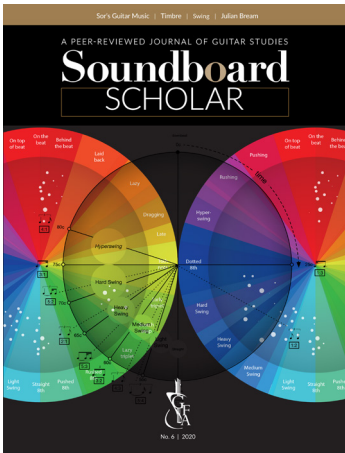


EDITOR'S LETTER

An Online, Open-Access Journal



WHEN THE SIXTH ISSUE of *Soundboard Scholar* was released in December of last year, it was our largest yet, featuring five extended articles. After so many months of work on screen, it was a pleasure to hold the printed journal in my hands. One article—Milton Mermikides's essay on microtiming—included a rich data graphic by the author, and our art director, Colleen Gates, had transformed it into a cover image that was even more intriguing, hinting at rosettes and soundholes.

And yet here we are a year later, and there is no escape from the computer screen: *Soundboard*

Scholar has moved entirely online. What has changed?

Quite simply, it has become clear that a paper journal—expensive to produce yet limited to around eighty pages per year—cannot serve the needs of our scholarly community. For one thing, we encourage interdisciplinary work, and contributions sometimes involve a variety of media. Visit the web pages that accompany previous numbers of the journal, and you will see material that should not, ideally, be separated from its parent article. Our new online platform, provided by Bepress's Digital Commons through the generous support of the University of Denver, offers new possibilities for multimedia discourse.

The space constraints of a print version are particularly unfortunate for guitar scholars, who have so few opportunities to acquire the credentials of peer-reviewed publication. My colleagues on the editorial board and I do not wish to exclude any contribution for lack of room: the evaluation of the peer reviewers should be the only determinant. Nor would we want to keep scholars waiting for an entire year to find out what their colleagues have been working on, as our print schedule has done. This online journal will be updated whenever an article is ready, and each issue will be closed at the end of the calendar year.

Above all, when scholarship is hidden behind a paywall, important communities are denied access and our entire field suffers. In the wake of the shattering events of

2020, the GFA has launched several initiatives in the service of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. I am deeply grateful to the GFA executives who listened to my proposal for a free and open-access journal and gave it their unqualified support.

Even an online journal requires considerable resources to produce. If you wish to support this project, please consider [joining](#) or [donating to the GFA](#).

In This Issue

Articles

It is not only non-profit foundations such as the GFA that have responded to the events of 2020; music educators throughout the United States have scrutinized and rebuilt their teaching repertoire. Many have thought to change not only the composers and identities to be studied but the instruments for which their repertoire is scored—lessening the emphasis on piano or bowed-string instruments, which have often been treated as somehow neutral sites on which abstract principles play out. A guitar piece is now more likely to crop up in a college music theory class than it once was.

Jonathan De Souza's article, "Guitar Thinking," positions the guitar and its idioms in relation to some current trends in music theory—cognitive science in particular. By defining music theory as a "shared culture of musical thinking," De Souza invites us to consider the guitar as a tool for theorizing about music, a tool that helped to shape common-practice tonality as it emerged around the beginning of the seventeenth century. His discussions of Amat (1596) and Brouwer (1972) as expressions of tactile musical knowledge will, I hope, open the door for guitarists who have been wondering how the gestures and patterns of guitar playing can be integrated into music analysis: after all, one could hardly imagine a satisfying account of, say, Villa-Lobos, Dyens, or Houghton that does not demonstrate this kind of integration.

Oliver Chandler's deep—and deeply heard—analysis of Reginald Smith Brindle's serial language draws on two fundamentally different theoretical models: Smith Brindle's personal, rather impressionistic ideas about tension flow, which foreground questions of voicing and texture; and Joseph Straus's rigorous "laws" of atonal voice-leading, in which every degree of tension is precisely calibrated. Chandler identifies moments in Smith Brindle's music where the two models seem to contradict one another; from this contradiction, he derives an approach to tension flow whose application clearly extends beyond Smith Brindle to any atonal repertoire that flirts with tonal implications.

It is interesting to consider these two articles side by side from the performer's point of view. Both authors draw on models of mapping and transformation in various kinds of space—atonal space and fretboard space, for example—and these models have striking implications for practice and learning. In one of his examples of *guitar thinking* at work, De Souza analyzes Amat's notation of the circle of fifths

in tablature, pointing out how the experience of harmonic progression is mirrored by the systematic movements of the fingers on the fretboard. Chandler likewise observes that Smith Brindle's balance of tonal and atonal forces can be explored directly at the guitar, by going through the musical examples and isolating the tritones and resolutions that inflect the serial discourse — thoroughbass exercises for atonal music. Both articles thus invite us to consider how knowledge of a musical score is construed through acts of reading, listening, and playing: even the listener's experience, surely, contains intimations of playing and reading, while for the performer, the three acts can hardly be separated at all.

From the Soundboard Archive

Going online has allowed us to create three additional sections: reprints, translations, and invited work. Our new section of reprints “From the *Soundboard* Archive” gathers together groundbreaking research of the past so that the voices of different generations can be put into conversation.

The articles in question will be gathered from the early years of *Soundboard*, which was for many years a major vehicle for scholarship in English, before the creation of the present journal in 2015 (of course, *Soundboard* still publishes research articles under the editorship of Robert Ferguson, himself a formidable scholar). At the core of *Soundboard Scholar's* project is the double-blind peer review: although this process cannot be conducted retroactively, we have convened a committee to select and approve the articles.

To inaugurate this project, we present an anthology of **Peter Danner's** work on the guitar in the United States from the 1770s to the 1920s, including his investigations into the American “parlor guitar,” as it has come to be known. Danner's articles are foundational to this portion of the guitar's historical record, certainly, but they are prescient in other ways as well. Increasingly, historians have demonstrated that to come to terms with the guitar as the most popular instrument in the world, we must step outside the classical canon. By giving rein to his curiosity about how people used the guitar in quotidian middle-class society, Danner helped pave the way for some of the studies of today: two examples that have been recently reviewed in this journal are *The Guitar in Tudor England*, the first in a series of social histories by Christopher Page, and Jukka Savijoki's examination of the guitar in Finland, “*So That the Soul Would Dance in You.*”

Strictly speaking, Danner's articles have always been obtainable (for example, the GFA sells a DVD of the first thirty-eight years of *Soundboard* in scanned PDFs). But this is a curated collection: we have left the original text alone — other than some discreet copy-editing — but footnotes, images, and bibliographies have been modestly updated. Most importantly, do not miss Peter's newly written, hugely motivating introduction, “How I Got into This,” which recounts his research journey and points to subsequent developments in this field.



José Ferraz de Almeida Júnior (1850–1899), *O violeiro* (The Guitarist). Oil on canvas, 1899. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).

Translation Series

The end of 2020 marked an encouraging event for guitar scholars: a major Brazilian music journal, *Vórtex*, devoted an entire issue to the guitar, with Humberto Amorim as guest editor. Some of the articles were in English; most were in Portuguese. This issue presents four translations from the Portuguese contents, commencing what we intend to be an annual series of articles translated from other languages. It is a pity that out of the thirty-odd peer-reviewed articles in that issue, we could translate so few. To render these four in English would have been impossible without Diogo Alvarez's penetrating insight into the arguments of each author, making each of his translations a work of scholarship in its own right.

Two of the articles in this collection are studies in performance and repertoire. **Sidney Molina's** analysis of Julian Bream's complete discography is an interdisciplinary

essay that opens up two conversations: one between Bream and Segovia, and another between Bream's listeners and the great literary critic Harold Bloom.

Pedro Rodrigues's article on Francisco de Lacerda's *Goivos* suite is a rather unusual contribution to the literature on Segovia's project to commission a modern guitar repertoire by non-guitarist composers. While there has been much discussion of the vast trove of music that Segovia received but did not record or edit for publication, most of that music comes from unpublished manuscripts that Segovia preserved in his own archive. Lacerda's manuscripts, by contrast, are held in library collections in Portugal. In his analysis, Rodrigues raises pointed questions about Segovia's collaborative practice — what, for example, to make of Lacerda's influence on Segovia's own composing? — while highlighting some uniquely haunting music from the circle of Claude Debussy.

The other two articles in this section examine the making of the guitar in Brazil — its varying social status, its links to the realm of men, and its emergence as a solo instrument. In a demonstration of the possibilities of digital archival research, **Flavia Prando** discusses the place of the guitar in a society seeking to renew itself in relation to European modernity, pointing to currents of influence from Spain and the school of Tárrega. **Cláudia Garcia** explores the contribution of women to the guitar's progress in Brazil against the painful backdrop of gendered stereotypes. Some of the topics she discusses are particular to Brazilian culture; others are not. We would be glad to receive more submissions that grapple with the questions she poses.

Once we had finished editing the translations, it was clear what our cover image should be: Almeida Júnior's 1899 painting *O violeiro* (The Guitarist). The scene is likely located in São Paulo state, perhaps in a rural area. Almeida Júnior was living in the city of São Paulo at the time, and indeed, looking up the Paulistano newspapers of the 1890s and early 1900s discussed by Prando, one can hardly miss mentions of the painter alongside the advertisements for guitar concerts that she cites. The composition of the painting is striking, placing at its very center the instrument the guitarist is playing. This is not a classical guitar or *violão*, but a double-strung, five-course *viola caipira* (or simply *viola*), the folk guitar of south-central Brazil. The distinction between these two kinds of guitar is the premise of a poem by Meireles, analyzed by Garcia. But in this distinction also lie two histories of the guitar: on the one hand, that of standard music history texts, where it is all but absent; on the other, the kind of social history explored by scholars such as Prando and Garcia in Brazil or Danner in the United States, where it is nearly ubiquitous. In *O violeiro*, an example of the new realist style of Brazilian art, the guitar is half indoors, half outdoors; it is not quite clear if the woman is singing or talking, who might be accompanying whom, or who — if anyone — is listening: this is the ephemeral, everyday life of the guitar.

By Invitation

A third new section, "By Invitation," is a space for columns, invited contributions, and other editorially reviewed content. In this issue, we include a trenchant call for a scholarly edition of Tárrega's works by **David Buch**, a musicologist known

especially for his work on Mozart. Since this piece is a call to action, we've included a Spanish translation generously prepared by Daniel Vissi García and José Luis Segura Maldonado (see the associated files on the [main article page](#)). Putting this column together with Erik Stenstadvold's discussion of Sor in *Soundboard Scholar* no. 6, one gains insight into the real complexity of creating a reliable text. And yet the issues involved do not always filter through to the performing community: many students devote far less care to choosing an edition than to practicing it. What is needed, then, is not just new editions but the kind of vigorous discussion of their importance that we read in Buch's piece.

Walter Aaron Clark's anniversary essay on Rodrigo consists of two complementary sections. The first creates context for Rodrigo's guitar works by discussing his output away from the instrument. In the process, Clark offers a way of thinking about composers whose work doesn't fall into stylistic periods, as is the case for many composers in the guitar canon (Giuliani, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, and others): Clark makes an inventory of Rodrigo's musical imaginarium and applies it to nearly seven decades' worth of compositions. The second section takes the reader, with transformed understanding, back to the guitar works with a comprehensive bibliography of research.

Discussion

From time to time throughout the year, we invite all who are interested to participate in informal discussion with scholars of the guitar—including discussions of this journal. These discussions take place on Zoom, where attendees may ask questions, share information, or simply listen. If you would like to receive emails about these meetings (and nothing else), let us know at sbs@guitarfoundation.org.

—Jonathan Leathwood, December 26, 2021



About Soundboard Scholar

SOUNDBOARD SCHOLAR is the peer-reviewed journal of the Guitar Foundation of America. Its purpose is to publish guitar research of the highest caliber. *Soundboard Scholar* is online and open access. To view all issues of the journal, visit <http://soundboardscholar.org>.

About the Guitar Foundation of America



THE GUITAR FOUNDATION OF AMERICA inspires artistry, builds community, and promotes the classical guitar internationally through excellence in performance, literature, education, and research. For more information, visit <https://guitarfoundation.org>.