Feast on Six Strings!

Five Years of Guitar Festival Nordhorn

By

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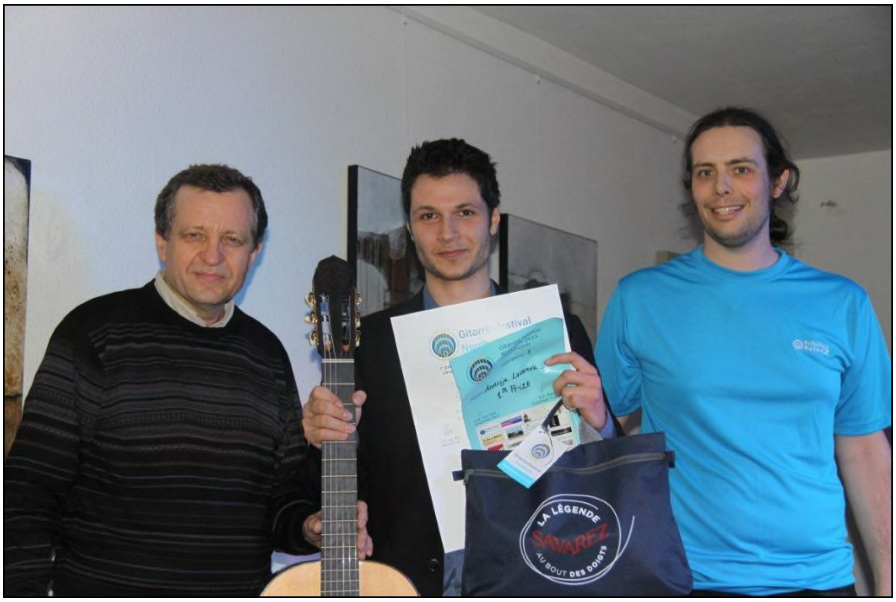
Interviews Competitors Professionals

Andrija Lazarevic

The Serbian guitarist Andrija Lazarevic has been a regular visitor of the region of Nordhorn, he participated in the competitions of the Nordhorn Guitar Festival in 2014 and 2015 and he gave it a go in the competition of the Twente Guitar Festival in 2015. As the winner of GFN 2015 he performed in Kulturhaus NIHZ this year.



Andrija Lazarevic (middle) winner of the GFN 2015

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

My name is Andrija Lazarevic, I am from Serbia, but I live in Netherlands, The Hague, and currently I'm studying guitar at the Royal Conservatory with Zoran Dukic.

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

My father plays guitar, and I grew up listening and watching guitar.

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

Before I came to Holland, I was studying in my home town Smederevo. At first with Jovica Milosevic, the best teacher ever. She accepted me when the music school didn't. I had two years of private lessons with her until I subscribed again with the music school. Later I studied with Ivan Markovic. After moving to Belgrade to the Music High School 'Josip Slavenski', I studied with Darko Karajic and afterwards Dejan Brkic.

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

Every teacher had its own influence, everyone in a different way and probably the most needed and necessary at that particular time. That covers aspects like the playing position with the guitar as well as the hand position, technique and musical expression. And in my opinion the most important aspect, expressing yourself and your own ideas and feelings, in brief a part of yourself, in playing a piece of music (not just listening to teacher ha ha).

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

Mozart: *Requiem*, and many other orchestral as well as piano works! If it counts as classical guitar piece: *Chaconne* by J.S.Bach.

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

I was playing at a concert at the end of the first year, I was about 10 years old, which was around 7 months after I started to play.

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?

They can be interpreted in a lot of ways, in this matter I'm positive. It's all a matter of perspective, and I don't think it necessarily is a distraction from the essence of music.

I mean, what is the essence of music? Everything that we play or listen to is music, in order to play any music or to express yourself you sometimes need different kinds of techniques or abilities or levels of perfection. In my opinion the essence of music is what you give, and what meaning you give to music on a deeper level.

I think that competitions are great way of faster learning, progressing and improving your playing in all facets, that going to competitions from time to time while studying will definitely make a difference and help to explore, see and experience lot of new things, people, stuff, knowledge and tricks in playing and that the competitions can be a great school, and shouldn't be taken too seriously and too personal.

After all somebody is sitting in front of you, who can play or can't play the same piece, judging your performance from his own experience and his own understanding of a certain piece and music, and still not involving a subjective opinion, right?

The last thing, lots of competitions offer concerts as a reward, which I think is one of the best prizes that a player can get. All together, I think whether you are playing at home, on a stage or on a competition, you should always be yourself and play how you feel it, how you see it, and how you believe in it! That's the essence.

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

Playing in front of audience, but when I have to, Jury..haha

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?"

It's always different, and it's always unpredictable, which I consider its beauty. The competition actually is in the player's head, and he needs to win the competition in his head first, and then the following will come.

Just before the 2015 competition finals you cut your finger. How did it influence your (excellent) performance later that day?

I must admit that this was one of my most difficult choices in life. While I was sitting down under the stage, waiting while time passed slowly, I had to decide if I should stay down and just don't go or go and play.

Because anything could happen. I had not studied anything the previous day and I had barely warmed up, and it was painful. Should I stay.... or should I go to stage and try my best and let whatever happens happen? If I failed, at least I knew I tried, if I did not fail and if all went well, I would realise myself what I am capable of.

I choose the second option, I just could *not* give up, and regardless of my finger, I really gave my best and pushed it out to the end. I still don't understand what I did then, how small or how big that actually was, and I believe that this gave a special energy to me and my playing.

The lesson that I learned: 'Never give up, and always keep moving forward!'

One of your prizes of the 2015 competition was a hand-built guitar by the Russian luthier Sergey Samoilov. How did it perform?

The guitar is excellent, and I was really happy to have it, my last guitar wasn't that good.

How did you find out about the Guitar Festival Nordhorn ?

My teacher told me.

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

The atmosphere is great, everyone is there, everyone is together, you are all the time in this classical guitar atmosphere and I think its really nice.

What were your impressions of the amateur competition?

I think its really nice that this kind of competition exists, that not only the students and professionals have a chance to play and learn and feel the same as others, and the whole excitement!

What is your opinion about the organisation?

The organisation was great from the start till the end, everything was in time as it was planned since the beginning, and the party after the concert was great too!

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

As I said its really nice cosy atmosphere that keep's us all gathered.

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

Yes, definitely!

Jakob Bangsø

The Danish guitarist Jakob Bangsø appeared on the Nordhorn Guitar Festival for the first time in 2012 and he won the competition in 2014. In the same year he just did not succeed to win the double strike in the competition at the Twente Guitar Festival (he became second in the finals).

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

My name is Jakob Bangsø, I live in Aarhus, Denmark, and I am currently finishing my Advanced Postgraduate Soloist Diploma in classical guitar from the Royal Academy of Music in Aarhus, Denmark. Besides playing concerts both solo and with ensembles I also teach guitar students part-time at various music schools in Denmark.

Jakob Bangsø, winner of GFN 2014

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

For me there was never a point during my musical training when I consciously made the decision to dedicate myself to the guitar. I guess it happened naturally the first day I came home from my first guitar lesson at the age of 9; I was immediately captured and from that day the guitar became a part of my life.

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

I had my first guitar lessons in primary school where I had a lesson once every week after school. My first teacher was Jörg Brüning. Later, when I was around 15, I continued getting guitar lessons at the local music school in Hjørring with Anette Wandel. I studied with her for 4 years until I was accepted at the Royal Academy in Aarhus at 19.

There I completed my studies with Frederik Munk Larsen and later also took my Master's at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz in Cologne with Roberto Aussel. After that, I won a place in the so-called 'soloist class' in Aarhus in order to continue Advanced Postgraduate Diploma studies with Frederik Munk Larsen.

During my studies I also had lessons with Marco Socías who is currently a guest professor of guitar in Aarhus, and during all my years there I had several lessons in early music performance practice with Danish lutenist Viggo Mangor.

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

I suppose all my teachers influenced me, it's very difficult and unfair to compare them. Each one gave me something different and helped me develop my own musical expression and personality.

However, having studied with Frederik Munk Larsen for more than 7 years (almost 8) definitely influenced me a lot, and he has been an important role model for me during my studies. After such a long time working together you develop a kind of friendship and close connection which I appreciate a lot in a teacher.

Also, Roberto Aussel was a big inspiration for me when I studied in Cologne and, besides being an incredible musician and teacher, he inspired me in so many aspects of playing the guitar - understanding musical phrasing, using of colours, interpretation, and the list goes on. I like to think that I matured a lot with him as my teacher in those years.

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

There are so many, it's difficult to name just a few. But I'm a big fan of the pianist András Schiff, and I heard some incredible performances by Carlo Marchione over the years.

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

Again, it's difficult to cut it down to just one but I always find myself returning to Bach's *Goldberg Variations* for example. I don't know if I have a favourite classical guitar piece, it's generally the piece that I'm playing at the moment.

Who is your favourite guitar composer?

Sérgio Assad immediately comes to my mind in terms of a good guitar composer. His pieces are both idiomatic for the instrument and at the same time fun to play. And of course, also Fernando Sor is worth mentioning here! However, even though he was not a guitarist himself, Joaquín Rodrigo is probably one of my favourite guitar composers.

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

I must have been like 11 years old or so. It was a student concert in primary school and I think I played a study by Carulli.

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

I recently finished my recording with Samsong Productions that I won in Nordhorn which will be my first official solo CD. I have recorded quite a lot of times over the years but only single pieces (for competitions, soundcloud, press material etc.), and I must say I always prefer playing in front of an audience rather than microphones. It varies a lot how I feel about listening to myself on a recording; but actually - and I think most people recognize this - for the most part I get positively surprised.

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?

For me competitions have definitely played a certain role in my own development and experience. They can especially be good because they give you something to aim for, and having to work towards a goal like playing in a competition has taught me a lot about efficiency in my practice routines. I don't think they necessarily distract the players from the essence of music.

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

Well, obviously it's nicer to play before an audience. However, I always try to not to approach playing in a competition any different from playing in a concert. Although one maybe shouldn't, I always find myself taking the same risks in a competition as I would do in a regular concert. In the end, to me, what matters in a competition is to present yourself as the musician you are; like a human being. Otherwise it's all just a waste of time, I think.

Annette Kruisbrink's prize composition, dedicated to Jakob Bangsø

One of your prizes of the 2014 competition was a hand-built guitar by the Italian luthier Roberto Pozzi. How did it perform?

Yes, I won a spruce top of his and I still have it. I like it very much!

How did you find out about the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

A friend of mine went to the festival in 2011 and I later heard about it at the music academy in Cologne where there was a flyer.

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

There has almost always been someone I already knew at guitar festivals/competitions which has made for a nice and friendly atmosphere in general. It's always nice to catch up with old friends and make new ones. In Nordhorn in particular the atmosphere is very relaxed and well-organized and I have many good memories from there still.

What is your opinion about the organisation?

Good organisation; very welcoming and helpful.

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

Already have!

Justyna Sobczak

Justyna Sobczak, winner of GFN 2013 with her guitar built by Friederieke Lindscheid

The Polish guitarist Justyna Sobczak won the Nordhorn Guitar Festival competition in 2013 after an exciting final round with an impressive performance. The prize included a number of concerts, so I saw her again in Kulturhaus NIHZ in 2014.

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

My name is Justyna Sobczak. I live in Poland. In 2014 I received with honors master degree at the Academy of Music in Katowice. Since 2014, along with the guitarist Błażej Sudnikowicz, I established the guitar ensemble Sedina Duo, which is exciting and at this moment is my main artistic activity.

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

It is hard to say. I was 8 years old, and one day my father came to school and asked the teacher if he can take his daughter for the entrance exams to the School of Music. We went, I passed the exams, and the examiner asked me about the instrument. I looked at the big poster with all the instruments and I decided that the guitar is the most beautiful one.

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

I began my musical education at the Szczecin State School of Music with Beata Vykysala and Piotr Pałac. I completed the bachelor degree at the Academy of Music in Poznań with prof. Piotr Zaleski and dr Łukasz Kuropaczewski. In 2014 I received master degree at the Academy of Music in Katowice, where I was studying with prof. Alina Gruszka.

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

It is not possible for me to mention one particular person. I had a great luck to work with great professors at every level. I can say that all my teachers had a great influence on me. I had the teachers who have shown me the guitar world, who have helped me to discover the musicality inside me, and of course who have helped me how to express this musicality.

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

I like to listen to many different instrumentalists, singers, like Grigory Sokolov, Alfred Brendel, Jacqueline du Pré, Cecilia Bartoli, Maria Callas. Of course there are also guitarists among them, such as Marcin Dylla, Duo Melis, Pavel Steidl, Carles Trepat, Carlo Marchione.

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

There are many pieces that I can listen many times but there are two pieces that are absolutely amazing and influenced me most, Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto played by Jacqueline du Pré, and Witold Lutosławski's Cello Concerto played by Peter Wispelwey. There are many fantastic guitar pieces that I have always wanted to play. Every week I listen to some new incredible piece.

Who is your favourite guitar composer?

You mean guitar composers that write only for guitar, or that wrote for example only one piece for guitar, like Peteris Vasks? There are many great composers who had short story with guitar but influenced it greatly. I like music composed by Maurice Ohana, Reginald Smith Brindle, Hans Haug, Antonio José, Benjamin Britten. They did not write many pieces for guitar but these pieces are the real treasures for guitar players.

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

Before Nordhorn, I have never made recordings. CD recording in Nordhorn was a new experience for me, and it was not so easy as I thought. Listening to yourself is a great lesson, you hear much more than during playing. But listening to the final result was much more relaxing.

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?

It depends on the players. Whether they treat the competitions as the essence of life or as another great occasion to perform public.

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

I do not see the difference, the jury is also an audience, they are listening to music like an audience. I try to play for them exactly like for the audience, treating the competition as if it was a concert.

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 think that we are lucky to be guitarists, because our world is very friendly. Of course, you can feel the rivalry, but that is normal during every kind of competition. But during guitar competitions you can feel also a lot of support and kindness from other guitarists.

One of your prizes of the 2013 competition was a hand-built guitar by the German luthier Friederieke Lindscheid. How did it perform?

The guitar is fantastic, it has very interesting, deep, warm sound. It has been changing quickly. It is also great guitar for the big halls because of its powerful sound.

How did you find out about the Guitar Festival Nordhorn ?

From my friend Błażej Sudnikowicz who has participated in the competition before.

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

Like I said before we are lucky to play the guitar. The atmoshere was great, everybody was very supportive and kind.

Annette Kruisbrink's prize composition, dedicated to Justyna Sobczak

What is your opinion about the organisation?

Everything was very well organised. It is very important for the competitiors not to wait for his/her performance, in order to stay calm. During the Nordhorn competition you're informed about the exact time of your performance and what's more, everything is on time.

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

There are many festival where the participants stay in different places and sometimes they even do not have the occasion to talk to each other. Thanks to Kulturhaus NIHZ the competitors have the opportunity to spend time together.

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

Absolutely yes.

Raphael Silva

Raphael Silva, competitor at GFN 2013 and 2014

Raphael Silva has been a competitor at the Cat. 1 competitions at the Nordhorn Guitar Festival in 2013 and 2014 and if I remember well I have seen him playing along and improvising during one of the late-night Lounge sessions with guitars, cajon and a number of nice songs, having a good time!

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

My name is Raphael Joshua Silva, I live in Cologne, Germany, I am a musician and guitar teacher.

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

Guitar has been a part of my life since I was a kid. I took classical lessons from an early age, and though I can't say I was dedicated, I stuck with it as a hobby, making it to an intermediate level by the time I finished high school. In high school I also enjoyed getting together with friends and having psychedelic jams :) But at that time my main interest was sports.

When I was 19, my interests turned from baseball more toward music, taking classes in college, and realizing music was something fascinating to work on for a lifetime. Also, an act of some racism by the father of my high school girlfriend resulted in my playing guitar much more than before, the summer before freshman year of college.

So then starting in college I became obsessed with guitar, mostly classical guitar. Also, my whole life I have loved songs, and my last year of college I started writing a couple of my own, something I have kept up the last years. Currently, I still love classical guitar, but most of my concerts are playing original songs and singing.

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

Growing up I studied with John McClellan at the St. Louis Symphony Community Music School in St. Louis. At Pomona College I studied with Jack Sanders (bachelors). At the Koblenz Guitar Academy: Hubert Käppel (artist diploma). At Musikhochschule Köln: Ansgar Krause (masters). Currently: private lessons with Thomas Offerman.

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

All of my teachers have influenced me, I cannot say who did the most. Growing up, John was fun-loving, taught me core technique, and instilled a love of the guitar. Jack is a great mentor and friend, and gave me faith in myself, and the wonder that is classical guitar repertoire. Hubert taught me how to make a good sound, stabilized my technique, and kicked my ass for two years! Ansgar was also a hard critic, taught me about arrangements, harmony, playing legato, and was full of musical ideas. Thomas I have not known so long, but he is a dynamic personality, with fascinating ideas about technique.

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

My favourite concert musicians are mostly guitarists, both classical and folk/country. Favourite concerts I've seen semi-recently: Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Vashti Bunyan, Hayes Carll, Kris Kristofferson, Scott Biram, Rodney Crowell, Ray Wylie Hubbard. Some favorite classical musicians I've seen in concert- Hubert Käppel, Pavel Steidl, Roberto Aussel, Aniello, Lorenso Micheli, Goran Krivokapic, Chia-Wei Lin, David Dyakov. Non-classical- Paco de Lucia!!! Joscho Stephan. Richard Smith. Of non-guitarists- Jordi Savall, Martha Argerich, Isabella Faust, to name a few.

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

Probably something by Bach, for both. Otherwise, maybe Mozart's *Requiem* (for the non-guitar category).

Who is your favourite guitar composer?

If you don't count Bach (or Scarlatti or Dowland), probably Rodrigo, or Villa-Lobos. I also like Turina and Albéniz, and Tedesco has some great pieces.

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

Student recitals, when I was a kid- maybe 7 or 8?

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

I did a CD for my masters project in Cologne, of all Baroque music. It was a laborious process, but I was glad to go through it. Currently I am playing more folk music, and recently got a recording interface and Logic. Just starting to learn to use it the last weeks, it seems exciting, but complicated, and maybe obsession inducing.

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 they are a good experience when you are a student in your early-mid 20s, to make you practice more and refine your playing. Overall, I think there is a time to move away from them- they do distract from the essence of music. Play Concerts!

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

Playing for an audience.

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 don't like the guitar competition stress, but it made me practice a lot, and showed me how my pieces sounded under pressure. That was a good experience. Nowadays, I think concerts do the same, and are more fun. I never felt like I had a chance to win a competition, so it didn't seem remotely like war. Just a challenge against myself. A couple of times I passed to the second round, and that was a nice feeling.

How did you find out about the Guitar Festival Nordhorn?

Through friends, I think. For a couple years I had gone to Gevelsberg around that time, but in 2013 I decided to try something else.

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

Nordhorn has the most fun and friendly atmosphere of the guitar festivals I have visited in Europe. Gevelsberg is also nice. And once I went to Sierra Nevada in California, which I really enjoyed (maybe as much as Nordhorn). The bigger festivals tend to be less personal, but you also can hear many fantastic concerts, and meet great people, and watch the masters teach.

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

The funniest ones are too X-rated for this interview!

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

David Trevors. Mainey. Also David Dyakov and his addiction to nasal spray. He used to ask everyone *You have something for nose??*

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

Probably Aniello Desiderio in 2008 in Koblenz. If you mean at Nordhorn, Zoran Dukic.

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

At Nordhorn? Jakob Bangsø? Others? Maybe Rafael Aguirre in Koblenz, or Cecilio Perera in Boston.

What were your impressions of the amateur competition?

Didn't see it :/

What is your opinion about the organisation?

Bobby and Sanna ROCK!

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

The house is lovely, but I always found it a bit cold and hard to get my fingers loose for a competition. Food and drink are good :)

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

YES!

Thu Le

The Vietnamese guitarist Thu Le visited the Nordhorn Guitar Festival in 2013 and 2015, and in this year she was a finalist. Additionally she was a participant of the competition at the Twente Guitar Festival in 2013 and she reached the finals there. During the *après concert* sessions in the Lounge, I got a surprise, she was very skilled in pop and jazz improvisations as well, a real *Guitar-tiger of the Lounge*!

Thu Le (left) in her element at GFN 2013, improvising in the lounge

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

My name is Thu Le, from Hanoi - Vietnam, currently living in Riyadh-Saudi Arabia. I am a guitar teacher at my own music club Guitar Sahara.

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

My father, Le Hanh, who was a painter but also a guitarist.

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

I started to learn guitar when i was 4 with my father Le Hanh. 2 years later, I studied with 2 more teachers: Vu Bao Lam and Nguyen Hai Thoai. At 7 years old, I passed Hanoi National Conservatory of Music, studied 15 years there and graduated in 2011.

Later, I took master classes with international teachers: Manuel Barrueco, Pavel Steidl, Hubert Käppel, Denis Azabagic, Marcin Dylla, Thomas Offerman, Johannes Mono, Liviu Georgescu, Judicael Perroy, Gabriel Bianco....

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

The teacher that influenced me the most was my first teacher - my father. I believe its very important how you start. From him I benefited the clear tone, different colours in dynamics, different musical ideas, think of a music piece like a painting and paint your own picture but not to copy others.

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

My favourite concert guitarists are : Pavel Steidle, Marcin Dylla, Gabriel Bianco...

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

I have many favourite pieces.

Who is your favourite guitar composer?

Tárrega, Barrios, Tedesco, Sergio Assad..

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

When I was 5 years old. It was in a theatre in Hanoi centre, together with my father and some other famous guitarists, his colleagues.

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

Yes, I made many recording and CDs. Sometimes I am not happy with the result, because I can hear my mistakes and missing musical ideas. Also, in general, recording and then listening to yourself again is a very effective way to study, you will realize things that you can not hear during normal practice. Recording requires you to pay attention to every note, it requires the artist to play at a level of perfection.

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 competition like a coin with 2 sides, good and bad. The good thing is, it gives you good pressure to practice more and improve yourself, helps you gaining experience and gives you opportunity to be recognized.

On the other hand, I think music should not be competed. Also, it depends very much on the taste of the Jury that you might be lucky or not, and when it comes to a bad result, this will bring you down very much and make you lose confidence.

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

I prefer to play before audiences, but playing before a jury gives me good challenge :)

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?"

Competition stress is a good stress to have, otherwise I wouldnt do it the 2nd time :)

Jury, most of them are friendly. I enjoy talking to them and listen to their opinion about my playing, I appreciate their comments.

Also I like to interact with other competitors and listen to their playing. Its nice sometimes to meet again people that you met in competitions before. It makes you feel like 'you are not alone fighting a new battle' :)

During the open stages, I noticed that you are a very skilled pop and jazz guitar player. How did you get in touch with this genre? Do you work in this genre, like in a band, or as a studio musician?

I used to play in a band for over 10 years, we played lots of Pop, Jazz, Latin and New Flamenco. I like all genres of music as long as its good quality, even though Classical is still my first love and biggest love.

While you were playing the finals in 2015, I noticed that you provided a feast for both the ears and the eyes, your appearance was a perfect match with your performance on the guitar. 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?

I select outfit by myself. I don't have a assistance in designing my clothes, but I love fashion and learn a lot about fashion from magazines, Internet... I like to look good but don't over-dressed. Especially, i think its very important to look good on stage, it shows that you respect the audiences and respect yourself.

Its difficult to match clothes with my music because my repertoire in concert is variety. I normally choose something fits all style and still elegant. The combination of Black and Red is my favourite.

How did you find out about the Guitar Festival Nordhorn ?

Through Samuel Klemke, a good friend of mine since many years.

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

In Guitar Festival Nordhorn, everybody is very friendly, helpful and always with a smile on their face. It seems easier to talk to each other, even with people I meet first time. Especially, the party every night is so much fun and bring people closer together, makes me feel more relax about competition.

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

In Nordhorn festival, I got to hear Zoran Dukic and Hubert Käppel for the first time, and those two concerts really impressed me.

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

The winner of last year (2015) (sorry I forgot his name).

What were your impressions of the amateur competition?

I didn't get the chance to listen to them.

What is your opinion about the organisation?

Professional, friendly and helpful.

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

Good place to stay, very good home-style food with very good price. It is convenient to stay and eat at the festival.

Would you recommend the festival to your friends and relatives?

I did, i do and I will :)