Feast on Six Strings!

Five Years of Guitar Festival Nordhorn

By

Mark de Gooijer,

Webmaster of the DOS Amigos Homepage

Luthiers

George Ziata

Duo NIHZ and George Ziata

The Australian luthier George Ziata has been main sponsor of the Guitar Festival Nordhorn until he changes business from classical acoustic guitars to electrical guitars. He significantly contributed to the professional competition prize packages in 2011 and 2012 with a top class hand-built guitar in a self-designed rugged case. A perfect prize for a guitarist that wants to extend his or her skills.

George Ziata is Australian of Greek origin. He uses modern materials, like carbon fibre technology in the bracing and the neck. As a special feature he builds with curved backs, just like a violin, to achieve a more powerful projection.

How George Ziata got involved with GFN is a long story that goes back to the time that Bobby Rootveld was in the board of the Twente Guitar Festival. In those days he helped a Hungarian guy, Gergö, currently his best friend, while he was studying on the Twente Conservatory in Enschede, amongst others with accommodation in his own place for six months (which as a student flat was no spacious home).

Gergö's stepfather Andras appreciated this very much and wanted to do something in return. He knew George Ziata and promised to arrange a guitar built by Ziata for free, as a prize for the competition of the Twente Guitar Festival that would do brilliantly besides the prize money.

A generous offer, one would say, but the remainder of the festival board thought otherwise and refused to accept a guitar as a clear addition to the prize money. 'Never mind,' Andras said, 'if you ever want to start a festival on your own after you have moved to Germany, I will deliver the prize guitar for you!' In this way the Ziata came to the first Guitar Festival Nordhorn in 2011.

Now we have a remarkable connection: Many years ago while I was in search of a new guitar to replace my Bernabe M10, I got a message that the distributor of Ziatas Guitars paid a visit to Bobby Rootveld, then one of the organisers of the Twente Guitar Festival in Enschede, offering me the opportunity to try his guitars if I wished to. Gergö's stepfather Andras was planning to start a kind of European sales office for Ziatas and he happened to be in Enschede with a number of guitars for demonstration.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained, so I decided to make an appointment. We started in style with home made Hungarian Goulash Soup and a number of stories about the differences of life in Hungary and Australia, because the Ziatas representative was a Hungarian guitarist. His son was a student at the Enschede conservatory and he had come here to visit him.

After the dinner, the guitars came out of the cases. Well, actually I only tried the top model. After an interesting story about the carbon fibre technology for bracing and neck, I got the opportunity to play this guitar. For sure I had taken my Ergoplay and music book with me, so the show could start. I was glad that I was sufficiently relaxed to avoid the usual stage fright when playing for strange people.

I was impressed. The Ziata has a well balanced and powerful sound in the complete spectrum, I did not hear offensively emphasized tones: no booming bass or squealing descants. With this guitar the playability was quite right, I played it like my Contreras, while it was strung with hard tension strings indeed! I was reasonably comfortable with its dynamic response.

I tried music from various style periods, from Renaissance to Romantic with some excursions to arrangements of popular music. I found it sound well. Unfortunately I could not try the contemporary music for which this class of guitars is designed. Fortunately there were sufficient guitarists around to demonstrate the Ziata on this point and I had the opportunity to listen to the guitar from a distance.

Unfortunately my budget had some limitations at that time even though the price of the top model provided and excellent quality to price ratio. Anyway, I knew about its quality and I guess that the prize winners of the Guitar Festival Nordhorn must have noticed too!

Additionally the Ziata adds to the sound of the Anido Guitar Duo, as I described before!

From the Interview with the Anido Guitar Duo:

Arlette instantly fell in love with the spruce top model and hastily took off in search of Annette to tell her that she finally found the guitar that matched her!

Friederieke Lindscheid

Friederieke Lindscheid with a number of nice builds

The German luthier Friederieke Lindscheid contributed to the professional competition prize at the Nordhorn Guitar Festival 2013.

She started to play guitar in her childhood, following guitar lessons in the workshop of the violin maker Raphael Zrock. In this way she became interested in the world of instrument building and started to assist Zrock with the small jobs and repair activities. The smell of fresh wood end finish and the contact with the material with handiwork added another passion to her musicianship, actually building guitars.

Choosing her direction after secondary education brought her in two minds between Literature/History and Instrument building. Finally she choose the latter and entered the Mittenwalder Instrumentenbauschule in the mountains of Bavaria. There she completed the training in the theoretical and practical aspects of instrument building. Already during her training she developed into guitar building. After her graduation she established a workshop in Berlin.

She landed on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn because Carlé Costa, one of Bobby's acquaintances, played her guitars and recommended GFN as an opportunity to promote her guitars.

She builds well sounding and good looking guitars with both cedar and spruce top, well-constructed, with a slick design and surprisingly light-weight. The rosettes she makes have a very personal touch, simple yet wayward in the small details.

I have tried her guitars myself, and I think the prize winner of 2013 must be very satisfied!

From the Interview with the Justyna Sobczak:

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.

Roberto Pozzi

Roberto Pozzi in his workshop in Italy

The Italian luthier Roberto Pozzi contributed to the professional competition prize at the Nordhorn Guitar Festival 2014.

He completed his training for luthier at the Scuola di Liuteria di Milano, originally a school for instrument restauration, and established a workshop in Mariano Comense, a village north of Milan. He builds both concert and study guitars.

He landed on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn because Lorenzo Micheli, one Pozzi's friends and an artist on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn recommended GFN as an opportunity to promote his guitars.

Unfortunately I did not grant myself some time to give his guitars a try. Other players, however, did and you could hear that he builds fine instruments.

From the Interview with the Jakob Bangsø:

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

Sergey Samoilov

Sergey Samoilov is a Russian luthier from the border region between Russia and Georgia at the western end of the Caucasian mountains. A perfect area, as he told me, for high quality spruce.

He landed on the Guitar Festival Nordhorn because Alexei Belousov (Duo SoloNeo) and Sabrina Vlaskalic recommended his guitars. Sabrina made the contact and Samoilov was delighted to come.

Sergey Samoilov, enjoying the atmosphere and weather in Nordhorn

I had a talk with him (which showed that English is not the main language for the world) about his journey from Russia (particularly inside Russia that is quite an enterprise) and his craft (which made clear to me that he is a craftsman that represents a long tradition of high quality instruments).

Unfortunately I did not grant myself some time to give his guitars a try. By the sound of it, I think others did indeed!

From the Interview with the Andrija Lazarevic:

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

***