Feast on Six Strings!

Five Years of Guitar Festival Nordhorn

By

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Interviews Artists

Roland Dyens

The first time that I got in touch with the music of the French guitarist and composer Roland Dyens was when my guitar teacher Ed Westerik played *Tango en Skai* for me and suggested that I would give it a try. Later I heard more of his remarkable compositions via my then teacher, the Polish guitarist Robert Horna who is a big fan of Dyens' music and played it often, and very well.

So I was prepared for excitement when I heard Roland Dyens play at the Twente Guitar Festival in 2008 and at the second Nordhorn Guitar Festival in 2012.

Please tell us something about yourself. What's your name, where do you live, what's your current occupation?

My name is Roland Dyens and I live in Paris. I'm together a soloist, a composer, an arranger and an improviser. Plus a teacher at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris.

Roland Dyens, playing the Gaudi guitar (made by Sarah Rootveld) at GFN 2012

Which person or event made you decide to dedicate yourself to the guitar?

The very first guitar sound I've ever heard was a young French female pop song, Marie-Josée Neuville. 4 songs and three chords (in all). But nice. I got impressed, mesmerized even by the sound of her guitar. She was super famous in the mid-50's then totally disappeared from the song scene. I was then between 3 and 4 years old.

Please tell us something about your musical training. Where and with what teachers did you study?

When I was a teenager, the real guitar teachers were extremely rare, even in Paris. I remember I even got a violin teacher as one of my 'guitar teachers'. Then I got an old musician as my 1st real guitar teacher (he taught many instruments including clarinet, saxophone, mandolin, violin etc...). I called him *Le Dernier Romantique*. He was my 1st big chance actually. Then, THE big meeting took place in 1969 with Spaniard Alberto Ponce in Paris. I studied 7 years under his precious guide. Ponce was an incredible teacher I owe so much.

Which teacher influenced you most? Which aspect of your play benefited from this?

Alberto Ponce of course. The colours I get from the guitar are certainly the most remarkable legacy I owe him. The tone also of course.

Who are your favourite concert musicians? Are there guitarists amongst them?

There are many I love actually. And not especially guitarists.

What is your favourite classical piece? What is your favourite classical guitar piece?

Prélude n°4 by Chopin. *Sonata* by Antonio José, *Variations after La Folia* by Manuel Ponce and *Nocturnal* by Benjamin Britten.

Who is your favourite guitar composer?

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Difficult to select ONE only. Same above! :-)

At what age did you perform for an audience for the first time? What was the occasion?

You mean 'solo' with a 'real' public (I mean not only family, relatives etc.)? Well, as far as I remember I'd say around 15 years old with a trio and 18 as a 'soloist'.

You recorded quite a number of CDs. Which one do you consider the most adventurous in the musical sense? Which one was the most challenging for you? And which one gave you the most positive reactions?

3 questions in one? I love that! :-(

First of all I don't think I've recorded many CDs (maybe 10 in all which is a handful compared to many guitarists). I think both 'my' *Chansons Françaises* and *Nuages* were the most 'adventurous' and challenging, and generated the most positive reactions.

What is your opinion about competitions? Do they have a positive influence on the player or are they a distraction from the essence of music?

Participating in too many of these competitions isn't a great thing to do I think. Because it's not the 'real' musical life. It's good and fruitful to do a few of them but not like 5 a year.

The positive points are all together a good opportunity to challenge with others (and with yourself !), to play in front of a public and, how to neglect this, to earn some money, needle$$ to mention. But all competitors should know competitions is one thing and a career is something quite else. Winning 40 first Prizes won't make you a solid international performer., be sure of that. Today, moving your fingers on a guitar neck with the greatest ability and talent is definitely not enough to 'make a career'.

Did you participate in professional competitions for the guitar yourself? If so, what are your impressions about the competition stress and interaction with the jury and other competitors? Did it for instance resemble a situation like "in war and love everything is permitted?"

I've had a couple of experiences of that type in my life (and really too long ago). Then not enough to state anything serious about that issue.

How did you get interested in composing? Which composers are your favourites?

My interest for composition (and impro) came from the very first minute I got a guitar in my hands. I was like 10 years old.

My favourite composers? Woaoh ! Quite difficult to say. Well... Bach, Chopin, Villa-Lobos, Schuman, Scriabine, Thelonious Monk, Egberto Gismonti, AC Jobim, Leo Brouwer, Tedesco, Piazzolla...

I heard that you are developing composition ideas when and wherever possible. What is for you the best place and time to compose music?

You've heard that ?

Yes but not every minute of my life ! Only when I'm in a composition time maybe. The morning is definitely the most fruitful moment to compose to my opinion since your ideas are fresh & clear.

The best places for that? I love hotels. They are much inspiring plus I'm never ever getting bothered by anything (or anyone). Green rooms are perfect for that as well :-).

You made a valuable contribution to the promotion of the French Chanson, making challenging arrangements for guitar and recording them on CD. Which Chansons do you consider the most characteristic for the genre? Which chansonnier do you like best?

First of all, the word 'Chansonnier' means something quite different in French. In that context you should say 'chanteur'. A chansonnier is rather an entertainer, those kinds of guys making fun of politics in cabarets.

I hope I made some contribution for the promotion of the French song in the field of the International classical guitar scene. But at the same time, I think these arrangements contributed also in the promotion of the classical guitar towards the 'normal' public (not the guitar aficionados so). This was originally my double goal at the time I was immerged into that project.

Which songs are the most characteristic for the genre according to me? I'd say *L'hymne à l'amour* (Piaf), *Ne me quitte pas* (Brel), *La Javanaise* (Gainsbourg), *Gottingen* (Barbara) or *Sa jeunesse* (Aznavour).

When and how did you get in touch with Bobby Rootveld of Kulturhaus NIHZ?

Do you want me to be honest? I suppose so :-).

Well, I don't remember when and how I 'got in touch' with Bobby. But my feeling is that I met Fred before him.

How did you like the idea of the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

This is somehow a 'perfect' annual event. Super friendly above all but not only of course.

If you really want a Festival to be a long term successful one, make it friendly, with a great line-up (of course) PLUS with everything close (or at the same place).

As a matter of fact have you ever seen a restaurant with a mediocre food and a f*kg bast... as an owner having a lot of customers? ☺

What are your experiences with the atmosphere at the festivals, in particular the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

So many great memories actually (much more than bad ones fortunately :-). From Nordhorn I remember my constant feeling was that I really felt at home. It was so cosy, so simple and so friendly. With a good home made food. Only good vibes there. I remember there were a guitar exhibition when I was there and one of the guitars was built with mosaic with stone. The sound was 'forgettable' but I swear I never played on such a heavy instrument. OMG!!

As a master class teacher you met a lot of students. Which student made the impression that he would grow into a skilful guitarist and musician that will be famous on stage later?

I met tons of students indeed. But the proportion of 'flowers' I've had the opportunity to smell and that you describe is just infinitesimal actually. Thomas Viloteau and and Jérémy Jouve are two of them. I met Thomas as he was like 14 at an annual workshop I had then in Burgundy (France) and I was truly impressed by his skills. Plus his playing was so easy! From this day I knew things would be somewhat obvious with him.

You met a lot of colleague professional guitarists at the festival. Do you remember some anecdotes? Please describe the funniest one.

The most beautiful memory is no doubt when the Festival Team picked me up at the hotel in bicycle-drawn carriage. It was the only time in my life I had the feeling to be the Queen Elizabeth. This was memorable, really.

(By the way, tell them I would love them to do this again. But with dressed dogs and cats as drawers this time. Very chic. Please !)..

Which professional player impressed you the most with his/her recital?

You mean during the Festival edition I attended, right? Shame on me so cause I don't remember who played.. This being said, I'm sure that if you reminded me one name only, then the others would show up in my memory.

Sorry for that but I'm travelling so much that I'm (hopefully) excusable :-).

At your final concert in Nordhorn you dedicated your performance of Tango en Skai to Fred Rootveld and invited him to play along on stage. A remarkable occasion! How did you get acquainted with Fred?

I remember of an e-mail I received from him. This was the very beginning of our friendship I think. How to forget this *Tango en Skaï* anecdote he was involved in? Memorable as well.

This memory you report is exactly what I'm expecting from my participations to festivals actually. Not to mention the public is always crazy with this kind of 'happenings'. Some 'serious' festivals aren't the best occasions for that, let's be honest.

What is your opinion about the organisation?

Excellent. Nothing was missing as far as I remember and everybody looked happy and satisfied.

What is your opinion about the facilities in Kulturhaus NIHZ (food, drink, lodging?)

I have nothing to say in term of lodging (!). I just remember the food was as good as genuine and original.

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

Absolutely. No question about that.

All the best, à bientôt.

Roland Dyens

PS- Hey Mark! Can't explain why you wrote I visited the Festival both as a teacher and an artist in 2015. I didn't. Or maybe as a sleepwalker guest. Well..why not after all...

In Memoriam Roland Dyens

Today, 30 october 2016, I got the message that the guitarist and composer Roland Dyens had passed away suddenly.

My first acquaintance with Roland Dyens was via his compositions. My then guitar teacher Ed Westerik had brought in a copy of *Tango en Skai* and proposed that I gave it a try. He had studied the piece in his own conservatory years and it had helped him with mastering a few techniques.

I started to study cheerfully, yet oh my, the piece was difficult! I have a tendency towards control during playing, which can work out counterproductive while playing music. Quite a few passages from this piece, for example the scale passage in measure 5 and the ornamentation in measure 7, require a liberty that you have to permit to yourself. Any attempt to control the situation removes the tempo and the *easy-going* atmosphere. To achieve this approach, you have to study hard to get some control, and study even harder to find the courage to let it go!

I never finished this piece, unfortunately.

Another guitar teacher of mine, Robert Horna, is a passionate fan of Dyens' music and likes to perform it. In this way, he plays for instance *Songe Capricorne* en *Saudade Nr. 3* in an inimitable manner. A combination of the genius of the composer and the skills and empathy of the player. This brilliant swing and deep emotion of *Saudade!* Wow…

It is so weird: In fact, at this moment I am writing down a *Saudade* for Roland Dyens himself. In characters…

I have had the pleasure to hear him playing live twice, and to "meet" him once via the written interview that he participated in for my anniversary book *Feast on Six Strings, Five Years Guitar Festival Nordhorn* (at the moment I am making it ready for publication).

The first time that I heard him play was at the Twente Guitar Festival in Enschede in 2008. He was a quiet person, at times almost tranquil and deep in thought. Yet he had a sharp view on his environment, observing it eagle-eyed. His concert was an experience, it was the way that he tasted the atmosphere in the hall during the first pieces that he played in order to connect to it, it was the way that he succeeded to invite the audience to participate in it.

In a subtle way, he conveyed the audience the right attitude to enjoy the music. This particularly applied to the nuisances on the balcony in the Concordia Theatre that thought that it was necessary to audibly comment on his playing *on the fly*, disturbing the experience for the others. He dropped his playing volume such, that the chatterboxes soon found out that they were disturbing the atmosphere. The curious fact was that his eloquence in the music remained unchanged. The dynamics in his play were independent of his playing volume to a large extent.

The second time that I heard him was on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn in 2012. As a consequence of the small scale of this festival, the atmosphere is pleasantly intimate, and you meet the artists more "in the wild". Here I saw him quiet and deep in thought at times as well, yet by his glance I could recognize that he felt at home here and enjoyed the festival atmosphere. A fact that he acknowledged in the written interview later.

One of the highlights on that festival was his performance of *Tango en Skai*, dedicated to Fred Rootveld, member of the loyal support crew for a few editions of the Twente Guitar Festival and all of the Guitar Festival Nordhorn. Both had met on that occasion and become friends.

Next year -2017- Roland Dyens was bound to play again on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn. It is sad that this will not happen now…

My "meeting" in writing with him was a special experience. As an inexperienced interviewer, I had asked an interview with him for the book *Feast on Six Strings, Five Years Guitar Festival Nordhorn*. He was one of the first with a positive reaction to join in. He answered my questions in a personal manner and indicated my journalistic blunders in subtle way with a very personal and mild humour. That's a positive way to learn as an amateur!

His response (*Bravo*…) after I sent him a concept of the book was a great encouragement for me personally.

He has passed away… What is left to me are the encounters with his music. The memories to his concerts and of course the CDs that he recorded. In particular, *Nuages* and the two CDs *Chansons Francaises*. Where else do you hear the remarkable contrast between *Bachianas Brasileiras* and *Felicidade* (both on *Nuages*) and the bright happiness that speaks from his interpretation of

Felicidade? Where else do you hear the soul of the French Chanson more than in his arrangement and performance of *La Chanson des Vieux Amants*, *Ne me quitte pas* and the tender version of *Plaisir d'Amour*…?

His music has become a heritage now. Roland Dyens is no more… Yet his music and compositions will live on!

I wish his next of kin, beloved and friends, and the guitar world, lots of courage to cope with this loss.

Pavel Steidl

Pavel Steidl at GFN 2015

I heard the Czech guitarist and composer Pavel Steidl for the first time on a recital in Hof 88 in the town of Almelo, at the beginning of this century. I was surprised and impressed by the expression, energy and fun that he added to 19th century guitar music, he provided a Night at the Opera indeed! When for instance he plays Paganini, you actually get a play! So it was a good thing to hear him again, playing at the Twente Guitar Festival in 2009 and at GFN in 2015!

I sent him a written interview via the Internet. Later he came back with a remarkable message of a situation that I did not expect. He apologized for the inconvenience, he was involved in lots of travelling and an Iphone was quite unsuitable to fill in an interview. Concerning Smartphones he is quite right, they are not suitable for office work even though they sell Word and Excel for it.

However, he did send a reaction that I will quote below:

Dear Friends,

Sorry for delay but I am really busy and the procedure to make a interview seems to be made for the students and not for the performers.

I will always say that Nordhorn GF is absolutely unique! I would always recommend it to everybody to visit and take part in this festival. Because it is like you live in the family, and in a warm atmosphere that is perfect for making music. It's absolutely unique among the guitar festivals. Also the level of the students is very high.

But please, on my I pad I do not know how to manage all things you wrote me to do. :)

Love Pavel

So maybe next time!

Alberto Mesirca

Alberto Mesirca, Musician in Residence of Kulturhaus NIHZ

Alberto Mesirca is a long time friend of Bobby and Sanna, so when we visited concerts by Duo NIHZ, we also had the pleasure to hear him at some occasions in the Synagogue of Borne and Kulturhaus NIHZ. Additionally we heard him at the Twente Guitar Festival in 2008 and the GFNs in 2011, 2012 and 2014.

During the years we have come to appreciate his subtle and sensitive playing style and a musical performance that touches your heart.

Please tell us something about yourself. What's your name, where do you live, what's your current occupation?

My name is Alberto Mesirca, I live in Castelfranco Veneto, Italy, and I am a performer and teacher in the music field.

Which person or event made you decide to dedicate yourself to the guitar?

I always loved music and I really was in love with the guitar, plus my aunt had a guitar at home, and that's the first instrument I played

Please tell something about your musical training. Where and with what teachers did you study?

I started with a private teacher for a couple of years, then I entered at the Middle school section of the Conservatory of Castelfranco, in the class of Gianfranco Volpato, ending my diploma when I was nineteen (the music course in Italy at that time was lasting 10 years, and luckily enough I managed to do it in 9 years). Then I kept on at the Music Academy of Kassel, with Wolfgang Lendle.

Which teacher influenced you most? Which aspect of your play benefited from this?

Gianfranco Volpato had a great experience playing chamber music with the greatest string players from Venice, from which derived I Solisti Veneti, Venice Baroque Orchestra, Orchestra La Fenice etc. So his way of thinking was meta-instrumental, not just linked to the instrument. With Lendle I definitely improved my technique, the aspect of performing live, hearing with a distant ear.

Who are your favourite concert musicians? Are there guitarists amongst them?

My favorite musicians are: Julian Bream, Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli, Maurizio Pollini, Harnoncourt, Giuliano Carmignola.

What is your favourite classical piece? What is your favourite classical guitar piece?

My favorite classical music piece is related to my childhood, it's the first *Image* by Debussy; I think it's one of the very first lps I've ever heard. My favorite classical guitar piece? There are many, but I think that the *Suite Compostelana* by Mompou is very close to perfection

Who is your favourite guitar composer?

My favorite guitar composers are Mario Castelnuovo Tedesco, Manuel Ponce, Angelo Gilardino, Leo Brouwer, Dusan Bogdanovic.

At what age did you perform for an audience for the first time? What was the occasion?

My first performance as a guitarist was when I was 7, in the final concert of the guitar class where I started. It was in a beautiful church in Cittadella.

You recorded quite a number of CDs. Which one do you consider the most adventurous in the musical sense? Which one was the most challenging for you? And which one gave you the most positive reactions?

The most interesting recordings I've done, in terms of choice of repertoire, are the very first one (*Ikonostas*), with lots of world premieres and all related to sacred music for guitar or inspired by mysticism, like Asencio, Mompou, the *Homenaje of Falla*, *Annunciazione* by Gilardino, *Errimina* (world premiere) by Donostia; and my last recording, V*oces de Sefarad*, featuring the incredible baroque singer Romina Basso, with a collection of Spanish and Sephardic songs.

What is your opinion about competitions? Do they have a positive influence on the player or do they distract the players from the essence of music?

I think that competitions can be a way of developing faster a career. They can be good, if one is very conscious of its characteristics, which doors they open. They can be dangerous, but if used cleverly (see Lorenzo Micheli) they can be an important step.

What do you like best: Playing before an audience, or playing before a jury in a competition setting?

I like to play in front of an audience.

Doubtlessly you participated in professional competitions for the guitar. What are your impressions about the competition stress and interaction with the jury and other competitors? Did it for instance resemble a situation like "in war and love everything is permitted?"

I remember competitions as a competitor as very stressful situations. Not having done many, I didn't know many participants (many of whom, by that time, have become great friends), so there wasn't much interaction, and not much stress-release through night partying, but practice and little sleep. So I didn't like to compete much.

When and how did you meet Bobby and Sanna of Kulturhaus NIHZ?

I met Bobby and Sanna many many years ago in Hungary at the Encs Guitar Festival, in summer, in a wonderful place.

How did you like the idea of the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

I liked very much the concept and the idea of the Nordhorn Guitar Festival!

You are musician in residence of the Kulturhaus NIHZ. What does that mean?

It means that I have the priviledge and honor to be there almost every year and perform, teach or be in the jury and give some artistic advise for the choice of the repertoire.

What are your experiences with the atmosphere on the festivals, in particular the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

It's a wonderful atmosphere, very home-like. All the staff is great and they are like my Dutch family. I like it very much.

As a master class teacher you met a lot of students. Which student made the impression that he would grow into a skilful guitarist and musician that will be famous on stage later?

I remember I liked very much Jakob Bangso, Augustin Pesnon and Federico Spina, and also Alice Ducoin.

You met a lot of colleague professional guitarists at the festival. Do you remember some anecdotes? Please describe the funniest one.

Bobby is a great fan of the Beatles, like me, and I remember that one evening he started jamming with the participants of the competitions singing and playing Beatles songs, which was very cool.

You met a lot of students at the festival. Do you remember some anecdotes? Please describe the funniest one.

Of course kids come to have fun too, so I always found it very funny when they had brutal party in the night and came (or didn't show up) with a mega hangover the next day.

Which professional player impressed you the most with his/her recital?

I loved Lorenzo Micheli's performance, and also Thomas Müller-Pering.

Which Cat. 1 finalist impressed you the most with his/her recital?

I think Jakob Bangsø was excellent.

What were your impressions of the amateur competition?

It was taken very seriously, avoiding to take it as a second class competition. There were good players there too!

What is your opinion about the organisation?

Very professional, very friendly, always helping if needed, always with a smile: wonderful.

What is your opinion about the facilities in Kulturhaus NIHZ (food, drink, lodging?)

All great, having the sleeping place in the same building where one performs, it gives a very cozy and home-like feeling!

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

I would definitely recommend the festival for everyone who may be interested into good concerts, a good competition and good music courses.

Samuel Klemke

Samuel Klemke, supporter on strings and for the organisation

I heard Samuel Klemke for the first time on the GFN 2012, when he performed in the Klemke Gitarrenduo together with his sister. From then on he is a regular guest in Kulturhaus NIHZ,. attending the festival as a loyal supporter for all kinds of jobs, a jury member and last but not least active musician during the *après concert* jamming sessions and the Lounge concerts.

He is an active guitarist from early childhood, witness a *Youtube* clip in which he plays a *Rondo* by Tielman Susato together with his father and sister in a video registration of a local TV station.

Please tell us something about yourself. What's your name, where do you live, what's your current occupation?

My name is Samuel T. Klemke. I am based in Weimar / Germany, where I received my music education at the Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt Weimar. But currently I am touring somewhere in the world most of the time.

Which person or event made you decide to dedicate yourself to the guitar?

My father Tobias is a guitarist himself, thus I grew up with classical guitar music being everywhere around me, seeing him practice and play at home. This way it was quite natural to pick up the guitar at an early age and make my first experiences with it.

Please tell something about your musical training. Where and with what teachers did you study?

My father was my teacher all through my childhood and youth. Later on of course I visited some other teachers for some courses. Then I went to Weimar to study guitar with Prof. Monika Rost and Prof. Thomas Müller-Pering at the HfM Franz Liszt Weimar. This education was complemented by master classes with most famous guitarists like Pepe Romero, David Russell, Manuel Barrueco, Dale Kavanagh, Roland Dyens to name but a few.

Which teacher influenced you most? Which aspect of your play benefited from this?

Each teacher could provide some fundamental and important insight into guitar playing and music in general. Depending of the stage of my development they all were important. My father for laying the basis and always showing me the way to go, my university teachers for adding a lot of knowledge, refining the technique and the sound and the great masters for further inspiration and insight.

Who are your favourite concert musicians? Are there guitarists amongst them?

I always have difficulties to pick a favourite, because the world is so full of diversity, so full of different beautiful things, which all can be admired, as is the world of concert musicians. There are so many out there who can bring you joy of listening to music. Maybe the guitarist that inspired me the most in my youth and still has lots of my admiration is Julian Bream.

What is your favourite classical piece? What is your favourite classical guitar piece?

Here the same aspects apply from the question before. There is so much fantastic music out there. Of course there are favourites in certain times, but they change. If I want to pay them all justice, we could fill a book just with this. If I had to name one then it may be the *Chaconne* by J. S. Bach, ... or maybe something else?

Who is your favourite guitar composer?

This is as hard to answer as the questions before for the same reasons. But let's keep it like this: Though I enjoy the music by composers who played guitar themselves, especially in the 20th century the works by non-guitar playing composers always seemed to have more depth in the music, thinking of Bach, Britten, Henze, Takemitsu, José.

At what age did you perform for an audience for the first time? What was the occasion?

I was not yet six years old, when I joined a performance of my father's class at the music school. Almost eight years old I gave my first solo recital.

You recorded a number of CDs. Which one do you consider the most adventurous in the musical sense? Which one was the most challenging for you? And which one gave you the most positive reactions?

I think my solo debut was the most challenging and adventurous at the same time. I recorded the pieces that I performed for my University Diploma. It was a great programme. I recorded three compositions: J. S. Bach's *Suite BWV 997*, Fernando Sor's *Fantasia opus 7* and Hans Werner Henzes *Royal Winter Music 1*.

This is more than one hour of music. This recording was challenging as it was my first to be professional recording. I did the editing myself. It is adventurous, because there is almost half an hour of a very complicated piece, the *Royal Winter Music*. It is complex for the performer and at the same time demanding for the audience, but I think a very fantastic piece how the different characters from Shakespeare's dramas are depicted by Henze through his music. But I also got some very good comments on it from guitarists who stated, they never understood and enjoyed Henze's music as much before they listened to me.

But also my other recordings like the duo CD with my sister Laura where we recorded Spanish music from different centuries, or our live DVD, my second solo compilation of recordings I did throughout my university time, and of course the single recording of *Koyunbaba* all had and have their admirers.

Your web site mentions that you work on film and experimental projects. I found a nice example in the James Bond background music for the promotional video clip of the Guitar Festival Nordhorn. What films did you compose and/or play the music for?

I have some very good friends, who studied Media Design at the Bauhaus University Weimar. They were doing different short films, that I made music for. Some very interesting projects where films made for a 360° dome projection in planetariums, which provides a very immersive experience through surrounding visuals and music. This film-works gave me many new ideas how I want music videos to look like and tell stories in the future. I started doing this with the James Bond - Video I made, from which the sound track then was taken for the Festival trailer. And I have many more fantastic ideas that need to be realized.

Your web site mentions a connection with the Italian fashion brand Cleofe Finati, a remarkable feat because many guitarist only mention luthiers and brand names of the strings they use. How did you get in touch with them? Did they design your performance outfit?

I was looking for a new outfit, that sets me apart from the standard straight black and white. It is still black, but joined by some glamour through the baroque patterns, while at the same time adding modern elements. In my opinion a successful blend of old and new. I got in contact with them and found this dress in one of their collections. They were very interested in a collaboration and so I even was invited to their fashion show in Milano in 2015.

Your concert programme shows a remarkable number of concert tours in the Far East. What attracts you to this region?

I visited a few festivals in Asia and this way got some contacts in this part of the world. These contacts developed further to all the events that came up so far. But it is true that I find these countries very fascinating. Though again to say that I love to go anywhere in the world.

Still the guitar scene in Asia is an interesting one. Many countries get more and more interested in guitar and classical guitar, but lacking a lot of exposure to classical music and especially modern classical music. I felt I can do a lot of good work there by performing and teaching, sharing my cultural experience of a European instrument and European music with music lovers that want to play the same music but grew up with a different cultural background.

What is your opinion about competitions? Do they have a positive influence on the player or do they distract the players from the essence of music?

Yes, in my opinion competitions are very ambiguous. There are good aspects and there are not so good aspects.

First of all I think competitions are a good exercise for everyone. You have a goal for preparing your repertoire. You experience a tense atmosphere and situation when performing for the jury, which prepares you well for concerts. For me the exam situation, where the competition belongs to as well, was always the most nervous one performing in, because of course I wanted to show all the 100% of my abilities, of what I have practiced before. But this is all pressure produced by yourself in your own mind, producing this nervousness on the stage. I think it is important to learn to enjoy and live in the moment of the music when performing and not allowing any other thoughts to interfere. And competitions are a way of learning this.

Also a positive influence is that the practicing before a competition gets very intense and focused thus enhancing your playing even beyond the competition, but on the other hand, if you make a big average, it is possible to observe that there is a certain type of performance that is winning competitions.

For example technical flawlessness can often win over deeper musical expression, catchy pieces win over more complicated ones. It is very understandable and at the same time music competitions do not really make sense as it is such an individual art. And the essence of this art is individual, transcendental beyond measurability.

Of course there are the technical aspects, we can measure the speed like in sports, the accuracy to the score, but if everyone does all perfect, is that art already? I often have heard competition winners in their final round. And truly it was amazingly perfect. But what else, something more was missing to me. It was great for the 20 minutes of the final round, but would I want to listen to them for a full 90 minutes concert? This is rare.

We should find a way how to promote young performers in their career aside from this competition scene, give room to more individual and extreme approaches instead of focusing on the average taste, by giving points and calculating the average.

I once joined and won a competition in England, where one had to submit a full concert programme to be played by the winner the day after the competition, this concert programming was included in the evaluation of the candidates. I think a very interesting and for the performer very demanding competition, because I had to prepare 2 hours of music. Maybe that is enough about competitions, though there could be said much more about it.

What do you like best: Playing before an audience, or playing before a jury in a competition setting?

You probably can guess already my answer to this question from my remarks before. Of course the performance before an audience is the one I enjoy most. Actually it is what I yearn for as an artist, next to the music myself this is the driving power. As performing artist we have a very important role beyond the mere reproduction of the music composed before.

Ok this might become a bit esoteric, but I think it's the essence everyone who performs for an audience must have experienced. We deal with and transform energies. In the beginning of a performance we have two sides: the performer on the stage and the listeners in the audience. Actually the audience consists of many individuals separated from each other. Still they have one common goal, which is to have a nice hour or two with music, so they generally come in a good mood and want to have a nice time. They focus onto the stage where the artist begins his performance, focusing on the music.

Already in the first piece you can observe how the audience gets more focused and more quiet listening to you. The atmosphere gets more tensed (in a good way) more dense and energetic. This energy is transformed back into music by the artist. The musical expression gets more intense than it might be in practising. Even my interpretation of the pieces might change on what I sense from the audiences, for example my tempi vary a bit, depending on the audience, or even the time of the day, the general mood I sense etc.

Through tiny adjustments in the pace, in the spacing, in the phrasing, in how long you wait before the resolution, building up the tension, that is where the true art begins, where you start talking to the audience without words, this is how you as the performer can influence the audience, make them feel excited, or calmed down, make them relaxed or surprised. This is the point when I think after each performance: 'Oh the concert is already finished, I wished it would go on!' - and looking forward to the next performance.

Did you participate in professional competitions for the guitar? If so, what are your impressions about the competition stress and interaction with the jury and other competitors? Did it for instance resemble a situation like "in war and love everything is permitted?"

I did my good share of competitions, from smaller ones to most of the big ones. Maybe there are too many guitar competitions when compared to other instruments. But also the atmosphere is different, from what I hear about for example piano and violin competitions. The atmosphere among participants mostly is very friendly and collegial, while other instruments seem more competitive up to throwing broken glass into handbags of other competitors in the extreme, may that be true or not.

Still I get the impression that even guitar competitions get a bit more competitive in the young generation. But that is what I liked so much about the festivals and competitions, to share the experiences with the opponents, talk and meet after the competition together, as well as with the judges.

When and how did you meet Bobby and Sanna of Kulturhaus NIHZ?

This was one of the lucky moments in life. I was arriving a few days early before the guitar festival in Calcutta in 2010. I stayed in the same hotel like them before moving to the festival location. After I arrived I heard some guitar music next door. It could only be for the festival, so I knocked and met Bobby and Sanna. Both with the same enthusiasm for seeing India for the first time. So we spent the next time sightseeing together before the festival started, becoming very good friends. Since then we met several occasions, I joined their festival and other projects together and am always looking forward to the next common event.

How did you like the idea of the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

It is fantastic to have everything under one roof. Of course the house is not big enough to provide rooms for all participants, so some are accommodated in nearby places, but everything is happening there, the classes, the concerts, the common meals and parties. This is keeping alive the spirit which was always among the guitarists, of being in a warm and friendly community.

You provided Bobby and Sanna with some useful information about the organisation of festivals, particularly concerning the catering. Where did you get this experience?

Really did I? I never was aware of that. Maybe just from my experience how important food is for the mood of all participants ;).

What are your experiences with the atmosphere on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

Well I am always having a great time there, and I think most of the participants do as well, which is reflected in the growth of the festival over the few years.

As a master class teacher you met a lot of students. Which student made the impression that he would grow into a skilful guitarist and musician that will be famous on stage later?

This is a difficult question. Of course there are many students of many different levels in the classes. The pity is that we only meet them for a very short time of 30 or 45 minutes. This is little time to give a prognosis. I think to become famous on stage, a strong will is needed to pursue this goal. Of course one or another student I met again in same and other places, and of course there are wonderful personalities amongst them for which I wish they can make their way in the music field.

You met a lot of colleague professional guitarists at the festival. Do you remember some anecdotes? Please describe the funniest one.

The most sticking anecdote from GFN probably is a few years ago, one competition participant got lost and just arrived outside the door immediately before his performance time. In such a hurry, he ran to stage, unpacked his guitar and started the performance, that he forgot to switch of his phone, which of course started ringing in his performance. This far - this good. Now to the anecdote. The final concert was performed by Maestro Roland Dyens who has a great humour. He started performing, then stopping remembering, he has to switch of his phone, and took it out of his pocket, making one or another listener in the audience check his phone as well.

You met a lot of students at the festival. Do you remember some anecdotes? Please describe the funniest one.

See the beforehand question. It answers both questions at the same time :)

Which professional player impressed you the most with his/her recital?

The pity is, that due to helping Bobby and Sanna in the festival means not always being able to listen all the concerts with full attention, because something needs to be done backstage. And at the same time there are so many great moments in the festival. Just from 2015 Hubert Käppel's rendering of *El Cimarron* by Henze, which I have heard many years before already, was one of those moments.

What were your impressions of the amateur competition?

It was great to see participants of this category from all different age groups, women and men. Some of the participants I could see return the following years, and it was great to hear the progress they made and see the enthusiasm for their guitar playing to put themselves in the stressful situation of a competition. It is great to have this category of competition, as guitar amateurs are an important part of the guitar scene, and thus give them a podium to stand in the centre of attention themselves.

What is your opinion about the organisation?

It is amazing that the whole festival is prepared mostly by Bobby and Sanna alone. Of course during the festival there are many helping hands, but to run a festival like this without any major incidents takes a lot of experience and energy.

What is your opinion about the facilities in Kulturhaus NIHZ (food, drink, lodging?)

I think it is a great place that Bobby and Sanna found there and built. And they constantly put work into it to make it more attractive and comfortable. It is a lot of work to run a place like this. And it is a place one of its kind in Germany, I think.

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

A clear YES! I not only would recommend but I actively do so.

The Anido Guitar Duo

The Anido Guitar Duo, Annette and Arlette, supporters of the GFN from the beginning, playing in Nordhorn

The Anido Guitar Duo, consisting of Annette Kruisbrink and Arlette Ruelens, appeared on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn for the first time in 2011, where they played an interesting mix of contemporary and more classical works. As supporters of the festival they have been active with master classes and appeared as jury members for the competitions.

The interview with Annette and Arlette is included in the beginning of the book, and this interview also gives information about the Anido Duo, particularly its namesake María Luisa Anido. So please browse back a bit to find this information.

Nutavut Ratanakarn

Nutavut Ratanakarn comes from Thailand, where he is one of the leading classical guitarists and guitar teachers. Additionally he is a composer of guitar music. He first appeared on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn in 2012 and returned in 2015 to play a concert in the *Alte Kirche* in Nordhorn during the festival.

Nutavut Ratanakarn, all the way from Thailand

Please tell us something about yourself. What's your name, where do you live, what's your current occupation?

My name is Nutavut Ratanakarn, classical professor and classical guitarist and composer.

Please tell something about your musical training. Where and with what teachers did you study?

I have studied the major classical guitar at the Kasetsart University in Thailand and took master classes with many famous artists.

What is your favourite classical piece? What is your favourite classical guitar piece?

I no have favourite pieces because my preferences change over time.

At what age did you perform for an audience for the first time? What was the occasion?

I started performing when was 18 years old, one year after I started to learn to play the classical guitar.

You recorded a number of CDs. Which one do you consider the most adventurous in the musical sense? Which one was the most challenging for you? And which one gave you the most positive reactions?

At this moment I have recorded 8 CDs. The latest CD is completely dedicated to my own compositions. That's a challenge indeed, because you need to *create* the piece as a composer, but you also have to *play* it (and record it) as a guitarist.

What is your opinion about competitions? Do they have a positive influence on the player or do they distract the players from the essence of music?

I would not like to play competitions during all the years of my musical career. However, competitions do benefit the development of a guitar student. On the other hand, winning competitions is no guarantee for success. Many big names in the guitar world did not win competitions, but they won the harts of the audience because they know how to touch them by their expression of the music.

What do you like best: Playing before an audience, or playing before a jury in a competition setting?

I like to play a concert more than playing a competition.

Did you participate in professional competitions for the guitar? If so, what are your impressions about the competition stress and interaction with the jury and other competitors? Did it for instance resemble a situation like "in war and love everything is permitted?"

Yes, a long time ago I have won many competitions in Thailand. I did not know much about the other competitions in the world because at that time I did not have Internet. When I was young, for some time I considered a competition to be a survival of the fittest, almost a kind of war. Now that I am older, looking back I think that it was quite stupid to think like that.

When and how did you meet Bobby and Sanna of Kulturhaus NIHZ?

I met them in 2010 at the Festival in India and Bhutan. We were amongst the artists there.

What are your experiences with the atmosphere on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

For me it was a like a warm bath, just like a stay with a close and friendly family.

As a master class teacher you met a lot of students. Which student made the impression that he would grow into a skilful guitarist and musician that will be famous on stage later?

Yes, I know many students from my master classes that have progressed well and start to win competitions. Some of them are even famous artists now!

You met a lot of colleague professional guitarists at the festival. Do you remember some anecdotes? Please describe the funniest one.

The complete festival was great fun!

What is your opinion about the organisation?

The organisation is like a family: warm and helpful.

What is your opinion about the facilities in Kulturhaus NIHZ (food, drink, lodging?)

Good!

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

I recommend it to many of my students and I hope they will visit the festival later.

Sabrina Vlaskalic

I heard the Serbian born guitarist Sabrina Vlaskalic for the first time at the professional competition of the Twente Guitar festival in 2008. She impressed me because of her clear stage presence and passionate performance. She played the finals there in 2008 and won this competition in 2009. She first appeared on stage at the Nordhorn Guitar Festival 2015, but as a representative of the Prince Claus Conservatory she was present at the festivals before.

Sabrina Vlaskalic, frequent visitor, competitor and performer at the festivals in this region

Please tell something about yourself. What's your name, where do you live, what's your current occupation?

I am Sabrina Vlaskalic, I am living in Groningen, The Netherlands, I am concert guitarist, Teacher at the Prince Claus Conservatoire (Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen, The Netherlands), PhD Student (Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, UK)

Hmmm...I think that summarizes the 3 lives which I am living simultaneously :-)

Which person or event made you decide to dedicate yourself to the guitar?

I was too young to remember (I started playing the guitar when I was 7). My parents say that I saw the guitar at the window of a store, 'air-strummed' an imaginary guitar in front of them and said "I wanna play that". I really can not recall that I have ever really made a conscious decision to play the guitar and also, I can not remember the times that the guitar has not been a part of my life.

Please tell something about your musical training. Where and with what teachers did you study?

- High Music School, 'Vatroslav Lisinski', (Belgrade, Serbia), class: Aleksandar Hadzi-Djordjevic
- Faculty of Music Art, (Belgrade, Serbia), class: Prof. Srdjan Tosic
- Bachelor degree: Royal Conservatoire of Music (Den Haag, The Netherlands), class: Zoran Dukic
- Master degree: Currently doing PhD studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, UK
- My father's (Milorad Vlaskalic) School of endless support: practiced with me for years and held my hand in good and bad times.

Which teacher influenced you most? Which aspect of your play benefited from this?

Unfortunately, I really can not choose one. I've been lucky enough that all my teachers were experts and all of them left a huge mark on me as a musician.

Aleksandar gave me a knowledge of sound at the age you normally don't even know what the sound projection is, Srdjan taught me how to interpret music and not improvise on the topic of written text, Zoran answered some of the most intriguing questions I had about the guitar, refined my musical taste, taught me to listen and in his own way set me up on a path of chasing things we normally think are impossible on the guitar. My father taught me what courage, discipline and faith are.

Who are your favourite concert musicians? Which guitarists are amongst them?

My favorite musicians are definitely: Vladimir Horowitz & Kirill Petrenko. My favorite guitarists are: Julian Bream & Zoran Dukic.

What is your favourite classical piece? What is your favourite classical guitar piece?

I don't have favourite pieces, I love all music that has emotional and intellectual quality. I do have a preference for piano, orchestra and guitar repertoire. I do have favourite things in music, but these are usually specific interpretations.

Who is your favourite guitar composer?

All of those that knew how to actually write for the instrument and use its possibilities. I like 'Barrios' guitar' very much, Manen's also, surely De Falla's, Ginastera's and Brouwer's (especially the sound of his guitar in pieces from his experimental composition period). Tárrega's sweet guitar recently found a place in my heart, too.

At what age did you perform for an audience the first time? What was the occasion for that performance?

I really don't remember. Studying and performing came hand in hand to me.

Did you ever make recordings and CDs? If so, how did you experience recording and listening to the result?

After refusing to record for many years (more then a decade, I think), I finally recorded my first CD this summer. It should be published in a matter of weeks.

Hmmmm....how did I experience the recording process and listening? I insisted on having an answer to that question written in my CD booklet, as a part of my 'Thank you note'. Here is a part of it:

...It has been a unique experience recording for the first time, both challenging and gratifying. Having to think of so many different aspects of a performance made me aware of just how large the world of sound and music is and how much more there is to be discovered...

What is your opinion about competitions? Do they have a positive influence on the player or do they distract the players from the essence of music?

I think the only one who can distract himself/herself from the essence of music is the player. Blaming the competitions, as an institution that actually provides amazing opportunities to young players, such as to be heard, is essentially wrong. I think competitions are resources which, when used well, can open many doors.

What do you like best: Playing before an audience, or playing before a jury in a competition setting?

When performing I don't adjust my playing level in relation to the audience attending or the occasion. I always play the best I possibly can: which in my world means better than the last time I performed. People are judging anyway, call them a jury or the audience, but I am my own strictest judge.

You participated in professional competitions for the guitar. What are your impressions about the competition stress and interaction with the jury and other competitors? Did it for instance resemble a situation like "in war and love everything is permitted?"

I remember both good and bad things, most importantly -great friendships made.

Which aspects of your play did benefit most from competition playing?

Experience.

For the classical guitarists of this time the competition is an important device for exposure and networking. As a teacher, how do you prepare your students for competitions and their judges?

As I already mentioned, I myself never prepare the performance to suite a particular audience or occasion and the same philosophy applies to my students. They should do their best, no matter what the occasion is and who is listening to them.

If we leave on the side the detailed preparation of the music material and the process of execution, I suppose that the most relevant aspect of preparation for me would be the state of mind of a student. I believe that in order to pursue your dreams, you have to fail, many times probably and this is an idea that I try to transfer to my students. For me, it's not about winning, it's not about competitions- it's about the chase.

I remember that you were active om Youtube and had an own promotional web site, already while you were a student. How did this help you in establishing your career? How important do you consider the web and social media for the classical guitarist of this day?

You have a very good memory! :-) And I find this a very interesting question! Yes, I have been very active on Internet already during my study days. And if you remember, it was in the time when very few musicians saw the benefits of Internet and entrepreneurship. I definitely did see the benefits and it helped me tremendously. Nevertheless, I do believe that the Internet today is a different place than what it was 10 years ago. I believe it's overcrowded and this is the reason why I decided to pull back from Internet, as much as I could.

You visit the Nordhorn festival as a representative of the guitar section of the Prince Claus Conservatory in Groningen. Doing so, you offer pre-entrance consultation for the conservatory study. In your opinion, what is the key to success for a guitar student that wants to teach music? What feats are necessary for a performing guitarist?

I don't differentiate between these two and teach both the same. They key for anything and everything is inspiration, motivation and diligence. To me these are the two sides of the same coin.

I have seen you playing at the Nordhorn festival and at the Twente competitons. Doing so, I noticed that during your performances your presentation, in particular the clothing, adds a stylish touch without interfering with the music. How do you select your outfit? Selecting it, do you

consider the music that you will play? Do you have assistance in the design of your outfit, or do you select it yourself completely?

In the culture that I come from the respect plays a very important role, especially in the frame of classical music. The reason why I dress the way I do is because of the respect that I have for my audience. No matter where I will play or for how many people, I'll always be dressed up as officially as I can. I am a simple girl-I chose the wardrobe by myself. :-)

How did you find out about the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

To be honest, I have no idea. Seems like it has always been there!

What are your experiences with the atmosphere on the festivals, in particular the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

I looooove the Festivals and think of them as 'guitar festivities/guitar celebrations'! And I love being at all the Festivals equally because these are the places where you meet people that share your passion. At least for those couple of days that the Festival lasts, the road of musical pursuit is less lonely. :-)

What is your opinion about the organisation?

Bobby and Sanna are great hosts and great friends! I appreciate what they do and love being a guest of their Festival, for several years already. I loved the atmosphere and the organization from the first time I came to the Festival and still enjoy it very much.

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

That I already did! :-)

Stefan Grasse

Stefan Grasse appeared as performer, jury member and master class teacher on the Nordhorn Guitar Festival 2013 and he will appear again on the next festival in 2016.

In the 2013 festival during his recital I heard a number of relaxing pieces of music, with lots of latin and jazzy elements. All pieces with a strong musical gift, yet played with considerable technical capability 'under the hood'. So I am looking forward to the next festival!

Please tell us something about yourself. What's your name, where do you live, what's your current occupation?

My name is Stefan Grasse, I live in Nuremberg in the south of Germany and I am a free-lance guitarist.

Which person or event made you decide to dedicate yourself to the guitar?

My sister had a guitar and I liked to pick it up for playing. Additionally lots my friends and their relatives played guitar too, so that becomes tempting and I picked up what I could. Finally my mother suggested that I should take guitar lessons.

Stefan Grasse, composer and performer

Please tell us something about your musical training. Where and with what teachers did you study?

My first classical guitar teacher was Leonard Anatol Regnier, who studied with John Williams in London. I continued my study at the Nuremberg conservatory with Kurt Hiesl who is very much involved in the concert business, running his own guitar concert series in Nuremberg. In Munich I had lessons with the jazz guitarist Peter O'Mara at the Munich Jazz School. Later I entered the Royal Scottish academy and studied with Philip Thorne.

Which teacher influenced you most? Which aspect of your play benefited from this?

Pepe Romero. I attended several master classes that were held at the International Summer Academy at the Mozarteum in Austria. He used to spend two or three weeks there.

He gave us lessons once in two days and every day he held master classes. He pointed out many mental aspects of musicianship and paid attention to technical aspects and tone production.

Who are your favourite concert musicians? Are there guitarists amongst them?

My favourite musician is Anne-Sophie Mutter. She is such a fantastic violinist! The best classical guitarist… I attended concerts of amongst others Andrés Segovia (the last one). John Williams, Julian Bream, Narciso Yepes. But I think the concert of Aniello Desiderio was the most impressive concert for me.

What is your favourite classical piece? What is your favourite classical guitar piece?

My favourite classical piece is the *Goldberg Variationen BWV 988* by Johann Sebastian Bach. Of course I have several favourite classical guitar pieces, I like the compositions by Francisco Tárrega very much, in particular the *Capricho Arabe*, but also the Villa-Lobos concertos with orchestra. They are nice to play, very convenient and make a lot of fun.

Who is your favourite guitar composer?

My favourite guitar composer is, besides Tárrega, Villa-Lobos and (some pieces by) Brouwer, a contemporary guitar composer, his name is Edward McGuire from Glasgow. He composed around forty pieces for solo guitar and ensemble, also one concerto, he is a very, very good composer for the guitar.

You recorded quite a number of CDs. Which one do you consider the most adventurous in the musical sense? Which one was the most challenging for you? And which one gave you the most positive reactions?

Yes, in the meantime I recorded fifteen CDs under my own name and I participated in many other CD productions.

The most adventurous in the musical sense was the CD *Adios Nonino*, with music by Astor Piazzola, and I additionally composed an homage to him, *Le tango du chat noir*, for the CD. I made all the arrangements but one that was originally by Piazzolla. I did not arrange his work for solo guitar alone, I also made arrangements with string quartet, double-bass and percussion, but without the Bandoneon. Sometimes I had to conduct the strings, so this CD was quite adventurous.

The most challenging CD productions for me are the ones that include mainly my own compositions, because I always try to come as close as possible to my limits, or I try to overcome them. I experienced that for instance with my CD *Brisas de Mar*, *Sea Breezes*.

I got a lot of positive reactions on my CD *Ripples*, which I published in 1996. It was mainly produced at the University of Stanford in the United States. The CD contained mostly minimal music composed by Steve Reich, Eddy McGuire, Leo Brouwer and Nicky Hind (he did a collaboration piece with me). The recording included up to fifteen guitars in overdub. Some media wrote that I opened the door to the twenty-first century for the classical guitar. Another positive reaction got my CD *Latin Christmas meets Classic*, with charming Christmas carols combined with Latin-American rhythms. The CD was really successful last Christmas!

What is your opinion about competitions? Do they have a positive influence on the player or do they distract the players from the essence of music?

My opinion maybe is a bit special and in this aspect I fully agree with a quote from the composer Bela Bartok: *Competition is for horses, not for musicians*! I think that playing competitions is good for starting a career, but playing *music* has always something to do with love, loving music, it's difficult to say, I guess competition affects this love.

What do you like best: Playing before an audience, or playing before a jury in a competition setting?

I always prefer to play before an audience, for quite common people, and I would like to invoke their fantasy to take them away from their everyday life and to fulfil their lives with something magic, something inspiring, and I would like that they can feel a world of fantasy. Then maybe afterwards they will be leaving the concert hall really inspired, having new ideas about their own life, or reflecting their own life.

Did you participate in professional competitions for the guitar? If so: What are your impressions about the competition stress and interaction with the jury and other competitors? Did it for instance resemble a situation like "in war and love everything is permitted?"

I have participated in some competitions and got also some first prizes. Well, it's hard to remember my exact impressions, because it's a long time ago. It was always a lot of stress and at times I felt that the jury was not quite concentrated and listening to every participant.

How did you get interested in composition?

I grew up in a family with very creative persons. My grandmother was an artist, a painter, she trained me in painting and developing my own fantasy. She succeeded, I always try to use my fantasy in connection with music.

It takes a certain time to develop ideas, to turn ideas into music. But it is worth it, sometimes, obviously, it is a struggle too. It is good to be able to do this.

You are known as a versatile player in classical, jazz and popular styles. What is your favourite style for composition?

Well, I don't have any favourite style for composition. Sometimes I have a rhythmical idea, or an arpeggio, sometimes it's a melodious theme. But I always try to tell a certain story or to find a certain structure. Sometimes I work it out quickly, other times it takes a lot of effort, like all artists have…

When and how did you meet Bobby and Sanna of Kulturhaus NIHZ?

I had the first contact with Bobby and Sanna in 2011. I personally met them in the spring of 2012, when they visited Nuremberg for a concert, and then I invited both to concerts in September 2012. And thus our friendship started.

After my guitar recital at the Nordhorn Guitar Festival 2013 they asked me to compose a duo for recorder and guitar for them. I selected a Hebrew theme and based the whole composition on it.

How did you like the idea of the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

I like it very much. Everything is concentrated in this same building, the Kulturhaus, so you have lodging there for the students, you have food, you can have breakfast together and spend the evenings together, so its's a very sympathetic thing!

What are your experiences with the atmosphere on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

I have only very good experiences with the atmosphere on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn. I met only very nice students, guitar makers and professors for the guitar. I know it is difficult to have enough room for all the preparations like practicing for the competitions and so on, but I think everybody could cope with this. It's really something unique, because it's a private building.

As a master class teacher you met a number of students. Which student made the impression that he would grow into a skilful guitarist and musician that will be famous on stage later?

I met a couple of students that could make something of a career, they have wonderful skills and a great imagination of the music. There are so many good players and maybe they are talented in organisation so that they can start something like a career, yes. But I can't remember the names, I

have a good memory for faces, but not for names. So there are several guitarists with potency, but it's always a matter of so many other aspects, of life, to become a great player. Obviously discipline is one of the keywords.

What were your impressions of the amateur competition?

I am not certain if I participated in the jury for the amateur competition, but I think this competition is a very good idea. I remember some performances at the end and it was very well received and I liked it also.

What is your opinion about the organisation?

I have a very good opinion about the organisation, because Bobby and Sanna and also Bobby's father is very much concerned about everything. They are doing a great job and this is something special!

What is your opinion about the facilities in Kulturhaus NIHZ (food, drink, lodging?)

I like the accommodation there, the food, the drinks. But what I like most of all is the atmosphere, staying together, spending time together, talking, laughing, everything. Again. It's really something special, the facilities at the Kulturhaus NIHZ.

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

Of course I do recommend the festival, I supported the festival on Facebook and other social media and I passed emails about the festival to my colleagues and guitarists. I support as much as I can!

Christian Lavernier and Francesca Nebiolo

The Italian guitarist and composer Christian Lavernier first appeared on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn in 2015. He played a programme with his own compositions and appeared a great improvisator during the *après concert* jamming sessions in the lounge. He travels on the road and in life together with his fiancée Francesca Nebiolo, who is also involved in his artistic management.

Please tell something about yourself. What's your name, where do you live, what's your current occupation?

I'm Francesca Nebiolo, Assyriologist (researcher on Paleo-Babylonian history) and intended of Christian Lavernier. Christian is an Italian classic guitarist. We live together between Imperia (Italy) and Paris. I'm also the assistant of Christian to organize his works (and his life!).

Which person or event made you decide to dedicate yourself to the guitar?

Christian: There is a photograph of me, I think I was 4-5 years old, and I try to play a tennis racket as a guitar... But I really met the music some years after. I started to play pianoforte in a music school but there was a guitar class before my course and I fell in love with the vibration of the guitar. Obviously I changed the class and I never lost this love! That's it!

Christian Lavernier playing together with Duo NIHZ in Aalborg

Please tell something about your musical training. Where and with what teachers did you study?

I started to study guitar in earnest with Maestro Mario Senise in Imperia. He gave me a solid basis and he developed my self-confidence in my art and potential. Next I studied with Maestro Alirio Diaz. We met during a competition (the Johannes Brahms Competition) that I won and he believed in me. He really formed me and helped me to enter the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory in Milan.

I have had the pleasure to work with great musicians like Paolo Cherici and in this period I met Claudio Abbado who made me understand what music really is. I completed my study in only 4 years and I won a fellowship to study in Vienna. There I worked specially with Konrad Ragossnig. The first time I played for him he said to me: 'If you need to prove that you are the best, you are not'. It became my personal mantra. After that I studied with Angelo Gilardino, the contemporary music and composition.

Which teacher influenced you most? Which aspect of your play benefited from this?

Alirio Diaz gave me the feeling of music, the heart of guitar. Konrad Ragossnig made me conscious of what is a real artist and what kind of musician I will be. Paolo Cherici built me up in a technical level. I think that my music is a composition of this. They influenced me in some different ways. Alirio Diaz made me discover my expressiveness, P. Cherici gave me the technique to express myself and Ragossnig helped me to understand my way.

Who are your favourite concert musicians? Are there guitarists amongst them?

Francesca: I'm not a musician and I love different kinds of music: First of all Bruce Springsteen and Johnny Cash, but they are not the only ones. I am a big fan of Giovanni Sollima, cello player, and Stefano Bollani, the pianist. Amongst the guitarists my favourite is Pavel Steidl.

Christian: Me! No, It's a joke... I really love Pavel Steidl too but the guitarists that I can't stop to listen to are Paco de Lucia and Egberto Gismonti. I also really love the pianists Martha Argerich, and Glen Gould. He is amazing!

What is your favourite classical piece? What is your favourite classical guitar piece?

Francesca: *TerraAria* (Giovanni Sollima) and *Kastalia* (Christian Lavernier)
Christian: *Concierto de Aranjuez* and *l'Arte della Fuga* by Bach

Who is your favourite guitar composer?

Francesca: Beside Christian? I think Roland Dyens.
Christian: Leo Brouwer

At what age did you perform for an audience for the first time? What was the occasion?

Christian: I was 14 years old, it was my first real competition. I was excited and terrified at the same time!

You recorded a CD. How did you experience recording and listening to the result?

Christian: My CD it's been a long, long work. I never make cuts in the executions, I recorded like a 'live' performance and it was so difficult to find the best execution. Sometimes it was perfect but without soul, sometimes the interpretation was so good but the execution was dirty. Afterwards I did not want to listen my CD! I started to listen it when I met Francesca...I needed something to impress her!

What is your opinion about competitions? Do they have a positive influence on the player or do they distract the players from the essence of music?

I played a lot of competitions when I was young. I needed them for money to pay for my study. It is simple, but it is true. However it was important too to test my interpretation, my technique and to compare myself with other players. I met great musicians in this period, such as Alirio Diaz.

Competitions were really important for my artistic development. I think that competitions are good if you want to meet other musicians, and compare your musical performance. If you want to understand the other way to make music, and to express your artistic feeling. It is good if you want to listen and learn from the jury and teachers and from the other musicians.

Unfortunately I often see young musicians that see a competition as an 'Athletics Meeting'. Who is toughest? Who is fastest? That is no music, it is no art. This approach affects their concerts as well as their musical vision. I hope that we can change this competition attitude in favour of the music because it is really dangerous for all of us.

What do you like best: Playing before an audience, or playing before a jury in a competition setting?

We exist if we have an audience, a real audience that wants to hear our feelings, our interpretation. Not a jury, no other guitarists. If we can't give emotion, if we can't touch the other, the audience, for what purpose do we play?

As I heard in Nordhorn last year, your own compositions form an important part of your repertoire. How did you get interested in composition?

I started to compose at a quite young age, but until 2014 I never had real confidence in my music. I never played it. Francesca motivated me to give my compositions a chance. Women are always right. Now I'm waiting for my first edition of three compositions, it is expected in June. My own compositions now are the core of my repertoire and they induce me to re-discover the art of improvisation too. Now I'm really more aware of what I want to express and how to do it.

On your website I found that you have a number of concert programs. What was important for the selection of the pieces? Will there be a program with your own compositions in the future?

I have a program but I never follow it. I have a repertoire but I cannot tell what I really want to play in a concert before going on stage. It is the atmosphere in the hall, it is dependent on how I feel the audience and what they give me. It is dependent on the day, on the persons that I met before. I have to be free!

You have published your CD in downloadable form with CDBaby, an interesting initiative that amongst others connects to streaming music publishers on the Internet. What are your experiences with this way of distribution of your recordings? Will it replace the "usual" methods of the large record companies in the future?

My work is on different platforms and it is also produced as classical CD's. I think that the future is the Internet. The future for the distribution and the future for enlarge the music diffusion. However, the CDs will still be important for a different quality of sound and for a different kind of listeners.

When and how did you meet Bobby and Sanna of Kulturhaus NIHZ?

We met Bobby and Sanna in 2014 during the Hong Kong guitar festival. A really special experience!

How did you like the idea of the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

It's a really special Festival, quite unique! They make something great with lots of love and energy. We are lucky to take part in this festival.

What are your experiences with the atmosphere on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

Energy, love, friendship, happiness, exchange. It was WONDERFULL

As a master class teacher you met a number of students. Which student made the impression that he would grow into a skilful guitarist and musician that will be famous on stage later?

I met Niklas Johansen. He was a great player and when we finished our master class, the next guitarist did not come (this is one of the problems of all competitions today. Musicians do not understand the importance of master classes). So we stayed together to speak about improvisation, to exchange ideas and interpretations about different pieces. I met him again in Mottola. He played one of his compositions for the competition. Really interesting. He won. He is the first real young guitarist who made me feel something. He is an artist.

You met a number of colleague professional guitarists at the festival. Do you remember some anecdotes? Please describe the funniest one.

One of the funniest is a video recorded in China with Sanna and Bobby...but maybe Sanna will kill me!

One funny souvenir is an incredible trip to arrive in Germany. I was with Francesca. We took the flight in Geneva for Munich but... the highway was blocked because of a landslide! OK, we took the back road...Oh no, 4 hours of queue! So we missed the flight.

Fortunately Andrea Vettoretti, a good friend, took part in the same concert and he would depart the day after by car. The only problem: he lived in an other part of Northern Italy and there was a train strike!!! In the end, after a series of incredible travels and a thousand calls to Andrea to

organize all (and he laughed, he laughed) we arrived in Treviso at nine in the evening. Andrea and Alice his wife started to laugh because the whole situation was so.... comical! We passed the evening with friends, beer and good food. The next day we finally took off! A trip by car with fun, joke, music and humour.. In the end we had a great time!

Which professional player impressed you the most with his/her recital?

Pavel Steidl. The first guitar player including me who really excited Francesca. Francesca never understands classical music. So, if he can touch someone like Francesca, he really has something extra! I joke about Francesca but it is true that Steidl impressed me as well for the impact of his music on someone who does not particularly loves classical guitar music. He can give always something amazing.

What is your opinion about the organisation?

They make a great effort to make us feel comfortable and welcome. Me and Francesca arrived with flu some days before concerts and they helped us like they do in a family. This was the feeling during all the time. Thanks to all.

What is your opinion about the facilities in Kulturhaus NIHZ (food, drink, lodging?)

We are Italians, we cannot judge food and drink! It's a JOKE! It was like in the family: easy and good!

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

We don't know... maybe we leave a comment on Tripadvisor! Yes of course! It's a high level competition and a great experience for all of us.

Jim ten Boske

Jim ten Boske shows the Anido Guitar Duo (Annette Kruisbrink and Arlette Ruelens) his composition Kruispunt (Crossroads) for two guitars

I got acquainted with the Dutch guitarist, composer and guitar teacher Jim ten Boske at the very first Twente Guitar Festival in 2006 and have been a yearly visitor of his workshops Improvisation ever since, until he stopped the workshops in 2014. In these workshops, Jim was teaching the basics of improvisation for a group of guitarists, based on famous jazz standards. It was good to have a chat and a string each year, so I was very pleased to see Jim at the Guitar Festival Nordhorn again!

Please tell us something about yourself. What's your name, where do you live, what's your current occupation?

After the Germans demolished the railway bridge across the IJssel near the Dutch town of Deventer on the 6th of April 1945, just before the liberation of The Netherlands, the British Royal Engineers were deployed to build a Bailey bridge instead. One of the engineers, Jim, *en passant* caused my mother, the violinist Rita Janse Vreeling, to fall in love with him. I was born in 1946 and lived with my grandparents in Deventer. They had a piano, my uncle used it to play jazz music. This year, 2016, the anniversary of the festival, is an anniversary for me as well, in multiple aspects.

From 1946 to 2016: seventy years of frequently crossing the Bailey and the other bridges across the IJssel that were subsequently built, on my trips from western to eastern Holland and vice versa, trips that I made for all kinds of reasons.

I'll summarize the highlights in a mini resume that relates to the ten-year anniversaries.

1956

- In The Hague my passion for music flares up, amongst others caused by the music of Bill Haley and his Comets.

1966:

- As a member of the pop group The Bumble Bees, I am 'on the road' for a concert tour in England and Finland.
- We have recording sessions in the studios of Tony Meehan (The Shadows) in London and in the Phonogram studios in the town of Hilversum, with producer Tony Vos.
- We are part of a TV show in Tampere (Finland).
- We play the support act for the Rolling Stones (in the Brabanthallen in the town of Den Bosch), The Hollies, The Fortunes and the Troggs.
- We make a tour through Holland in the support act for one of the idols of my youth, Bill Haley and his Comets. We play amongst others in The Hague and Enschede.

1976

- Concert tour with Mini and Maxi, a well-known Dutch cabaret duo.
- As a member of the Combo Koos Mark, I work as an accompanist for various artists.
- Studio work with producer Ad van Olm.
- Together now for 40 years with Ine.

1986

- Première of my composition *Second Time* for 2 flutes and guitar in the English Church in Amsterdam.
- Release of USA compilation CD *The Rubble Collection 5* with The Bumble Bees.
- On the 9th of March our youngest son Nick is born, he still lives with us in the village of Hoogland near Amersfoort. My son Gwynn, the bass guitarist of the punk band NRA, now lives in Amsterdam, daughter Ingrid lives with our grandson Chris in the town of Uithoorn and son Tim is looking around for a place to live on his own.

1996:

- Judoka Tim ten Boske chooses for top sport.
- Eight years after my musical tour with the 'Russian State Circus' I am on the road again with my son Tim. That means spending lots of weekends in European sports centers. In this way I return to places like the Brabanthallen and the Rotterdam Ahoy complex. Frank Zappa used to comment on the latter place: 'poor acoustics, totally unsuitable for music'. Yet it is quite suitable for judo matches!

2006:

- My composition *Leave Something Unexplained* appears in the US on a CD with the same name by the mandolin player Marilynn Mair.
- Contribution to *The Great Amersfoort Songbook*, a CD project with 20 jazz musicians from the town of Amersfoort.
- Release of the track
- *SurfJim Thing* with punk band NRA on a French compilation CD. The track is a birthday present from my son Gwynn, the bass player of the band.
- Concert together with Duo NIHZ in the Concordia Theatre at the first Twente Guitar Festival.

2011:

- Bobby and Sanna invite me to their Kulturhaus NIHZ in Nordhorn, Germany.
- First version of my new composition for recorder and guitar. On suggestion by Bobby and Sanna the name of the composition is
- *Minimal 3* after some adaptations.

2016:

- Edition Tre Fontane asks me to write an introduction to the publication of *Minimal 3* for recorder and guitar. The work is dedicated to Duo NIHZ. The cover design is made by *digital artist* Nick ten Boske.

At what age did you start playing the guitar?

When I was ten years old.

Which person or event made you decide to dedicate yourself to the guitar?

In November 1952, my mother married Arend ten Boske in the town of Deventer. In 1953 my parents moved to an upstairs flat in the Archimedesstraat in The Hague. I decided to follow them.

Three years later the Rock and Roll craze flourished on the street and in my school, so my motivation for my violin study at home diminished proportionally, slightly to my mother's disappointment. I'd rather be glued to the speaker of the Rediffusion when English and German stations played the 'real' *Rock and Roll*, *Rhythm and Blues* and *Skiffle* music.

Please tell something about your musical training. Where and with what teachers did you study?

Via an advertisement in the newspaper *Haagsche Courant* I landed in Music School Thórig for my very first guitar lesson. It appeared to be a group lesson with forty complete beginners. The teacher first wrote five chord diagrams on the blackboard and we subsequently copied the chord progressions of two songs. Then the teacher loudly played the songs on the piano with the 'accompaniment' of the forty guitars. At the end of the lesson, the teacher and his assistant waited at the exit of the classroom to collect the 75 cents tuition fee per session from everyone.

The week after my first lesson I practiced diligently on the 'popular' waltzes *If the Mocking Bird whistles.*. and *Faria.* Fortunately after the second lesson, my mother preserved me from further study with Thórig's. In the meantime she had completely agreed with my choice to play the guitar, so she invited the classical guitarist Rob Bakker to our home. Rob played a passionate recital with a likewise explanation of the instrument and the pieces that he played. Rob Bakker became my first teacher for the classical guitar.

The renowned and popular guitar teacher Ab Bronkhorst was the director of the Haagsch Gitaar Centrum (The Hague Guitar Center) on the Acacialaan. Additionally he was sub-manager, secretary, treasurer and clerk at the same time. Fortunately he succeeded in finding time to teach me the guitar 30 minutes a week for a fee of 20 guilders per lesson.

Almost the complete Rock and Roll scene in The Hague followed his lessons despite the fact that he despised electrical guitars. As one of his favourite students I was invited to his wedding party. The party was graced by the (electrical guitar band) *The Jumping Jewels* that included some of his students. Ab was proud as a peacock of his famous students and obviously of his wife too. Ab possessed a large steel-string acoustic guitar that he nicknamed *The Gun*, because of its loud volume.

Koos Tigges was my main guitar teacher when I was studying at the Conservatory. Later I studied with Rob Koenders for my specialization in classical guitar. His lessons yielded a widening of scope, depth to the subject and the ability of reflection.

Which teacher influenced you most? Which aspect of your play benefited from this?

Rob Bakker introduced me to the basics of classical guitar playing. He also helped me selecting my instrument. In the shop of luthier Theo Dellen, he ordered a guitar for me from the Valencian luthier Vincente Tatay Tomas. Its label inside reads *Fabrica de guitarras bandurrias y laudes*, *Valencia.* I still have this very guitar within reach in my studio.

Ab Bronkhorst taught me changes of standards like *Summertime*, *Nuages*, *All of me*, *Stardust*, etc. If Ab played the chord progression of the song, he used to whistle along the melody loudly, clearly and enthusiastically, although unfortunately not always in tune. It was not before much later that I realised that he introduced me to the repertoire of the jazz guitar players Django Reinhardt and Charlie Christian. I still remember that Ab started every lesson with a nice touch of often quite spicy Jewish musician's humor..

Besides teaching me the classical guitar, Koos Tigges offered me the freedom and opportunity to explore Flamenco music. Tigges also cooperated with the contemporary Dutch composer Hans de Heer. He immediately provided De Heer's fresh guitar compositions (that were dedicated to him) with fingerings and shared them with his students that showed interest. For my final examination I selected three of De Heer's *Etudes* that were not yet published at that time. That gave me an incentive to explore my own musical preferences outside the then standard repertoire for the classical guitar.

Rob Koenders was a skilled and passionate teacher. His often quite explicit opinions and views on the guitar world and the world beyond provided incentives for me to develop my own musical identity.

Who is (are) your favorite concert guitarist(s)?

My teacher Rob Bakker stimulated his students to attend classical guitar recitals in the Diligentia Theatre in The Hague. My then favorites from this concert series were Ida Presti and Alexandre Lagoya , Alirio Diaz, Narciso Yepes, Julian Bream and John Williams.

Now, in 2016, my answer would be more balanced.

The musical expression of a concert guitarist is a deliberate expression that is bound to place and time. As a consequence every concert musician has his own history, he does not start out of nothing and carries the emotional and physical experiences from the past. That's his starting point to shape a musical expression on stage with as much freedom as possible.

If, however, the concert guitarist succeeds to minimise this heritage from the past, if he takes the freedom to play himself rather than others, resulting in shaping his performance to achieve a maximum listener's experience, well in that case this guitarist joins my favourites. I have had the pleasure to attend a number of these successful concerts in Kulturhaus NIHZ.

What is your favourite guitar piece?

A composition that is very dear to me is the *Fantasie for the Lute* that originates from one of the most important printed collections of English lute music, the *The Varietie of Lute Lessons* by Robert Dowland (ca. 1591 - 1641) that was published in London in 1610. This collection now is in the British Museum, in London. In the library of the Academy for Social-Pedagogic Sciences Middeloo (currently Hogeschool Utrecht) where amongst others the branch for Creative Music Therapy is established, I found a facsimile publication of this collection of tablatures for the lute.

At the Conservatory in The Hague, Koos Tigges introduced me to the beautiful lute music by the Renaissance composer John Dowland (1563 - 1626), be it by means of the then common transcriptions for guitar. The masterpiece *Fantasie for the Lute*, however, had never been on my music stand in those days.

The *Fantasie* has the form of a *Fancy*, the English equivalent of the *Ricercare*, a free musical form from the Renaissance. The piece consists of eight sections, with cadenzas in between, in which the thematic material (sometimes very short motives) is elaborated in variations and imitations.

Originally the key of the piece was G major, I transposed the piece a minor third lower and tuned down the G string to F-sharp. This enables more extensive chords with a more easy fingering on the guitar. The voicing of the piece is at times hard to deduce from the tablature, and in this composition multiple options for interpretations appeared feasible. It was a curious experience that I could play the piece by heart after I finished the transcription. In 1974 I agreed to the publication of the transcription by the Dutch publisher Harmonia Publishers from the town of Hilversum. They did so under number Harmonia 2666.

I offered a copy of the publication to the library of Middeloo, where I had found the original material. In this way interested students of Creative Music Therapy got the possibility to study, analyse and compare my transcription and the original material by John Dowland and play it if they liked to.

Ten years later the Library Committee of the Twente Conservatory invited the teachers to make suggestions for new assets. After consultation with and advice from my colleague-guitar teacher Louis Ignatius Gall, I added *Fantasie for the Lute* to the guitar collection. In the following years in my role as member of the examination committee I have had the pleasure to hear the *Fantasie* at various final examination performances.

At what age did you perform for an audience for the first time? What was the occasion?

At the age of eight I played Christmas carols on the violin for the Christmas tree and my family. In my audience was my violin teacher, i.e. my mother. My first guitar performance was at a recital night with the students of Rob Bakker.

Initially you were a pop musician, you played with The Bumble Bees and The Shoes, bands that got a reputation in the Sixties of the last century. In the same time you finished your education at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. According to you, how was the relation between the worlds of pop music and classical music in those days?

A few pop musicians terminated their conservatory studies for various reasons, others chose to give priority to classical music.

In 1966 I was put on the spot by Conservatory director Kees van Baaren. 'Absence without leave' caused by a concert tour abroad. A pop group being involved, I did not venture to ask for permission in advance because I was afraid of a negative response. To my relief Kees van Baaren said that personally he understood my dilemma. Yet he had a regulatory obligation to suspend me for a fortnight. At the presentation of our diplomas Van Baaren's successor Jan van Vlijmen promised us, the three classical guitarists with practical experience in all kinds of other playing styles, a bright future!

When did you start composing? What was your composition style in the beginning?

The first explorations to find a way to 'arrange sounds in my manner' on the piano were inspired by the improvisations of my uncle Bert Janse Vreeling, while I was living with my grandparents in the town of Deventer. The repertoire of *The Condors* from 1962 showed the title *The Condor Boogie*. That was an early attempt to arrange my boogie-woogie experiments on the piano for this Indo-rock guitar band.

At the Conservatory during my days as a student, most of the teachers were composers. Consequently the aspect of composition was an obvious theme in their lessons.

Kees van Baaren dictated the complete classical Theory of Harmony off the cuff in a brilliant way and wrote all related musical quotations and theoretical examples on the blackboard, including own annotations and comments.

Jan van Dijk had the same approach for fugues and sonatas during the lessons in Harmonic Analysis, including a summary of all possible choices that the relevant composer could have made. After the lessons, he accompanied us to the pub, where he provided us ample additions to the compulsory teaching material by placing the compositions in even other perspectives.

Ruud Koumans enhanced the weekly obligatory exercises in motets and fugues of his two guitar students with ingenious additions and improvements. Koumans' enhancements to the polyphony of the Italian composer Palestrina (1525 - 1594) and his contemporaries were an important incentive for me to shape musical ideas myself.

At a certain time Ruud asked us which guitar compositions we were studying. Since three weeks I had been studying a *Sonata in C* by Mauro Giuliani. Ruud played this sonata by heart on the piano and compared Giuliani with Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. Such an enlightening moment for two flabbergasted prospective guitarists!

In my compositions you will always find residues of my first musical impressions: Jazz and pop music from the Fifties and the Sixties besides the classical music that has been part of my life from the beginning. Obviously these impressions are flooded, affected and worn out by elements of other music from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries with all their experiments and innovations. Nevertheless my musical roots still act as a kind of foundation that forms a gauge for my musical ideas and explorations.

You have worked as a music professor at the academy for Creative Therapy in the town of Amersfoort. What is the role of music in a therapy?

A Creative Music Therapist uses music for the treatment of psychological problems and as a major non-verbal instrument for the stimulation of the development of mentally and physically handicapped people during the therapy.

This requires knowledge of the musical elements, processes and structures, and additional skills to realize and communicate these by actually *playing* them. Additionally historical awareness is required, knowledge of musical development through the ages till the present day, including all kinds of musical styles and the functions and meaning of music for people in various (sub)cultures and layers of society.

Have you been active yourself in composing for therapeutic purposes? Which kind of music is suitable for Music Therapy?

The musical frames of reference for my son Nick are for instance the tunes of the Gameboy and computer games from his youth, or the sound tracks from his favourite movies. Together we listen to a Youtube version of the pieces that he wants to learn to play on the piano. Then I make a playable arrangement, integrating his own input on the way, and study it together with him in brief sections per session, using the method of playing (example) and repeat (imitation). Obviously I reckon with his momentary ability to concentrate and his level of tension. Nick indicates that by intent listening to his familiar music and playing it himself, the voices in his head that are always there are pushed to the background.

You worked as a guitar teacher with the specialization electric guitar at the Twente Conservatory, currently ArtEZ. In those days the electric guitar was a relatively new instrument for a Conservatory study. How was the relation with the 'classical' instruments?

Electric guitar was introduced as a support subject. The teachers Harry Mast (electronic organ), Frank van der Starre and Hans Gruttering (both percussion) taught their instrument as a support subject as well within the branch of Music Education. Amongst others within this branch the first 'popular music' ensembles emerged. Presently the branches for Classical Music, Jazz and Pop Music have an entirely similar curriculum.

Which famous jazz and pop musicians have studied with you?

Over the years I have had the pleasure to coach and support numerous jazz and pop musicians to a certain extent. In my opinion by definition these musicians cannot be 'educated' by a single teacher. My colleague for the classical guitar, Louis Ignatius Gall, shared this opinion. Thus I hereby venture the remark that I have been in the position to make a modest contribution to the reputation of Duo NIHZ, like I did for many jazz and pop musicians.

What is your opinion about competitions? Do they have a positive influence on the player or do they merely present an exciting adventure?

Considering my present role as a jury member, I think that both statements are applicable, depending on the attitude of the player.

What do you like best: Playing before an audience, or playing before a jury in a competition setting?

Playing before an audience, with or without a jury in competition setting.

How did you find out about the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

The CD *Gitarren Festival Nordhorn 2011* was the reason. Duo NIHZ had included their own interpretation of my composition *Leave Something Unexplained* on this sampler CD. Duo NIHZ visited us in our residence in the village of Hoogland, and gave us the CD as a present. Of course we got detailed reports of the proceedings of their very first Guitar Festival Nordhorn as well!

Which were your initial expectations of the festival?

As a consequence of the enthusiastic recounts of Bobby and Sanna, expectations of the 2012 festival edition were high! Additionally I was hoping for a resumption of an old tradition that had started at the Twente Guitar Festival with Fred Rootveld, my fellow contemporary and rocker of old with a classical guitar education.

This tradition involved treating ourselves to an exorbitantly BIG bowl of ice cream, against all medical advice of our mutual doctors. Unfortunately in Nordhorn Fred appeared even more occupied with all kinds of organisational chores than he used to be before at the Twente Guitar Festival. Never mind, at least our doctors are pleased now…

What are your experiences with the atmosphere on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

Up till now the festival had a relatively small-scale approach. Almost all festival events take place in Kulturhaus NIHZ, apart from incidental concerts on locations in the neighbourhood. Implementing lessons learned and with a consistent artistic and social policy that is based on personal views and choices, Sanna and Bobby succeed to give the festival a unique atmosphere and identity. In brief, my experiences with the atmosphere at the festival are greatly positive. I do not take my wife Ine with me for less! A pleasant bonus is the humour of Fred Rootveld, backstage and behind the bar, that stands comparison with the humor of for instance Ab Bronkhorst !

Did you have a good contact with the artists?

For me the Louis Ignatius Gall Festival that was held in Kulturhaus NIHZ in January 2014, became a pleasant and at times surprising reunion with ex-students, colleagues and friends.

Playing *Gamelan* by Louis Ignatius Gall, the Anido Guitar Duo added a beautiful contribution to the festival. As a result we got a lively discussion that included anecdotes, ideas and visions about the Dutch classical guitar scene. Soon we turned to music and composition in a much broader perspective.

Asking 'Do you happen to have a guitar duo for us amongst your compositions?', Annette Kruisbrink, The Netherland's best known and most prolific guitar composer, took me completely by surprise. Of course I got down to work!

Late in the evening in the Lounge at the Nordhorn Guitar Festival in April 2014, together with Arlette and Annette we had a moment to take a first look at the result, *Kruispunt (Crossroads)* for two guitars. There were some witnesses to this delicate moment, *The Small Faces* hanging on the wall and Sanna, her uncle Henk Olden (he was a student of Rob Bakker too!) and my wife Ine listening intently.

One year later at the festival in 2015, at the same spot the Anido Guitar Duo played a Lounge Concert with compositions by Annette Kruisbrink, amongst others *Eucalypta* and *Horizontal 8*. To our pleasant surprise we saw Louis Ignatius Gall amongst the listeners.

Without announcement the Anido Guitar Duo interrupted their program and played a bright performance of *Kruispunt*. I want to thank you for this performance again, Annette and Arlette!

In the meantime *Gamelan*, *Eucalypta, Horizontal 8* and *Kruispunt* have been recorded on the CD *Dual Quest* by the Anido Guitar Duo. This has been made possible for an important part by the atmosphere and the contacts at the festivals in Kulturhaus NIHZ.

What is your opinion about the organisation?

Over the years, the entire Rootveld family has proven that they possess excellent organisational skills and I would definitely extend this statement to the family of Sanna van Elst as well.

What is your opinion about the facilities in Kulturhaus NIHZ (food, drink, lodging?)

My wife Ine regularly assisted jack-of-all-trades Angie Rootveld with the catering. A perfect excuse for me to take a look in the kitchen in the literal and figurative sense. If Angie or Fred were running the bar, in between times I happened to get a quick peep there too. I am aware of my irresponsible and for my age dangerous behaviour, but well, what the heck!

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

As a special guest I am regularly invited to contribute to the music programme *Encanta* that is broadcast by the local radio station *De Golfbreker* in the town of Amersfoort. Using the sampler CDs of the festivals as a guideline in the programme, I have provided the Guitar Festival Nordhorn and its artists with some media exposure and recommendations.