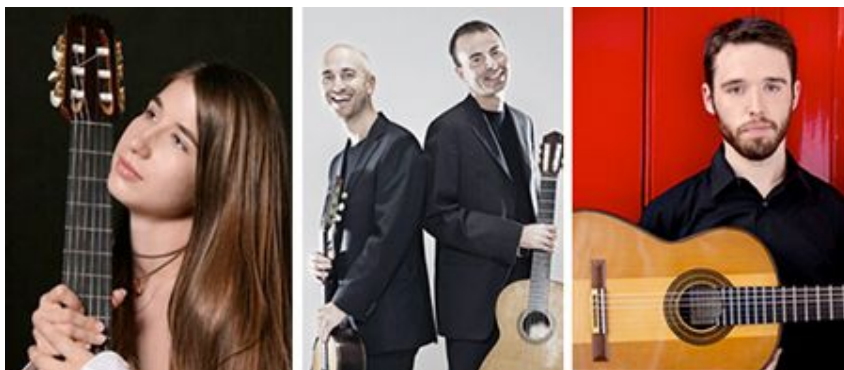


Cleveland International Classical Guitar Festival: conversations with three of this year's artists

by Mike Telin



When the Cleveland International Classical Guitar Festival kicks off its 16th edition on Friday morning, June 3 at the Cleveland Institute of Music, audiences can take in an impressive lineup of recitals, premieres, master classes, lectures, and exhibits celebrating the

classical guitar. Each year Festival attendance continues to grow, due in no small part to the quality of performances that are presented. It has also become a favorite destination for the players.

“The first time I played at the Festival was two years ago, and it was special for me because it was also the first time I was in the United States,” Czech guitarist Petra Polácková said during a Skype conversation. “It was like living a dream. I’m in America and the festival is so well-organized, and everybody is so kind, and the hall is beautiful. Everything was perfect — the hotel, the food. The audiences were really interested in the concerts and the master classes.”

Italian guitarist Lorenzo Micheli, who is half of the ensemble SoloDuo, agreed with Polácková about the Festival’s organization. “There are a number of things we like about it, but first is the care the organizers put into every single detail while planning it,” Micheli said during a telephone conversation from the Italian Alps, where he and his duo partner Matteo Mela were rehearsing. “We go to a lot of very good festivals around the world but Cleveland has something very special. You can feel that everything happens because of the love for the music. Every detail is attended to so that players and audiences can enjoy the music at its best.”

Bay Village native and CIM faculty member Colin Davin said that it is difficult to begin to talk about all the things that make the Festival special for him. “I’ve been attending these concerts at CIM since I was in middle and high school — before it was officially a festival,” Davin recalled during a telephone interview from his home in New York. “I grew up on this Festival and it was where I learned to really love the classical guitar community. I was able to meet so many brilliant artists and play in master classes for them. Being on the other side of it as a performer and giving master classes is really cool. It has the feeling of a long-term relationship.”

The three guitarists concurred that it is the attention to detail and the friendly atmosphere that keep audiences and performers coming back each year. “They invite the best artists, and the program notes they provide for the audience are great,” Micheli noted.

“I know Nigel North and the guys from SoloDuo,” Polácková said. “All the artists are really human, and it’s fun to go out and have dinner and talk. It’s like a big family. For me that is really important because it makes the atmosphere of the festival so nice.”

Performing the Festival’s closing concert as a faculty member at CIM brings things full circle for Colin Davin. “It’s a personal culmination to get to play a full recital in Mixon and to teach a master class as part of the festival. It’s a great thing.”

On Saturday, June 4 at 3:00 pm, Petra Polácková will present a free concert of Baroque and 20th-century works by Weiss, de Falla, and Ohana. At 8:00 pm, SoloDuo will present “Music from four centuries.” The program will include works by Bach, Bellini, Debussy, Piazzolla, and Scarlatti. And on Sunday, June 5 at 7:30 pm, Colin Davin will present a concert of music by de Falla, José, Mompou, Tárrega, Torroba, and Turina.

Later this week, we’ll talk to Polácková, Micheli, and Davin about their programs and their latest projects.

Click [here](#) for more information about the Cleveland International Classical Guitar Festival.

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