

The Halifax Guitar Society Newsletter

Vol.1 No.1

September 21, 2001

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Upcoming Concerts

~~September 21, 2001 8:00pm Concert~~

~~**David Olson**~~

~~MCPA*~~

~~**POSTPONED**~~

~~September 22, 2001 1:00pm Masterclass~~

~~**David Olson**~~

~~MCPA**~~

~~**POSTPONED**~~

September 26, 2001 7:00pm Masterclass

Dale Kavanaugh

Dalhousie Arts Centre, MacAloney Rm 406¹

September 27, 2001 8:00pm Concert

Dale Kavanaugh

Dalhousie Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Building, Ondaatje Hall²

*	Regular	15.00
	HGS Member	10.00
	Students/Seniors	8.00
**	Participants	20.00
	Auditors	10.00
1	Participants	25.00
	Auditors (Community)	15.00
	Auditors (Members)	10.00
	Auditors (Student)	8.00
2	Regular	12.00
	Students/Seniors	8.00

Greetings from the HGS Chairman

The Halifax Guitar Society was founded by a small group of enthusiastic guitar players and fans who met at the Maritime Conservatory, Chebucto Road, Halifax, May 30, 2001.

The society's founding represents the fruition of a long held dream by the executive and members, to build a guitar community in Halifax to foster the best interests of all people who share a love for the instrument and its music, in all its forms and diversity.

Although barely three months old the society has a constitution, issues membership cards, and has negotiated discounts for card holders with local music stores. Moreover the society organized and held its first festival in July. Performers at all levels participated in workshops, master classes and recitals, over several days. The future for guitar in Halifax is unlimited. It is already the world's most popular instrument, and we are off to a great start.

This newsletter is the first of many by which we will communicate news of upcoming concerts, visiting guitarists, and subjects of interest to members. It can also act as a sounding board for exchanging information, or expressing members opinions.

On behalf of the Halifax Guitar Society, I cordially invite anyone who is interested in playing, studying, teaching, or just listening to join us and discover the many facets of the guitar, from folk to flamenco, from classical to jazz. There is always something new to try, and many new friends to share it with.

Jim Ferguson

Greetings from the HGS Artistic Director

I'd like to start off by welcoming all members both to the HGS and to the first edition of the HGS' newsletter. I'm not really sure exactly what happened in between the conception and the realization of this society, but nonetheless here we are. It's been a rocky road, hard at times, but a road filled with personal fulfillment.

Endless hours of planning and organizing have been put in to create the society for each and every one of its members, that's right....for you. Some of the obvious advantages of having a guitar society are: the ability to organize and bring more concerts into Halifax; the ability to promote these concerts to the people (our members) who most want to see them; discounts and deals at local music shops; the ability to promote and support local artists and local up-and-coming talent; and the advantages associated with being a unified, visible group.

We have a great concert year lined up, one like Halifax has never seen, which you will be notified of as soon as each concert/masterclass is confirmed. I will let you know that there are a good many concerts lined up needing only final approval (and some much needed funding which is being addressed even as you read this).

I pass on my regrets to the postponing of the David Olson concert/masterclass. David is a great performer/teacher who has completed his undergrad at the San Francisco Conservatory under the tutelage of David Tanenbaum, Dusan Bogdonavich and Larry Ferrara and is currently finishing his masters under the guidance of Jeffrey Van. Unfortunately, in a sudden turn of tragic events in the U.S., David's flight was cancelled leaving him unable to make the trip to Halifax. Keep an eye out for David's new Halifax date in the coming months as we're working diligently on securing his passage to Halifax.

All that aside, we are most fortunate this month to be able to witness one of Canada's best performers, and certainly one of the best performers worldwide: Dale Kavanaugh. I personally have been fortunate enough to see her perform/teach on a number of occasions, always leaving me speechless with her powerful sound and beautiful tone. This is a must-see concert/masterclass for all guitar enthusiasts.

Eugene D Cormier

Finger Tips

Simple Savouries: A review of Koshkin's 'Da Capo: 24 Easy Pieces for Guitar'

With his newest publication, 'Da Capo: 24 Easy Pieces for Guitar' (Editions Orphe'e, 2001; \$12.95 US), the contemporary Russian composer, Nikita Koshkin (b. 1956), has given over a measure of his creative attention from concert repertoire to little works that beginners and beginning-intermediates can study and have fun with. Koshkin is probably most celebrated for his 'Prince's Toys Suite', and, too, the 'Usher Waltz'; this latter work is arguably one of most performed and most recorded works of the last two decades.

The 24 miniatures in 'Da Capo', pastiches, mainly, range in length from 15 to 90 measures or so. Koshkin has mustered his signature powers of imagination, character, drama, surprise, and wit. The opening little three-line piece in this collection, 'Intrada' calls for the student to play 'pomposo'. It's a miniature E-minor fanfare, announcing the parade of character works to follow, and its super-easy to play. There appears to be low-angled incline of difficulty from this opener to the last piece, "Amphion", a 95-measure work with seeming aspirations to testify credibly to the guitar as the 'mini-orchestra'.

In between, we find a colourful range of pedagogical strokes, each with a distinctively etched personality. Excellent for trying to impart in students the 'human meaning' of music as it speaks its language. 'Choros' (XXII), for example, spells "international intrigue" sounding as if written for the score of a James Bond movie. By contrast, (XXI), "Dotted Line", is a study in tongue-in-cheek jazz, with its cakewalk syncopations and harmony. "Polka", XIX, and "Ukrainian Folk Song" (XIII) have a decidedly Eastern European panache, and "Jig", XX, sports five different time signatures, from 7/8 to 3/4, not an easy one to dance to! 'Desert' (VI) reawakens that dramatic sense of proletariat resignation as in the Volga Boatman's heave-ho.

A few of the pieces do allow the student to move up and down the fretboard, but the travels and leaps Koshkin has kept simple, using fixed shapes, a la Villa-Lobos, or relatively easy, big targets to hit, or logical, graduated steps up and down. 'The Sailor's Fate' (XVII), though it doesn't stray far from first position, does incorporate such a movement of identical chord shapes as a way to keep technical demands. This being Koshkin, however, simple could never mean 'simplistic'.

Presenting Koshkin's forceful, innovative, and sometimes cinematic compositional moves comes by way of the publisher, Matanya Ophee. Editions Orphe'e is arguably, Rolls Royce's echo in music publishing business. This is not a pumped-up claim as testified by the fact that another of Editions Orphe'e products recently took first prize in this year's "Paul Revere Award for Graphic Excellence" given by the Music Publishers Association of America. Detailing and graphic design is meticulous. Fingerings are judiciously and clearly marked, the scores are easy to read, well-laid out, set with lots of air on a buffy, cream paper, and the inked staves and notes and other bits of notational miscellany are sharp as a tack. Packaged artfully, the cover of 'Da Capo', is a reproduction of a cubist-cum-surrealist artwork, "Evening Musicians" (1975) painted by the composer's brother, Alexander (1975). My simple point here is that Koshkin's music plus Edition Orphe'e mode of delivery make for collector's item.

The name of game in teaching music to young and old alike is to keep them coming, keep them showing up for lessons, week in, week out. Implicated in that goal is the calling power of music itself? - We need it to pique curiosity, enthusiasm, and to evoke human drama from lesson one onward. Most beginner music, with its paint-by-number predictability and/or threadbare harmonies, falls well short of this mark. 'Da Capo', from my angle, however, makes innovative, yet easy-to-do art with the power to voice a 'calling' out toward new students. It is therefore an important didactic work, by an important composer, aimed at a very important audience? - beginning students of the classical guitar. I wish I had had this book at age 9. But even at age 49, I'm still boyishly delighted have Koshkin's simplest savouries sweetening my musical library.

Bob Ashley (Member 0017)



Featured Artist: Dale Kavanagh

Canadian-born Dale Kavanagh is one of the guitar world's most gifted interpreters.

She received her Bachelor of Music degree at Dalhousie University in Canada, then completed her graduate studies with the Solisten Diplom at the Musik Akademie der Stadt Basel with Oscar Ghiglia in Switzerland. Between 1986 and 1988 Ms. Kavanagh was a top prize-winner in many international competitions and she now performs internationally as a soloist and in the Amadeus Guitar Duo with German guitarist Thomas Kirchhoff.

She is a regular recitalist and teacher in guitar and music festivals in Canada, Turkey, Poland, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Hungary, England and the United States and has given more than 400 concerts around the world. Many composers have written works for Dale Kavanagh such as Carlo Domeniconi, Roland Dyens, Jaime M. Zenamon, Stephen Dodgson, Stephen Funk-Pearson, Bruce Shavers, Christian Jest and Harald Genzmer.

Her seven CDs (FONO, Hänssler) have received superlative reviews in international magazines including Classical Guitar Magazine, Fono-Forum, Hi-Fi-Vision, Gendai Guitar, Gitarre & Laute, La Cahir de la Guitare, Musikblatt, Staccato, Soundboard Magazine, Gitar och Luta and many others. Dale Kavanagh is teaching at the Musikhochschule in Dortmund, Germany and she is an exclusive artist with Hänssler Classic since 1999.

You can contact the Halifax Guitar Society at: 6199 Chebucto Rd., Halifax, NS B3L-1K7
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