynn is a former faculty member of the Crane School of Music, State University of New York at Potsdam, where she received a Student Choice Award in 2006. She also serves as the Tour Director for the Guitar Foundation of America and presently lives and teaches in Albuquerque, NM.



Ida Presti (1924-1967) and **Alexandre Lagoya** (1929-1999) formed the greatest classical guitar duet in the world to date. This was not simply due to their technical excellence, but their subtlety and force in emotional expression. In addition, they also transcribed music for the instrument from many sources, most notably the harpsichord, violin and piano. By the time Lagoya was 19, he had already given about 500 concerts throughout the Middle East. He decided to move to Paris and continue his studies with Jean Saudry, also studying harmony and counterpoint with Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos. He met the French-born Presti -

already a celebrity, having made her first recording at 10 - soon after his arrival in Paris when he was invited to perform at a guitar society concert.

Presti had been a student of Andrés Segovia and he fondly called her "Ida Prestissimo." At the concert Presti declared Lagoya the best guitarist she had ever heard. They soon married, and from 1950 until her death in 1967 performed exclusively as a duo. In a musical world that still regarded the guitar as a folk instrument, duos were comparatively rare. Most other guitarists were finding it hard to establish solo careers. To meet their need for material they began transcribing keyboard works by Bach, Scarlatti, Debussy, Falla, Granados and Haydn—among them a concerto by the last-named originally written for two hurdy-gurdies - and commissioning works from other composers. Segovia was so taken with their performance at their New York debut that he wrote to Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco asking him to consider writing for two guitars. The resultant *24 Preludes and Fugues* became a staple piece. Castelnuovo-Tedesco also composed for them a *Concerto for Two Guitars*. André Jolivet, Pierre Petit, Federico Moreno Torroba and Joaquin Rodrigo, amongst others, also wrote for them. Between 1952 and 1967 they played some two thousand concerts. Tragically, in 1967, Ida Presti died in New York City of an internal hemorrhage resulting from cancer of the lung. Alexandre survived her by 32 years. He became professor of guitar at the International Academy of Music in Nice from 1960 and at the Paris National Conservatory in 1969. He retired from these positions in 1994. He began to perform solo again in 1972.



Maria Zemantauski (*seen here with Jonathon Cohen in a concert at RPI*) is one of the world's few heralded female flamenco-style guitarists, and one of even fewer female flamenco composers. Maria will be the featured performer for the Sunday afternoon concert that follows the Collegiate Honors Recital at the CGSUNY 2011 Fall Festival. She has performed in Spain, Italy and across the continental United States to great acclaim. Her albums, *Mrs. Laughinghouse* (1997), *Seeing Red* (2000), *Under the Lemon Tree* (2005) and *Petty Feet & Mistletoe* (2010), have received stellar reviews from music critics around the world. Maria's programs are a dynamic blend of artistic freedom, innovation and tradition. This is not surprising considering that as a child, she resisted guitar lessons, telling her encouraging parents that she wanted to "discover the instrument on her own without being told what to do." As one reviewer wrote, "Zemantauski has continually pushed the boundaries of the possible with her trusty 6-string, blending genres that have little or no business appearing on the same bill, much less in the same

song. It's rarely less than electrifying to watch her do it." She believes that the expressive possibilities of the guitar are limitless and pursues her music with passion, confidence and grace.

With a Masters Degree in Cultural Anthropology, she is a relentless promoter of the arts as a vital educational component and an integral part of society. She is highly regarded for combining both performance and sociocultural analysis and is a frequent guest lecturer at colleges and universities nationwide, including the University of San Francisco, University of California at Santa Cruz, Eastman School of Music, Ithaca College School of Music, St. Lawrence University, California State

University at San Marcos and The University of Kentucky at Lexington. Her music can also be heard in the award-winning documentary, "Radical Harmonies," an historical perspective of Women's Music Festivals and "The Heretics" a documentary film about the Women's Art Movement of the 1970's in the USA.

Maria performs extensively as a soloist or with her ensemble, which has been described as an "elegantly understated global music ensemble. The Flamenco style began as Gypsies of Spain's Andalusia province first spread the florid songs, dances, and improvised guitar accompaniment so characteristic of Flamenco throughout the rest of the country. And since it became the rage of Spanish coffeehouses in the mid-19th century, flamenco has also traveled a stylistic route leading from traditional forms to a freer, more open style known as nuevo (new) flamenco, and influenced both classical music and jazz along the way.

Maria Zemantauski's fine new CD, *Under the Lemon Tree*, spans the spectrum of flamenco guitar's evolution. The 11 tracks here include a pair of celebrated Spanish works, a hymn arrangement, and eight of her own captivating compositions. These last range from classic flamenco to more nuevo-sounding pieces flecked with borrowings from jazz, Celtic, and Appalachian string-band music. Guesting on the disc are Tony Dumas on cajon, Angelina Glashenkova-Reed on domra, and Martha Gallagher on Celtic harp.

Maria is a superb guitarist by any standard, but her presentation, personality and stage presence are really what set her show special. She gave one of the best performances we have ever had here, and I think our only standing ovation in almost 4 years of guitar concerts."

Reminders for All

- A reminder to all that we will be electing Officers and Board Members at the festival. Nominations can be made by email to : carolyn@cgsuny.org
- There will also be a Silent Auction at the Saturday evening concert.
- Membership dues of \$ 25 for 2010-2011 are also due. Your financial support helps CGSUNY cultivate an appreciation for the Classical Guitar. It also helps us provide educational outreach, local concerts and events like the Fall Festival. Tax-deductible memberships and/or donations can be sent to:

*CGSUNY
8 Banta Place
Stamford, NY 12167*

Other Coming Events

September 25 – Benefit Concert featuring **Duo Marchand** at Historic Slingerlands Methodist Church. 4 p.m. Concert, \$20 Donation. To RSVP or details call 518-439-6472