

# VIEWS FROM EVERYWHERE

## 10th Internationales Pflingstseminar

Koblenz 2002

15-20 May 2002

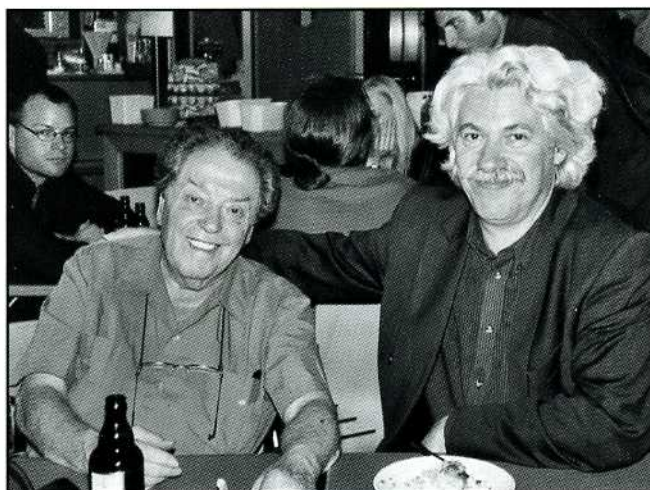
KOBLENZ IS a town built at the meeting point of the two rivers the Rhein and the Mosel in Germany. The seminar was held at the Musik Volkshule in Koblenz and was for guitar, both jazz and classical, flute, violin, piano, voice, bass and percussion. There were guitar concerts each evening, and sometimes late night jazz performances in the established jazz venues with artists such as Philip Catherine, Frank Haunschild, Gunnar Plümer and Keith Copeland. As the Pflingstseminar is for a number of instruments we were also able to heard a broader range of concerts such as a performance of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* on harpsichord by Gabor Antalffy of the Robert Schumann Hochschule in Düsseldorf, who was also there to give masterclasses.

Hubert Käppel gave a very fine opening recital for the seminar in the beautiful Rathaussaal in the centre of this historic city. He played a selection of *Preludes* by Villa-Lobos with all the emotional commitment and freshness of a young student and the musical maturity of a world-class performer. His musicianship in the Bach and Brouwer that followed were equally inspiring. David Russell gave a fine recital of works by Regondi, Granados, Giuliani, Bach and Tárrega. His playing was as liquid as ever, with superb glissandos as he worked his way through Tárrega's mazurkas and waltzes. He created gorgeous bass colours in Granados's *La Maja de Goya*.

Aniello Desiderio was poetic in his interpretation as always. His performance of Bach's *Sonata No. 1* was completely absorbing. He followed this with an very energetic performance of Bach's *Chaconne*.

Among the special guests at this year's seminar were the Turkish guitar duo of Kursad Terci and Kagan Korad from the Faculty of Performing Arts at Bilkent University in Ankara. They brought a number of their students from Ankara with them. As a duo they perform with a tight ensemble and a good tone quality. It was interesting to hear works by Turkish composers: Arif Melikov, Nejat Basegmezler, Ahmet Adnan Saygun, Muammer Sun and some of their own arrangements of Turkish traditional folksongs, and their performance of Albéniz, Granados and Falla was in style.

A gala performance was held in the Kurfürstliches Schloss. Champagne and food were served and a number of performers were featured: Alexander Sergei Ramírez performed a Boccherini Quintet with the Iturriaga Quartet, and Carlo Marchione performed a Giuliani Quartet with the Iturriaga Quartet. Sheila Arnold gave a very moving and technically impressive performance of Schumann's *Kinderszenen*, and the flautist Robert Winn was accompanied by Wigbert Traxler on piano, and by an endless need to tell stories between each piece.



Hubert Käppel and Eli Kassner.

PHOTO: THERÈSE WASSILY SABA

Volker Höh has an enthusiastic ensemble of young players called the Cantomano Guitar Ensemble. They performed pieces from all over the world and used percussion as well as guitars. These young players are obviously being enriched by the experience. Another ensemble of guitarists were the Ensemble Kitharokosmos from Greece who gave a short recital at the guitar competition finals.

The guitar teaching faculty was of the highest standard: David Russell, Aniello Desiderio, Alexander Ramírez, Hubert Käppel, Eli Kassner, the Bilkent Guitar Duo, Henri Pinto and Carlo Marchione. One of my favourite comments was from David Russell in his masterclass. He explained to a student struggling with a passage: 'For me it's not difficult because I practise it.' It is of course the solution to most problems. Eli Kassner had his lecture on the guitar in the 20th century cut short unfortunately by the technical difficulties of video players, but he was a fascinating source of detailed information about the playing techniques of some of the finest players of last century, many of whom he had had close contact with — details such as the weight of each of Segovia's fingers!

In the competition all the various instruments competed against each other and so it was very pleasing to see that out of the 15 finalists, there were seven guitarists. The violinist Alissa Margulis from Germany won first prize, and the British guitarists Russell Poyner was awarded the second prize for his performance of Falla's *Homenaje* and part of the *Sonata* by Antonio José. Third prize was given to the Germany guitarist Tristan Angenendt. He played *Variations on a Turkish Folk tune* by Domeniconi and *Carnival of Venice* by Tárrega.

In 2001 the Guitar Academy in the Koblenz Musikschule was established. Georg Schmitz and Hubert Käppel are teaching there, preparing young guitarists for auditions at the next level of study, the Musikhochschule. This Guitar Academy is a unique department in Germany. Georg Schmitz hopes to establish post-graduate courses there for

German and overseas students in the near future. He is very aware of the improved standard of players in the guitar world and of the need to improve the approach to guitar teaching, so that students reach a professional level before they are 20 years old. With this in mind, a symposium was organised during the Festival with guest speakers: Dr Marialva Barbosa from Rio de Janeiro (*Temporalities, spatialities and imagination: interfaces with the world of creation*), Henrique Pinto from São Paulo gave a lecture on the history of guitar in Brazil and its players. Having had lessons with Savio, he had a lot of first hand experience to speak about. Hubert Käppel spoke of the effects of the raised level of playing standard in the younger players: *Welche Auswirkungen auf das Konzertleben hat das hohe Niveau der heutigen jungen Gitarristengeneration?* Kürsad Terzi and Kagan Korad gave an interesting talk on the history of classical guitar in Turkey, and I gave a lecture entitled *A Performer's Career — A View from the Outside*. The symposium was chaired by Dr Klaus Heinen.

It was a very inspiring festival to attend. Despite the large number of guests, there was a very intimate and friendly atmosphere. Michael Macmeeken set up a shop in the foyer of the Volkshule with a impressive range of scores and recordings.

The festival date for the 11th International Pentecost Seminar is 4-9 June 2003 with Antigoni Goni, Hubert Käppel with his Guitar Quartet, Costas Cotsiolis, Thomas Müller-Pering, Trio Cologne, Gyan Riley, Peppino d'Agostino, Gerhard Reichenbach, and Tilman Hoppstock, David Tanenbaum, Helmut Öesterreich, and the premiere of the World Guitar Ensemble.  
website: [www.pfingstseminar.de](http://www.pfingstseminar.de)

*Thérèse Wassily Saba*