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"Living and Playing in the Material World"

This discussion/lecture demonstration explores the challenges faced by a conservatoire trained guitar soloist working as a freelance musician. Guitarists are trained, primarily, as both soloist and chamber music participants. These skills are often supplemented with classes in career development, publicity, networking, pedagogy, etc. Whilst these—and all the other requisite classes in harmony, counterpoint, history, etc.—are essential, there is another rewarding side of the profession for the classical guitarist in the genre of playing plucked string “parts” with orchestras, large ensembles and opera companies. It is been my experience that, despite the real opportunities in the profession, this is an area in which classical guitarists are little prepared. I know this was my “real world” experience and my excursion into this area was fraught with joys and sorrows, as well as frustration and satisfaction. This discussion/lecture/demonstration presents a cross section of my own experiences, “war stories,” experiments, and performances. Including “real life” tips on repertoire, preparation, equipment, score/part study, listening, and courtesy, recording and performance situations with these ensembles I hope to pass professional and practical advice to the emerging classical guitarist to prepare them to cope and succeed in these rewarding and challenging performance opportunities.

Considerations:

1. Why do this work?
2. How do you get? How do you keep it?
3. Pay, Time Commitments, Travel, Dress code. Seating
4. Instrument(s). How do you adapt your technique to new situations?
5. Comfort with score / Problem with the score. Transposing. Reading parts.
6. Difficult situations. Nerves Following the beat (or not!) Listening.
7. Recording situations
8. Relationship w/ the orchestra, conductor, composer, management, and the technicians!
9. Dealing with other freelancers and "Deps." (Not Johnny)!
10. Tuning the instruments.
11. The importance of all those “other” music classes. Researching the repertoire.

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1 Many thanks to George Harrison for inspiring the title!
2 I am aware of the “other” gigs such as shows and musicals, but I have less interest and experience in this genre.
Mannes Guitar Seminar: *High Performance Forum* Peter Argondizza
Living and Playing in the Material World: Facing the Challenges of Freelance Gigs

Mandolin

*Igor Stravinsky*- *Agon* - BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra ★★★, ℮.

Composer- **Four Characters in Search of an Author.** BBC production Soundtrack. $$$.

*Arnold Schoenberg*- *Moses und Aron* - BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra; ★★★.

*Arnold Schoenberg*- *Serenade* Hebrides Ensemble –(also includes guitar) ★★.

*Gustav Mahler*- **Symphony No. 8** Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra; ★★★, ★★★.

*Gustav Mahler*- *Das Lied von der Erde* (The Song of the Earth) (mandolin) BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. ★★★.

Mario Lanza/Jose Carreras-BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. *O Sole Mio* and *Santa Lucia* - Mandolin.

Banjo

*George Gershwin*- *Porgy And Bess*- *I Got Plenty o’ Nuttin’.* BBC SS Orchestra (Willard White), Royal Scottish National Orchestra. $$$, ★★★, ★★★, ℮.

**Electric Guitar**

Leonard Bernstein - *Selections from “West Side Story.”* Electric and Acoustic (?) Guitar. ☠, ☀, ♬, ♩.
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Classical or Acoustic Guitar


*Gustav Mahler-Symphony No. 7*; fourth movement. (Guitar). Royal Scottish National Orchestra; (includes a mandolin part in this). ♩.

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Luciano Pavarotti—with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra; Four Neapolitan Italian Songs. Classical Guitar. ☺ ☺ ☺.


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Various Instruments


Viva Zapata- Soundtrack Re-recording; Classical Guitar, Mandolin and twelve-string guitar. Royal Scottish National Orchestra. Commercial recording. ☠☠, $$, ♬.


Barry Wordsworth Conductor: BBC Film Music Broadcast: The Man with the Harmonica* (Electric Guitar) Morricone; Taming of the Shrew–Rota- Classical Guitar; Luis Bacalov- Il Postino- Mandolin; My Uncle- Classical Guitar (with plectrum). Dr Zhivago- Mandolin. ☠☠, $$, ♬, ☺☺☺.

*=war story; =tough gig; = very tough gig; =fun gig; =lucrative; $$= ridiculously lucrative; ♬=score; ♬=recording

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**Equipment**

Steel String Guitar- Martin Eric Clapton Signature Model. Martin or Ernie Ball Strings
Electric Guitar(s)- Fender Stratocaster and Fender ‘Thinline’ Telecaster (with humbucking pickups). Ernie Ball Slinky Strings
Electric Bass Guitar- Fender telecaster squire copy. Flat wound Ernie Ball Strings.
Greg Smallman Classical Guitar. Gaudin Strings.
Banjo- Tanglewood tenor with peg string removed. Martin Strings.
Mandolin- Tanglewood flatback. Martin Strings.
Fender Amplifier (borrowed!), AER compact 60 Acoustic Guitar Amplifier.
Acoustic Guitar Clip-on microphone- DPA 4060 Omni directional, Hi Sens “Snark” Electronic Guitar Tuner (Clip on)- cheap and cheerful!
Spare electric guitar patch chords! Spare strings! Various effects pedals.
Footstool, Glasses-Eyes. Focus-Brain. Ears!

**Bibliography**
