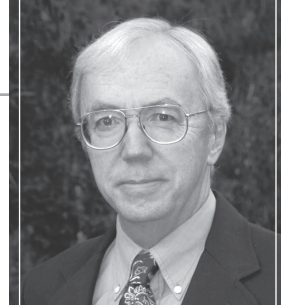


LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

by Thomas Heck



Thomas Heck,
Soundboard Scholar
General Editor

It is a pleasure to welcome the contributions of two fine guitar historians, Richard Pinnell and Stefan Hackl, to this edition of *Soundboard Scholar*. Their topics, while different in focus, should be of broad interest to those of us who are just plain curious—who have always wondered, for example, how, when, and why the guitar rose to prominence in the New World. And in Europe, how and why did “folk” music become so popular with the guitarist-composers of Giuliani’s generation?

Regarding the diffusion of the “guitar” in its various guises (*guitarra*, *vihuela*), Richard Pinnell helps us to understand the many reasons why these instruments made such inroads into the hearts and minds of South American peoples, both Iberian immigrants and native-born. His cultural and language (Spanish) literacy make credible his version of the history of the “early guitar” in the New World.

Stefan Hackl brings his own brand of cultural and language literacy (German) to his treatment of Mauro Giuliani’s impressive legacy of European (especially Austrian) folk music. His transcriptions, variations, and arrangements for one or two guitars have long been favorite repertoire for student guitarists of all ages. By way of cultural history, Hackl explains how “folk” music rose to prominence hand-in-hand with nationalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; and again with the *Wandervogel* movement in the twentieth century.

The reviews in this issue are eclectic, even as they celebrate the Hispanic “flavor” of recent books and CDs. Richard Long explains, in his review of the life and times of the Romero family, how Walter Clark’s excellent new biography, *Los Romeros . . .*, benefitted not just from his access to the family archives, but also from his ability to interview the still-living Romero brothers. Their personal stories have enriched this family saga. The Romero family archives, incidentally, are now being curated at U. C. Riverside.

Nathan Cornelius’s review-article about the *21st Century Spanish Guitar* project deserves wider attention. The recordings, all “Spanish” in character, intentionally represent new takes on the older Segovia-style guitar repertoire of the previous century. Adam Levin is the producer of what will eventually be this 4-CD set. It’s now $\frac{3}{4}$ complete.

Returning to the 19th century, Richard Long shares his appreciation of *Nineteenth-Century Guitar Songs: An Idiosyncratic Survey*—a valuable treatment of vocal literature with guitar by British scholar Ian Gammie. “For performers looking to explore attractive new repertoire,” Long concludes, “this book is not just helpful; it is indispensable.”

Ellwood Colahan, our CD reviewer/editor, gives his critical attention in this issue to recent recordings of baroque guitar music—in particular selections from Corbetta’s *La Guitarre Royale*. He has interesting things to say about three different Corbetta recordings, two of which are CDs, while the third is made available online—a freewill offering by Lex Eisenhardt of his own recordings of *La Guitarre Royale*. These contrasting interpretations are well worth a listen.

A final note on the Pinnell annotations. The author has opted to use a contemporary style sheet with in-line references for this lengthy article, in preference to the Chicago, footnote-heavy style that is the *Soundboard* norm. I find that it reads easily; I believe that it will be welcomed by our readers. Do let us know what you think!

Cover Illustration

The scene of angel musicians on our cover is a detail shot of the topmost portion of the famous “Paradiso” fresco in the Cathedral of Orvieto, Italy. It was painted by Luca Signorelli in 1499, at the very time of Columbus’ third voyage, when (as Richard Pinnell explains, below) Spanish *guitarras* and *vihuelas* were first being introduced to the New World. The Signorelli fresco’s music-historical interest for us lies in the guitar-like instrument depicted in the hands of the highest angel in the heavenly ensemble—a position of no small honor for her or her instrument. It is approximately the size and shape of the “vihuela” by Juan de Juanes (1523–1579) shown in **Figure 3** of the Pinnell article. That instrument, in Italian, would have been called a *viola da mano*. In Spanish it is known as a *vihuela de mano*.

