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Jorge Caballero playing a flamenco negra guitar made by luthier Carlos Salmone. JC

## City Scene

### 2006 New York Guitar Seminar at Mannes

by Julia Crowe

The 6<sup>th</sup> New York Guitar Seminar at Mannes, 'Guitarists of the Big Apple' (July 5-9, 2006), attracted a record number of seventy-five participants and auditors participating in five day cavalcade of master classes and lectures taught by twenty-five faculty members. Performing guest artists for the sold-out evening faculty concerts included: Benjamin Verdery, David Leisner, Dennis Koster, David Starobin, Dominic Frasca, Frederic Hand, Jorge Morel, the Newman & Oltman Guitar Duo, along with a special performance from award-winning Mannes graduates, Meliset Abreu and Giacomo La Vita. Masterclass instructors and lecturers included Sharon Isbin, Kevin Gallagher, David Leisner, Dennis Koster, Arthur Kampela, Mark Delpriora, Frederic Hand, Michael Newman, Laura Oltman, Ben Verdery, Dominic Frasca, Jorge Caballero, David Starobin, Jorge Morel and Harris Becker.



Michael Lorimer with student. JC



Sharon Isbin with student. JC

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Participants who flew into the city were able to enjoy the Independence Day fireworks display over the East River in Lower Manhattan before entering the whirlwind of lectures, masterclasses and five evenings of double-bill concerts each night, starting with the Newman & Oltman Duo performing "No Feathers on This Frog" by Dusan Bogdanovic; "Vespergang, Mazurka, Barcarole and Tarantella" by Johann Kaspar Mertz and a New York premiere of "Three Hungarian Tributes: à Bartók, à Liszt and à Ligeti" by Roberto Sierra.



Michael Newman and Laura Oltman with Francesco Barone, the winner of Guitar Salon International's Antonio Lauriente guitar giveaway. MA



Ben Verdery with a young student artist. MA

Ben Verdery followed with his crowd-pleasing trio of Jimi Hendrix arrangements- "Easy Rider", "Little Wing" and "Purple Haze". His program included Mozart's "Adagio, K. 540" and Verdery's own "Be Kind All the Time" for electrified classical guitar and digital delay. He has also pulled off the feat of arranging the entire "Blue Danube Waltz" by Joann Strauss for the guitar. A reception followed this first evening concert with a buffet of Hungarian and Viennese pastries in honor of Mertz's 200th birthday, Mozart's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday and Giuliani's 225<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The second evening concert with guitarist/composer David Leisner featured the New York premiere of Matiegka's "Sonata in B Minor, op. 31, no. 6", which Leisner will be recording in this autumn. He performed Nel Mezzo "In the Middle", a dramatic piece from his new CD *Self-Portrait* (Azica), followed by Mertz's "Sehnsucht" and a rousing "Tarantelle". For an encore, he performed Heitor Villa-Lobos' "Etude #12".



David Leisner in concert. MA

Dennis Koster paid homage to the oud player George Mgrdichian with his "'Oudspaña", imitating the taksim in places. He also performed Samuel Zyman's Sonata para Guitarra, commissioned for him in 1988, followed by a dazzling evocation of flamenco dance footwork with his "Homenaje a Carmen Amaya".



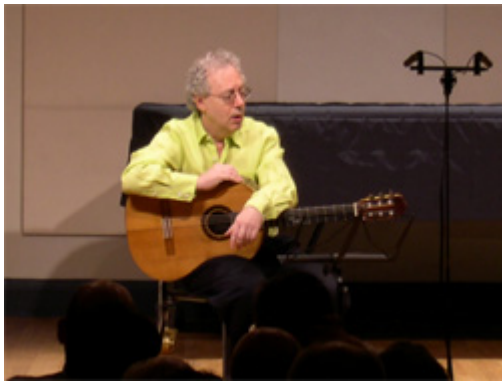
David Starobin in concert. MA

Friday evening's concert featured David Starobin performing a set of Mauro Giuliani's works in honor of the composer's 225<sup>th</sup> birthday, including "Divertissement, Op. 106, No.1", "Rondo, Op. 14, No. 5", "Delightful Etude, Op 98, No.8", "Allegretto, Op 51, No. 13", "Delightful Etude, Op. 98, No. 4", "Preludes, Op. 83, Nos. 6, 5, 4". He was accompanied by a spectacular pianist, Inon Barnatan, for "Rondo in A Major, Op. 68, No. 1" and "Rondo in B Minor, Op. 68, No.2". His program concluded with "Variations on a March by Cherubini, Op. 110".

Dominic Frasca performed his own works, "Fixations part 4", "Shattered Glass and Deviations", along with his arrangement of Marc Mellits' "Lefty's Elegy" on one of his modified Humphrey guitars, featuring a mix of steel and nylon strings, each with its own pickup processed and filtered through a computer laptop.



Dominic Frasca in concert MA



Frederic Hand in concert MA

Early Saturday evening, Mannes alumni Meliset Abreu and Giacomo LaVita each gave a recital. Abreu's program included pieces by Leo Brouwer and Joaquin Rodrigo and La Vita performed a selection of works by Domenico Scarlatti, Miguel Llobet and Agustin Mangoré Barrios. Frederic Hand opened his evening concert with Jazzantiqua flautist Keith Underwood to perform Hand's "A Psalm of Thanksgiving for Flute and Guitar", then solo for his "Waltz for Maurice Ravel" and the third movement of his "Trilogy". David Leisner joined with Hand onstage to perform his guitar duo, "Journey", originally written for the Greek guitar duo Evangelos and Liza. Hand's program also included "The Water is Wide", "Elegy for a King", "A Dance for John Dowl" and and a world premiere of his "Theme and Improvisation".

Jorge Morel treated the audience with a surprise percussive accompaniment with Thiago de Mello for his "Pampero", followed by a solo performance of "Olga, Lullaby and Dance", Gershwin's "Someone to Watch Over Me"; Cobian's "Los Mareados" (Tango), Troilo's "La Trampera (Milonga)" and Bustamante's "Misionera".



Jorge Morel in concert with Thiago de Mello, JC

Guitar dealers Larry Rawdon of Rawdon Hall Guitars and Pedro Baez-Tello displayed their wares in the second-floor hallway. Rawdon featured a Dale Perry guitar and Tello offered similar hands-on trials of a beautiful flamenca blanca guitar and a cedar guitar made in Argentina by Carlos Salmone.



Students rehearsing in the Mannes Concert Hall, MA

The lecture highlights included Dennis Koster's 'Flamenco Techniques,' which included an overview of flamenco history, *rasqueado* and rhythm techniques; Michael Newman's 'Practice for Perfection: Effective Daily Practice Techniques,' with his number one recommendation to practice *slowly*; Mark Delpriora's 'The Andrés Segovia Archives: An Overview,' featuring music written for but never performed by El Maestro, and David Leisner's discussion of 'Right Hand Techniques Using Large Muscles', an approach he devised to successfully restore his own full playing ability and in countless others who have experienced *focal dystonia*. Ben Verdery also managed to

tickle the funnybones and improve the playing of ten young artists, ranging from seven to twelve years old in age, who took part in his masterclass.

On the last day of the seminar, an Antonio Lauriente concert guitar donated by Guitar Salon International was raffled off to Temple University student Francesco Barone of Philadelphia and the participants presented a final ensemble concert that was free and open to the public.



Dean Joel Lester with New York Guitar Seminar Artistic Directors, Michael Newman & Laura Oltman.

The 2007 New York Guitar Seminar at Mannes will take place early in July with the theme 'Ensembles of the World', featuring the Newman & Oltman Guitar Duo, the Zvi Migdal Tango Ensemble, the Arthur Kampela Band, the Cavatina Duo and the Amadeus Duo, among others.

Julia Crowe is a New York-based guitarist, composer and writer. She writes a monthly column and features for *Classical Guitar Magazine* in the U.K. and is a regular contributor to *Acoustic Guitar Magazine* and Mel Bay's *Guitar Sessions*® webzine. She has also written for *FRETS*, *Guitar Player* and *Down Beat*. For further information, please visit her website at: [www.juliacrowe.com](http://www.juliacrowe.com)

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