British Music Fair 2003 - A Report

CLASSICAL GUITAR

Costas Cotsiolis
His career and the guitar in Greece

Stanley Yates
The English Guitarist, Arranger and Editor, talks to Paul Fowles

April 2004
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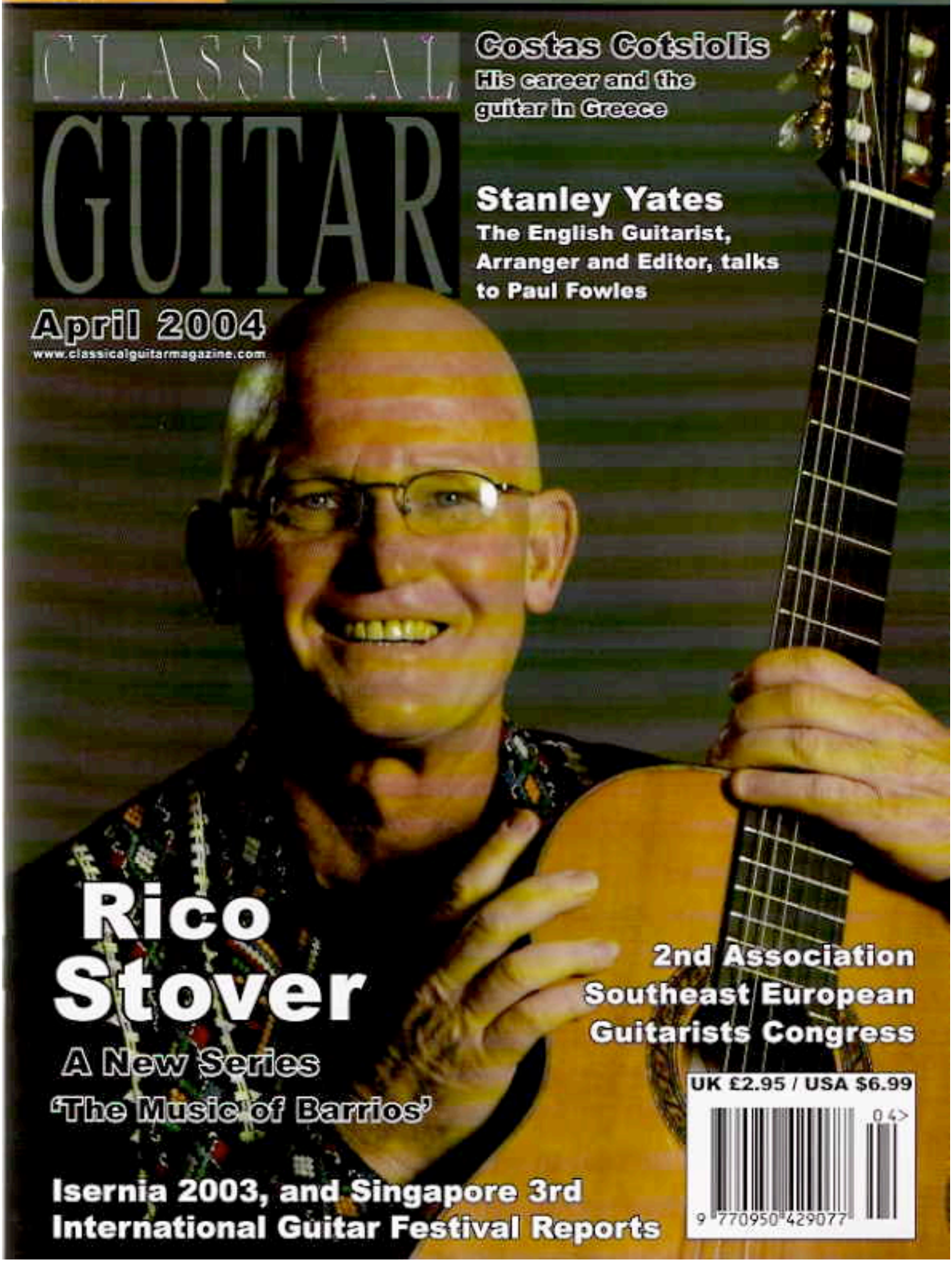

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APRIL 2004

CLASSICAL GUITAR

VOLUME 22, No. 8

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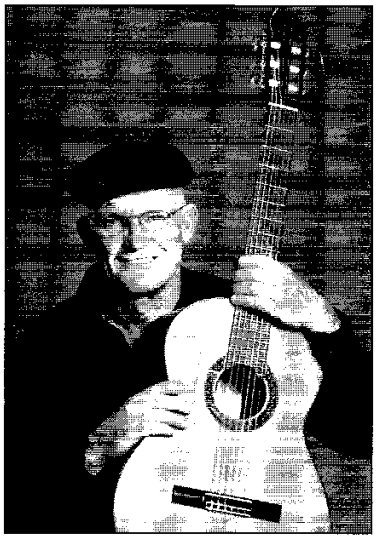

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

1 Year (12 Issues)	£	US$
United Kingdom	40.95	
Western Europe	45.95	
Rest of World (Priority)	55.95	89.95
Rest of World (Economy)	45.95	73.95
2 Year (24 Issues)		
United Kingdom	73.95	
Western Europe	82.95	
Rest of World (Priority)	100.95	161.95
Rest of World (Economy)	82.95	132.95

Remittances must be in GB Pounds payable in the United Kingdom or US Dollars payable in the USA.

If not remitting in Sterling or USA Dollars, please add equivalent of £10.00 for Bank Handling charges.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY:
ASHLEY MARK PUBLISHING COMPANY
1 & 2 Vance Court, Trans Britannia Enterprise Park,
Blaydon on Tyne NE21 5NH, United Kingdom.
TEL: +44 (0) 191 414 9000 FAX: +44 (0) 191 414 9001
e-mail: mail@ashleymark.co.uk
Web: www.ashleymark.co.uk

Printed by BAKERSHAW PRINT LIMITED

UK Distribution to News-stands
Newsagents and Wholesalers
by Post Scriptum, Unit E3, Marshgate Centre,
22 Marshgate Lane, London E15 2NH.
TEL: (020) 74730771 FAX: (020) 7473-0772

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ISSN 0950-429X

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THE MUSIC OF BARRIOS

Part One

By RICO STOVER

THIS IS the first in a series of articles that will take an in depth look at the music of Agustín Barrios Mangoré (1885-1944). Barrios's musical legacy is complex, left to posterity in the form of original manuscripts dispersed throughout Latin America as well as on the numerous phonograph recordings he made between 1914 and 1929. Consequently, with many works, there are numerous sources involved, leading to questions that I hope to answer over the next few months.

All previous publications of Barrios's music have been based only partially on original manuscripts and recorded sources. The two major editions that appeared in the 1970s (from this writer and the Zen On edition by Jesus Benites) are not based on these two primary sources and are thus to be taken with a pinch of salt. Thirty years ago very little was known about the recordings and the significant number of original manuscripts that exist, which were found primarily in Uruguay and El Salvador. While intentions were good, the results were incomplete. As the years passed I came to realise that a new edition of Barrios was needed and it was not until the 1990s that I was able to begin contemplating such an undertaking. [See appendix below for a full listing]

PHOTO: RICHARD WISDOM

Rico Stover.

Sources of Barrios's Music

Barrios left his musical legacy in the form of published editions, manuscripts and phonograph recordings. The fact that in some cases there are several distinct sources available for a specific work requires that a detailed measure by measure analysis of the different versions be given, and that is exactly what I have done in the 82 pages of Critical Notes that are in Volume Two.

Published Editions

In his lifetime Barrios published the following works: *Estudio de Concierto, Humoresque, Luz Mala, Madrigal, Minuet in A, Minuet in B, País de Abanico, Preludio op. 5 no. 1, Vals op. 8 no. 4.*

Around 1952, Romeo DiGiorgio of Sao Paulo, Brazil, published a collection of 23 works that, while not as reliable, must be seen as the first significant body of Barrios's works to appear in a posthumous anthology.

Manuscripts

I divide manuscripts into four categories:

Category A: Original manuscripts in Barrios's hand done with great care and attention to details with an elegant style of calligraphy.

Category B: Original manuscripts in Barrios's hand done with less care regards details and calligraphy.

Category C: Original manuscripts in Barrios's hand done very quickly without attention to style and details.

Category D: A manuscript in the hand of someone else other than Barrios.

Obviously, Category A manuscripts are the most desirable. In my new edition there are 51 works that have an original manuscript as their source or as one of their sources. There are 33 that can be classified as Category A sources: *Aire de Zamba, Allegro Sinfónico, Arabescos, Capricho Español, Córdoba, Danza en Re Menor, Danza Paraguaya, Danza Paraguaya duet, Dinora, El Sueño de la Muñequita, Escala y Preludio, Estilo Uruguayo, Estudio de Concierto No.2, Estudio en Si Menor, Estudio No.6, Gavota al Estilo Antiguo, Julia Florida, La Catedral, Las Abejas, Leyenda de España, Minuet in E, Minuet in B, Mazurka Apassionata, Preludio en Do Menor, Prelude in Do Mayor, Romanza en Imitación al Violoncello, Serenata Morisca, Variations on a Theme of Tárrega, Vals de Primavera, Vals No.3, Vidalita, Villancico de Navidad* and *Una Limosna por el Amor de Dios.*

It must also be noted that in his manuscripts Barrios did in fact make a mistake now and then. Where applicable, I will point out these situations in the measures involved.

Recordings

Barrios left 42 78rpm records that contain 38 original works. Of these, eleven have their sources only from a phonograph recording. It was not until the 1970s that people started transcribing Barrios from recordings. This was made possible by the release of

first Barrios's recordings on cassette tapes (from Ronoel Simoes in Brazil, the collector of all the known records of Barrios and then from Gringo Publications in the 1970s), then on vinyl (from El Maestro Records three-volume set released in 1980) and finally on CD (three CD set from Chanterelle and the single CD from Querico). In this area, recognition must be given to Jason Waldron who was one of the first people to transcribe from the recordings, followed by Edmar Fenicio in Sao Paulo, and of monumental import work done by Chris Dumigan in England.

With a phonograph recording as the source, several unique factors come into play. With the recordings you are sure that you have 100 per cent the original item. With a manuscript, even a Category A one, there could be something involved that was perhaps not put there by Barrios. Recordings reflect usually the best version of a work due to the fact that by the time Barrios recorded a piece he had rehearsed considerably until he felt ready. Therefore, there would be a delay from the time he created a work, perhaps putting it down in a manuscript form, to the time he recorded the work which could be anywhere from a few months to several years. This allowed Barrios time to perform the work and refine his ideas.

Barrios had to shorten the length of some works by omitting repeats in order to make them fit on one side of a 78rpm disc, which had a maximum capacity of nearly four minutes. Barrios may have tended to play faster when recording in view of the time restrictions involved.

In the next issue, I will begin my musical analysis of Barrios' music, starting with *Danza Paraguaya.*

Appendix

The two volume set of the new edition of Barrios published by Mel Bay (MB96308 Volume One and MB220765BCD Volume Two) features 112 musical works together with 82 pages of critical notes and a CD of Barrios playing 21 original works. The works in the edition are:

Volume One:

Abrí la Puerta Mi China; Aconquija (Aire de Quena); Aire de Zamba; Aire Popular Paraguayo; Aires Andaluces; Aires Criollos; Aires Mudéjares (fragment); Aire Sureño (fragment); Allegro Sinfónico; Altair; A Mi Madre-serenata; Arabescos; Armonías de América; Canción de la Hilandera; Capricho Español; Choro da Saudade; Confesión (Confissao de Amor); Contemplación; Córdoba; Cueca (Danza Chilena); Danza en Re Menor; Danza Guaraní; Danza Paraguaya; Danza Paraguaya duet; Diana Guaraní; Dinora; Divagación en Imitación al Violín; Divagaciones Criollas; Don Perez Freire; El Sueño de la Muñequita; Escala y Preludio; Estilo Uruguayo; Estilo; Estudio de Concierto (A); Estudio de Concierto No.2 (A); Estudio del Ligado (A); Estudio del Ligado (d); Estudio en Arpegio; Estudio en Si Menor (solo and duet); Estudio en Sol Menor; Estudio Inconcluso; Estudio No. 3; Estudio No. 6; Estudio Para Ambas Manos; Estudio Vals; Fabiniana; Gavota al Estilo Antiguo; Habanera; Humoresque; Invocación a Mi Madre; Jha Che Valle; Julia Florida (barcarola); Junto a tu Corazón; Jota; La Bananita (tango); La Catedral: Preludio, Andante, Allegro; La Samaritana; Las Abejas; Leyenda de España; London Carapé; Luisito; Luz Mala; Mabelita; Madrecita; Madrigal Gavota; Maxixe; Mazurka Apasionata.

Volume Two:

Medallón Antiguo; Milonga; Minuet o en La; Minueto en La (no. 2); Minueto en Si Mayor; Minueto en Do Mayor; Minuet (E); Oración (Oración de la Tarde); Oración por Todos; País de Abanico; Pepita; Pericón (F and G); Preludio Op. 5, No. 1; Preludio en La Menor; Preludio en Do Mayor; Preludio en Do Menor; Preludio en Re Menor; Preludio en Mi Mayor; Preludio en Mi Menor; Romanza en Imitación al Violoncello (Página d' Album, Fuegos Fátuos); Sargento Cabral; Sarita; Serenata Morisca; Tango No. 2; Tarantella (Recuerdos de Nápoles); Tua Imagem; Una Limosna por el Amor de Dios; Un Sueño en la Floresta (Souvenir d'un Reve); Vals de Primavera; Vals Op. 8, No. 3; Vals Op. 8, No. 4; Vals Tropical; Variaciones sobre un Tema de Tárrega; Variaciones sobre el Punto Guanacasteco; Vidalita con variaciones (a); Vidalita (d); Villancico de Navidad; Zapateado Caribe (trio).

Second Guitar Parts:

Coste Estudio Op. 38, No. 22 ; Ejercicio No. 12 (Aguado); Lección 40 (Aguado); Estudio No. 1 (Aguado); Ejercicio No. 2 (Aguado); Andantino (Sor); Alegretto (Carulli)

There are four works in Uruguay that this writer was unable to obtain: *Grano de Arena, Rancho Quemado, Romanza de la India Muerta* and *Leyenda Guaraní.* Furthermore, recently in El Salvador a previously unknown work has surfaced titled *Variations on a Theme of Schubert.* Barrios traveled a great deal and left manuscripts in many different places in Latin America and this phenomenon of works cropping up here and there will no doubt continue.

About The Author

Richard Dwight 'Rico' Stover first discovered his two great obsessions, the guitar and Latin American culture, during a summer spent in Costa Rica as a student. He learnt many of that country's folk songs, and later fascinated by the classical guitar after hearing a performance by Juan de Dios Trejos, a former student of Augustín Barrios Mangoré. He has performed a wide range of styles, including in folk and pop groups, and has travelled extensively in Latin America.

In the early 1970s, Stover began researching the life and work of Barrios, and later helped John Williams prepare his 1978 recording of the Paraguayan guitarist's works. In 1992, he published his book *Six Sliver Moonbeams – The Life And Times Of Augustín Barrios Mangoré* through his own company, Querico Publications.

Rico, who grew up and has spent much of his life in California, divides his time between performing and publishing. Other books, published by Mel Bay Publications, include *Latin American Guitar Guide* and the two-volume *Barrios In Tablature.* In 2000, he released a CD, *Beautiful Music of the Guitar,* on the Musication label. In 2002, that was followed by a CD of Latin American music and songs on the Querico label, *Southern Journey.*

COSTAS COTSIOLIS

Interviewed by MACER HALL

THE LEADING Greek guitarist Costas Cotsiolis is this year (2004) teaming up with John Williams to premiere an eagerly awaited new work by the Cuban composer, Leo Brouwer; a concerto for two guitars. Its first performance is due to be in Athens in January 2004.

The son of a journalist, he was born Costantine Cotsiolis in Athens in July 1957. He began playing the guitar at the age of six, and gave his first public recital at the Parnassos Room in Athens. As a youngster, he studied with Charalambos Ekmetsoglu at the Hellenic Conservatoire in the Greek capital. He went on to win 15 international prizes and studied with Andrés Segovia, Alirio Diaz and José Tomás. Since 1972, Cotsiolis has performed regularly, both in his native country and throughout Europe. In 1976, still aged only 19, Cotsiolis helped found the International Festival for the Classical Guitar at Volos, an annual gathering that became a catalyst for interest in the instrument throughout Greece and beyond. In 1996, Brower wrote the *Volos Concerto* for him. Cotsiolis now lives in Athens.

I met Cotsiolis in Ankara during a meeting of the Association of Southeast European Guitarists (ASEG), of which he is a leading member.

Costas Cotsiolis.

It feels a little incongruous to be interviewing a Greek guitarist here in the Turkish capital. It might surprise some of our readers, but you perform quite regularly in Turkey, don't you?
Yes. I've played with the Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra many times and, for the last three years, I've been coming every year to be play with the Bilkent Symphony Orchestra. It's always a very happy experience for me, they are very good musicians.

How did you first come to the guitar?
I came from a poor family, so the guitar was the cheapest instrument available for me to start to learn music. And yet it's such a complete instrument because it's polyphonic. The guitar is easy to start learning; all you need is a cheap instrument. Becoming an artist on the guitar, however, that's a lot harder.

Did you come from a musical family?
No, but my family wanted me to learn music as part of my education. While other children tried to learn instruments and then dropped out, I kept going at it. After a few years I grew to love music very much and I was quite happy to play without any encouragement from school. Very soon, I was playing quite well.

Were many people playing the guitar in Greece at that time?
Not many.

But you weren't attracted to a traditional Greek instrument, like the bouzouki?
No. I wanted a classical education. I didn't just want to play music; I wanted to be educated in music. The family had a lot of LPs and I listened to a lot of other musicians.

When did you start to think that you might make a career out of the instrument?
I started to win competitions in other countries and to play concerts, but it wasn't those experiences that led me to believe that I could be a professional musician. I only really started to believe that when I was professor at the conservatoire, when I was 19 years old. I saw that I could make a living with music. I found that I was getting to be invited to play with orchestras and I said to myself: 'OK, I can be a musician'. At the same time, I was a studying economics at university but I decided to continue with music.

Was there any teacher who was particularly influential?

I had many teachers but I still believe that the greatest teacher of any student is his own character. Of course, the technical information that you get from teachers is very important, but the best professor is the one who develops your character to be that of a musician. I did have good teachers, but I prefer to think of them as people who inspired me rather than as teachers. One was Alirio Diaz, whose seminars I attended in Italy when I was twelve years old; another was Leo Brouwer, in France when I was 16. They show me a way of thinking, above all, especially Leo, who has been a friend since 1979.

Some of my best teachers have been my students. I've always learned from them, even though they often don't realise that. Teaching is also learning.

When did you start teaching?
I started teaching children when I was 18 years old. I don't anymore, but it was helpful for my musical development because you see how children think and how they use their fingers, especially when they are very talented. It can impress you very much and it makes you want to find out why they find it so easy. You analyse it and sometimes it makes you change the way you do things yourself.

You have some strong views about the guitar repertoire. Is it right that you feel guitarists play too many transcriptions of music written for other instruments?
I believe that there was a period when transcriptions helped guitarists to be better musicians, in the days of Segovia and Bream and so on. But now the opposite is true; now the guitar needs to build career as a classical instrument because the guitar deserves to be taken seriously. The guitarist is a really good musician. He needs and he deserves to make a career like a violinist or a pianist.

We now have many guitar concertos but orchestral musicians, and particularly conductors, aren't familiar with them. The real problem is that guitarists don't play this music. Many of the big name players only perform the *Aranjuez* or the Giuliani concerto or repertoire from before the last 25 years. It's not bad music, but it's not very interesting for orchestral players to play *Aranjuez*. The orchestration is very simple, not rich. They will have played so many other composers, like Mahler or Bruckner, whose music is full of different sounds. As a result, I don't think they respect our instrument so much.

Really, we have a good repertoire. I believe that Leo Brouwer is the biggest composer in the history of the guitar. He takes the guitar and puts it right inside the orchestra. Every time I play the *Lieja* concerto or the *Volos* concerto, the conductor wants to keep the score to remind him of the music because it was interesting for him and for the orchestra. It is very good contemporary music, and that is difficult to find, not only for the guitar but in general as well.

You're saying that contemporary guitar music might appeal more to orchestral musicians, but what about audiences? They aren't necessarily as receptive to contemporary music, are they?
I believe in audiences. The history of every piece of music is really down to the audience. To me, classical music is not just Sor and Giuliani in the guitar repertoire or Mozart and Beethoven in the general repertoire. To me, classical is The Beatles, for example. They are classical because they will stay forever. Leo's style of composing and his sounds touch the public, not as contemporary music but as good music. I believe in this distinction: there is good and bad music. I don't see it in terms of Classical or Romantic; we need to separate what's good from what's bad. We need a bigger quantity of good repertoire for the guitar.

Another point is that we are not in an era to play Baroque or Classical music. Other musicians, like 'cellists for example, can go back and play original instruments. There's far less opportunity for that for guitarists.

Here's a story that typifies many guitarists' attitude to playing transcriptions. I recently met a very talented, competition-winning guitarist. In concert, she played very well, but she played Scarlatti very badly. I asked her why she played Scarlatti and she told me that she loved it. I happen to feel that Scarlatti's music is fantastic as well. But when I asked her if she knew the recordings by the great Scarlatti interpreter Horowitz, she said: 'No'. If you don't know this music from really specialised players, how can you say you love Scarlatti? That sort of thing never happens with players of other instruments.

So you think that it's time for guitarists to stop playing Bach and Scarlatti in concerts.
Yes, in concerts. We must respect the repertoire of other musicians. For sure, they will respect us more if they hear from us music that they don't already know, music written specifically for the guitar. But they know Bach, Scarlatti, Albeniz and Granados already. They'll respect us very much when they hear the Ginastera *Sonata* or works by Leo Brouwer. We do have good music for our instrument and we should use it.

I'm not saying we should stop learning Bach. But, unfortunately, we have an instrument with physical pedal, and that makes it very difficult to play Baroque music. We should play this music as studies, so that we can learn the meaning of counterpoint, fugues, polyphony and harmony and so learn about music. It's a

different thing to learn music and to play. There's a difference between playing the notes and seeing the lines.

What about playing music by Giuliani or Sor? That's music from the Classical or early Romantic period that is written specifically for the six-string guitar.
It's not music of the highest level from that time. And it is still hard music to play on the guitar compared, for example, with piano works from the same period. There must be a reason why we don't have substantial works by the leading composers of that period. Beethoven must have known Giuliani's works and maybe admired him as a player but just didn't like the sound of the instrument so much. Berlioz knew the guitar, he loved it but he never tried writing for it. The same is true of Schubert.

The guitar is a difficult instrument to write music for. We have the same note in three different places with three different colours. So how do you compose for this instrument if you don't know it well?

We have repertoire now that is richer than that for other instruments. The 20th century guitar repertoire is richer than that for the piano. I'm very open, also, to recognise guitarists who play other types of guitar. To me, great is Egberto Gismonti, Stanley Jordan, Paco de Lucía or Vicente Amigo. They are greats and we must learn from them. If it's possible to play together with them, we will win.

Is that the key to getting bigger audiences for the guitar; collaborations that stretch beyond what is conventionally thought of as classical music?
Yes, but I don't mean that if I play with Gismonti we get a bigger audience by simply bringing his audience and my audience together. We should look for new combinations to create new sounds, like bringing so-called classical and acoustic or electric guitars together. If we had one piece that combines the sounds of both instruments very well, the music will win for sure and the public is going to be happy.

How is the classical guitar in Greece at the moment?
I must say it makes me very happy to live in a country with such a great love of this instrument. All the Greek guitarists work hard for our instrument. The public in Greece loves the guitar very much. Every guitar concert gets a full house, which you don't find in many other countries. I still believe the Volos Festival was a big source of all this guitar playing in Greece. Over 26 years we've had more than 350 professional guitarists perform there.

What was the first one like, back in the 1970s?
There was nothing like that in Greece. I was inspired by my visits to other festivals, like those in Santiago de Compostela in Spain or Esztergom in Hungary. It was a good opportunity for all guitar students in Greece to see the art of the great players up close and to learn from them. Many of the children of this period are now teaching guitar, and so are a lot of their students.

The standard of guitar playing in Greece is very high. We have a lot of international competition winners. The important thing is that we have many good teachers.

Tell me about your concerts with John Williams.
This was John's idea. It was a great honour for me. I was a young boy of ten or eleven when I used to listen to his LPs and learned from him. John is one of the biggest legends in the guitar's history. It was his idea to play Leo Brouwer's double concerto. It's the first time Leo had written a concerto for two guitars. He finished it last July, for us. The first performance is with the Athens Camerata on 27th of January. Then we're going to Belgrade, Cordoba and Italy. It's really great music, although Leo has made it very difficult music to play. It's lucky that we're really hard workers.

Can you describe the piece?
It's a typical Leo piece, but more in the style of the Toronto concerto. It has three movements; the first is a theme with variations, the second is slow and the third is allegro.

Did you or John speak to Leo about the piece at all as it was being written?
Not really, Leo composes alone. Sometimes we might discuss some ideas. But it's his composition; I don't think he needs anybody else. As he always says: 'The piece is mine until I put my signature at the end. Then it's not mine any more.' I believe that's right.

Will there be a recording?
Yes, for sure, though there are no definite plans at the moment.

Are you doing much recording apart from that? What other projects are you working on?
I'm doing all Leo's repertoire with GHA. I've been working on that for some time because Leo's output is enormous. Too much!

And we've set up a guitar department in the Ionian University on Corfu, and I've been running that this year.

Selected Recordings
Constantine Cotsiolis Melodiya S10-16481-2 (LP)
Giuliani/Castelnuovo-Tedesco Concertos Electrecord ST-ECE 01930 (LP)
Concierto de Lieja Auvidis A5846 (CD)
Concierto Antilliano MusicaViva MV 88-045 (CD)
Un Dia de Noviembre. Leo Brouwer: the Complete Guitar Works Volume One GHA 126.040.

STANLEY YATES

Interviewed by PAUL FOWLES

THE English guitarist Stanley Yates is one of a rare breed whose abilities to both play and write about his instrument co-exist on equal terms. Despite a demanding international performing schedule, Yates has always devoted a large part of his time to researching, arranging and editing material from a repertoire containing arguably more under-exploited areas than that of any other mainstream European instrument.

In the recital he gave for the Manchester Guitar Circle in October 2003, Stepan Rak's *Elegy: Hommage à Sibelius* was the only piece I already knew. Apart from some closing lightweights by Jose Luis Merlin, the rest of the evening was devoted to newly completed Yates arrangements and editions, plus the world premiere of Mark Houghton's substantial yet approachable *Sonatina for Solo Guitar.*

The Houghton, like the Rak before it, is one of a growing number of significant new works dedicated to Stanley Yates. But despite his enthusiasm for challenging new repertoire, Yates maintains an ear for strict quality control. When the subject of Cyril Scott's *Sonatina* enters the conversation, his restrained evaluation of the work as 'rather disappointing' speaks volumes.

Alongside the two contemporary works from England and the Czech Republic, Yates's Manchester programme featured the imposing *Concert Etude in B minor*, originally for seven-string Russian guitar, by Andrei Sychra, plus solo guitar settings of *La Vega* by Isaac Albéniz and the *Praeludium and Allegro In the Style of Pugnani* by Fritz Kreisler. As far as Yates is aware, neither the Albéniz nor the Kreisler have been attempted on solo guitar before, although an earlier arrangement of the Albéniz for guitar and orchestra exists. In an age when every new guitar transcription or arrangement seems to come complete with a scholarly justification for its creation, Yates's reason for arranging Kreisler is refreshingly straightforward: 'It's just a piece I've loved for years.'

The Kreisler served as an appetiser for the Albéniz, an important yet relatively unfamiliar work that preceded the epic *Iberia*: '*La Vega* is a virtuoso piano work that came before *Iberia* but about five years after the period when Albéniz wrote what we now know as the "guitar" pieces.'

Originally spanning some 14 minutes and centred on the far from guitar-friendly key of A-flat minor, Yates realistically describes his version of *La Vega* as a 'concert paraphrase'. The use of this unfashionable term reveals a key element in Yates's approach to transcription and arrangement, a field in which the received wisdom among guitarists has often been to aim first and foremost at retaining as many of the original notes as physically possible: 'Arranging is more than just moving the notes from one instrument to another. Even if you can play all the notes on the guitar, it doesn't necessarily create the most effective solution.'

PHOTO: PAUL FOWLES

Stanley Yates.

This has led Yates to re-evaluate a number of established repertoire items, including the ubiquitous *Leyenda*, which he now performs minus the customary quick-fire triplet figures and that finger-wrenching C7 chord towards the end of the outer sections. It is quite a departure; one, which Yates admits, requires a willingness to 'clean out the ears'.

Yates finds himself drawn towards the source in his approach to music originally for the Russian seven-string guitar. In Sychra's *Concert Etude*, he adopts the daunting *scordatura* of GBDGBD (ie: Russian tuning, minus the low D). He believes this is the way forward in reviving a huge and still largely unexplored 19th century repertoire. But he is careful to acknowledge the pioneering work in this field by Matanya Ophee, whose published settings for six-string guitar generally use standard Western tunings and sometimes require transposition from the original keys: 'Matanya's arrangements were certainly the right thing to do as a means of getting the music out there.'

Yates is convinced that the highly idiomatic textures in the works of Sychra and his contemporaries, including extensive use of slurs, can only be fully recreated by retaining the G chord tuning that still exists within the Russian Federation. It requires considerable time and toil from even the most accomplished six-string players, but the potential rewards are immense: 'We're not just reviving the works of an individual composer, such as Coste or Regondi. This is a whole repertoire. Sychra alone wrote up to 1,000 pieces and was easily as good as Sor or Giuliani.'

Add to this the legacy of Asafiev, Morkov, Vyssotsky and numerous lesser-known figures, and the motivation for what amounts to re-learning the fingerboard becomes increasingly sustainable. As Yates has already speculated, there might even be some additional applications: 'I'm definitely going to try some Bach in Russian tuning.'

Although such cutting-edge activities are greatly appreciated here in his homeland, they tend not to yield a living wage. This is one reason why Stanley Yates, whose basic training took place in Liverpool, has spent more than a decade living in the US, where 'tenured professorships' are bestowed upon those with the necessary qualities and qualifications. As a recent letter to *Classical Guitar* vigorously pointed out, guitar professors were never common in the UK and are now an endangered species. Not so in the US, where most major institutions seem to have one. Having secured such a post at Austin Peay State University near Nashville, Yates enjoys that 'job for life' status that his British peers regard as little more than a theoretical concept. Better still, the teaching burden is a mere twelve hours per week, any additional duties being carried out by a lower ranking 'adjunct guitar teacher'. This is an enviable situation that Yates, openly refers to as 'a full-time salary without full-time working hours'.

It is hardly surprising that American guitarists rarely take up residence here in the UK. But it is interesting to note that there is not exactly a full-blown 'brain drain' in the opposite direction either, even though a number of the more bookish English guitarists now appear to be spending a large slice of their thinking hours in air-conditioned libraries on the far side of the Atlantic.

But how about earning a living as a regular freelance musician in the US? According to Yates, the sheer size of the country and the number of potential outlets, make it possible to survive: 'In the US, touring just one state can cover as much ground as a national tour in Europe.'

But this does not mean just anyone can make it as a concert performer. Yates is quick to point out that, like their European brethren, American guitarists often have to play in cocktail bars in order to pay the grocery bill. He is equally emphatic that the opportunities are there for those who have the ability and are willing to do the work.

And there is no escaping the widely held perception that for the arts as a whole, both national and local funding in the US is to be envied. This is the case right down to grass-roots level, the fact that some American guitar societies are actually run by paid employees causing their British counterparts in the function room at the local pub to shake their heads in wonder. US prosperity is reflected in the level of performance fees, meaning that a moderately successful American guitarist can usually get by without teaching all the hours God sends.

A further significant difference exists in the status of the guitar at university level. It is all too easy to assume that every institution turns out a battalion of blue-chip performers at every graduation. But according to Yates, it is 'only the likes of Eastman and Julliard that regularly produce competition winners', with most other 'guitar programmes' catering for able but less exalted students, many of whom have come to the classical guitar at a relatively late stage in their development: 'At the typical audition, we'd be looking for a couple of Sor studies or possibly a single Bach movement. In British terms, maybe Grade Six to Eight level.'

Hardly an 'open door' policy for anyone who happens to own a guitar, although presumably one that allows most music faculties to maintain a healthy staff-student ratio.

But when it comes to accepting a tenured professorship, there's a *quid pro quo*: a sizeable chunk of the hours when not teaching should be devoted to relevant academic pursuits. This is an obligation that Yates takes seriously: 'When you're in such a fortunate position, you should always be willing to contribute.'

This he most certainly does. At the time of writing, his Mel Bay catalogue alone comprises ten substantial offerings, ranging from the ground-breaking new settings of the Bach cello suites to a lavishly presented album of solo works by that singular product of the Victorian era, Ernest Shand. Each publication includes extensive historical notes that display the rare double distinction of being both academically secure and eminently readable.

Yates was also a key figure in the reconstruction of Shand's *Premier Concerto pour Guitare Op.48*. The fate of the original string parts is unknown, although they appear to have existed at least until 1896, the time of Shand's only known performance of the work (with piano reduction, due to an indisposed cellist).

And there are more rediscovered concertos to come. Yates's recent collaboration with *Artaria Editions* will shortly result in the release of long-forgotten works for guitar and orchestra by Doisy and Vidal, the latter, dated 1795, being the earliest known guitar concerto at the time of writing.

Add to this the numerous articles Yates publishes on both sides of the Atlantic and his working week becomes increasingly demanding. The depth of his commitment is shown by an almost unconditional willingness to share his expertise via the internet. On his own website *www.stanleyyates.com* one finds music by Albéniz, Bach, Rak and others that can be downloaded and a library of articles, including a fascinating new look at *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*.

Equally important are his frequent contributions to online discussion forums. The level of discourse in these cyberspace debating chambers has been much criticised in the past, often with good reason. Together with Matanya Ophee, Angelo Gilardino and others, Yates has now elevated the former *Segovia List*, first launched by John Dimick and currently maintained on *Yahoo* by James David Whalley, into an essential channel for news and views.

With all this on the agenda, it's a wonder Stanley Yates finds time to practise, let alone do twelve hours' teaching.

EXTENDING RIGHT-HAND TECHNIQUE TO INCLUDE THE LITTLE FINGER

By CHARLES POSTLEWATE

Part II: Repertoire

THIS series is the culmination of a 16-year research project to add the right-hand little finger to the playing technique of classical guitar, a concept that guitarists have contemplated and attempted at various times since the publication of *Escuela de Guitarra (School of Guitar)* in 1825 by the Spanish guitarist Dionisio Aguado (1781–1849). Part I gave an overall background of this project and a history of right-hand technique development from the 'thumb-under' technique of the Renaissance lutenists, using *pi*, to the present-day standard of *pima*, with a few attempts at adding the little finger from Aguado to the present day. It would seem fitting to first talk about the training/retraining of the right hand to accommodate the little finger before moving on to using it in actual repertoire, but I believe that it is best to show first its practical use as a reason and an incentive to undergo the exercises involved in building a useable five-finger technique.

The manner in which I began followed the above reasoning. I kept coming across pieces in the present canon for guitar by Bach, Barrios, Britten, Lauro, Sor, Tárrega, Moreno Torroba, Turina, and Villa-Lobos that I felt would benefit from the use of all five fingers of the right hand. When I began using the little finger in the repertoire, I underwent many years of doing right-hand exercises in a situation-by-situation manner without any organised thought of trying to train the right hand to fully accommodate the little finger. After receiving a sabbatical and research/travel grants from my employer, the University of Texas at Arlington, I began the gradual development of the system of studies, *Right Hand Studies for Five Fingers* (Mel Bay Publications MB98710), which I will present in Part III of this series. As these studies developed over the years, I saw a dramatic increase in the realisation of all five fingers working together as a team to perform satisfactorily in actual repertoire. I then began making transcriptions of piano pieces that needed an extra finger to attempt to match the ten fingers of the pianist. This finally led to original compositions especially designed for the concentrated use of a five-finger technique in scales, chords, arpeggios, tremolos and harmonics in many varied and interesting ways.

I will refer mostly to the main repertoire of the present guitar literature, since that is known to the readers of this journal, but will make occasional refcrences to several of the original compositions. Almost all of the musical examples come from the recording that was produced through this project, *Homage to Villa-Lobos* (Prism 9904 and MB98711CD), and its accompanying book, *Homage to Villa-Lobos and Other Compositions* (MB98711), which were funded by UTA and are published/distributed by Mel Bay Publications. The designation for the little finger of the right hand is *c* (for *cuarto*, which is Spanish for fourth).

Relative strengths and weaknesses of the fingers

When I first began this project, I sought the expert advice of the anatomy professor at the University of Texas at Arlington, Dr Neal Smatresk, and his wife Debbie, who is an occupational therapist specialising in hand rehabilitation at Arlington Memorial Hospital, to learn the mechanical structure of the hand and the capabilities/limitations of the individual fingers. This proved extremely beneficial in determining how and where to use the little finger in relationship to the others. (My choice of advisors was wise because Dr Smatresk is now Dean of the College of Science at UTA and Debbie is Director of Occupational Therapy at Arlington Memorial Hospital.)

The index and middle are the most accurate of the fingers, and the ones generally used for precision work. The little finger is the strongest of the hand, containing more musculature than any of the others, and is the finger used in 'power-grip' situations, such as the grabbing and lifting of a music stand. The little finger has a muscle that gives it more co-ordination than the ring finger, and allows it to abduct away from the hand. The ring finger has the least amount of musculature and is, therefore, the weakest digit of the hand. When I explained to the Smatresks what my work was all about and demonstrated the principals of right-hand technique, both were amazed that guitarists do not use the little finger. Debbie's first remark was, 'If you are *not* going to use one finger, make it the ring finger!' The strength of the little finger more than makes up for its lack of natural precision, much of which can be overcome by practice. The little finger of the right hand can be just as useful to a guitarist as that of the left hand, or the little finger of each hand of a keyboard player, for that matter.

As I progress through various techniques and pieces, it will become clear that I have shifted most of the work of the weak ring finger to the strong little finger where strength is required, which brings up the subject of health that I briefly mentioned in Part I of this series. Having talked to classical guitarists with various right- hand ailments, I have found some agreement that overworking the inherently weak ring finger has been part, if not most, of the problems, especially in the

case of focal dystonia. Excessive exercising, in a futile attempt to overcome the limitations of the ring finger, affects the entire right hand in a negative way, as verified by my occupational therapy work with Debbie Smatresk.

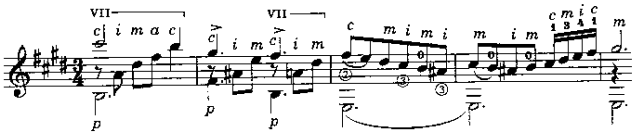
Scales

In 1985 Michael Lorimer advised me, 'Find something that all guitarists want to do better and improve it with the little finger; then you'll really have something.' Many fine guitarists shy away from pieces with fast scale runs, especially the concertos. All good keyboard players can play rapid scale passages, but only a few guitarists have this ability. This skill is the result of a great deal of hard work as well as innate, rapid reflexes. Early keyboard technique (pre J. S. Bach) that omitted the thumbs used the alternation of two fingers (such as the middle and ring) for strong/weak phrasing purposes in the execution of scale passages. The addition of the thumbs brought about a thumb, index, middle and ring finger system (with the little finger sometimes used for the final note) that is used today.

The most common guitar fingering for single-note scales is the alternation of *i* and *m*, although some players (including me in the 1970s) prefer the alternation of *i* and *a*, because of the extra independence between the two. There have been several examples of three-finger alternation, *ami*, used by very fine guitarists for added speed, and I was using *ami* at the beginning of this project. As the little finger developed, because of its extra strength and independence from the middle finger, I used it to replace the ring finger. Since 1986 I have always used *cmi* for fast scale runs.

Since my university student days in the 1960s, I have kept record of different technical capabilities in terms of rhythmic density, in notes per minute. For example, playing scale runs in sixteenth notes (semiquavers) at quarter note (crotchet) = 100 produces a rhythmic density of 400 notes/minute (4 notes/beat x 100 beats/minute). Using *im*, I was able to play scales at 608 notes/minute. Switching to *ia* moved my speed up to 632 and going to *ami* increased my speed to 728 notes/minute. After a few years of using *cmi*, my speed went up to 800, where it stands today. All the scales on the *Homage to Villa-Lobos* recording were performed using *cmi*. The pieces that I chose to demonstrate the use of fast scales were *Prelude No.2* by Heitor Villa-Lobos (the E major scale in the A section) and my jazz variations, *Improvisation on Green Dolphin Street* (the Intro and 'quasi improvisation' sections).

For slower moving scale passages, I believe it is best to rely upon the more accurate *im* pattern and employ *cmi* when rapid sections occur. An excellent application of this is in measures 7-9 of the third (E major) section of the *Vals venezolano No.3* in E minor by Antonio Lauro (from *Quatro valses venezolanos*), shown in Example 1. Some players overcome the sixteenth notes in measure



Example 1.

8 by using slurs, but the piece sounds more brilliant if all the sixteenth notes are articulated.

String crossings are much less of a problem with three-finger alternation. Using *im*, it is always awkward to ascend to the next string with the shorter index finger and descend to the next string with the longer middle finger. Since diatonic scales that move across the strings usually contain three notes per string, that means that guitarists are faced with awkward string crossings about half of the time! A three-finger combination fits perfectly with the three-notes per string crossing pattern. With the straight wrist position and the relative lengths of the fingers, the only awkward string crossing is ascending to the next string with the index finger — just one out of six possibilities (17 per cent) as opposed to two out of four (50 per cent) with the *im* combination. Ascending with the index finger slows down my right hand, but only to 704 notes/minute, and this one awkward string crossing can almost always be avoided with proper fingering in both hands.

Chords

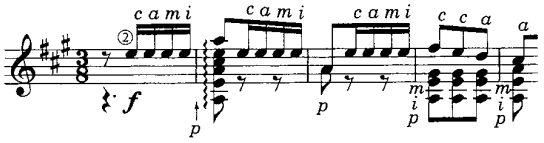
Guitarist composers usually restrict themselves to four-note chords, and non-guitarist composers who work closely with guitarists, like Stephen Dodgson, have told me that they also usually limit their chords to four notes. Because of his use of the little finger, five-note chords abound in Villa-Lobos's guitar works and occasionally occur in the works of other composers. While guitarists have become accustomed to brushing the thumb over the lower two notes of a five-note chord (and lower three notes of a six-note chord), it is much easier to use all five fingers of the right hand. If you want to see how awkward it is to use *ppima* for a five-note chord, try using *ppim* to play a four-note chord!

In addition to playing five-note (and six-note) chords, the little finger works effectively for many four-note structures. One case is when there is a four-note chord spacing that skips a string in the middle of the chord. Example 2 shows the first five measures of the third movement of Federico Moreno Torroba's *Sonatina*, where the first two chords of measure 4 skip the second string. Using the little finger on the first string, as shown, eliminates the awkwardness of reaching up with the ring finger to play the first string. In addition to the strength problem of the ring finger discussed earlier, there is very little abduction ability of the ring finger to move away from the middle finger. A similar problem occurs at measures 94–95 (Example 3) where the chords skip a string

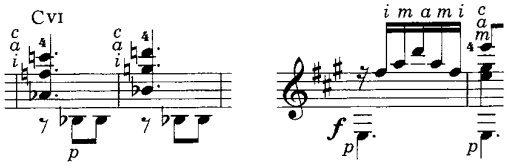
between the second and third notes, and a fingering of *piac* eliminates the problem.

Another problem occurs when a four-note chord follows a rapid arpeggio or tremolo pattern and the player using only *pima* has to repeat the last finger of the arpeggio or tremolo in the chord. Example 4 shows this situation in measures 52–53 of the third movement of Moreno Torroba's *Sonatina* and its solution by using *pmac* to play the chord. Example 5 shows a similar situation in measures 21–22, where the same solution can be used to play the four-note chord that follows the four repeated notes of the main motif; measures 25–26 of this example show a slight variation where the repeated-note motif is in the bass of a three-note chord. Still another variation of this problem occurs throughout *Chôros No.1* by Villa-Lobos (opening measures shown in Example 6), where the little finger is used to replace the ring finger on the last note of the arpeggio and the four-note chord is played with *pima*. An exception to this rule can be used occasionally, as in going from measure 3 to measure 4 in Example 2, if the playing action of the last finger of the tremolo or arpeggio pattern (*i* in this case) moves it towards a lower string that it is to play in the chord.

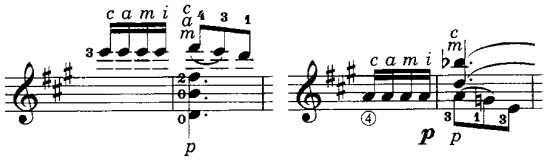
Example 2.



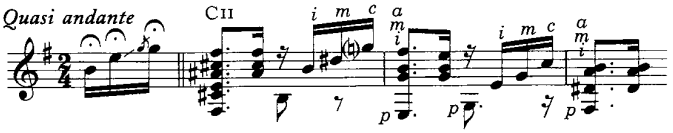
Example 3 (left).
Example 4 (right).



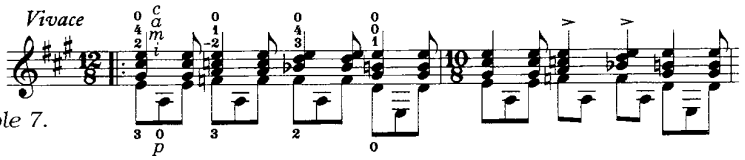
Example 5.



Example 6.



Example 7.



Needless to say, my own compositions, arrangements, and transcriptions abound with five-note chords, and the best example is the third movement of *Homage to Villa-Lobos*, entitled *Danza*, which alternates the upper four notes, played by *imac*, with the bass, played by the thumb. Example 7 shows the first two measures of this mixed meter dance, reminiscent of the *Étude No.12* by Villa-Lobos.

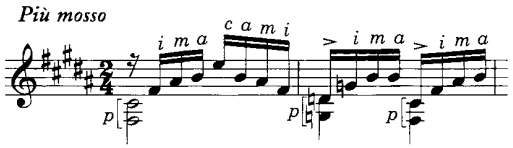
Arpeggios

Obviously, an extra finger in the right hand lends possibilities of more arpeggio patterns. *Right Hand Studies for Five Fingers* contains 80 arpeggio studies for the various combinations of thumb + one finger, thumb + two fingers and thumb + three fingers, and 136 arpeggio studies for *pimac*. Throughout my own compositions and the two Debussy transcriptions on the *Homage to Villa-Lobos* CD, I use a variety of five-finger arpeggio combinations. In the standard repertoire for guitar, I have used two familiar and outstanding examples — the Villa-Lobos *Prelude No.2* and *Study in E Minor, Op.6, No.11* (Segovia edition No.17) by Fernando Sor.

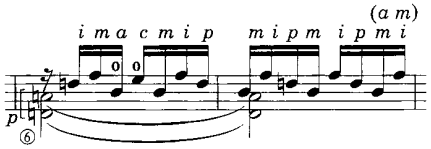
The middle section of *Prelude No.2* (Examples 8 & 9) has always been awkward for guitarists using only *pima*, requiring a repetition of one of the fingers for the five-string pattern. Simply playing the main pattern (Example 8) *pimacami* eliminates the repetition and makes the arpeggio flow faster (about 33 per cent) and smoother, assuming that you have a well-trained little finger. The increased speed gained by the use of the little finger helps create the tension and excitement required in this contrasting middle section. The last three notes of measure 5 through measure 6 (Example 9) can be played with *ami*, but I find it faster and easier with *mip*, as notated.

Sor's *Study in E Minor* uses two different arpeggio patterns that are spread out over five strings about half of the time. Even the first two measures (Example 10) involve five strings, as the top note (melody) of the arpeggio goes back and forth between the first two strings. As noted in the previous section on chords, it is awkward to reach up with the weakest, least co-ordinated ring finger, as required in the four-finger technique. Using the strongest and more independent little finger for the melody note throughout this piece solves that problem, and makes this pattern much faster, and easier to play. The advantage of using all five fingers is even more pronounced in places such as measure 4 (Example 11), where a five-string pattern is used and guitarists usually employ the thumb to play the notes on the fourth string. Example 12 shows measure 9 where there is an extra string between the second and third notes of the arpeggio pattern with two possible solutions using the little finger. I recorded this piece using *piac*, but recently have switched to *pimc* with

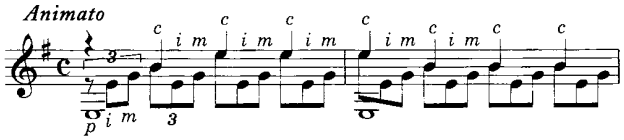
Example 8.

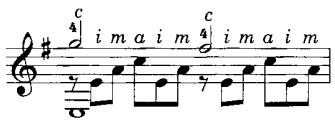


Example 9.

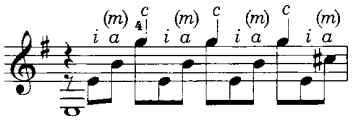


Example 10.





Example 11.



Example 12.

equally fast results and with less tension on the hand by not using the weaker ring finger. In this case it is permissible to put a string between the index and middle fingers, because of the natural abduction ability between the two.

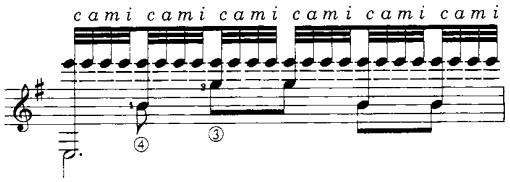
This Sor study brings out another important function of the little finger — that of the *main melody finger of the right hand.* Throughout this piece, the top note of these arpeggios is the melody. With a four-finger technique, this melody is played by the weakest finger of the hand, the ring finger. In a five-finger technique, the function of the melody finger falls where it properly belongs — on the strongest little finger (as it does in the right hand of keyboard technique). As in the Villa-Lobos *Prelude No.2*, the use of all five fingers allows this study to be played about a third faster than with *pima*, and it keeps the melody notes strong throughout. In a study such as this, the main objective is usually speed — the faster you can play it, the better control you have of the technique being studied.

Going back to Lauro's *Vals venezolano No.3*, I use the little finger as the melody finger in the first two measures of Example 1, especially since there is a five-string arpeggio pattern in the first measure. I did not include this piece, or any other by Lauro, in my published/recorded work; but as I go back and re-examine the repertoire that I dropped over this 16-year project, I find his compositions (the many waltzes, *Suite venezolana* and *Sonata*) full of applications for the little finger in situations similar to these two measures.

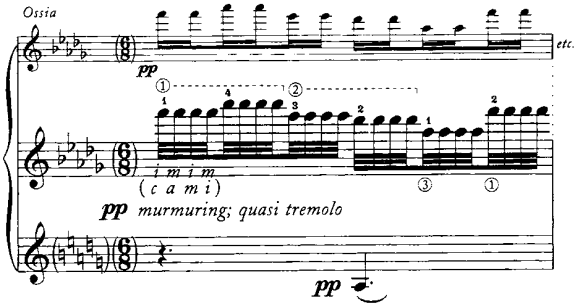
Tremolos

The use of the little finger in various repeated-note (tremolo) techniques can enhance the standard patterns, as well as create new ones. In the standard tremolo pattern, I use the little finger to pluck melody notes simultaneously with the thumb-plucked bass notes in what I call a 'completed tremolo.' In the standard tremolo of *pami*, a melody note is omitted when playing the bass note alone, interrupting the melody. By using the little finger to pluck a tremolo note simultaneously with the thumb, the melody has a continuous sound, as shown in measure 3 of *Una limosna por*

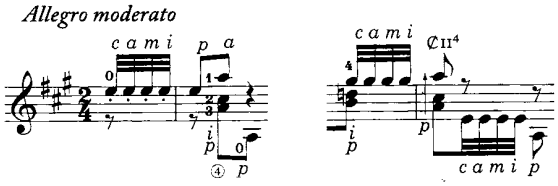
Example 13.



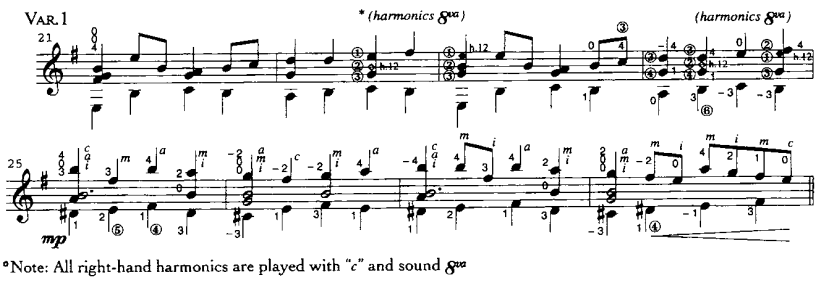
Example 14.



Example 15.

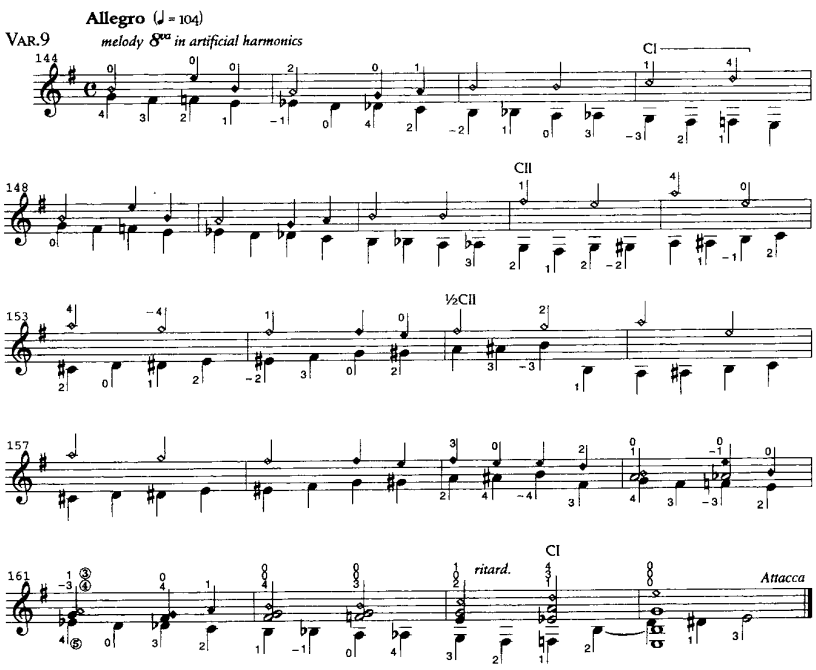


Example 16.



*Note: All right-hand harmonics are played with "c" and sound 8va

el amor de Dios by Agustín Barrios (Example 13) and as I recorded it on the *Homage to Villa-Lobos* CD. I believe that Barrios, Tárrega, and other guitarist-composers who have written tremolos would have played them in this way, had the little finger been in use during their times. Benjamin Britten wrote his 'Gently Rocking' variation of *Nocturnal* in this manner, with a simplified, half-speed *ossia* version (Example 14). Playing Britten's original version is very difficult using *im*, but much easier using *cami*, again assuming that you have a well-developed little finger.



Example 17.

Two other standard repertoire pieces, Sor's *Study in A Major, Op. 31, No.19* (Segovia edition No.10) and the third movement of Moreno Torroba's *Sonatina*, use a five-note, mini-tremolo pattern that fits the five fingers of the right hand perfectly. The beginning of the *Study in A Major*, and a slight variation going from measure 7 to measure 8, using a chord in the pattern, are shown in Example 15. The third movement of *Sonatina* uses this same pattern with much variety in the upper, middle and lower registers of the guitar, with and without chords — shown earlier in Examples 2 and 5. I used the Sor *Study in A Major* as a preparation for the more complex use of this pattern in the *Sonatina*. Both of these pieces can be played much faster and easier with the use of the little finger. This Sor study, originally written as an exercise for developing the alternation of *p* and *i* (presumably for scale passages), was always very boring to me until I sped it up with the little finger; and the third movement of *Sonatina* never seemed to be fast enough for a concluding movement until I played it with all five fingers.

Harmonics

The stronger little finger is the logical finger for the execution of this delicate technique, and I pluck all harmonics with the little finger instead of the presently used ring finger. The extra separation of the little finger from the index finger (which touches the string at the harmonic node) gives it more mechanical advantage to produce, in combination with its extra strength, a much stronger harmonic sound than the ring finger. A five-finger technique also allows the playing of four-note chords (three natural tones and one harmonic) with ease, given that two fingers are required to produce the harmonic. One of my compositions, *Variations on a Theme of Prokofiev*, uses four-note chords with a harmonic in the first variation (Example 16) and at the end of the harmonic (ninth) variation (Example 17). Even when the harmonic falls in the middle of a chord, as in the second and fourth measures of Example 16, it still is plucked with the little finger, for the reasons noted above.

Conclusion — coming up

I have presented a few examples of the advantages of using the little finger in the main five techniques of classical guitar performance, and could have presented many more. As I stated in Part I, I can find use for the little finger in almost any piece of guitar music that I look at today. In the final chapter of this series, I will show how to train the right hand in a five-finger technique using the above techniques in a manner that will be useful and applicable to beginning, intermediate, and advanced guitarists who wish to extend their right hand capabilities.

Musical credits: Antonio Lauro's *Venezuelan Waltz No.3* is published by Broekmans and Van Poppel; Federico Moreno Torroba's *Sonatina* is published by Columbia Music, as is Villa-Lobos's *Chôros*. A different edition of *Choros No.1* and the same composer's *Cinq Préludes* is published by Editions Max Eschig. Benjamin Britten's *Nocturnal* is published by Faber Music; Charles Postlewate's *Homage to Villa-Lobos* and *Variations on a Theme of Prokofiev* are published by Mel Bay Publications.

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(First published in Soundboard, the journal of the Guitar Federation of America)