

ABSTRACTS

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Keynotes

Prof Jonathan Leathwood

University of Denver

Zooming In and Zooming Out: Harmony and Structural Levels in the Guitar Repertoire

In common-practice tonal music, harmonies flow on more than one level. On a literal, surface level, there are chord-to-chord relationships; on a more imaginative level, there are relationships across larger spans, in which some harmonies act as structural pillars, while chords embellish or connect them. From this distinction two questions arise: First, what analytical methods help to identify structural harmonies? Second, how can listeners and performers divide their attention between the chord-by-chord flow of events and the larger harmonic pillars?

The first question is easily answered, because the Schenkerian approach has been enriched and widely tested. It has, however, been very little applied to the guitar

repertoire, so one of the purposes of this talk is to encourage scholars to remedy the gap.

The second question, I suggest, is addressed expressively within the composition itself: composers are able to shift the focus from one level to another through such techniques as pedal points, harmonized scales, and voice-leading patterns. Such shifts of focus have great poetic value that might be compared with techniques of zooming in and out in the domain of film.

Prof Milton Mermikides

IGRC and Gresham Professor of Music

Something in the Way: A Multi-Modal Case Study of Nirvana

This lecture addresses a central challenge in music analysis: how to meaningfully illuminate the listener's experience. Like the parable of the blind men and the elephant, detailed focus on a single parameter – harmony, rhythm, lyrical meaning, performance – can yield valuable insight, yet can obscure and distort the whole. Further, when no one parameter appears sufficiently complex to sustain such scrutiny, certain musical forms risk being cast as either beyond, or beneath, analysis.

Using Juslin and Västfjäll's BRECHEMA model of musical emotion as a framework, this lecture proposes a multi-modal approach through the music of Nirvana. The lenses of Brain Stem Reflex, Rhythmic Entrainment, Evaluative Conditioning, Emotional Contagion, Visual Imagery, Episodic Memory, Musical Expectancy, and Aesthetic Judgment are applied not as competing explanations, but as interacting perspectives on the same material. Together, they offer a richer and more integrated account of how meaning and affect arise in listening, and how analysis regardless of musical style might move beyond description, toward a more illuminating engagement with the vastness of musical experience.

Prof Richard Savino

San Francisco Conservatory

PXAT: Pedro Ximénez Abrill y Tirado (1784-1856): Maestro of the Americas

Born in Arequipa, Peru, PXAT was a virtuoso cellist and guitarist who composed over 40 symphonies, 40 masses, dozens of chamber pieces with interesting instrumentations, and over 300 solo pieces for the guitar.

He moved to Lima for a period and later became Maestro di Capella at the Sucre Cathedral in Bolivia. At the time Sucre was one of, if not the wealthiest cities in South America. His renown was such that he was published in Paris by Richault and was written about in Hugh Bonelli's published travel diary (London, 1854.)

His music is well composed, and he employs techniques that would not reappear in the classical guitar canon until the mid 20th century.

Lecture-Recitals and Papers

James Akers

Independent researcher

Fantasia Romantique: The guitar in Eastern Europe in the 19th century

Whilst the modern perception of the classical guitar is that its origins and core repertory are of Spanish origin, there is a vast body of Eastern European guitar music from the 19th century that points to a more complex and nuanced historical narrative. Moreover, the breadth, scope and productivity of these Eastern European composers, during a time when few Spanish guitarists were making a significant impact, suggests that the perception of the pre-eminence of Spain in the history of the guitar may be ripe for re-assessment. This repertory has languished largely unexplored due to a combination of factors. It often requires extended range instruments, which renders some of the music impossible to perform on a standard modern guitar. The paucity of scores published in the modern era has lessened its ready availability and a lack of awareness of its existence amongst contemporary performers has maintained its relative invisibility.

This lecture recital will explore the historical context of, and significant works by, forgotten Eastern European guitarist composers including, Ivan Klinger, Johann Decker-Shenk, Mikhail Polupayenko and Nicolai Makaroff; thereby, endeavouring to reaffirm their position in the historical record, and importance to the romantic era repertory of the guitar. All performances will be done on original 19th century instruments and employing techniques gleaned from a study of period sources.

Tim Beattie

IGRC

Posthumous Collaboration and Performer Agency in Twentieth-Century Guitar Repertoire

What happens when a performer reimagines music written without intimate knowledge of the instrument? Editing is broadly accepted as a natural and necessary part of the guitarist's interpretative role, and recent research has begun to articulate how the guitar itself reshapes compositional ideas through its physical space, affordances, limitations, and idiosyncrasies. Yet important questions remain: How far can performers take this creative role? What kind of authorship arises when collaboration is indirect, deferred, or posthumous? How does the instrument itself influence musical meaning?

This lecture-recital explores how guitarists bring neglected works to life through a series of case studies drawn largely from unpublished manuscripts by non-guitarist composers who intended to engage in collaboration with a chosen performer. These works reveal how interpreter-performers may shape the afterlife of compositions, stepping into creative spaces left open by unrealised, undocumented, or problematic partnerships. More broadly, this research investigates practical ways of approaching

critical editorial practice as a form of creative mediation, situated along the same creative continuum as transcription, arrangement, and composition.

Francesco Braggio

IGRC

Cadence and Phrase Function: Rethinking Period Structure in Early 19th-Century Guitar Music

This paper examines the internal structure of musical phrases and periods in early 19th-century guitar repertoire, with the aim of providing historically grounded tools for expressive interpretation. Drawing on selected works by, for example, Carulli, Sor, Aguado, and Molino, the study challenges the adequacy of symmetrical models such as the standard 2+2 phrase division, proposing instead a rhetorical conception of phrase structure centered on cadential function.

The theoretical framework combines historical sources—especially Riepel and Momigny—with more recent analytical perspectives, notably Caplin’s *Analyzing Classical Form*. These sources highlight the phrase as a dynamic entity shaped by tension and resolution, comparable to the rhetorical arc of *arsis* and *thesis*. In this view, the cadence is not merely a closing gesture but the structural and expressive goal of the phrase. The paper demonstrates how such orientation toward cadence often generates asymmetry, interruption, or displacement in the phrase structure—features frequently overlooked when rigid models are applied.

Examples from early guitar works illustrate how composers shaped tension toward cadences through harmonic direction, rhythmic grouping, and motivic development. This perspective also clarifies the expressive function of deviations from regular phrasing, treating them as meaningful exceptions rather than irregularities.

Ultimately, the paper advocates for a shift in analytical and performance practice: from reading phrases as formal blocks to understanding them as expressive gestures driven by cadential resolution. This approach restores movement, direction, and phrasing logic to the core of classical guitar interpretation.

Dr Sam Cave

Brunel University

Michael Finnissy and Felix Namque

The practice of composing *In Nomines* established in the 16th century and flowering into the 17th century is well studied and documented. In many ways the compositional techniques used to create these instrumental works from Taverner’s setting of the plainsong melody *In Nomine Domini* from the Benedictus of his mass *Gloria tibi Trinitas* foreshadow many 20th century ideas about the use of found materials. What is less well known is the related, yet particularly English, practice of creating highly virtuosic keyboard works from the plainsong melody of the Felix Namque (*For Though Art Happy*), most famously demonstrated by Thomas Tallis in works published in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. The guitar’s universal appeal makes it the perfect vehicle to revive and update the practice of creating instrumental Felix Namques, just as Ensemble Recherche did with their 1999 Witten *In Nomine Broken Consort Book* to

which composers such as Brian Ferneyhough, György Kurtág, and Wolfgang Rihm contributed.

Michael Finnissy is a composer as steeped in ancient music as he is in the hypermodern. He had written Felix Namques for me in 2012 and 2021. To partner these works I invited Christopher Fox, George Holloway, and John Croft to compose Felix Namques. Their dazzling array of responses to the material, from the spectral, through the microtonal, via the restringing of the instrument, and to the de-coupling of the player's two hands will be demonstrated and avenues for further development will be explored.

Giacomo Copiello

IGRC

New Music for the 8-string Brahms Guitar: Instrumental Identity & New Solo Repertoire

This presentation introduces a practice-based research project centered on the eight-string Brahms Guitar, an extended-range instrument conceived to broaden the expressive and registral scope of the classical guitar. By expanding the instrument both below and above the traditional range, this eight-string model creates new conditions for transcription within contemporary guitar practice.

The research approaches artistic practice as a primary mode of enquiry, focusing on how repertoire for the eight-string guitar can be developed through sustained engagement with performance. Transcription is treated as a central practice through which musical understanding is articulated in relation to instrumental conditions, rather than as a secondary or auxiliary activity. Through this perspective, the project explores how existing repertoire may be rethought for the instrument and how new music may emerge from this process.

A further focus concerns the relationship between the guitar and vocal-oriented modes of musical thinking. Drawing on music shaped by vocal imagination, the research reflects on lyricism as an instrumental quality that emerges through performance. These ideas find concrete realization in LIEDER, a combined project (CD+Books) that represents one of the principal artistic outcomes of the research, providing a practical context in which the research questions are explored in sound.

Gerard Cousins

Independent Scholar

Back to First Principles and perhaps a Half Step Beyond: Scordatura as an Interpretative Tool in Classical Guitar Repertoire

When preparing a new work for performance, it is often advantageous to return to 'first principles' in order to develop an original interpretation. Some musicians advocate listening to recordings by renowned performers, while others recommend setting aside previous interpretations altogether. Similarly, opinions differ on the role of the score: some urge strict adherence to the written text, whereas others caution against editorial influence and encourage the use of urtext editions. This paper proposes that

performers begin by asking a different question: is a given work best suited to the standard tuning of the guitar, or might an alternative scordatura offer advantages?

Through my experience as a guitar transcriber, I have found that many transcriptions are only feasible when employing non-standard tunings. As my familiarity with scordatura increased, I began to recognise its potential benefits not only for transcriptions but also for standard repertoire originally conceived for EADGBE tuning. In certain cases, alternative tunings can make works more resonant, idiomatic, and technically accessible, while also opening new interpretative possibilities.

This paper explores the advantages and disadvantages of using alternate tunings, focusing on several well-known repertoire pieces. Its aim is to encourage guitarists to consider scordatura as an integral part of their interpretative process and to explore the potential of alternative tunings when approaching each new work.

Dr Matt Curran and Prof Frank Lyons

Ulster University

Developing an Integrated Guitar Technique System (IGTS) for the Right Hand Through Practice-Based Research

Over the past five decades, electric guitar technique has undergone sustained evolution, shaped by innovations such as Van Halen's two-hand tapping, Gambale's sweep-picking, and recent fingerstyle-driven approaches by players such as Mancuso and Nieri. Despite these advances, alternate picking remains the dominant electric guitar pedagogical and performance model. Whilst alternate picking is deeply ingrained in instructional approaches, its reliance on continuous bidirectional motion introduces limitations in right-hand efficiency and as contemporary improvisational practices increasingly embrace wide intervallic structures, triad pairs, quartal harmony, and angular melodic design, the constraints become more pronounced.

This presentation introduces a new Integrated Guitar Technique System (IGTS) developed through a practice-based research methodology. IGTS combines elements of sweep picking, classical right-hand technique, and Bela Fleck-inspired banjo picking approaches, hybridised with escape-motion concepts identified through motion-analysis research. Unlike traditional models that prioritise speed through repetitive motion, IGTS seeks to optimise movement efficiency and reduce directional change, facilitating expansion of the guitarist's harmonic and expressive palette. By integrating the plectrum with the right-hand middle and ring fingers, the IGTS reduces 'trapped zone' interference while enabling wider harmonic intervals, enhanced dynamic contouring, and more flexible access to complex angular melodic structures.

A series of original exercises was developed to test the system, focusing on single-string patterns, triad pairs, spread triads, quartal structures, sequential intervallic designs and octave displacement. The system was evaluated through performance trials across a range of improvisational settings, and findings demonstrate that IGTS leads to measurable improvements in technical facility, intervallic clarity, and expressive control.

When Sibelius Meets Six Strings: Engraving Principles and Practical Challenges in Guitar Notation

We consume musical notation avidly, but only rarely stop to consider what it is that makes the notation usable – indeed we only really register this when something doesn't feel quite right about the typography, layout and presentation of a score.

Over the centuries there have been many attempts to codify good engraving practice, and with the advent of computer engraving these rules and heuristics are applied automatically when setting music in Finale, Sibelius, Dorico and other notation software. However, it's often the case that these programs don't do a good job by default when faced with the constraints and complexities of music for solo guitar – a wide range, the potential for multiple polyphonic voices all on a single staff, and a large variety of articulations and playing techniques.

This short presentation will give an overview of engraving and printing technology from the early c19 to the present day, before looking at examples (good, bad, and ugly), explain why some (at least) of the received rules of engraving are actually wrong, and conclude with some recommendations for personal practice when using notation software.

Dr Ataman Kinis

ARUCAD (Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design)

Instrument in Between: An Exploration of the Fretless Electric Guitar within the Electroacoustic Composition Environment

The fretless electric guitar's augmented ability to produce a wide range of timbral and microtonal textures, while retaining the functional capabilities of a standard guitar, creates an environment that enables diverse forms of sonic experimentation. The fretless board allows for alternative tuning systems as well as continuous pitch movement, generating unique possibilities within the contexts of electroacoustic improvisation and composition.

Through the use of additional devices such as the E-Bow (Electronic Bow), traditional bow, electronic effects, and the instrument's built-in timbral controls (e.g., tone and volume), the fretless electric guitar is examined as a device for producing electronic sound textures as well as pitch-oriented musical material.

Within this framework, this investigation positions the fretless electric guitar at the centre of the experimental process, functioning almost as a standalone electronic instrument within the modular electroacoustic setup. Further informed by my doctoral research, conceptualized as Decoration as Material, this presentation draws from analyses of makam pitch structures and ornamentation and examines technical and compositional strategies for sonic experimentation centred on the fretless electric guitar and live electronics.

Re-Creating Illusion: Collaborating with Hans Abrahamsen on a New Work for Guitar

This lecture-recital presents the collaboration between Hans Abrahamsen and Katalin Koltai in creating a new guitar work inspired by Abrahamsen's October, originally composed for piano left hand. While the piano piece was published in 1976, Abrahamsen had previously explored its compositional material in a version for French horn and piano, though this version was never published. Later, the composer also reworked the third movement of October into his dramatic piano concerto, Left, Alone. The paper examines how this collaborative arrangement recreates the gestural and timbral world of the original composition, seeking to evoke the illusion of different instrumental expressions. The arrangement utilises an augmented instrument, the Open Frets Guitar (previously referred to as the Ligeti Guitar in earlier literature), which features an adaptable fretboard technology that allows for the flexible modification of open strings.

Playing with History - Primary Sources with Practical Implications

How do we turn written, historical treatises into sounding results? While this may seem straightforward at first, the reality is often more complex. Some of these challenges can be met without resorting to practical music-making. For example, one can gain a better historical understanding of an author's life, or analyse the specific qualities of the source itself: who was it written for and why? However, at some point there will arise a need for practical experimentation if we are to transform written signs and symbols into sounds.

As part of my PhD at the University of York I have been exploring the expressive potential of Catharina Pratten's Guitar School (1859). Using this treatise as a point of departure, I have applied Pratten's expressive devices to a wide range of nineteenth-century repertoire. Paradoxically, this process has at times led me away from the written source towards a methodology of embodiment and what musicologist Elisabeth Le Guin calls Carnal Musicology- often to return to Pratten's writings with a renewed perspective.

In this lecture-recital I will share my journey with Pratten's method book and demonstrate its practical relevance in action. Among her most interesting devices we find a variety of arpeggiation- and strumming techniques, as well as an ingenious 'right-hand diagram'. By using a selection of pieces by Pratten, Nüske, and Regondi, I will discuss the challenges and rewards of studying historical sources with their practical application in mind.

The creative guitarist: co-shaping music from sound to structure

Over the past century, the roles of composer and performer have become increasingly separate, mainly due to growing specialization in many areas of human activity. In the field of guitar performance, this separation is relatively recent and coincides with the rise of Andrés Segovia. While not solely responsible, Segovia had a strong influence on the 20th-century guitar repertoire, elevating the guitar to a status comparable to the piano and violin but also contributing to the loss of a more multifaceted guitar culture. In the pre-Segovian period, guitar activity in Central Europe often took place within Gitarren Klubs, amateur music societies that also included highly skilled guitarists and composers. These figures were often active in several areas, combining the roles of performer, composer, and sometimes even luthier.

Today, there is a renewed dialogue between performative and compositional practices. This presentation explores several collaborative projects involving a non-guitarist composer as well as other performers, including violin, cello, and voice. Developed through an improvisatory and exploratory instrument-in-hand approach, these projects highlight the creative potential of direct engagement with the instrument and reveal how musical ideas, structures, and decisions can emerge organically from practice. This perspective also opens broader reflections on authorship, the role of the performer in the creative process, and the ways collaborative composition can reconnect the historically connected tasks of making and performing music.

This working method encourages direct interaction between performer and composer throughout the creative process and evokes the multifaceted collaborative spirit of the early Gitarren Klubs.

Dr Samatha Muir and Dr David John Roche IGRC and University of Cambridge

More Than Four Chords: Writing New Music for Ukulele and Large Ensemble

Concerti for ukulele and orchestra remain relatively rare, and existing works often reveal challenges in achieving effective balance and orchestration, as well as in integrating the instrument's distinctive timbre within the context of a large ensemble. Examining practical strategies for composing new works that expand the ukulele's orchestral and large-scale ensemble possibilities will help develop its presence in concert repertoire, essential for the future of the instrument.

Drawing on classical orchestral traditions and experience in writing for amplified instruments, Dr. David John Roche composed a 30-minute concerto for solo ukulele and orchestra. This was written for, and in close collaboration with, performer Dr. Samantha Muir. Through the process of completing this work, both collaborators explored solutions to issues of instrumental balance, combining careful orchestration techniques with varying degrees of amplification - including strategic use of texture, register, and dynamic shading - and engaging with how one might ensure a solo ukulele performer's clarity against a full orchestra. This work is scored for a traditional

double wind symphony orchestra – emphasis is given to transparent textures, doubled lines, and timbral pairings that complement the ukulele’s range and resonance.

In this presentation, Dr. Muir and Dr. Roche will detail the creative process behind the concerto, from its conception through drafting, arrangement, and orchestration. We will discuss technical considerations, including passages that highlight the ukulele’s virtuosity, choices around orchestral instrumentation, and specific challenges encountered in blending the ukulele with orchestral forces. This will be practically shown on stage with the use of different instruments and amplifiers in combination, prior to a recital of works drawn from the concerto, performed by Dr. Muir.

Establishing new repertoire for ukulele and orchestra not only broadens the instrument’s artistic horizons but contributes to building a sustainable professional canon for future performers and composers. Through practical examples and reflection on this recent project, we aim to offer insights into compositional techniques that can support the ukulele’s evolving role on the concert stage.

Beatriz Oliveira

University of Aveiro (Inet-md)

The guitar in Portugal in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: An archival study

The guitar in Portugal has increasingly attracted scholarly interest; however, the repertoire produced between the mid-nineteenth century and the early twentieth century remains largely insufficiently studied. The activity of composer-guitarists during this period, as well as the contexts of production and circulation of music for the instrument, continue to be underrepresented both in academic discourse and in contemporary performance practice. This paper presents the results of an archival research project focused on the identification, collection, and description of previously unknown musical sources.

Research conducted in archives and libraries throughout Portugal led to the identification of a substantial body of manuscript and printed scores, revealing the existence of a broad and diverse repertoire. This corpus comprises works of different styles and formal genres, reflecting musical practices associated with both performance and instrumental instruction, in amateur as well as professional contexts. Representative examples of works by Reynaldo Varela, Evaristo Pacheco de Sousa, Manuel Elyseu, Simões de Carvalho Barbas, César das Neves, and Luíz José Maria de Oliveira, among others, will be discussed. In parallel, brief biographical accounts of these composer-performers will be presented in order to situate their activity within the sociocultural contexts of the period.

The preliminary results reveal a marked contrast between the extent of musical activity documented in the recovered sources and its limited presence in the current guitar landscape in Portugal, particularly when compared to later periods. This paper aims to contribute to the dissemination and reassessment of this previously unknown musical heritage, opening new perspectives for research that integrate musicological inquiry with artistic practice.

Idiomatic Ukulele Plucking-Hand Techniques in Contemporary Practice

This lecture recital presents my ongoing research into idiomatic plucking-hand techniques for the ukulele and their applications in contemporary performance and composition. While the instrument is often associated with strumming and accompaniment, its expressive potential is considerably broader. By examining and systematising plucking-hand approaches, I aim to contribute to both performance practice and the evolving body of ukulele repertoire.

Two central research questions guide this work:

How can idiomatic plucking-hand techniques on the ukulele be systematised to support both performers and composers in the creation of contemporary repertoire?

In what ways do collaborative processes between performer and composer influence the development and integration of new plucking-hand techniques for the ukulele?

The presentation will combine performance demonstrations with analytical commentary. Selected examples will illustrate how composers, working in dialogue with me, have responded to the ukulele's unique sonic possibilities. These collaborations have provided opportunities to test, refine, and document approaches that are both technically feasible and musically compelling.

By situating techniques within a live performance setting, the lecture recital demonstrates their artistic impact and shows how idiomatic approaches, that are rooted in the physical and acoustic properties of the ukulele, can stimulate new works and new ways of playing.

Nicola Pignatiello

Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata

So You Want to Fake a Fugue? Partimento Imitato and the “Fugues” of Giuliani and Diabelli

Fugal writing is rare in the nineteenth-century guitar repertory, despite the centrality of counterpoint in European musical training. The guitar's constraints—limited sustain, reduced registral span, and less bilateral independence than keyboard instruments—discouraged extended polyphony; equally important were genre economics, which rewarded salon pieces, studies, and opera-theme variations.

Against this backdrop, two key figures of Viennese guitar culture, Mauro Giuliani and Anton Diabelli (also connected through Diabelli's publishing activity), each produced short works labelled “fugue” for solo guitar. This lecture-recital argues that, title notwithstanding, these pieces are not fugues in the strict pedagogical sense. Instead, they align with a compact contrapuntal exercise ubiquitous in Neapolitan partimento collections: the partimento imitato, a schema-based practice intended to be realised (and often improvised) at the keyboard.

Through performance, guided analysis, and live demonstrations, I will identify the characteristic imitative procedures and cadential templates that underpin Giuliani's and Diabelli's "fugues";

propose guitar-specific realisation strategies that preserve the logic of the models while respecting idiomatic constraints;

show how a practical command of partimento rules enables performers to improvise convincing "fugal" textures without composing a fully worked fugue.

The session ultimately reframes these pieces as traces of a broader pedagogy of improvised counterpoint and offers a historically informed pathway back to creative musicianship on the guitar.

Vitor Noah Moraes Sandes

IGRC

R. Marino Arcaro's Guitar Works: A Collaborator's point of view

This lecture-recital presents the ongoing development of my artistic research on performer–composer collaboration with Brazilian composer Rafael Marino Arcaro. Although our partnership precedes it, *Concerto Apinayé* (2019) marked the first moment in which we explored incorporating the performer's voice into the compositional process and examining its potential structural and dramaturgical functions. Since then, this exploration has expanded into a substantial body of repertoire and an evolving collaborative methodology.

I have created multiple arrangements for voice and guitar (including Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas 4*, *Viola Quebrada*, *Suite A menina e a canção*, and Violeta Parra's *El Gavilán*) with the specific aim of demonstrating to Arcaro the practical tools, techniques, and expressive possibilities that this expanded practice can offer. These arrangements function as prototypes within our collaboration, informing his compositional approach and stimulating further creation. In parallel, Arcaro has developed a series of works centred on voice–instrument pairings, including *Four Nocturnals to Lull Cicadas* (op.24a), *À Norte, Rio Preto* (op.9), *Brincadeiras Brasileiras n° 2* (op.8), and *Pisadeira* (op.6d). Together, these works provide a productive context for examining embodiment, timbre, and dramaturgy in vocalised instrumental performance.

I will introduce three new solo-guitar études from Arcaro's cycle *Bigato na goiaba branca*: *Festeira*, *Pique-esconde*, and *Bugrinha*. The presentation outlines the collaborative processes behind these works, focusing on co-creation, notational negotiation, timbral experimentation, and iterative performer–composer feedback, contributing to broader discussions on collaborative authorship and emerging roles of vocalicity in contemporary guitar practice.

Schubert Lieder Transcription – Idiomatic approach in the transcriptions of Franz Liszt and Johann Kaspar Mertz

The transcriptions of Schubert Lieder for solo piano by Franz Liszt had a major impact on the 19th-Century European musical scene. These transcriptions were so popular that Liszt regularly included them in his concerts, to great enthusiasm of the public.

In November 1838, the editor of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* Gottfried Wilhelm Fink wrote: “Nothing in recent memory has caused such sensation and enjoyment in both pianists and audiences as these arrangements The demand for them has in no way been satisfied; and it will not be until these arrangements are seen on pianos everywhere. They have indeed made quite a splash.”

Due to the huge popularity of Liszt’s Schubert Lieder transcriptions, other composers followed suit and it is not surprising that one of the leading guitarists in Vienna at the time, Johann Kaspar Mertz also made adaptations for guitar.

Mertz’s *Sechs Schubert’sche Lieder*, was heavily influenced by the transcriptions of Liszt. They are ambitious and technically demanding, exhausting the full resources of the instrument.

This lecture explores how Liszt and Mertz made these transcriptions idiomatic for their respective instruments. It will then examine the techniques used by Liszt and Mertz to convey the dramatic and lyrical qualities of the songs in the absence of the text and singer. Finally, the lecture will illustrate how guitarists in the present day can make further Schubert Lieder transcriptions by following the stylistic and idiomatic approaches of Liszt and Mertz.

The lecture will conclude with performances of new transcriptions of Schubert Lieder.

A Tempo Rubato: A discussion of nineteenth-century performance practices

In recent years, research on Romantic performance practice and analyses of early recordings have shed light on how flexibility of time, rhythmic displacement, and asynchrony were fundamental elements of historical musical interpretation. These practices – often challenging for modern performers and listeners to comprehend – produced a fluid and variable conception of musical time. Techniques such as tempo rubato, rhythmic displacement, and asynchrony between the hands on the piano point to a radically different understanding of sound and time. Rather than being merely aesthetic choices, these approaches reflect distinct modes of perception and listening during performance, likely influenced by neurological processes.

As part of the TouchTheSound project, we investigate how historical instruments, pedagogical methods, and the structure of past musical communities may have stimulated brain plasticity. This, in turn, likely fostered a deeply integrated tactile

approach to playing and listening, profoundly shaping perceptions of time and enabling musical creativity.

This lecture recital presents “A Tempo Rubato”, an artistic project devoted to solo and chamber music performed on historical instruments, with particular attention to timing, touch, listening, vibration, and the role of tactile perception. In dialogue with researcher and pianist Inja Stanović, we will explore historical approaches to tempo rubato and their embodied dimensions through live performance and the examination of early twentieth-century recordings.

This methodology not only informs our creative approach to interpretation but also provides deeper insights into how tactile perception may have shaped Romantic performance practices.

Emmanuel Sowicz

University of Oxford

The Anxiety of Derangement: Sor, fidelity, and flexibility in arranging for the classical guitar

Musical arrangements are foundational to the guitar repertoire. But what constitutes a good arrangement? Is it faithfulness to the original? If so, is this measured by the retention of original notes, or by the translation of musical intent into the guitar’s idiom? I examine this tension through the concept of derangement, as articulated by Fernando Sor in his *Méthode* (Paris, 1830), in which he warned against arranging compositions that, in his view, could not be properly rendered on the guitar.

Sor’s anxiety towards arrangements appears to anticipate modern musical values that privilege the authority of the composer and the supremacy of the score, favouring textual faithfulness as a primary evaluative criterion. Yet Sor’s own practice complicates this stance. By comparing his theoretical writings with his two arrangements of *Das klinget so herrlich* from Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* – the theme in *Introduction and Variations on a Theme of Mozart*, op. 9, and the fourth of his 6 *Airs* from ‘The Magic Flute’, op. 19 – I argue that Sor’s arrangements reflect a nuanced balance between fidelity and flexibility. Sor uses interventions in rhythm, melody, and texture not to distort, but to preserve musical intent.

Reassessed through contemporary perspectives on embodied cognition, instrumental affordances, and shifting musical ontologies, Sor’s arrangement practice challenges any assumption that faithfulness resides in textual replication alone, instead highlighting the arranger’s creative agency. Arrangement emerges as a hermeneutic act: an interpretive negotiation between composer, instrument, and arranger, in which flexibility becomes a condition of fidelity, rather than its contradiction.

Steven Watson

IGRC

Pulp Friction: Discussions and Controversies Surrounding No-Nail Technique

In his 1828 guitar method, Flamini Duvernay noted that, ‘Every Professor differs in opinion ... as to the manner of striking the strings.’ Indeed, the range of nineteenth-

century right-hand technique is especially remarkable – although one also encounters considerable differences among later players too.

When it comes to nails, the differences often get reduced to a binary choice: do you play with or without? Especially in the twentieth century, the two camps were portrayed as monolithic blocks. At its worse, it became an ideological debate without nuance – a sort of cold war.

Yet the differences are greater within the two ‘camps’ than between them; there are many ways one can play without nails, just as there are many ways one can play with nails. Among no-nail players, past and present, there are differences on issues ranging from hand position to calluses to which part(s) of the fingertip to use (or even which fingers to use).

It is also possible to go beyond the division of flesh and nail. There are examples of hybrid techniques – wherein a player alternates between nail and flesh – from the late eighteenth century until the present day.

The question of whether to use nails has been a recurrent feature of the guitar’s history. Although nail playing now dominates, the evidence suggests that, for the greater part of the history, most guitarists used flesh. There is much that flesh and nail player alike can learn from the discussions and controversies surrounding their technique.

