

# GUITAR NEWS

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## *AT AIX-EN-PROVENCE FESTIVAL*



Photo by

Henry Ely, Aix-en-Provence

**IDA PRESTI and ALEXANDRE LAGOYA**

## THE GUITAR AT DARTINGTON HALL, 1956

THE Summer School of Music, Dartington Hall, Devon, combines festival, school, and holiday and is intended for every kind of music-lover, from the ordinary listener to the advanced student. The programme includes lectures, concerts, choral singing, chamber music, and so on, and the visitor may take part in as many, or as few, activities as he likes.

This year, for the first time, the lute and guitar were included amongst the many activities at the Summer School of Music. William Glock, Director of Music, invited Julian Bream to take a guitar class during the first week for advanced amateurs and professionals. Altogether about ten of us participated and I have to report that no advanced amateurs or professionals were present. Bream gave two classes during the week and, in addition, individual tuition could be arranged.

With disarming candour we were told that we could not expect to learn much in a few lessons, and then were treated to a highly informative and interesting discourse, followed by musical illustrations. The lute and guitar were heard in two of the evening concerts, both solo and as accompaniment, and were received with enthusiastic ovations. There is no doubt that Dartington Hall has taken to the guitar and here is a splendid opportunity for the guitarist, not only to meet others of his kind and to improve his knowledge of the instrument, but, at the same time, to broaden his field of musical experience.

David Knapman.

## JULIAN BREAM'S ENGAGEMENTS

THE following list is necessarily incomplete but it will give some idea of the popularity of the leading British guitarist and enable our readers in Britain to make arrangements to hear him.

Engagements marked \* are with Peter Pears.

October	
8th	Maidstone*
9th	Croydon*
10th	Abingdon
19th	Sheffield
24th	Cheltenham*
25th	Stroud*
26th	Long Eaton
27th	Bristol
November	
4th	Tunbridge Wells
5th	Cleethorpes
6th	Manchester (Mid-day concert)
7th	Kendal
8th	Middlesbrough
9th	Newcastle-on-Tyne
10th	Huddersfield
16th	Newbury
21st	Swindon
30th	Reading
December	
10th	Welwyn Garden City
January—1957	
10th	Cheam
17th	Sevenoaks
24th	Aberystwyth
February	
23rd	Devizes
March	
9th	Shoreham
29th	Manningtree
30th	Sawbridgeworth
April	
7th	London—Royal Festival Hall (St. John Passion Bach Choir)

## VICTORIA KINGSLEY RECITAL

VICTORIA KINGSLEY will give a recital of Songs with Guitar at Wigmore Hall, London, on December 13th at 7.30 p.m.

# The Presti-Lagoya Duo in Provence

by Wilfrid M. Appleby (*Britain*)

**A**LMOST twenty miles inland from the busy Mediterranean seaport of Marseilles, just where the hills begin to rise and rise increasingly north-east-wards to the great mountains of the Alps, stands the beautiful French town of Aix. 'Aix-en-Provence' it is called, for it is in that magical territory where lived the troubadours, that musical Garden of Eden where probably the guitar and even art-music itself originated.

That the glorious musical traditions of Provence remain pure and vigorous has been demonstrated in recent years by a series of Music Festivals, the ninth of which took place this year, lasting from July 7th to August 2nd. It was an international festival on a grand scale. The luxuriously printed souvenir programme of about 80 pages contained notes by leading writers on music and among the illustrations were two clever line impressions of Prokofieff and Hindemith drawn by Marc Pincherle, the Secretary-General of the Festival.

Mozart's "*Don Giovanni*" and Rossini's "*Barber of Seville*" were among the operas performed. Famous orchestras, choirs, ensembles and solo artists gave special concerts, many of which were broadcast by Radiodiffusion-Francaise. Several of these concerts were given in the open-air, three in the delightful setting of the Place des Quatre-Dauphins, where fountains cool the air of the warm summer evenings. The Quartetto Italiano and the Quintette à Vent Français each gave a concert there, but the concert on Tuesday, July 24th (9 p.m.), must have been quite a new experience for many music lovers who gathered to hear it, for it was a Guitar Duo concert, the artists being Ida Presti and Alexandre Lagoya.

The amount of music written for two guitars is all too small, and much of this is below the standard required for such a Festival. The guitarists could have been excused if they had padded out the programme with groups of solos, but that was not their plan. They played *as a Duo* from start to finish. They transcribed or composed their music, they inspired composers to write suitable music for them and here is the wonderful programme which they played—and which was heard not only in Place des Quatre-Dauphins but, by radio, throughout France and even beyond—it was heard clearly in Cheltenham.

Sonate en la majeur (pour 2 luths) ...	W. J. Lauffensteiner
Gavotte ... ..	J. S. Bach (trans. Lagoya)
Prelude et Fugue ... ..	J. S. Bach (trans. Lagoya)
L'Encouragement—theme et variations	Sor
Largo et Rondo ... ..	Carulli
Petit concert de grand style ... ..	H. Ambrosius
Etude (first audition) ... ..	Ida Presti
Élégie ... ..	Daniel-Lesur
Variations sur un thème de Paganini ...	G. Dessagnes
Tango ... ..	Albeniz
Intermezzo ... ..	Granados

The Sonata by Lauffensteiner (c. 1690–1761) is in four movements: Grave-Allegro ma non troppo-Andante-Fugue. Its transcription from the lute for the guitar adds a work of great importance to the repertoire of our instrument. Both the *Elégie* by Daniel-Lesur and the Variations by G. Dessagnes were dedicated to Ida Presti and Alexandre Lagoya. The theme of the variations is from Paganini's 24th Caprice. Brahms also utilized this theme.

There was no doubt about the reaction of the audience to this outstanding concert; they loved it and applauded enthusiastically, asking for more and more. The Duo played as an 'encore' a Prelude by Kaufmann but still the cries of 'bis' persisted so they concluded with Dance No. 6 by Granados.

The photographic artist, Henry Ely of Aix-en-Provence, caught the spirit of the scene in the delightful picture which adorns our front cover. Jean Gabriel-Marie concluded his report in "Le Provençal" (Marseilles) with the words: "*Ida Presti et Alexandre Lagoya y rencontrèrent un triomphe.*" Yves Florenne, music critic of "Le Monde" (Paris), wrote: "*Ida Presti penche sur la guitare un visage étrangement inspiré. Son art est sans pareil; elle s'y est avancée jusqu'où les plus grands guitaristes hésitent, en lui rendant hommage. Alexandre Lagoya lui répond très dignement.*"

\* \* \* \*

Ida Presti was born at Suresne (Seine), France, and commenced the study of the guitar at the age of six years under the guidance of her father. Her first recital was given at the Salle Pleyel, Paris, at the age of 10; she was soloist of the Concert Society of the Conservatoire and the Padeloup Concerts at the age of 13, being the first guitarist to be accepted by these societies. She took part in the Centenary celebrations of Bizet, Berlioz and Paganini. She has played in England, Holland, North Africa and Indonesia.

I realize that these biographical details convey nothing of the real personality and genius of this gifted musician. Never shall I forget the first time I met and heard her. It was a few years ago at Monsieur André Verdier's flat in Paris. We arrived with our Turkish friend, Bulent Nisancioglu, and there were a few other people present. Ida Presti played on André Verdier's *Simplicio* guitar for more than an hour—not even the noise of crates unloading from a lorry in the street below could break the spell of her music. She plays because it is her nature to make music.

Alexandre Lagoya was born in Alexandria, Egypt; commencing at the age of 8 he gave his first recital at the age of 13. He came to Paris to further his studies of music and married Ida Presti. As soloist he has frequently played on radio and television and given recitals.

The Guitar Duo was formed in 1955. Duo concerts have been given in Paris and in several places including the Bordeaux Festival of 1956.

Ida Presti and Alexandre Lagoya have created a 'new look' in guitar music—long may they continue!

Permission to reproduce the picture on the front cover was kindly given by "Le Provençal" (Marseilles).

# HOW ?

By Peter David (Britain)

**I** HAPPENED to tune in to the Julian Bream recital on the Home Service during the August Bank Holiday week-end. It was of a bare 20 minutes duration you may remember, and was followed by half-an-hour devoted to "The romantic story of an eel's struggle for existence."

I appreciate the necessity of fair shares for all as regards cultural enlightenment, but it did occur to me that the story of the eel's lonely trek overland to the Sargasso Sea was possibly of limited interest, except of course to the trained eel observer, who could in any case be presumed to have a comprehensive knowledge of that creature's habits.

Far be it from me to decry the programme planners of the B.B.C. Nevertheless, I feel I am expressing the views of the majority of my fellow guitarists in impressing upon the B.B.C. that interest in the guitar is growing rapidly throughout the country.

But to come to the point of this article, namely—how does Julian Bream do it?

It may come as a surprise to readers to learn that Peter David is, in fact, in the course of adding Sor's Rondo in C to his repertoire. This is the item with which Mr. Bream began the recital referred to above, as those who heard it will possibly remember. Now I had considered my progress in mastering this happy piece encouraging, as after three months' practice I could play most of it with reasonable accuracy, tempo "andante". It was therefore with a sense of hopelessness that I listened to Mr. Bream. He and I have this much in common; we were both born in the year 1932. That fact alone stirs me on to periodic frenzies of practice, in the knowledge that I have at least had the same span of years in which to seize the opportunity of becoming a virtuoso guitarist. But I have come to the conclusion that I lack some inborn ability, some knack which no doubt precludes me from attaining this end. There, in a short sentence, I have laid bare the secret which I have been trying to hide from myself for so long. I am glad of it, for it was as a millstone round my neck, a weight on my conscience, a skeleton in my cupboard, and so on.

"How could you deceive yourself so?," you quite naturally inquire. The answer is brutal in its simplicity—and can be illustrated by reference to Mr. Bream's playing of the Rondo. A few weeks ago I would have pointed out to friends and relatives the immeasurable superiority of his guitar, enabling him to impart an unhurried sprightliness, while at the same time playing the piece about five times faster than I could. Or again, I would say, perhaps Mr. Bream had the advantage of reading "Guitar News" from its inaugural issue, whereas I had missed the first 20-or-so editions.

Delusion, delusion, all delusion! I announce to the guitarist world that Mr. Bream has nothing to fear from me as a dark competitive cloud on the horizon. It is for me to venture only into the realms of the easy-to-moderately-difficult.

But every dog has his day. I well remember, for instance, while touring

in France, staying a night at a camping centre in a remote banlieue of Paris. My friend and I had that evening visited "Le Catalan" in La rue des Grandes Augustines—at that time a home of the guitar in the French metropolis. We were enthralled by the flamenco playing of an artist who I am prepared to swear was Luis Maravilla (for some unaccountable reason I forgot to ascertain his identity then, probably for fear of displaying some sort of ignorance), and we could talk of nothing else when we returned to the centre. We were at once accosted by a Swede, who in perfect English informed us that like all tourists we glibly talked of things we knew nothing about. With a gesture of scorn I seized a battered guitar which belonged to a fellow camper, and rattled off "Arada" from Torroba's Suite Castellana. Fury added accuracy to my fingers, and I played the piece with only a few trifling errors. Then, with an indescribably majestic air, I handed the guitar to the Swede in the form of a challenge. The gauntlet had, in effect, been thrown down, but the Swede could not play a note! It was then that I became fully aware of the value of practice. Dismissing the fact that the Swede had a bandaged left fore-finger, I maintain I adopted exactly the right attitude in the circumstances.

### JOHN RUNGE IN U.S.A.

THE well-known British singer-guitarist, John Runge is now at Phillips' Academy, Exeter, New Hampshire, U.S.A., where he will remain for about a year. His frequent concert and radio programmes will be missed by his friends in England, but no doubt he will add even more songs to his repertoire.

### RECITAL IN SAO PAULO

ASSOCIACAO Cultural de Violao presented Sergio Napoleao Belluco at their 44th recital in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on June 16th. He played a three-part programme as follows:—Sonata (Labarre), Bourrée and Gavotte (Bach), Adagio (Beethoven) and Minuet op. 11, No. 9 (Sor), Sonatina in La major (Milton R. Nunes), Study op. 2, No. 2, (Savio), Euterpe, concert mazurka (Scupinari), Rondo (Aguado), Recuerdos and Danza Mora (Tárrega), Granada (Albeniz), and Study No. 1 (Villa-Lobos).

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**Stop Press:** "Guitar Review" No. 20 (the second Flamenco number)—superb as ever—has arrived as we go to press.

## HOLLAND AND BELGIUM

THE Society which organised the successful Guitar Festival at Hilversum, reported in our last issue, was originally formed in Holland on Aug. 28th, 1948, reviving the society of the same name founded before the war, but in 1951 its title was changed to "Constantijn Huygens, Society of Guitarists in the Netherlands and Belgium". A circle of young guitarists had been formed in Antwerp, Belgium, by Professor Frans de Groot, a well-known teacher of the guitar. Thirty of these became members of the Society when it was extended to cover Belgium. The Board now consists of: —Ries de Hilster (chairman), Frans de Groot (vice-chairman), Dettje de Vries (1st secretary), Fred Klaver (2nd secretary) and Wim Luksemburg (treasurer).



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## RECITAL IN DAYTON, U.S.A.

MISS CLARE CALLAHAN, secretary of the Classic Guitar Society of Greater Dayton, has had to leave the flourishing young society owing to removal to Virginia. Before going, however, she gave a guitar recital at the University of Dayton last June.

## RECITAL IN MALAGA

JOSE NAVAS, Professor of Guitar at the Conservatorio de Málaga, Spain, gave a guitar recital in that city on August 5th.

His programme included Etude en La major (N. Coste), Gavotte (J. S. Bach), Sonata (M. Albeniz), Nocturno (Raymond Petit), Fandanguillo (Turina), Choros (Villa-Lobos), Asturias (I. Albeniz), and Malagueñas (J. Navas).

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## THE GUITAR IN EGYPT

By Dimitri Crey (Egypt)

**T**HE guitar was introduced into Egypt by early Italian and Greek immigrants circa 1900, who used it to accompany their songs. It was and still is played only by Europeans, Arab music being confined to the "oud", a stringed instrument of the "luth" family.

One of the earliest guitar teachers in Egypt was Mo. Aravantinos. He came from Russia in 1900 and taught the guitar, the mandolin and the flute. Unfortunately, his method was the old Italian one, that made use of the left-hand-thumb and kept the right hand in an inclined position relative to the strings. He died in Cairo in 1942. I do not think the guitar was known in Egypt before that as there are no other traces of old guitarists here.

We have never had a guitar recital in Cairo except two or three by Miguel Ablóniz who lived here till 1948. From time to time we can also hear a flamenco guitarist accompanying a Spanish dancer in a cabaret.

In Egypt to-day only two persons teach the guitar in the proper way and show some activity. Mo. Diamantopoulos in Cairo and Mo. Sideridis in Alexandria, who was the first to introduce the modern (Tárrega) technique in this country.

Both are constantly busy as the number of amateurs increases every day. Unfortunately many of the beginners give up their studies owing to the lack of good instruments on the market. The guitars played upon by most students are of cheap Italian or Japanese make and they sound like kerosene tins; when strung with nylon they give no sound at all. Another difficulty the amateur encounters is of getting guitar music, studies, methods or nylon strings. As there is but a small demand for them music dealers hesitate to have them in stock, and therefore every time a friend has to travel to Europe we charge him to bring us a good supply of whatever we may need.

There is a good Italian "luthier" established in Alexandria who makes pretty good instruments of the Ramirez pattern. Certainly Mr. Coschiera's guitars cannot be compared with those of a Hauser or a Velasquez, yet if we take into consideration the kind of wood available here—which is not of the finest—and his one-generation experience, we must admit that he is indeed a very capable craftsman. His guitars cost about £40 sterling and his production is rather small (not more than six guitars a year) as he is also engaged in violin making as well as piano repairs.

But paradoxical as it may seem, Egypt, so much deprived of all that



concerns the classic guitar, has presented the world with famous guitarists. To begin with I name Mo. Miguel Ablóniz who is universally known as an authority on the Spanish guitar. He was born in Cairo where he took his first lessons and lived until after the war. He then went to Spain where he studied with Pujol. Once graduated from the Conservatory of Barcelona, he returned to Egypt, stayed for a while and then left for Italy where he established himself as Guitar Professor at the Santa Cecilia Music Academy of Milan.

Another famous soloist who also started from Egypt and conquered Europe is Alexandre Lagoya. He was born in Alexandria and started guitar lessons with Mo. Sideridis. In 1951 he went to Paris for higher studies under Ida Presti, whom he married later. Ida Presti with Lagoya formed a guitar-duo which is the most perfect of its kind and they are regularly heard in concert halls of several European capitals, radio programmes and television.

Last but not least is Constantin Proakis, another excellent guitarist who was born and lived in Egypt for many years. He began studying the guitar practically alone and later went to Barcelona where he studied under Pujol. He is now established in Rome where he conducts a guitar course with great success. His contribution to the instrument includes compositions, transcriptions, recitals and magazine articles.

Much merit also goes to Mme. Feninger de Rogatis, an excellent soloist and teacher. Although the guitar is not her main instrument she has been teaching and playing it along with the harp and the piano with great success. She is heard as a guitar soloist from time to time from the studios of the Egyptian State Broadcasting.

The few qualified amateurs who are in Egypt, perhaps not more than ten (including myself) are doing all they can to spread the knowledge of this instrument—so full of mysticism. We participate in musical manifestations, radio broadcasts, etc. Not being professionals, we can unfortunately devote but little time to the guitar, and this only for personal satisfaction. Consequently we are far from being “virtuosos” and cannot produce ourselves on concert platforms. This should be the job of a real professional (and not of a mere “dilettante”) who would bring and impose the instrument on a public that has never heard it played in its true light.

In this respect I urge I.C.G.A. to encourage a soloist to come on a concert tour in Egypt. This “mission” should be sincerely artistic and not merely commercial. I am sure he will meet a comprehensive audience and his journey would not be in vain.

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## GUITAR ACCOMPANIMENTS FOR SONGS

By Victoria Kingsley (Britain)

WHEN one buys the Burl Ives or the New York Bantam Book of Songs, one finds the chords indicated over the tune on the first beat of each bar. Even beginners can soon strum a few chords in the rhythm of the melody and so supply support to the voice, but this will not long satisfy the more ambitious player; certainly not to-day when so many amateurs are studying the guitar seriously, and it is good to find that they frequently have the Elizabethan Lute Songs as their goal.

These are, as all admit, difficult, for they should be played *as they were written* and not in some watered down version.

For guitar players in the earlier stages there is a lack of song books in most countries. In Germany where there are quite a number of publications, the accompaniments tend to run in a groove, regardless of the period of the song. However they are usually musicianly and that is more than can be said of some of the songs published in England and in U.S.A.

To make a good setting for a song involves knowledge, experience and taste. Once one has left behind the six-string strumming, one embarks on a vast sea of possibilities in which some instruction is indispensable, even if one is quite gifted musically.

In a brief article and without illustrating with musical examples of particular songs, one can only give a few suggestions and perhaps a few "DON'TS".

(1) Study counterpoint and harmony the academic way if you possibly can. They are interdependent and there are no short cuts.

(2) Pay respect to your song: think about its period and character. Choose your style and stick to it. It is unkind to a seventeenth century song to distort its dignified melody with fancy harmony of a much later period.

The trick which stamps the amateur as tasteless and ignorant, is the use of some diminished seventh suddenly just for the sake of sounding clever. It is only a trick and would not be tolerated by any good musician. Even if your song is modern it must have some consistent style.

(3) Aim at a good bass line. As long as you strum on six-string chords you will have none, but when you have learned some harmony you will begin to appreciate the value of the different inversions and to feel the bass as a part, *moving* and just as important as the tune.

(4) Aim for some variety. With six-string chord strumming you probably had a "PLONK" on each first beat. Now experiment: the guitar can go with the voice in parallel thirds or sixths. Do not double the voice part. The voice has the tune, so be thankful that your guitar part need not bother with this. Contrary motion is most valuable, particularly in the bass, and it is good to let the guitar part move when the voice has a held note or a rest, and reciprocally to hold still in the guitar part when the voice is busy with a quick run.

(5) A very simple guitar accompaniment can often be the best. A masterly example of this would be the Nana from Falla's Seven Popular Songs which can be played exactly as written (though it is better transposed).

Never disturb your singing with fussy accompanying.

(6) In general *hear all you can*. Why not songs for piano as well? Even if only indirectly they are developing your feeling for the way a voice and an accompaniment work and build together a *musical structure*. One must shed the feeling that the accompaniment is just a background noise, so listen to Fischer-Dieskau singing Schubert and Hugo Wolf. Anyhow you will enjoy it!

Listen to Deller and Dupré, and Cuenod and Leeb.

We may not be able to reach these heights, but in our accompaniments we must let the song be itself and not impose on it harmonies which would puzzle the original singers a hundred, even two hundred years ago. If this sounds too rigid I would say that it is at any rate a rule until one has quite a lot of experience. Benjamin Britten can carry through an original idea which may seem to deviate from this, but he cannot easily be imitated.

So good luck with your accompaniments!

### BROADCASTS FROM FRANCE

THE 'Notes sur la guitare' broadcasts presented on French Radio by Robert Vidal may be heard at the following times (from October 15th):—  
Every Monday from 10.15 to 10.20 p.m.

Every Tuesday from 7.10 to 7.25 p.m. (on Chaîne Parisienne). Wave-lengths: 280 (Paris), 498, 445, 379, 318, 258, 218, 213. As we are not sure if allowance has been made for the ending of British Summer Time it might be advisable to test an hour earlier than these times. Listeners should write to, 'Notes sur la Guitare', R.T.F., 107 Rue de Grenelle, Paris 7, France, expressing thanks and asking for 15 minutes (instead of only 5) on Mondays. (Letters 4d., Cards 3d., British postage.)

Recent broadcasts presented by Robert Vidal have included Andres Segovia, Luise Walker, Ida Presti, Presti-Lagoya Duo, Alirio Diaz, Sainz de la Maza, Antonio Francisco Serra, Carlos Santos and Laurindo Almeida.

### CONCERTS IN PARIS

The Presti-Lagoya Duo will play for the first time on October 28th 'Concerto for Two Guitars (originally two mandolines) and Orchestra by Vivaldi' at Salle Gaveau under the direction of Fernand Oubradous.

November 12th, Presti-Lagoya Duo recital at Salle Gaveau.

### GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

Eight gramophone discs (R.C.A.) have been made by Ida Presti and Alexandre Lagoya (solos and duets). Particulars from M. Robert Vidal, 178 Rue du Fbg. Saint Denis, Paris 10, France.

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# LOLITA TAGORE

## AT THE "MOZARTEUM" OF SALZBURG

By Hans Almaroth (Germany)

IT was in the Summer of 1953 that I first heard Lolita Tagore in two recitals which she gave in Gelnhausen. From that time I have been delighted with the mature art of this excellent guitarist who plays on her instrument classic music from the early 15th century up to our modern music. Before then I never thought it was possible to play works of Frescobaldi, Vivaldi, Bach or Mozart on the guitar in such a style, so that after the concerts I was enthusiastic about the instrument and its intelligent player. At that time I thought that this talented young girl, who is a descendant of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, had already reached the climax of her art, but to-day I can understand that she has extended still further her knowledge in a prodigious way. She plays with a smooth clear touch, and the sound she obtains from her instrument is so great and extends so far that for me her playing is a real wonder: the fluency is almost mysterious and her mind and soul are united in a surprising manner.

Recently, on May 29th, I was in Salzburg and went to hear the concert Lolita Tagore gave in the Wiener Saal of the Mozarteum. The programme she presented was a very difficult one and the audience was drawn from the most musically-cultured public in Europe: the result was a complete success such as a guitarist has seldom obtained in that city. Works by Milan, Galilei and Weiss formed the first part of her programme, Frescobaldi and a complete Suite of Bach the second part; and how Lolita Tagore plays Bach is something unique for style and feeling, and I often feel it could not be better played. The third part included also the Sor variations on a theme of Mozart, as homage for the celebrations of the second century of his birth. Few works for the guitar are so beautiful when played as brilliantly as this and the audience was enthusiastic and wanted to hear it once more, but Lolita did not repeat it as the evening had already been very trying for her, with the long programme and the heat of the late season.

Among the other pieces of the last part we heard a composition of Marie Chiesa, a very young Italian composer, who dedicated to Lolita Tagore a "Preludio".

The concert was also favoured by a very good instrument, made especially for her by the well-known Italian constructor Lorenzo Bellafontana of Genova.

We shall have the pleasure of hearing Lolita Tagore soon again in the coming season in Germany where she is engaged for a "tournee" in the autumn, and on my part I wish again to this young, serious musician a happy future, and for those who have listened to her guitar the joy of hearing her many times again.



LOLITA TAGORE



Professor  
PERICLES  
DIAMANTOPOULO  
of  
Cairo, Egypt

Professor  
STELIOS SIDERIDIS  
of  
Alexandria, Egypt



*GUITAR SONGSTRESS*



**VICTORIA KINGSLEY**



## Eric V. Ridge

*Plate 1.*—Self-portrait of the author in his workshop



## “THE BIRTH OF A GUITAR”

Introduction by L. T. Bridell, M.A.

*A thing of beauty and a joy forever—such is the guitar. If we ask for romance, for the pure joy of listening to lovely sounds, for the pleasure of handling a beautiful and artistic thing—then we can find all this and more in the guitar.*

*To many, there will come a time, when the desire to build one of these delectable instruments becomes too strong to resist, and so it is hoped that the story as told by Mr. Ridge, of his adventure in building his first guitar, will interest and help those who wish to follow his example.*

*He already has built a number of excellent violins, but as very little has been published, especially in English, on the guitar, much of which he has done has been personal and pioneer work.*

*His wish is to describe the many experiments and difficulties he encountered, and how he overcame them. The story will be told here in six instalments and will of necessity be an abridged version but Mr. Ridge intends eventually to publish a fully detailed and illustrated book on the subject.*

*Besides being a violinist and a clarinet player and teacher, Mr. Ridge is also an expert photographer and is thus able to illustrate these articles himself, so without more ado I will let him tell the story in his own way.*

# THE BIRTH OF A GUITAR

By Eric V. Ridge (England)

UPON reflection it occurs to me that it was due to my association with the members of the Classic Guitar Circle at Cheltenham and in particular to my old friend Mr. L. T. Bridell, our President, that my first guitar was born; and very hardly born, through many experiences, trials and tribulations, some of which I wish to narrate to you in this series of articles in the hope that some of my readers may benefit thereby when the urge comes for them to produce an instrument of their own.

It has been my good fortune to make a number of violins and believe me there is hardly a greater thrill to be experienced than that of the craftsman who after weeks of pious industry strings up a new instrument and hears for the first time wood which may have lain dead for countless years, brought back to life and singing once again as it did in the breezes of long ago.

This thrill was brought back to me recently when I fitted the strings to my first guitar and those first few moments were worth all the hours of hard labour, a labour of love, which went before and made it possible.

Owing to the dearth of information available to prospective guitar-makers I was forced to the examination of existing instruments, both good and bad, the perusal of short articles which appeared from time to time in “Guitar News” and other publications, the examination of the difficulties experienced in matters of intonation and tonal production by players at the Circle and the possible elimination of same (the difficulties, not the players) combined with my knowledge of woodworking, instrument making in particular and a certain amount of commonsense.

I started off therefore, after months of contemplation and some experimenting, with a firm idea in my mind as to how I proposed to proceed with

my first instrument, free and untrammelled by the experiences and writings of past guitar-makers, and if some of my ideas seem revolutionary to other makers, let me say here and now that at no time during the making of this instrument was anything done without due consideration and forethought.

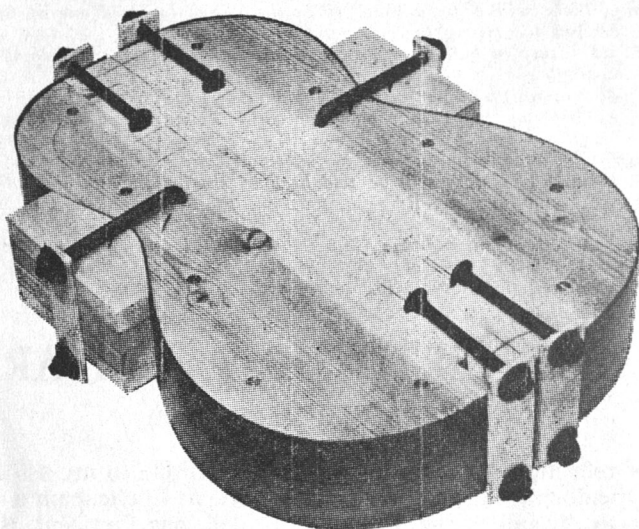


Plate 2.—Mold with ribs and cramps in position

It is my intention to publish an illustrated book under the above heading at a later date, but in the meantime, for the purpose of these short articles, I propose dividing the construction into six sections as follows:—

1. Materials, design and moulds.
2. Ribs, back and front.
3. Interior strutting and assembly.
4. Purfling and neck.
5. Fingerboard, fretting, bridge and machine head.
6. Preparing, varnishing and stringing.

The wood for the back and ribs is Palisander, a species of Rosewood from South America, the back was in two halves, being one piece of wood split down the centre edgewise, the ribs being similar to match. Walnut, maple and mahogany are frequently used, figured maple cut on the quarter being the most ornate, and similar to that used by violin makers, but is purely decorative, affecting the final tonal results of the instrument very little.

Tyrolean Spruce of fine grain was used for the front or table, this also was in two pieces cut edgewise from the same plank; it is very soft in texture and cuts (with a sharp tool) like a piece of cheese.

The neck and head which was of maple was purchased rough cut to shape and afterwards laminated for strength with palisander.

Nothing but straight grained ebony should ever be entertained for the fingerboard as it is the only wood which is hard enough to stand the wear of continuous friction by strings and fingers.

The interior blocks, linings and struts were all of pine and the bridge cut from a block of Rosewood, with ivory saddle from an old paper knife, likewise the ivory nut at the end of the fingerboard.

The only other materials required were the machine head, fretting wire, purfling and edging, the three latter being purchased in suitable lengths.

For my design I selected a Torres model details of which were kindly lent to me by Mr. W. M. Appleby, the dimensions of the sound chest being as follows:—

Length	19 $\frac{1}{8}$ "	Upper bout	10 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Waist	9 $\frac{3}{8}$ "	Lower bout	14 $\frac{3}{8}$ "
Ribs	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ "		

Length of stop or vibrating string length 25 $\frac{5}{8}$ "

I built my guitar around an inside mould constructed of four  $\frac{7}{8}$ " thicknesses of deal planking, glue jointed to the correct width, cut to the interior rib-shape and screwed together in such a manner that the top one can be unscrewed and removed leaving the other three within the ribs, which will be explained later; two sections of the mould can be seen in PLATE 1.

Two outer shapes are made to fit the "waist" of the instrument, recesses are cut at the top and bottom of the mould about 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " by 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to receive the top and bottom blocks, as shown in PLATE 1.

Six cramps were made to hold the ribs in position from  $\frac{3}{8}$ " bolts and pieces of plywood as can be seen in PLATE 2, and in the next article I will describe how the ribs were bent and fixed, together with the construction of the back and front with sound hole and inlaid decoration.

(To be continued)

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### ISAIAS SAVIO

There is much to be said for 'albums' or 'collections' of guitar music. They provide good practice for sight-reading and it is interesting to play through a number of pieces, whether by the same or different composers, perhaps marking those one likes particularly or those which are worthy of further study. Musical taste is developed by comparing the various items. Moreover, these albums are usually produced at a much lower cost than would be entailed by purchasing each item separately, even if all the items were obtainable.

One of the most interesting and important collections of guitar music published in a single volume is "Anthology of Works for Guitar" (Antologia de Obras para Guitarra), BA11250, selected and edited with great care and skill by Isaias Savio, professor of guitar at the Conservatorio de Sao Paulo, Brazil. Its 43 items by 35 guitarist-composers of seven different nationalities range through four centuries.

Professor Savio has made available to guitarists many rare items from his very extensive library of guitar music. For instance, Andante from the Grand Sonata by Federico Moretti, one of the first guitarists to compile a method for the six-stringed guitar: a Prelude which Adolphe Le Dhuy dedicated to his friend Ferdinand Sor; works by Viñas and Parga who were leading guitarists in Spain before the scene was dominated by the great Tárrega. Corbetta, R. de Visée, Sanz, Roncalli, Asioli da Regio are among the earlier composers represented. Solos by Sychra (Russia), Matiegka (Czechoslovakia) and Horetzky (Poland) serve to show the internationality of the guitar. The most famous name would be that of Paganini, and the best known music is Franz Gruber's 'Silent Night', an arrangement of which is appropriately included in Prof. Savio's excellent Anthology.

There is a simple charm about children's songs in all parts of the world and those sung by Brazilian children are among the most delightful. Isaias Savio has collected nine of these melodies and arranged them for solo guitar in an Album bearing the title "Para Nilo Brincar"—BR 1079.

\* \* \* \*

Another useful Album edited by Isaias Savio is his collection of "23 Selected Studies" by Mauro Giuliani (23 Estudios Escogidos), BA 11328—a *must* for every student of the guitar.

\* \* \* \*

Published as separate items by Ricordi are the following transcriptions by Isaias Savio :

Canção Triste (Chanson Triste) ...	Tschaikowsky
Moment Musical ... ..	Schubert
Dominó (Valse) ... ..	Louis Ferrari
Estrellita ... ..	Ponce
Poema ... ..	Fibich
{ Olhos Negros (Black Eyes) ... ..	Russian gypsy trad.
{ Santa Lucia ... ..	Neapolitan trad.
{ Côco-Penêruê ... ..	Valdemar Henrique
Casinha Pequenina, etc. ... ..	Brazilian trad.

\* \* \* \*

Finally, an original work by Isaias Savio: '4 Preludios Pitorescos'—Crepusculo, Retrato, Paisagem (dedicated to Wilfrid M. Appleby) and Na Ilha Abandonada. This suite reveals the composer's profound knowledge of the guitar. It is definitely an item for the concert artist.

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## JULIAN BREAM

**A**T least four elements combined to make a success of the Promenade Concert at the Royal Albert Hall on July 25th:—Sir Malcolm Sargent and the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, the music of Sibelius and the two solo artists, Ida Haendal and Julian Bream. The concert attracted the largest audience of this season to that date.

The first part of the programme was devoted to the music of Sibelius with Ida Haendal in the Violin Concerto. Julian Bream played the solo guitar part in Joaquín Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez". With such a conductor and soloist a great success was assured.

Julian Bream was heard on B.B.C. radio on August 3rd in a twenty-minute recital of guitar solos: Rondo in C (Sor), Granada (Albéniz), Segovia, op. 29 (Roussel), Hommage à Tárrega (Turina), and Study in A (Tárrega). It was a brilliant performance.

On September 3rd he was heard in a repeat broadcast playing guitar accompaniments to the singing of Frederick Fuller (baritone) in "Songs of the Spanish Races". It was a demonstration of what really good guitar accompaniment can be—varied but always in good taste and always keeping a perfect balance with the singer.

Another twenty-minute solo recital was broadcast on September 14th the programme being Siciliana and Fugue (Bach), Andante and Minuet (Sor) and Study in A minor (Villa-Lobos).

## THE ART OF FINGERING

by M. Ablóniz (*Italy*)

### Part III

#### TWENTY PRINCIPAL RULES OF FINGERING FOR THE LEFT HAND

(rules: 1—7)

**R**ULE 1. THE RE-USE OF THE SAME FINGER FOR A FEW DIFFERENT CONSECUTIVE NOTES ON THE SAME STRING IS CONVENIENT. In this case the finger should move as lightly as possible, not only to avoid making the string whistle (a noise that is not heard when playing on the three first strings) but especially because the entire left hand technique otherwise gets heavy. To illustrate better the eight first examples (see enclosure) I have joined with lines the notes stopped by the same finger.

**R**ULE 2. THE IMMEDIATE RE-USE OF THE SAME FINGER ON DIFFERENT STRINGS SHOULD BE AVOIDED. This however is allowed and mostly inevitable in chord formations. EXAMPLE 9: *A* sharp taken with 3 not to re-use immediately 2. EX. 10: *G* taken with 3 instead of 2. EX. 11: *B* is taken with 4 because had it been taken with 3, the 3 would have been re-used immediately for *C*. EX. 12: *D* sharp taken with 1 because had it been taken with 2, the 2 would have been re-used immediately for *G* sharp.

**RULE 3. A FINGER TO BE USED IMMEDIATELY AFTER, SHOULD BE KEPT FREE.** Ex. 13: *C* sharp taken with 4 to leave 3 free for *B*. Ex. 14: *G* sharp (6th string) taken with 2, not to use any of the three fingers implied in the following chord. Ex. 15: The last *A* is taken with 3 to leave 4 free for *D*. Ex. 16: *C* sharp taken with 2 and not with 1, to leave 1 free for *A* sharp. Ex. 17: *E* taken with 3 and *C* with 2 to leave 1 free for *E* sharp. Ex. 18: 2 and 3 used, to keep 1 free; in this case 1 is used for a 'partial barré'. NOTE: Some fine examples, where finger 1 is kept free before its immediate use as a 'barré' may be seen (a) in study No. 1 of the "20 studies by F. Sor, fingered by Segovia" (in reality this is No. 8 of op. 6), bar 24, where Segovia takes *A* and *F* with 2 and 3, keeping 1 free for following barré; (b) in 'Fandanguillo' by M. Torroba, fingered by Segovia (Schott, G.A. 104), bar 15, *C* and *E* taken with 2 and 3. Ex. 19: *A* is taken with 3 to keep 2 free for *E*. Ex. 20: *B* taken with 3 to keep 2 free for *F*. Ex. 21: *D* taken with 3 to keep 2 free for *G*. Ex. 22: *A* taken with 3 to keep 2 free for *E*. Ex. 23: *D* taken with 3 to keep 2 free for *G*. Ex. 24: *G* sharp taken with 2 to keep 1 free for *F*. Ex. 25: *B* (second note) taken with 3 to keep 4 free for *E*. Ex. 26: *G* taken with 2 to keep 1, 3, 4 free for following chord.

Rules 2 and 3 are so relative that examples 11 and 12 might have very well been represented under Rule 3.

**RULE 4. IN MANY CASES THE ANTICIPATED LIBERATION OF THE FINGERS IS POSSIBLE.**

Although Tárrega in very few cases has almost prepared the field for the introduction of this idea, Segovia, guided by his constant and extraordinary concern for 'continuity of sound' is certainly the creator of this principle. Ex. 28: second bar, fingers 4 and 3 though already stopping *E* and *C*, are replaced by 3 and 2 to liberate 4 for *A* (acciaccatura) on first string. Ex. 29: Though 3 stops already *D*, it is replaced by 4. Ex. 30: First bar, though it was possible to use 3 even for the third and fourth *G*, it is replaced by 4 sometime before it will be used for *D* on third string; second bar, though 4 could still have been used for the second *F* sharp, it is replaced by 3 which liberates 4 for the following *C* sharp. Ex. 31: first bar, 4 replaces 2 on *D* to liberate 2 for next chord. Ex. 32: 1 replaces 3 on *B* flat for same reason. Ex. 33: second bar, *A* and *C* sharp are taken with 3 and 4 (though 1 and 2 might have been used) to keep 2 free for *E*; third bar, 4 and 3 are used to keep 1 and 2 free for next bar; though 1 and 2 might have been used three times in succession (for bars four and five) they are replaced in bar four by 2 and 3 to liberate 1 for *F* (and following *E*). Ex. 34: *F* sharp (third crochet) and the following *C* sharp are taken with 4 and 3, instead of say a partial barré (with 1) on the second fret, to keep 1 and 2 free for next *G* sharp and *B*. Ex. 35: *B* (sixth note) taken with 3 (instead of 1) to keep 1 free for *A*. Ex. 36: *G* taken with 3 to leave fingers 1, 2, 4 free. Ex. 37: 1 replaces 3 on *B* (fourth note) to liberate 3 for the following *E*. Ex. 38: *G* natural taken with 2 to keep 1 free for *F* sharp. Ex. 39: 3 replaces 2 on *B* (first bar—last note) to let finger 1 and the entire hand be nearer to the following *E* flat. In last bar, the third bass note *E* flat is taken with 3 on the fifth string so that 1 and 2 may take easily and in time the following *E* flat and *G* (2nd and 4th strings).

**RULE 5. SOMETIMES WE MAY STOP A NOTE WITH A FINGER WHICH WOULD NOT BE THE BEST ONE TO USE FOR THAT PARTICULAR NOTE, JUST BECAUSE IT WILL SERVE RIGHTLY A FOLLOWING NOTE ON THE SAME STRING.** Ex. 40: *F* sharp (first bar) taken with 4 to have that finger ready on the string for the following *G*. Ex. 41: *G* (first bar) taken with 4 instead of 3 to have it ready for next *F* sharp. Ex. 42: A fine example of anticipated preparation; 1 replaces 3 on third *C* sharp to have finger 1 ready for next *D*. Ex. 43: *A* taken with 3 which is used immediately after for *C* sharp.

**RULE 6. WHEN POSSIBLE, A NOTE OCCURRING TWICE OR MORE TIMES IN SUCCESSION (ON THE SAME STRING) SHOULD BE KEPT STOPPED BY THE SAME FINGER.** Ex. 44: *C* bass all the time with 3. Ex. 45: *F* bass, both times with 3.

**RULE 7. SOMETIMES THE CONVENIENT RE-USE OF A FINGER (ALREADY USED OR TO BE USED) CREATES A 'CROSSING OF FINGERS'.** Ex. 46: first bar, last *A* taken with 4 (instead of 3) because 3 has been re-used from the previous *E* to *D* (third string); second bar, *G* sharp taken with 2 because it has not abandoned the third string (from a previous *A*). Ex. 47: by re-using 1 for *F*, 2 crosses 1 to stop *C* sharp. Ex. 48: To stop both *A* (on third string) with finger 2, 3 crosses 2 in first chord. Ex. 49: second bar, 3, to stop *E* crosses 2 which is used for *A* and following *B*.

*(To be continued)*

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Est. 1867 Phone: DOU. 8676-9**"THE CAMPBELLS ARE TUNING!"**by **Tim Verey** (*Timbuctoo*)

I OFTEN wonder what happens to the many people who decide to learn the guitar but who have no one to tell them the vital facts about the instrument.

There was the dear, bed-ridden, old lady of nearly eighty years who heard a broadcast by Segovia and ordered a guitar from a local music store. She received one of the jazziest of plectrum-guitars and when I visited her she was pluckily picking out simple single-note melodies on it. Under the circumstances I hadn't the heart to disillusion her. Poor old lady! She has passed on now to where she will not be given a phoney harp! But how many younger people have been sold such guitars, I wonder!

\* \* \*

Then there was the man who bought a guitar at a big music store. Fortunately he was able to say that he didn't wish to play jazz, so he bought the right kind of guitar. But just as he was leaving the shop he realised that he did not know how to tune it, so he asked the sleek-haired salesman if a pitch-pipe or tuning fork would be any help. "Oh!" replied the salesman, "you don't

need anything like that with a guitar. Just tune the four thinnest strings so that they play the first bit of 'The Campbells are Coming' and tune the two thickest strings a bit below!"

Fortunately the purchaser heard of "Guitar News" before it was too late!

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A COPY of No. 3 "Guitar News" was recently purchased for £1 sterling by a reader, from Mr. Alberto Valdes Blain of New York. Mr. Valdes Blain kindly donated the proceeds to I.C.G.A. funds. He is the father of two guitarist sons, Albert and Roland.

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## THE GENEVA COMPETITION

320 candidates representing 39 nations have applied to participate in the 12th International Competition for Musical Performers which is being held in Geneva as we go to press. Seven competitors, all male, have entered for the Guitar Section. Although this is the smallest entry for any Section, it is the first time the guitar has been included and some would-be competitors were unable to obtain the necessary music. No doubt such difficulties will be overcome in future.

The final concert of prize winners will be broadcast on Swiss and other European Radio on the evening of Saturday, October 6th.

From 1939 to 1955 more than 3,000 candidates from 53 countries have participated in these important competitions. Many of the winners have become world-famous artists; for instance, the celebrated singer Victoria de los Angeles (who is often heard with guitar accompaniment) won First Prize for singing in 1947.

The governments of Austria, Italy, Poland and Yugoslavia have organised special competitions to select young artists to send as candidates to the 1956 event.

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