

CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL CLASSICAL GUITAR FESTIVAL® - 24TH ANNIVERSARY



Jason Vieaux (US)
guitar

Daniele Chiesa (IT)
guitar maker

Thomas Flippin (US)
guitar/composer

Jonathan Leathwood (EN)
guitar/lecturer

Lorenzo Micheli (IT)
guitar

Petra Poláčková (CZ)
guitar

Andy Poxon (US)
guitar

Mari Sato (US)
violin

Nicolò Spera (IT)
guitar

Hao Yang (CN)
guitar

Stroud Youth Competition
Semi-Finalists and Finalists

JUNE 6-9, 2024



**The Cleveland International Classical Guitar Festival®
strives to:**

Inspire guitarists and non-guitarists of all
ages, genders, national origins, and backgrounds;

Encourage deeper thought, discussion, and understanding
about how we perceive, perform, and evaluate fine music;

Nurture new and old musical relationships;

Promote the creation and dissemination of fine musical art.

For we believe that it is in heightened moments of
live musical magic—when art and chance coalesce,
time stops, and egos dissolve— that often we
become most mindful of our shared humanity.

*[One of] two of the most important
annual American classical guitar events.
(Classical Guitar Magazine)*

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Front Cover: Guitar by José L. Romanillos
(England) 1981 courtesy Guitars International

Welcome and Acknowledgments

Welcome to the twenty-fourth annual Cleveland International Classical Guitar Festival®. This June we look forward once again to sharing world-class classical guitar concerts, premieres, master classes, lectures, private lessons, and exhibits, with old friends and new from around the USA and beyond in a celebration of the classical guitar and art music: solo and ensemble, old and new.

In presenting this international event it has been my pleasure over the years to work closely with Jason Vieaux, Grammy Award Winner and Cleveland Institute of Music Guitar Department Head; Tom Poore, a devoted guitar teacher and superb writer; and James Stroud, Founder and Director of the James Stroud Classical Guitar Competition. Without these individuals' many generous and varied contributions this Festival would not be possible. As always, many thanks to you all.

Armin Kelly, Founder and Artistic Director
Cleveland International Classical Guitar Festival®

We Wish to Thank the Following for their Support.

Cleveland Institute of Music and **law firm Thompson Hine LLP** for their ongoing generosity and assistance.

Business Partners: Alphagraphics Cleveland, The Augustine Foundation, ClevelandClassical.com, Cleveland Foundation, First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland, Guitars International, Rodgers Tuning Machines, SOUNDTREE Artists, The College Music Society, The Plain Dealer, and WCLV 90.3FM.

Festival Friends: Jeff and Teri Allen, Chip and Kate Andrews, Elizabeth Batts, Cornelia Bergmann, Rosario Cambria and Teresa Cambria Btrvis, Rick Chandler, Mark Cohen, Martin and Kathy Davin, Joshia de Jonge and Patrick Hodges, Jim Doyle, Patrick Duncan, Jeffrey R. Elliott and Cyndy Burton, Patrick Frank, Drs. Jonathan and Melissa Fitzgerald, Chris Freitag, Robert and Melissa Gruca, Linda and Steve Hall, Ruud Harmsen, Christoph and Iris Harlan, David W. Hershberger, Tom Holland, Patrick Kilkenny, Doug and Carolyn Kohrs, Brian Kozak, Terese McLeod, Krystin O'Mara, Andy Poxon, Carolyn Ritchie, William W. Rowley, Matthew Ryan, Lisa and Michael Sharon, Andy Sutton, and Paul Valenti.

Festival Artists and Participants: Finally, many thanks to all our distinguished participating artists, the James Stroud Classical Guitar Competition Semi-Finalists and Competition Judges, and to all of you who have traveled here from near and far over the years, thirty-two states and Canada at last count. Your musical passion, support, and diversity contribute immeasurably to making this Festival the artistic jewel that it is widely acknowledged to be.

About Our Festival Director



Armin Kelly (USA), Founder and Artistic Director of the Cleveland International Classical Guitar Festival®, studied classical guitar with Miguel Rubio in Spain and Switzerland, and Phillip de Fremery and Oscar Ghiglia at the Aspen Music Festival. Among his most formative musical influences were friends and colleagues - classical guitarists Christoph Harlan and John Holmquist. Armin Kelly holds BA and MA degrees in English literature from Columbia University and an MA degree in teacher education with a concentration in English from Harvard University. While at Harvard he founded Guitars International,

a business devoted to representing, promoting, and retailing the work of the world's finest contemporary classical guitar makers.

About Our Competition Director



James Stroud (USA), Founder and Director of the James Stroud Classical Guitar Competition, received his undergraduate degree in classical guitar and composition and his MA degree in classical guitar. He is a Board Member of the Guitar Foundation of America and long-standing supporter of a number of artistic and philanthropic organizations. He founded the Stroud Competition to help create opportunities for the next generation of classical guitarists, ages thirteen through eighteen, residing in the United States. Now in its fifth year, he hopes that this Competition will aid deserving guitar students to further their artistic development through advanced

musical study and the pursuit of professional musical careers.

About The Author Of Our Concert Notes



Tom Poore (USA), has taught at the North Carolina School of the Arts Community Music Center and the Cleveland Institute of Music Preparatory Department. His background in teaching children includes Suzuki training, outreach programs through the Broadway School of Music and Passport Program, and the Cleveland Public Schools' Arts in Summer Education Program. Former students have gone on to earn scholarships and degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, The Juilliard School of Music, University of Southern California Thornton School

of Music, and Aspen Music Festival. Tom Poore earned his bachelor's degree at the North Carolina School of the Arts, under Aaron Shearer, and his master's degree at the Cleveland Institute of Music, under John Holmquist. He was the editor for Aaron Shearer's three volume *Learning the Classical Guitar*.

About Our Guest Lecturers



Jonathan Leathwood (England) is Chair of Guitar at the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music. He is passionate about integrating different kinds of skills: apart from guitar performance, he teaches performance-informed music analysis, and he is an internationally certified teacher of the Alexander Technique. Professor Leathwood gained his PhD at the University of Surrey and his bachelor's degree at King's College London. He edits *Soundboard Scholar*, the Guitar Foundation of America's peer-reviewed scholarly journal. As a recitalist,

Jonathan has appeared at Wigmore Hall (sponsored by the Julian Bream Trust), the Leo Brouwer Festival in Brazil, the Cheltenham Festival, and many other venues in Europe and both American continents. His recordings are available on the Cadenza and NMC labels.



Daniele Chiesa (Italy) was born in Bergamo in 1973 and graduated from the Stradivari violin making school in Cremona in 1997. After apprenticeships with guitar makers in California until 2002, he moved to Granada, Spain, to focus exclusively on the traditional classical guitar. There he learned from masters such as Paco Santiago, Rolf Eichinger, and Antonio Marín. In 2010 he moved to a town near Málaga where he still makes and perfects his traditional and contemporary models. He also trains apprentices occasionally, some of whom are now respected makers' on their own.

About The Composer Of Our Competition Set Piece



Thomas Flippin (USA) is an original and versatile voice in the world of contemporary classical music. Recent highlights include: premiering Chris Brubeck's double concerto for classical and blues guitars with the Memphis Symphony; composing a string quartet for a joint commission by the New York Philharmonic, Juilliard and the American Composers Forum; and premiering a work by Nathalie Joachim. Flippin graduated from the University of Chicago with honors and the Olga and Paul Menn prize for undergraduate music composition. He then earned Master of Music and Artist Diploma degrees in guitar performance from the Yale School of Music.

About Our Guitar Demonstration Performing Artist



Andy Poxon (USA) is a guitarist and arranger. His arrangements have been performed by Grammy winning artists such as Jason Vieaux and Sasha Cooke, as well as the esteemed concert violinist Anne Akiko Meyers. He has performed at venues across the United States and Canada as a soloist and with various bands and orchestras. Currently, Mr. Poxon is a faculty member at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he teaches guitar for the Joint Music Program with Case Western Reserve University and in the Preparatory Department. He also teaches private lessons and classes in Northeast Ohio. Andy Poxon received a Bachelor of Music degree from Towson University under Troy King, as well as a Master of Music degree and Artist Diploma from the Cleveland Institute of Music under Jason Vieaux and Colin Davin.

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Cleveland International Classical Guitar Festival

Schedule of Events THURSDAY, JUNE 6

James Stroud National Classical Guitar Youth Competition

Semi-Final Round - competitors biographies p. 35-38

10:00 am - 12:30 pm, CIM Mixon Hall

Open to the public - Free (no tickets or passes required)

James Stroud National Classical Guitar Youth Competition

Semi-Final Round - competitors biographies p. 35-38

1:30 to 4:00 pm, CIM Mixon Hall

Open to the public - Free (no tickets or passes required)

Lecture 1: Creative Practice

Jonathan Leathwood (England), lecturer

6:00 - 7:15 pm, CIM Studio 217

Open to the public - Free (no tickets or passes required)

CIM FACULTY CONCERT: Jason Vieaux (USA), guitar, and Mari Sato (USA), violin

See page 10 for program and concert notes

7:30 - 9:30 pm, CIM Mixon Hall

Tickets: \$30.00

Post Concert Dinner: L'Albatros Brasserie

11401 Bellflower Road, Cleveland, Ohio - Tel: 216-791-7880

10:00 pm - Attendees must make their own reservations and pay their own tab.

FRIDAY, JUNE 7

Master Class: Nicolò Spera (Italy), guitar

Four student guitarists will perform and be coached by Mr. Spera.

9:30 am - 12:30 pm, CIM Studio 201

Open to auditors - Free (no tickets or passes required)

Master Class: Petra Poláčková (Czech Republic), guitar

Four student guitarists will perform and be coached by Ms. Poláčková.

9:30 am - 12:30 pm, CIM Studio 229

Open to auditors - Free (no tickets or passes required)

Master Class: Hao Yang (China), guitar

Four student guitarists will perform and be coached by Ms. Yang

9:30 am - 12:30 pm, CIM Studio 227

Open to auditors - Free (no tickets or passes required)

Cleveland International Classical Guitar Festival

Schedule of Events

FRIDAY, JUNE 7 cont.

Master Class: Jason Vieaux (USA), guitar, and Mari Sato (USA), violin

Four student guitarists will perform and be coached by Mr. Vieaux and Ms. Sato.

2:00 am - 5:00 pm, CIM Studio 201

Open to auditors - Free (no tickets or passes required)

Master Class: Lorenzo Micheli (Italy), guitar

Four student guitarists will perform and be coached by Mr. Micheli.

2:00 - 5:00 pm, CIM Studio 229

Open to auditors - Free (no tickets or passes required)

Lecture 2: Perceiving and Shaping Harmony

Jonathan Leathwood (England), lecturer

6:00 - 7:15 pm, CIM Studio 217

Open to the public - Free (no tickets or passes required)

GUEST CONCERT: Nicolò Spera (Italy), guitar

See page 13 for program and concert notes

7:30 - 9:30 pm, CIM Mixon Hall

Tickets: \$25.00

Post Concert Dinner: L'Albatros Brasserie

11401 Bellflower Road, Cleveland, Ohio - Tel: 216-791-7880

10:00 pm - Attendees must make their own reservations and pay their own tab.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

Lecture 3: A Guitar Maker's Art - Memory and Innovation

Danielle Chiesa (Italy), guitar maker

6:00 - 7:15 pm, CIM Studio 217

Open to the public - Free (no tickets or passes required)

GUEST CONCERT: Lorenzo Micheli (Italy), guitar

See page 16 for program and concert notes

7:30 - 9:30 pm, CIM Mixon Hall

Tickets: \$25.00

Post Concert Dinner: L'Albatros Brasserie

11401 Bellflower Road, Cleveland, Ohio - Tel: 216-791-7880

10:00 pm - Attendees must make their own reservations and pay their own tab.

Cleveland International Classical Guitar Festival

Schedule of Events

SUNDAY, JUNE 9

Demonstration of Fine Classical Guitars

Classical guitar virtuoso **Andy Poxon** (USA) will perform on seven individually hand-crafted concert guitars to demonstrate each instrument's unique musical qualities.

10:30 am - 11:30 am, CIM Mixon Hall

Open to the public - Free (no tickets or passes required)

Lecture 4: Memory and Improvisation, Demystifying Nicholas Maw's "Music of Memory"

Jonathan Leathwood (England), lecturer

11:45 am -12:45 pm, CIM Studio 217

Open to the public - Free (no tickets or passes required)

GUEST CONCERT: Hao Yang (China), guitar

See page 23 for program and concert notes

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm, CIM Mixon Hall

Tickets: \$15.00

Exhibition: Fine Classical Guitars From Around The World

Guitars International will display a selection of Vintage and new handcrafted classical guitars.

3:10 - 3:50 pm, CIM Pogue Lobby

Open to the public - Free (no tickets or passes required)

GUEST CONCERT: Petra Poláčková (Czech Republic), guitar

See page 28 for program and concert notes

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm, CIM Mixon Hall

Tickets: \$25.00

James Stroud National Classical Guitar Youth Competition

Final Round and Awards Ceremony

See page 34 for information.

6:30 pm - 8:30 pm CIM Mixon Hall

Open to the public - Free (no tickets or passes required)

Post Festival Dinner: Valerios Ristorante

12405 Mayfield Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44106 - Tel: 216-421-8049

Open to all Festival participants

Attendees must pay their own tab.

9:30 pm

Jason Vieaux (USA) and Mari Sato (USA)
Guitar and Violin

Thursday, June 6 at 7:30 p.m.
Cleveland Institute of Music, Mixon Hall

Program
(Solo Guitar)

Sonatina Meridional	Manuel Ponce
Campo	(1882-1948)
Copla	
Fiesta	
Suite in E major, BWV 1006a	J. S. Bach
Prélude	(1685-1750)
Loure	
Gavotte en Rondeau	
Menuet I	
Menuet II	
Bourrée	
Gigue	

Intermission
(Guitar and Violin)

Twist	Vivian Fung
Twisted Prelude	(b. 1975)
Twisted Pipa	
Twisted Jam	
Arpeggione Sonata	Franz Schubert
Allegro moderato	(1797-1828)
Adagio	
Allegretto	

About the Artists



Grammy-winner **Jason Vieaux (USA)** is "among the elite of today's classical guitarists" (Gramophone). Multiple appearances for San Francisco Performances, Caramoor, 92nd St. Y, and Lincoln Center have cemented his reputation. Vieaux has premiered works written for him by Jeff Beal, Avner Dorman, Vivian Fung, Pierre Jalbert, and Pat Methany. His various collaborators include Escher String Quartet, Anne Akiko Meyers, Julien Labro, and Grammy-winners Sasha Cooke, Zuill Bailey, and Timothy McAllister. Vieaux has taught at the CIM for 28 years.

Artist's Website: jasonvieaux.com/



Violinist **Mari Sato (USA)** has enjoyed a rich and varied career as a chamber musician based in Cleveland. Described as "a visceral and engaging storyteller," by clevelandclassical.com, Ms. Sato was the second violinist of the award-winning Cavani String Quartet for twenty-four years. Mari Sato has collaborated with many distinguished artists including members of the Cleveland, Juilliard, Miami, Ying, Emerson, Borodin, Amadeus, St. Lawrence, and Colorado String Quartets, the Weilerstein Trio, Itzhak Perlman, Robert Mann, Anton Nel, Stephanie Blythe, and Charles Neidich.

Notes

When it came to composing for Andrés Segovia, Mexican composer **Manuel Ponce** (1882-1948) knew his place. He wasn't a guitarist, and relied on Segovia to tell him if what he wrote was playable. In a recent interview, composer Stephen Goss summarized Segovia's attitude toward composers: "His idea was that they would just simply write music, and then he would do a sort of arranging, transcribing, translating job to make that music work on the guitar. That was the deal, and all the composers knew this." Composed in 1930, *Sonatina Meridional* was the result of Segovia's request for a work "of a purely Spanish character." Once done, it ran through the Segovia mill. He added the title Meridional, and also gave evocative titles to the four movements. Though Ponce's original score is perfectly playable on the guitar, Segovia punched it up to underline his expressive decisions. Apparently none of this rejiggering disturbed Ponce, and they remained close friends for life. After Ponce's death, Segovia fondly wrote: "I more than anyone else owe gratitude to Ponce, because he responded with the deepest sympathy to my ceaseless eagerness to metamorphose the guitar." (As a "where's Waldo" treat for those of you familiar with Spanish folk music, less than a minute into Campo you'll hear a quote of the traditional children's song "Serranilla.")

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) took a categorical attitude to composing. He seemed intent on producing definitive works for every instrument on which he was proficient. And he was proficient on a lot: violin, cello, contrabass, most brass instruments, oboe, bassoon, flute, and recorder. So it's unsurprising that so many instruments today tout Bach as the foundation of their repertoire. Even the guitar - a close cousin of the baroque lute—gets in on the act. It's unlikely Bach played the lute well, though he owned two in his large instrument collection. (With his large family, an endless parade of visiting students and guests, and vast music library, one wonders where he had room for all this.) But he certainly knew and admired some of the best lutenists of his time, including Silvius Leopold Weiss. Still, his four lute suites seem an ad hoc part of his output. Two of them are reworkings of works previously written for other instruments. The 4th lute suite—BWV 1006a—began life as a work for solo violin. But re-purposing music for another use was common for Bach. In his day composers were hired help. They were expected to produce on demand, and if they didn't feel up to it, their employer would sack them for another composer who did. To meet this conveyor belt of demand, composers often self-plagiarized. For Bach, the Prelude from the 4th lute suite was a particular favorite. Besides the two versions for violin and lute, he also dressed it up as the opening sinfonia for two festive cantatas. Clearly Bach knew a good tune when he composed it.

Born to Chinese parents in Canada, composer **Vivian Fung** (b. 1975) has long felt pulled in diverse cultural directions. "I'm what's known in Asian circles as a banana: yellow on the outside, white on the inside. I often see myself as a voyeur, seeing and listening to different cultures without being a full-fledged participant in any of them." Premiered in 2014, *Twist* was commissioned for violinist Kristin Lee and Jason Vieaux. Before composing the work, Fung met with Lee and Vieaux over a Japanese barbecue dinner. Said Lee: "What I love about Vivian's approach is that she really values getting to know the players, and takes the inspiration from their personalities." Of this work, the composer wrote: "The movements are reinterpretations of my 'twists' on a Baroque prelude, a traditional pipa work, and some jam session licks. In *Twisted Prelude*, I take stock bariolage passages and then gradually contort the phrases in various ways. *Twisted Pipa* alludes to court pipa music with added color. *Twisted Jam* is a fun, fast close to the piece, featuring licks for both violin and guitar, solo passages, and percussive hitting that develops to a rowdy, intense close."

The ever popular *Arpeggione Sonata* by **Franz Schubert** (1797-1828) was composed for an instrument that no longer exists. Indeed, the arpeggione, invented and championed by the Viennese guitar-maker Johann Georg Stauffer (1778-1853), had barely a ten year stint before slipping into obscurity. Also called the guitarre d'amour, it was a bowed instrument with six strings. A cross between the guitar and cello, it was tuned like a guitar and held between the knees without an endpin. Schubert wrote the sonata in 1824 and dedicated it to Vincenz Schuster, a fervent champion of the arpeggione. Fortuitously, Schubert's serene and lovely work has far outlived the instrument for which it was composed. Nowadays it's performed in arrangements for a diverse array of instrumental combinations. It just goes to show that one can't keep great music down, even if it was written for a now extinct instrument.

—Tom Poore

Nicolò Spera (Italy) 10-String Guitar

Friday, June 7, at 7:30 p.m.
Cleveland Institute of Music, Mixon Hall

Program

Passacaglia

Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber
(1644-1704)

Suite per la Capella Degli
Volta Celeste
Il songo di Gioacchino
Annunciazione
Strage degli Innocenti
Lavanda dei piedi
Pentecoste
Giudizio Universale
L'ottavo giorno

Giacomo Susani
(1995)

Intermission

Ciaccona, BWV 1004

J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)

About the Artist



Nicolò Spera (Italy) performs on both six-string and ten-string guitars. A primary goal of his creative work is to expand the guitar repertoire. He has commissioned, performed, and recorded new works ranging from solos to programs with choirs, ensembles, and orchestras. His recordings include the complete works by Maurice Ohana, new pieces for guitar and choir, Bach's Cello Suites; transcriptions of Mompou and Granados, a recording on the passacaglia form, and works with guitar by Christopher Theofanidis. Nicolò Spera teaches at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Artist's Webpage: colorado.edu/nicolo-spera

Notes

Composed around 1676, the collection of suites for violin and continuo entitled the *Rosary Sonatas* or *Mystery Sonatas* is an extraordinarily ambitious work by **Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber** (1644–1704). At the end of the collection, there is a one-movement passacaglia scored for solo violin: often claimed to be the most impressive unaccompanied violin work before J. S. Bach's *Sonatas and Partitas*, Biber's passacaglia is one of the glories of Baroque music. It shares with Bach's much later chaconne a virtuoso string technique of polyphonic playing, as well as brilliant passage work that can be traced back to the tradition of improvising instrumental divisions on a ground, which originated in the vihuela and lute circles of sixteenth-century Spain and Italy. I have transposed the piece from its original G minor to F minor in order to accommodate the tuning and resonances of the ten-string guitar

The young Italian composer **Giacomo Susani** (b. 1995) was faced with the great challenge to dialogue with the artistic and intellectual depth of Giotto's frescoes for the Scrovegni Chapel of Padua, and the cultural vastness that they bring with them. His *Suite per La Cappella Degli Scrovegni*, dedicated to Nicolò Spera, is based first on the iconographic events represented in the Chapel: some moments of the narration of the stories of Joaquim, Anne, Mary and Jesus, which, in Giotto's rendition, the composer found most moving and powerful. Each selection gives the title to the movements of the piece.

The second major inspiration for this piece was a musical one: the work of Marchetto da Padova, specifically his Motet *Ave Regina Caelorum*, which some scholars believe was composed for the opening of the Chapel in 1305. Susani took a few fragments from his music and used them in the texture of the piece, sometimes by clearly presenting them, sometimes by hiding them behind his own musical ideas.

Finally, this piece was inspired by philosophy: the expression of the theological foundation on which the Chapel was conceived. Eight movements—like the seven vices and virtues that are represented below the main frescoes and that accompany human earthly experience—plus one last episode, the “8th day” that completes the journey of human spiritual growth and, according to the conception of the world in 14th Century Italy, marks the end of temporality.

Of all **Johann Sebastian Bach's** pieces for solo violin, the most monumental is the *Ciaccona* that serves as the final movement of the Second Partita in D Minor, BWV 1004. In the last two centuries, it is this single movement that has most intrigued scholars, challenged performers, and inspired arrangers and transcribers. Albert Schweitzer suggested that “out of a single theme Bach conjures up the whole world.” Johannes Brahms, in a letter to Clara Schumann, described the *Ciaccona* as “one of the most wonderful and incomprehensible pieces of music.”

A source of endless fascination and wonder, Bach's *Ciaccona* is one of the most often arranged compositions in the history of music. In the century following the first publication (1802) of Bach's six sonatas and partitas for solo violin, the *Ciaccona* was performed in arrangements and transcriptions almost as diverse as the composers whom it inspired. Each arrangement reveals a different attitude toward the performance of Bach and tells the story of each interpreter's voyage of discovery. My own transcription for ten-string guitar is presented in this recital. Believing that the *Ciaccona's* majestic force lies in its sobriety and elegance, and that the magic of Bach's writing for solo violin is foremost in its art of suggestion, I have taken pains to change as little as possible. My goal has been to preserve the simple beauty, sincerity, and immeasurable profundity of Bach's artistry. The few additions in my transcription are meant to enhance the guitar's sonority, while retaining the clarity and integrity of Bach's writing.

— Nicolò Spera

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Lorenzo Micheli (Italy)

guitar

Saturday, June 8, at 7:30 p.m.
Cleveland Institute of Music, Mixon Hall

Program

Nachtmusik

Der Tod und das Mädchen (Arranged by Ferdinand Rebay)	Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
Variationen über das Brahms'sche "Wiegenlied"	Ferdinand Rebay (1880-1953)
Pour un hommage à Claude Debussy Prélude Pastorale Postlude	Georges Migot (1891-1976)
Minstrels (Arranged by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco)	Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
Caprichos de Goya, op.195 XIII. Quién más rendido? XV. Porqué no fue sensible XII. No hubo remedio	Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968)

Intermission

Nocturnal after John Dowland, op.70 Musingly (Meditativo) Very agitated (Molto agitato) Restless (Inquieto) Uneasy (Ansioso) March-like (Quasi una marcia) Dreaming (Sognante) Gently rocking (Cullante) Passacaglia (Misurato) - Slow and quiet (Molto tranquillo)	Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
Rondò, op.129	Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco

About the Artist



Lorenzo Micheli (Italy) has taken up a busy concert career throughout the world since winning first prize in some of the most prestigious international guitar competitions, including both the Alessandria and Guitar Foundation of America International Competitions. As a recitalist and orchestral soloist, he has performed in more than six hundred concerts throughout Europe, in two hundred US and Canadian cities, and in Africa, Asia, Australia, and Latin America. In addition, since 2002 he has performed worldwide as one half of SoloDuo, whose duo performances have been acclaimed by The Washington

Post as “extraordinarily sensitive – nothing less than rapturous.”

Artist’s Website: lorenzomicheli.com

Notes

Darkness is easy to overlook today, as we can banish it at the touch of a switch. But it wasn’t always thus. Through much of human history, night held us in fearsome thrall. In primeval eons, darkness hid real predators and—perhaps more daunting—lurid creatures conjured from our own fevered imaginations. (Not for nothing was Beowulf’s monster Grendel called “shadow walker.”) Even later, as our gradual mastery of light eroded night terrors, darkness retained its spooky power. William Shakespeare, that exemplar of renaissance exuberance, nonetheless could ominously intone: “Tis now the very witching time of night, when churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out contagion to this world.”

Music has long tapped into this emotionally charged resource. Nachtmusik came to embrace a wide palette. It might depict a frivolous state no more scary than an after dark college kegger. Or it might plumb the disquieting depths of the human soul. So prepare yourself accordingly as the lights go down on tonight’s recital.

For all his luminous beauty, **Franz Peter Schubert** (1797-1828) lived under a shadow. He was chronically ill and believed he hadn’t long to live. “Every night when I go to bed, I hope that I may never wake again, and every morning renews my grief.” Today it’s suspected he suffered from cyclothymia, a mental illness with jagged mood swings between hypomania and severe depression. Sensing his time was short drove him artistically. In 1815 alone, Schubert wrote 150 songs, including eight in one day. Two years later he composed *Der Tod und das Mädchen*, where he depicts a young woman pleading with Death to spare her. Always a superb word painter, Schubert contrasts the maiden’s passionate plea with Death’s implacable chant.

Even those who’ve never heard of Brahms know at least one of his melodies—his *Wiegenlied*, published in 1868, was the 19th century equivalent of a viral meme. So it’s no surprise that Viennese composer **Ferdinand Rebay** (1880-1953) wrote a set of variations on it. Though he wrote almost 400 works for guitar, Rebay himself couldn’t play the guitar. But his niece did, and advised him on how to compose for the instrument. Curiously, Rebay seldom is recognized as one of the first non-guitarists to prolifically compose for the guitar. Perhaps not writing for Andrés Segovia relegated him to the shadows.

Painter, poet, and composer **Georges Migot** (1891–1976) was a free spirit. His music was imbued with his other interests, something noted by his contemporary critics. Wrote one: “It’s only natural then, that if his melodic ideas are those of a painter, they should be not only sonorous successions, but lines as well. Harmony and rhythm are of secondary importance: his vocal threads, or melodies, as they assume their shape, are first and supreme.” (Praise or insult? Hard to tell.) Migot wrote *Pour un Hommage à Claude Debussy* in 1924, and dedicated it to Segovia. Unfamiliar with the guitar, Migot treated it almost as a small harp—indeed, he later reworked the piece into a harp version. The guitar original languished until its belated publication in 1980. As it stands, it needs much revision to be playable on the guitar.

Racism seems bred into our species, and even great composers weren’t immune. When **Claude Debussy** (1862-1918) penned *Minstrels* as part of his 24 piano Preludes, he likely intended nothing more than a light-hearted character piece. That it’s based on an offensive slur—“minstrels” refers to comedians in blackface makeup—probably never troubled him. But in our more enlightened time (ahem) we now can hear it as the innocuous frolic Debussy intended.

When Andrés Segovia set about expanding the guitar’s repertoire, his conservative taste dictated which composers he solicited. There’s a story, probably apocryphal, in which Segovia was asked why he never asked Igor Stravinsky to write something for him. His reply: “I didn’t want to insult him by not playing it.” And when it came to atonalism, he was explicitly caustic: “I think of writing to [Schönberg], this time directly, that it is time that he thinks of God, and that he writes for the guitar a work where he repents of all his sins pseudo-scientific-musical, returning to the melodic and consonant faith with a sincere humility.” To be fair, his taste was shared by many, including **Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco** (1895-1968). A successful film music composer, he not surprisingly gravitated to the “Capricos” of Spanish painter Francisco Goya. Though caprichos in Goya’s day were usually light and whimsical, Goya’s 80 prints are dark and grotesque. They inspired Castelnuovo-Tedesco to some of his most vivid guitar music. In contrast, his Op. 129 *Rondò* is more chaste. But it seems a particular favorite of the composer. “I consider it, among many that I have written, as my model Rondo.”

English guitarist Julian Bream long begged composer **Benjamin Britten** (1913-1976) to write something for him. So one can imagine his delight when, out of the blue, he received a letter from Britten asking if something he’d composed was playable. This was soon followed by the finished piece, a roughly 18 minute theme and variations now considered the apogee of 20th century guitar music. Unlike a standard theme and variations, in which the theme is stated at the beginning, Britten’s *Nocturnal* saves the theme for the end. The theme—a literal quote of the song *Come Heavy Sleep* by renaissance composer John Dowland—is not so much varied as it’s deconstructed, almost note by note. In doing so, Britten inverts our usual reaction to Dowland’s song. On its own, *Come Heavy Sleep* is a somber rumination on death. But as the culmination of Britten’s *Nocturnal*, it’s transfigured into the early light of morning that banishes darkness.

—Tom Poore

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Hao Yang (China)

Guitar

Sunday, June 9 at 1:00 pm
Cleveland Institute of Music, Mixon Hall

Program

Sonata no. 3 in F major, op. 29 no.3 Allegro moderato Andante Presto	Anton Diabelli (1781–1858)
A Romantic Album Song without Words, op. 30 no.3	Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)
Allegretto, D. 900	Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
Träumerei (from Scenes from Childhood, op.15)	Robert Schumann (1810–1856)
Canzonetta (from String Quartet no. 1, op.12)	Felix Mendelssohn
Music of Memory (1989)	Nicholas Maw (1935–2009)

Intermission

Elegy	Alan Rawsthorne (1905–1971)
Toccatà (from Keyboard Partita no. 6, BWV 830)	J. S. Bach (1685–1750)
Three Dances Natarayah (1997)	Mario Lavista (1943–2021)
Shard (1997)	Elliott Carter (1908–2012)
Open Up Your Ears (1997)	Bryan Johanson (b. 1951)

About the Artist



Classical guitarist **Hao Yang (China)** has won top prizes in numerous competitions, including the: Koblenz Guitar Competition, the GFA International Youth Competition, CSU International Guitar Competition, and Andrés Segovia 7th International Guitar Competition. She has appeared as soloist with the Chursächsischo Philharmonie in Germany and has been invited to perform solo recitals at the Cleveland, Panama, and Beijing International Guitar Festivals. Ms. Yang has performed concerts in major venues such as Carnegie Hall, Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Miller Theatre, Princeton Sound Kitchen, and Subculture NYC. Hao Yang holds a BM from the Curtis Institute of Music and just completed her MM degree at the Lamont School of Music at University of Denver as recipient of the Newman Fellowship.

Artists' Webpage: astralartists.org/artist/hao-yang/

Notes

The first decades of the nineteenth century were a time of enormous change in European music. The so-called classical style of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven gave way to the romanticism of Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and others. The British composer Nicholas Maw has described this period as a “golden age” in music. The first half of this recital explores this golden age by contrasting a classically styled sonata by Diabelli with a selection of transcriptions from the romantics. It culminates in Maw’s own monumental *Music of Memory*, which, though written in 1989, engages passionately with the ideals of romantic music and with Mendelssohn’s music in particular. When **Anton Diabelli** published his Three Guitar Sonatas in Vienna around 1807, the six-string guitar was still being invented: players were figuring out what the instrument was capable of and how best to play it. Although his music is played much less than his great contemporaries Sor and Giuliani, Diabelli deserves credit as one of the early pioneers. In fact, he could hardly have known the music of Sor, who did not leave Spain until 1813, and perhaps not much of Giuliani, who arrived in Vienna in late 1806. What’s more, Diabelli’s Third Sonata, which begins this recital, offers something unique in the guitar’s nineteenth-century repertoire: the mercurial changes of character one associates with the music of Haydn or Mozart. Taking just the opening section of the first movement, for example, the music is by turns grand, brilliant, playful, and wistful. The idea of this style was to imitate the character and pacing of comic opera. This comic spirit dominates the third movement, while the second is a beautifully spun-out song.

The program now moves deeper into the nineteenth century with an “album” of four romantic pieces in substantially new transcriptions for guitar. First is one of **Mendelssohn’s Songs without Words**, a set of forty-eight piano pieces that the composer wrote over a period of sixteen years. Mendelssohn explained the title by saying, “It’s not that music is too imprecise for words but too precise.” This warning has not stopped various musicians and writers from putting various fanciful titles to some of the pieces. The one chosen for this set, op. 30 no. 3, has been known variously as “Consolation” and “A Mother’s Love.”

Franz Schubert notoriously left many of his works unfinished, including his most popular symphony, no. 8 in B minor. The reason was certainly not dissatisfaction but distraction: he had so many projects on the go that he never got round to completing them all. Among his incomplete piano works is the remarkable Allegretto, D. 900, undated but in the style of his last works. It appears to have been planned in three sections (A-B-A), of which Schubert completed the first part and the beginning of the second. Fortunately, the first part is not only complete in itself but perfectly suited to the guitar.

Robert Schumann's *Träumerei* is one of a several short piano pieces that he originally shared with his wife Clara, only later compiling them into sets for publication. This one was included in a collection called Scenes from Childhood: the title means "daydream." Notable transcriptions of this piece for guitar include those by Tárrega (in D) and Barrios's friend Borda y Pagola (in C); in this recital we will hear it in A.

The album closes with the *Canzonetta* from Mendelssohn's First String Quartet, a wickedly playful piece that was arranged for other instruments several times in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including an inspired arrangement for guitar by the Spanish guitarist Francisco Tárrega that is the basis of the version presented here.

And so we come to the celebration of the "golden age" of romanticism that is **Nicholas Maw's** *Music of Memory*. The first thing to say is that Maw was not afraid to express himself in long spans: his *Odyssey* for orchestra must be the longest continuous orchestral piece ever written, taking as it does an entire concert to perform. At around twenty-two minutes, *Music of Memory* might be the longest continuous guitar solo in the regular repertoire, but it is divided into succinct episodes of contrasting character. Maw is never lengthy for the sake of it: he aspired to build on the expansive music of the nineteenth-century composers, especially Wagner and Mahler: so often, in fact, does he refer to this earlier music that almost any of his works could have the title *Music of Memory*. This guitar piece is a series of reflections on a theme from Mendelssohn's Second String Quartet, which Maw has arranged for guitar and scattered throughout the piece like breadcrumbs marking a trail. By the end, you will have heard the entire theme twice, though always in fragments, never in a single continuous passage. Indeed, Maw's presentation of Mendelssohn's music, not only broken up but also slowed down, its original flowing innocence replaced with a lingering nostalgia, might suggest that as with the memory of any bygone time, there is illusion as well as loss.

The second half of this recital opens with another unfinished piece (to add to the Schubert Allegretto). The sixty-six-year-old **Alan Rawsthorne** died before he could complete his *Elegy for Guitar*, on commission from the great British guitarist and champion of new British music Julian Bream. He left two completed sections and sketches for what was clearly intended to be the ending. By polishing the sketches and adding just a little music of his own, Bream was able to create a complete piece that has become an enduring classic of the guitar's modern repertoire. It is a work of great economy, deriving all of its material from the opening melody. If Rawsthorne was writing this elegy for himself, it is a striking meditation on old age and

death. Its vigorous middle section might recall Dylan Thomas' famous line, "Do not go gentle into that good night."

As an improviser, **J. S. Bach** was famous—even feared, since he occasionally competed against other musicians in tests of improvisatory skill. The opening of the Toccata from the Sixth Keyboard Partita this piece, with its arpeggios, passagework, and sequential harmonies, give us a sense of what it must have been like to hear him in full flight. But this improvisation soon yields to an example of Bach's 'learned' style: a fugue in double counterpoint. Then comes a remarkable conception: Bach weaves an idea from the opening improvisation into the final section of the fugue, creating an intense debate that leads to a climax—and the return of the opening flourishes.

Bach intended his Toccata to be followed by a collection of dances, which is exactly what the final set of this program provides. Mind you, Bach could scarcely have imagined the visions of Hindu dance, jazz improvisation, and Jimi Hendrix that Lavista, Carter, and Johanson evoke. It's no accident that these three pieces were all composed around 1997: they were commissioned by the American guitarist David Starobin for his New Dance project—an album of dance-like miniatures, featuring a total of eighteen composers of different nationalities and stripes. Hao Yang's selection of three is enough to demonstrate just how differently each composer responded to the brief, though each piece is fiendishly difficult to play.

Natarayah, by the Mexican composer **Mario Lavista**, is inspired by the image of a solo female Indian dancer (in Sanskrit, *natya* means 'dance'). It pits a dry, rhythmic drumbeat in the bass against a sustained high-pitched melody. As the piece progresses, the melody gradually takes over. There's a hypnotic feel to the music that might recall the Stravinsky of *The Rite of Spring*. In his orchestration, Stravinsky often preferred to emphasize the sound of wind instruments over that of the strings, and it turns out that *Natarayah* is closely based on an earlier composition by Lavista for wind ensemble.

Elliott Carter is so well known for his uncompromising American modernism that it's easy to forget how much he was influenced by jazz as a young composer—at least until we hear *Shard*. There's a profusion of characters in this piece—slow melodies, staccato notes, explosive chords—all moving at different speeds, often at the same time. It all comes together in a thrilling burst of passagework that recalls nothing so much as the ecstatic improvisations of Coltrane. **Bryan Johanson**, a guitarist and composer living in Oregon, responded to Starobin's commission by visualizing an unlikely scenario: "If Jimi Hendrix had lived and become a classical guitarist, what would his music sound like?" *Open Up Your Ears* is Johanson's answer. The title is a quotation from Hendrix's song *Can You See Me?*, but the licks and riffs that make up the piece are the product of Johanson's remarkable guitaristic ingenuity.

- Jonathan Leathwood



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Evening Concerts 7:30pm
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Petra Poláčková (Czech Republic)

Guitar

Sunday, June 9, at 4:00 p.m.
Cleveland Institute of Music, Mixon Hall

Program

Made in Czech

- | | |
|--|--|
| Salonstücke für die Gitarre
Gondel und Welle
Lied ohne Worte
Die Spinnerinn
Das Tremolando | Ludvík Dietrich z Dietrichů
(1803–1858) |
| Sonate VI., op. 31
Allegro non molto
Scherzo. Allegro non molto
Finale. Allegretto | Václav Tomáš Matějka
(1773-1830) |

Intermission

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| St. Wenceslas Suite 2020, à Petra Poláčková
I. The Tune
II. Sarabande
III. Rondo | Michal Hromek
(b. 1958) |
| Tabulatura nova (1979)
Rhapsodic variations on an old Bohemian love-song
Introduzione e Tema
I. Allegro drammatico – estinto
II. Rapsodico – estinto
III. Risoluto
IV. Sostenuto cantabile – estinto
V. Allegretto ben ritmico
VI. Finale – Vivace ballabile
VII. Coda – Calmo | Petr Eben
(1929-2007) |
| Variations on a theme by Jaromír Klempíř (1969) | Štěpán Rak
(b. 1945) |

* 9-string romantic guitar by Jan Tuláček (2014)

** 6 string guitar by Domingo Esteso (1926)

About the Artist



Classical guitarist **Petra Poláčková (Czech Republic)** has received “sustained international acclaim” (The American Federation of Musicians), travelling the world to perform and teach. Her performances on her 1 and mark debut CD *Weiss* have garnered wide praise for their elegant phrasing, tonal beauty, and emotional intensity. Petra Poláčková has been co-organizer of Guitar Festival Mikulov, Czech Republic, since 2010 and most recently in 2022 was appointed Honorary Professor at the Royal Academy of Music Aarhus/Aalborg, Denmark. Ms. Poláčková obtained her Bachelor and Master Degrees under Prof. Paolo Pegoraro at Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Graz, Austria.

Artist’s Website: petrapolackova.com/en/

Notes

As countries go, the Czech Republic is small, roughly the size of Virginia. Through much of its history, it was called Bohemia. (Somewhat confusing, as Bohemia is also a region in the Czech Republic.) Sited in a historically turbulent region, Bohemia had the chronic misfortune of subjugation by its more aggressive and powerful neighbors. It didn’t help that it also was a convenient battleground, even when the belligerents weren’t really at war with Bohemia. But throughout the strife, it’s also been a hotbed of imposing composers. Antonín Dvořák, Leoš Janáček, Gustav Mahler, Bohuslav Martinů, and Bedřich Smetana all are familiar names on concert programs today. Eventually, as if fed up with war and occupation, the Czech people shook off their chains in the 1989 Velvet Revolution. There was the first democratic election in a former Communist country after the fall of the Soviet Union. The first President Václav Havel—renowned author, poet and playwright—hinted that Czech citizens had chosen a new path. Today the arts flourish in the Czech Republic, and it consistently ranks among the safest and most peaceful of nations.

Ludvík Dietrich z Dietrich (1803-1858) got off to a good start in life. His father, a successful lawyer, owned a small but imposing estate, and also funded a musical ensemble. So it was inevitable for his son to become a skilled musician. While the good times lasted, the younger Dietrich studied hard, including music lessons with Gottfried Rieger, a respected composer, teacher, and director of the Brno Theater Orchestra. Tragically, an economic crisis wiped out the family fortune. To make ends meet, Dietrich eked out a living as a music teacher and managed to keep up his music studies. A virtuoso guitarist, much of his compositional output is for the guitar. His musical style foreshadows that of the now better known (among guitarists) Johann Kaspar Mertz. Indeed, Mertz himself performed Dietrich’s music as part of an 1841 recital. Dietrich was also a prolific song writer—his patriotic song “Moravo, Moravo” became an unofficial national anthem. For all his artistic success, he died in poverty.

While Dietrich began rich and ended poor, **Václav Tomáš Matějka** (1773–1830) managed to avoid a similar fate. Though his father was a teacher's assistant, his extended family was musical, with sufficient connections to ensure a good education. Matějka's varied skill set stood him well. Moving to Vienna in his early 20s, he at first got by as a lawyer and accountant. By the early 1800s, he could support himself entirely as a music teacher, and later assumed directorship of various church choirs. While he played both piano and guitar, he preferred the guitar. (If this seems improbable now, recall that the early 1800s were a golden age for the guitar.) The dedications of his published works read like a "Who's Who" of Vienna's music highbrows. A measure of Matějka's success spilled into the 20th century. His Nocturne in G major, Op. 21, slightly reworked by Franz Schubert, was for decades assumed to be by Schubert. It's high praise when your work can be mistaken for that of a musical immortal.

To hear composer **Michal Hromek** (b. 1958) tell it, his early brush with music wasn't auspicious. Though he took violin and guitar lessons as a child, he apparently was a music teacher's nightmare. "I learned absolutely nothing, and for several years didn't care for music at all." But later he was intrigued by the music emanating from his older brother's reel-to-reel tape deck: The Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel, Donovan, The Beach Boys, and the Bee Gees. "I got interested. Apart from that, the sound of guitar in all its forms started to fascinate me." Influenced by indigenous folk music, he soon drifted into composing music that fuses classical, folk, and early music. His 2020 St. Wenceslas Suite, composed for Petra Poláčková, is itself based on the 12th century Saint Wenceslas Chorale, one of the oldest known Czech melodies. Its subject, the 10th century Duke Wenceslas, was assassinated by his younger brother. Soon after, tales of miracles at his tomb unnerved his murderous sibling, who had the body relocated to the Church of Saint Vitus. Wenceslas was venerated as a martyr. A 12th century chronicler wrote: "No one doubts that, rising every night from his noble bed, with bare feet and only one chamberlain, he went around to God's churches and gave alms generously to widows, orphans, those in prison and afflicted by every difficulty, so much so that he was considered, not a prince, but the father of all the wretched."

Sinister events shaped the early life of composer **Peter Eben (1929-2007)**. Though his family was Catholic, his father was a Jew—in 1943 Nazi occupied territory, this was little short of a death sentence. Eben later described a harrowing experience at the Buchenwald concentration camp. With his older brother, he was taken to a "shower room." He knew what that could mean, and gripped his brother's hand, awaiting the lethal gas from the spray heads. Instead, harmless water emerged. The terror of that close call understandably suffused the rest of Eben's life. Writing about one of his works, he said: "It is a remembrance of the dead in the mass graves, and a testimony to the wonderful faith of human beings. Faith and hope cannot be killed, the spirit cannot be defeated by external events."

Štěpán Rak (b. 1945) was born late enough to avoid Bohemia's Nazi occupation. But he was still close enough to endure its lingering consequences. His birth mother Cilja Slivka fled her native country when it was occupied by Hungary. She was imprisoned in USSR, and joined the Czechoslovak Army in 1944.

During this turmoil, young Štěpán, then living in Ukraine, was adopted by Marie and Josef Rak. On his later return to his homeland, other children, thinking he was Russian, taunted him with: “Russian, Russian, you came with them on a tank, you Russian!” Recalled Rak, “I was twelve years old at the time, an age where every insult cuts like a knife. Since then I have never really known who I am.” Outsider or not, Rak emerged as one of the most engaging and innovative of guitarists and composers. “I can’t imagine writing music without a picture. Whether abstract or concrete, I must see pictures when I compose.”

• • •

A closing thought. It’s tempting to hear Czech music as exotically foreign. But perhaps we shouldn’t. The origin of the word “Čech” harks back to an old Slavic root similar to the Czech word “člověk.” Roughly translated, it means “person.” So calling someone or something “Czech” is encompassing, not excluding. It’s an outlook we do well to embrace.

—Tom Poore

Partial List Of Festival Artists Presented: 2000 - 2024

Tony Arnold, soprano, USA (Cleveland Debut)
Manuel Barrueco, guitar, USA
Beijing Guitar Duo, guitars, China (Cleveland Debut)
Jorge Cardoso, guitar, Argentina (USA Debut)
Carlotta Dalia, guitar, Italy (USA Debut)
Duo Damiana, flute and guitar, USA (Cleveland Debut)
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Zoran Dukic, guitar, Croatia (Cleveland Debut)
Eduardo Fernandez, guitar, Uruguay
Paul Galbraith, guitar, Scotland (Cleveland Debut)
Ricardo Gallén, guitar, Spain (Cleveland Debut)
Antigoni Goni, guitar, Greece (Cleveland Debut)
Robert Gruca, guitar, USA
Ellen Hargis, soprano, USA
Antonis Hatzinikolaou, guitar, Greece (USA Debut)
Drew Henderson, guitar, Canada (Cleveland Debut)
John Holmquist, guitar, USA
Hubert Kappel, guitar, Germany (Cleveland Debut)
Dale Kavanagh, guitar, Canada (Cleveland Debut)
Elizabeth Kenny, lute, England
Yolanda Kondonassis, harp, USA
Irina Kulikova, guitar, Russia (Cleveland Debut)
Julien Labro, accordion and bandoneon, France
Jonathan Leathwood, guitar, England
Emily Levin, harp, USA (Cleveland Debut)
Daniel Lippel, guitar, USA
Lynn McGrath, guitar with spoken word, USA (Cleveland Debut)
Duo Melis, guitars, Spain and Greece (Cleveland Debut)
Nigel North, lute, England
Paul O'Dette, lute, USA
Patterson-Sutton Duo, cello and guitar, USA (Cleveland Debut)
Petra Poláčková, guitar, Czech Republic (USA Debut)
Stephen Robinson, guitar, USA
Liliana Rodriguez, soprano, Argentina (Cleveland Debut)
Rucco James Duo, guitars, Italy and USA (Cleveland Debut)
David Russell, guitar, Scotland (Cleveland Debut)
Mari Sato, violin, USA
Carrie Henneman Shaw, soprano, USA
Raphaella Smits, guitar, Belgium (Cleveland Debut)
Gaelle Solal, guitar, France (Cleveland Debut)
SoloDuo, guitars, Italy (Cleveland Debut)
Nicolò Spera, guitar, (Italy)
Pavel Steidl, guitar, Czech Republic (Cleveland Debut)
Nathasja van Rosse, guitar, Netherlands (Cleveland Debut)
Ana Vidovic, guitar, Croatia (Cleveland Debut)
Jason Vieaux, guitar, USA
Hao Yang, guitar, China (Cleveland Debut)
Xuefei Yang, guitar, China (Cleveland Debut)



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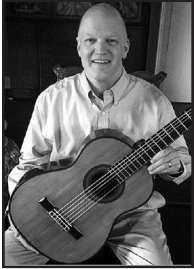
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Welcome to the fifth annual James Stroud Classical Guitar Competition. This year's fifteen Semi-Finalists have travelled here from seven states - California, Connecticut, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas - and range in age from thirteen to eighteen. Their level of musical accomplishment is artistically and technically amazing. Please take time to read their profiles in the following pages. While only one person can gain First Prize, this Competition is about much more than winning: It is about learning, becoming a better and more complete person, and

forging lifelong friendships. To this end it is my hope that all our competitors will make the most of this Festival's exceptional and varied musical offerings, have many wonderful experiences while visiting Cleveland, and leave here having gained a few pearls of wisdom that will enhance their playing and their lives forever.

In conclusion, I wish to thank Armin Kelly Founder and Artistic Director of the Cleveland International Classical Guitar Festival® of which this competition is proudly a part, the Cleveland Institute of Music administration and staff for providing their lovely facilities and support, Thomas Flippin for writing our Semi-Final Round set piece, and this year's esteemed judges for so generously sharing their time, experience, and artistic insights with us.

Sincerely,
James Stroud, Founder and Director
James Stroud Classical Guitar Competition

COMPETITION JUDGES

Preliminary Round

Steven Lerman (US), guitar
Eugenia Mollner (US), guitar
Connie Sheu (US), guitar
James Stroud (US) guitar
Evan Taucher (US), guitar

Semi-Final Round

Stephen Aron (US), guitar
Tomas Flippin (US), guitar
Christoph Harlan (US), guitar
Andy Poxon (US), guitar
Ricardo Saeb (MX), guitar
John Marcel Williams (US), guitar
Hao Yang (CN), guitar

Final Round

Jonathan Leathwood (GB), guitar
Lorenzo Micheli (IT), guitar
Petra Poláčková (CZ), guitar
Mari Sato (US), violin
Nicolò Spera (Italy), guitar
Jason Vieaux (US), guitar
Hao Yang (CN), guitar

James Stroud Classical Guitar Competition 2024 Semi-Finalists' Biographies



Paloma Chaprnka, 14, is a freshman at Interlochen Arts Academy. She has won first prizes at the Houston International Classical Guitar Competition, University of Florida, Florida State University, and Pensacola State University classical guitar competitions. She has performed in master classes conducted by Manuel Barrueco, Jason Vieaux, Celil Refik Kaya, and Gohar Vardanyan. Paloma has performed for Guitar Sarasota and the Florida Guitar Foundation. She has also recorded videos at Guitar Salon International and Sicca's Guitars. Paloma studies with Irina Kulikova and Matthew Cochran. When not practicing guitar, Paloma enjoys cooking, writing, going for long walks, and studying biology.



Hilbert Chen, 15, is a sophomore at Valley Christian High School and a Conservatory Honors fellow. He has played classical guitar since he was three. He currently studies with Robert Miller at the California Conservatory of Music. He has won prizes in the: Kithara Project Guitar Competition, United States International Music Competition, Denver Guitar Festival Youth Competition, SF Bay Area Guitar Competition, Society of American Musicians Guitar Competition, James Stroud Classical Guitar Competition, and GFA International Youth Competition. Hilbert has performed in master classes of: Manuel Barrueco, Andrew York, Steven Aron, Ben Verdery, Jonathan Leathwood, Raphaella Smits, Montenegrin Duo, Meng Su, Marco Tamayo, and Jason Vieaux.



Elle Davisson, 16, is first-place winner of the Junior Division of the Guitar Foundation of America's 2022 International Youth Competition. She has recorded with Guitar Salon International and performed for the Omni Foundation for the Performing Arts, and Peninsula Guitar Series. As a member of the Davisson Duo, she has appeared on NPR's *Tiny Desk* Concert Series and *From the Top*. Elle has also performed numerous outreach concerts for non-profits all over the California Bay Area and enjoys teaching veterans at a local VA hospital. Elle studies with Christopher Mallett at the California Conservatory of Music and is a D'Addario and Strings by Mail artist.



Laurel Harned, 18, began guitar lessons at age 9. She currently studies with Jack Sanders, and has participated in master classes with Manuel Barrueco, Ana Vidovic, the Beijing Guitar Duo, Jason Vieaux, Los Romeros, and others. In 2023, she received First Prize in the Denver Guitar Festival's Youth Competition, and was also a recipient of the Jack Kent Cooke Young Artist Award. She has appeared on NPR's radio program *From the Top* (show 447), and also had the opportunity to record several pieces with Guitar Salon International. In addition to practicing guitar, Laurel enjoys teaching a few guitar students, trail running, and hiking with her family.

James Stroud Classical Guitar Competition 2024 Semi-Finalists' Biographies



Preston Hong, 15, studies guitar with Christopher Mallett. He has been featured on *NPR's From the Top* and won prizes in guitar competitions including: the GFAIYC Junior Division and James Stroud Classical Guitar Competition. He has been honored to have lessons and master classes with Bokyoung Byun, Evan Hirschelman, Christopher Parkening, Raphaella Smits, Duo Sonidos, Meng Su, Marco Tamayo, Benjamin Verdery, and TY Zhang. To give back, he provides free guitar lessons to other youths. Preston is a Boy Scout, plays in school/club volleyball teams and plays clarinet in his school's marching band, County Honor Band and California All-State High School Concert Band.



Brandon Kim, 16, will be a junior in high school in Austin, Texas. Brandon has been playing guitar since he was 7 years old, and for the past two years, Brandon has studied classical guitar under Adam Holzman. In 2022 and 2024, Brandon placed First in the Dallas Guitar Festival in both Division III and Division II, respectively. Brandon is also part of the Orpheus Honors Quartet, which has played at the Southern Guitar Festival and the Brownsville Guitar Festival, among other venues. Besides guitar, Brandon's hobbies include watching movies, cooking on weekends, and going hiking in the woods.



Matthew Kuplack, 18, is from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He began his classical guitar studies at age 14, working with Mike Lorenz. He now studies with John Arnold and John Marcel Williams. Matthew has played for and worked with other outstanding musicians including: Jason Vieaux, Raphael Feuillâtre, Isaac Bustos, and Badi Assad. Matthew recently won first prize in the high school division of the CSU Guitar Competition. He was also selected to play on a New Music concert, performing chamber works with musicians from the Allentown Symphony. When not playing the guitar, Matthew runs his company that he started when 11, making and selling gourmet beef jerky.



Kiran Lee, 16, is a prizewinner in the high school and collegiate divisions of the 2023 Chicago Guitar Festival Competition and First Prize winner of the 2022 Sierra Nevada Guitar Festival Youth Competition. Kiran is a finalist in the upcoming California Guitar Competition of the American String Teachers Association. She was one of six performers invited to the 2023 Pre-College Guitar Virtuosos master class with Manuel Barrueco, and opened for Stephanie Jones and Gaëlle Solal at the South Bay Guitar Society. She is a student of Scott Cmiel at the Pre-College Division of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and volunteers at the Pets In Need animal shelter.

James Stroud Classical Guitar Competition 2024 Semi-Finalists' Biographies



Allen Liu, 17, is a junior at Westwood High School in Austin, Texas. He began playing classical guitar at the age of 6, and currently studies with Stephen Krishnan at the Orpheus Academy of Music and Adam Holzman at the University of Texas, Austin. Allen has won prizes in the 2021 Southern Guitar Festival in North Carolina, the 2023 Texas Guitar Festival in Dallas, and the 2024 Southwest Guitar Symposium in San Antonio. He is also a member of the Orpheus Honors Guitar Quartet. In addition to playing classical guitar, Allen participates in his school's choir, robotics club, and Chinese yo-yo club.



Joey Malvinni, 16, began classical guitar at four with his father. He has honed his performance skills in master classes throughout the world including; Chigiana (Siena, Italy), Mozarteum (Salzburg, Austria), and Guitar Seminar (Granada, Spain). He has played for luminaries Eliot Fisk, Oscar Ghiglia, and Christopher Parkening. Winner of the Santa Barbara Symphony competition, he performed the Castelnuovo-Tedesco Guitar Concerto in D under Nir Kabaretti. Joey won First Prize at the Latin American Guitar Festival, Second Prize at the PASF, and Second Prize at the URI Guitar Festival: he has placed in the Boston GuitarFest, Stroud, and Parkening Competitions.



Micah Montgomery, 14, is an 8th grader at Bret Harte Middle School in San Jose, California. He began studying classical guitar at age five, and he's loved it ever since. Currently he studies with Robert Miller at the California Conservatory of Music. Micah was a part of the Guitar Foundation of America's 50th Anniversary Orchestra with Sergio Assad and Ben Verdery, as well as a two-time participant in the GFA Mentorship Program. Micah has performed in master classes conducted by Jason Vieaux, Sharon Isbin, Meng Su, and Marco Tamayo. In his free time, Micah enjoys playing basketball and video games.



Andrei Orasanu, age 15, is a sophomore at Norwalk High School in Connecticut. He began playing classical guitar at five. For the last seven years he has studied with Dr. Tudor Niculescu-Mizil. Andrei has won over thirty prizes in competitions including: Boston GuitarFest, Southern Guitar Festival, Sinaia International Guitar Festival, Altamira International Guitar Competition, International Fringe Virtual Competition, and the GFA Youth Competition (3rd prize winner). He has worked in master classes with prominent guitarists including: Gabriel Bianco, Rene Izquierdo, Benjamin Verdery, and Joao Luiz. His hobbies are jazz, saxophone, tennis, gaming, and ping-pong.

James Stroud Classical Guitar Competition 2024 Semi-Finalists' Biographies



Trent Park, 16, is a student in the Pre-College Division of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he studies guitar with Scott Cmiel and has completed the highest level of the music theory curriculum. In October 2023, Trent performed in Maestro Manuel Barrueco's "Pre-College Guitar Virtuosos" master class. He has also participated in master classes with Judicaël Perroy, Meng Su, Ben Verdery, and Jason Vieaux. Additionally, Trent has completed Level 8 of the MTAC Certificate of Merit program in piano. In his sophomore year, Trent received a score of 5 in AP Music Theory, as well as AP Calculus BC. He attends Proof School.



Owen Wang, 18, is a high school senior from New Jersey with a passion for classical guitar. He has studied under Galina Jitina, Tengyue Zhang, Denis Azabagic, and Alan Liu. In 2020 and 2021, he was selected to participate in the GFA Mentorship Program. Owen has been a prizewinner in numerous competitions, including the GFA International Youth Competition, Chicago Guitar Competition, Long Island Guitar Competition, Florida Guitar Competition, and Houston Classical Guitar Festival and Competition, among others. Besides practicing guitar, Owen enjoys video gaming, soccer, and has a keen interest in environmental science.



Sonya Wert, 15, is a freshman at Mars Hill Academy in Cincinnati, Ohio. She currently studies with Stefan Schmidt and has been playing classical guitar since she was 5 years old. She is a prize winner in competitions including: Boston GuitarFest, Indiana University, Southern Guitar Festival, App State GuitarFest, Columbus State Guitar Symposium, and Progressive Musicians. She debuted at Carnegie Hall, Weill recital hall, in the summer of 2023 and has opened for the Beijing Guitar Duo. She has enjoyed master classes with Martha Masters, Mak Grgic, and Thomas Viloteau. Sonya loves running, playing golf, waterskiing, puzzles, and caring for her leopard gecko.

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