

Bio: Stephen Kenyon studied as a postgraduate at Trinity College London under Gilbert Biberian, has performed widely in different contexts and formats, has several compositions in print, made many videos, and, last year, released a recording of Catharina Josepha Pratten's solo guitar works on Bandcamp.

(b) 'Beyond the Score: Catharina Pratten as Poetic Pedagogue' – Johan Löfving (University of York)

Abstract: Catharina Pratten's (1824-1895) didactic works offer a never-ending source of guitaristic wisdom allied to a highly practical approach. Her treatises and separately published pieces feature a wealth of interesting strumming patterns, timbral variations, and imitative effects rarely found in other sources. Pratten's frequent use of poetic titles and written narratives invite the modern interpreter to engage with extramusical imagery which, in practice, may push the boundaries of the written score. Additionally, her occasional instructions to speak these narratives out aloud while playing, challenge our modern expectation of what an historically informed guitar performance may involve. Using a practice-led methodology, this presentation will look beyond the mere technical aspects of the guitarist's toolbox to explore how an artist's imagination is integral to an historically informed approach and share concrete examples of how Pratten's poetic imagination can be transformed into sounding results. Through the chosen repertoire this presentation also explores the wide range of extramusical associations which followed the guitar throughout the 19th-century and demonstrates the immense potential of historical sources to challenge modern artistic conventions. Indeed, these sources may even shatter our notion of what 'classical guitar' can be.

Bio: Hailed for his 'magical playing' (*Classical Guitar Magazine*), Swedish-born guitarist and theorbo-player Johan Löfving has inspired audiences across the globe. His expressive playing style and original research has made for uniquely personal interpretations of historical repertoires. His solo debut album 'Fandango!' was released by Resonus Classics to great critical acclaim and was recorded on an original 19th-century guitar. A keen chamber musician, Johan works regularly with the ensemble Flauguissimo which he directs together with flautist Yu-Wei Hu. As a PhD candidate at the University of York, he is currently mapping out the expressive resources of early romantic guitar playing under the supervision of Dr. Emily Worthington.

(c) Session 3 Panel Q&A

SESSION 4: FINGERNAILS & VOCAL CORDS (3.30pm-5pm)

(a) 'Alpine Hats, Abbreviated Trousers, and Long Fingernails: The Nail Question and Guitar Pedagogy c.1800-1950' – Steven Watson (University of Surrey)

Abstract: In his 1799 method, Antonio Abreu compared playing without nails to putting oil or tallow on a violin bow – 'Oh! infinitus est numerus stultorum!' he complained. On the other hand, Fernando Sor wrote that 'never in my life have I heard a guitarist whose playing was supportable if he played with nails'. Yet despite the strong feelings it could evoke, the nail question is a somewhat elusive aspect of historical guitar

technique. Most methods do not even mention nails and, among those that do, relatively few dedicate more than a sentence to the subject. One is left wondering not only who used which technique (or even both) but, more generally, what was the significance of the nail question among those playing and learning the guitar. While there are considerable evidential gaps and uncertainties – sometimes one cannot even be sure that guitarists always practised what they taught – we are still left with hundreds of sources that address the nail question. The guitar in this period is partly characterised by its heterogeneous technique, with the nail question being one aspect of a diverse pedagogical landscape. Indeed, the teaching of flesh or nail technique is often linked to other technical questions, notably the resting of the little finger, as well as to fashion, regional difference, rivalry between teachers, and technique on other instruments. (As to how it relates to alpine hats and abbreviated trousers, you will have to wait to find out.)

Bio: Steven Watson is a guitarist, researcher and composer. With a background in both history and music, he is now pursuing a PhD on the history of playing guitar without nails. His other research includes the life of the eccentric guitarist-writer John Roberts and the history of the classic banjo in England.

(b) “Many desirable qualifications”: The Role of Singing in Nineteenth-Century Guitar Pedagogy’ – Declan Hickey (University of Oxford)

Abstract: The authors of *The Giulianiad*, Britain’s unique guitar periodical of the 1830s, declared emphatically that their favoured instrument possessed unique qualifications as an accompaniment to the voice. One finds in the journal’s pages a range of pedagogical material aimed specifically at song accompaniment: solfège exercises, a song text inviting a musical setting, and a wealth of songs with accompaniments suitable for the amateur player. A similar emphasis is found in a large number of guitar tutor books published during the Great Vogue; the methods of Ferdinando Carulli, Johann Bornhardt, Henry Lea and Charles Sola are a few among many to focus specifically on the practice of song accompaniment. Evidence of guitar-accompanied song instruction in the private realm includes the abundance of newspaper advertisements for itinerant private tutors offering lessons in both guitar playing and singing. This paper considers the centrality of singing to guitar pedagogy in the early nineteenth century, and by extension the importance of song to both amateur and professional guitarists during the Great Vogue. I argue that song accompaniment was among the principal aims of guitar tuition in this period.

Bio: Declan Hickey is an historical musicologist, guitarist, and DPhil candidate at the University of Oxford, where his work is jointly funded by Christ Church and the AHRC. His research focuses on British musical culture in the nineteenth century; recent projects have centred on *The Giulianiad; or, Guitarist’s Monthly Magazine*, its prolific contributor William Ball, and Philippe Verini’s annual publication *Petit Souvenir*. Declan has presented at the Guitar Foundation of America and the Cambridge Cohort for Guitar Research, and given lecture-recitals at the Royal Academy of Music and Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In 2025, his review of Stanley Yates’s *Ernest Shand: Guitar Music from Late Victorian England* was published in *Soundboard Scholar*.

(c) Session 4 Panel Q&A