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Leading Worship with the Guitar

Calvin Symposium on Worship

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Calvin Symposium on Worship 2011
Workshop C10: Leading Worship with the Guitar
Andrew Donaldson and Robert Keeley

Terms/Definitions

The art of accompanying congregational song with a classical or fingerstyle guitar has roots in classical, folk, and pop styles of guitar. This list of players who still inspire me is just a beginning!

“Classical” guitar includes many kinds of music: baroque (Bach and Handel), romantic (Schubert), contemporary classical music (Benjamin Britten, Leo Brouwer), and so on. Its main characteristic is that melody, harmony, and other rhythmic textures are all played at the same time on one instrument.

Where to start

Sharon Isbin

<http://www.sharonisbin.com/>

John Williams

<http://www.johnwilliamsguitar.com/>

Manuel Barrueco

<http://www.barrueco.com/>

Christopher Parkening

<http://www.parkening.com/index.html>

- has recorded and published a collection of hymn arrangements on guitar. Mel Bay originally published them, and still offers hymn collections.

Manuel Barrueco

<http://www.barrueco.com/>

“Fingerstyle” guitar, or “finger-picking” also refers to many styles of guitar: folk, pop, jazz,, ragtime, blues, all played with the thumb and fingers of the right hand, with or without finger- and thumb-picks.

Where to start

Phil Keaggy

<http://www.philkeaggy.com/>

Bruce Cockburn

<http://brucecockburn.com/>

Ry Cooder

- many fan sites. Best known for the album “Buena Vista Social Club”. His album “Jazz” has melodic guitar with various early jazz, gospel and New Orleans music.

Tommy Emmanuel

<http://www.tommyemmanuel.com/>

Lenny Breau (fingerstyle jazz genius)

Steve Bell

<http://stevebell.com/>

Resources (Basic Studies)

Where to start

Most of these are available online. Here’s what to look for.

Studies by Matteo Carcassi, and Ferdinando Carulli give the basics in playing melody and harmony together.

Twenty Studies by Fernando Sor, edited and fingered by Andres Segovia. Also available tabbed online.

Preludes and Studies by Heitor Villa Lobos give the basics in more contemporary sounds on the classical guitar, rooted in Brazilian folk music.

Societies – the website of the Guitar Foundation of America offers links to local “guitar societies” across North America and Europe. It also lists guitar teachers.

<http://www.guitarfoundation.org/drupal/guitar-societies>