

Program Profile

Guitar Studies at Austin Peay State University

By Stanley Yates, Director of Guitar Studies

Austin Peay State University, located in Clarksville (“Take the Last Train to...”) on the Tennessee-Kentucky border forty-five miles north of Nashville, is Tennessee’s designated Center for the Creative Arts. As a relatively small school of around 7500 students, APSU generally offers attractive class sizes, a high degree of student-faculty interaction, and a tightly-knit student community. The guitar program at APSU accommodates twenty guitar majors, who work with myself and adjunct guitar faculty member Roger Hudson in pursuing undergraduate and graduate courses of study in guitar performance, music education with guitar specialization, and composition with guitar specialization. Our curriculum is classical-based, though students may elect (and are encouraged) to pursue a commercial music component within their overall course of study.

I joined the APSU faculty in 1994, after completing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in guitar performance at the University of North Texas. (Moving from the dry, dusty environs of Texas to the green, rolling hills of Tennessee felt almost like a return to my native England!) Looking back, what seemed at the time an obvious and easy transition was actually quite fortuitous; in reality the likelihood of a graduating guitarist landing a full-time teaching position, and the security it provides, is today fairly remote (though not impossible—as several APSU graduates have discovered). With this reality in mind, we have structured the guitar curriculum at APSU to provide our students with the real-world tools they need to function as professional musicians.

It has been a pleasure to see so many of our graduates go out into the world and “create” a musical career. I use the word “create” deliberately, since the reality of professional musical life for the vast majority of graduating guitarists is one of creating a freelance career. Sounds scary? It should! But think about it for a moment. This is the time-honored method used by the musicians of the past, and it is the method used by countless professional musicians to make a living today. If those guys can do it, so can you. It’s simply a matter of developing the tools you need to find the work—and to

do a good job once you get the work.

Our guitar curriculum therefore focuses on developing skills in three principal areas: 1) playing technique and musicianship; 2) pedagogical (teaching) skills; 3) marketing/business skills. These are addressed through specialized courses in Guitar Pedagogy, Guitar Literature, and Directed Studies; in addition to private lessons, guitar ensemble (four meetings per week), performance class/masterclass, and required recitals and performances on and off campus.

We consider the first priority for an incoming student to be the development of sight-reading skills—an indispensable aspect of musicianship so often lacking in guitarists (who have generally not spent the previous four years in marching band!). Sight-reading is one element of the Freshmen guitar ensemble class, which includes two “reading meetings” per week, in addition to



regular performance rehearsals.

Chamber music/ensemble skills are also given high priority, since guitar students traditionally have spent their pre-college years playing solo guitar only. In the professional musical world, opportunities for performing with other musicians are abundant; most professional musicians, however, are not usually interested in working with a guitarist who does not read well or who does not know how to interact, musically and professionally, in a chamber music or ensemble situation. In addition to guitar ensemble, all upper-division guitar performance majors (years 3 and 4) are required to perform with an instrumentalist (non-guitar) or singer each semester. Students who elect for the commercial music component also work with the Jazz Combo and Jazz Collegians (big band) during their upper-division years.

Private instruction for the lower division (years one and two) focuses on development of playing technique, fingerboard knowledge and practice methods (an art-form in itself!). We achieve this, as much as possible, through appropriate musical repertoire rather than heavy technical exercises. We feel that musical performance should always be the goal and that, in most cases, a well-chosen etude or repertoire piece is of greater overall value than abstract technical exercises (there are certain exceptions to this, of course). “Appropriate musical repertoire” is repertoire that not only addresses specific technical and musical areas effectively, but is also repertoire that can be assimilated quickly. During the lower-division years, the average student can expect to study and assimilate many intermediate-level pieces, rather than “hack away” at only a few advanced works; in the upper-division years, students develop performance repertoire appropriate for a variety of performance settings (including formal recital material and “gig” material).

Fretboard harmony is also addressed through the private guitar lesson, and all students (not only those who pursue the commercial music option) are expected to be able to “comp” (fingerstyle and pick-style) from a lead sheet as well as identify the harmonic features of the solo repertoire they study.

The ultimate goal of any musical endeavor is performance—music cannot exist without it. In addition to two formal recitals at the end of the lower and upper divisions of study, all guitar majors perform regularly in the weekly guitar performance classes/masterclasses, in music department student recitals, and in a variety of ensemble and chamber performances on and off campus. Additionally, performance majors “book” a short

series of off-campus performances leading up to their senior recital and/or graduate recital. The day after graduation is no time for a young professional guitarist to start thinking about developing performance chops and booking skills!

There are very few professional musicians who do not teach, whether it be a full-time or part-time position at a university, community college or high-school; private studio teaching; teaching children; teaching in a church or other community program; teaching in a music store; or any combination of the above. We therefore regard our guitar pedagogy courses as one of the most important components of our curriculum. In these courses, students not only learn what and how to teach, but also learn the skills needed to find and develop institutional teaching opportunities, attract students, and run

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a freelance teaching studio. It has been a particular pleasure to see so many of our alumni build successful careers around their teaching activities. Recent graduates of the APSU guitar program hold full-time teaching positions at Western University, KY; The Renaissance Center, Dickson, TN; and the Sarasota School of the Arts, FL; run full-time “guitar academies” in Bowling Green, KY and Knoxville, TN; and hold adjunct teaching positions at Trevecca Nazarene University, TN; Cumberland Community College, TN; Tennessee Technical College; Owensboro Community College, KY; Kentucky Wesleyan College; Henderson Community College, KY; and Brescia University, KY.

Yet another indispensable professional skill for the guitarist is the ability to arrange music in a variety of styles and settings. Musicians are often called upon to arrange music originally written for other instruments in order to satisfy a particular performance or pedagogical situation. Arranging can also be a genuinely creative expression that contributes to the artistry and persona of a performer. Upper-division guitar majors at APSU are required to make arrangements in classical-solo, accom-

paniment, ensemble, and chord-melody styles. These skills are addressed through pedagogy class, private lessons and guitar ensemble. Graduate students may elect to take a Directed Study dealing specifically with issues relating to arranging and transcribing music for guitar.

We live in a technological age which offers musicians powerful tools to assist them in their work and increased opportunities to get that work. Professional musicians today expect to receive their playing parts in printed form, not in the old hand-written “chicken-scratch”; MIDI files are great way of producing rehearsal “tapes” for practice at home; and the Internet provides an unparalleled method of disseminating information. All music students at APSU take a music technology course which trains them in the use of notation software (Finale®), MIDI rehearsal software, and HTML (web page design).

Interaction with professional musicians is an important part of the training of the soon-to-be professional musician. Through the activities of APSU’s Center for Creative Arts, we are able to bring to campus a wide range of musicians for performances, masterclasses and residencies. Through this program, the APSU guitar program has benefited from visits by such leading guitarists as Manuel Barrueco, John Scofield, David Leisner, the Falla Guitar Trio, from Germany the Albeniz Duo, Czech guitarist Vladislav Blaha, and British composer John Duarte, among many others.

Perhaps the most important aspect of a guitar program, after the students themselves, is its teachers. We have recently been very fortunate in adding to our faculty guitarist-composer Roger Hudson. In addition to his considerable experience as a teacher, Roger is a very versatile guitarist and composer much sought-after in

the Nashville area for studio work and live performance. He currently writes a regular pedagogical column for *Fingerstyle* magazine.

As for myself, in addition to running the APSU guitar program (teaching, scheduling, arranging, recruiting, developing curricula, attending committee meetings, etc.), I continue to maintain my performing and publishing activities and was recently honored to receive the university award for scholarly and creative achievement (mark one up for the guitar program!). Although my performances and masterclasses take me throughout the country and overseas (no student has ever gone without a make-up lesson!), I give many, many performances on campus, and a masterclass every week. When I’m working on a new program, my students get to experience the entire process: the preliminary read-throughs, the re-fingerings, the difficult bits, the new tempos and, on occasion, even an (unofficial) world premiere! This semester I’ll be performing on campus Paganini with violin, Joaquin Rodrigo’s Concerto de Aranjuez with the symphony orchestra, Boccherini with string quartet, an arrangement of Mike Oldfield’s Tubular Bells with the percussion ensemble and...well, who knows what else!

The professional guitarist leads a full life; at APSU, we like the same to be true of our students.

If you would like to learn more about guitar studies at APSU, including information relating to scholarships and graduate assistantships, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at YatesS@apsu.edu or by phone at (931) 221-7351. You may also look us up on the web at:

www.apsu.edu/mus-page

www.StanleyYates.com

www.apsu.edu/YatesS

www.RogerHudson.com

Stanley Yates

Stanley Yates is an internationally respected performer, teacher and scholar, an elected advisory board member of the Guitar Foundation of America and an editorial board member of the European Guitar Teacher’s Association.

A past prize-winner in such prestigious performance competitions as the Guitar Foundation of America and the Myra Hess (London), he has performed throughout the United States and Europe and has recorded for Heartdance Music, Aeolian Recordings and Reference Recordings. He has been dedicatee and/or first performer of numerous new works for guitar, and has been first modern performer of numerous rediscovered works (including four guitar concertos).

An in-demand clinician, he has presented masterclasses and lectures at numerous guitar festivals and at such institutions as the Royal Academy of Music (London), the Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto) and the Royal Northern College of Music (Manchester).

He has been the subject of articles, interviews and reviews in almost all of the international classical guitar journals; his own articles dealing with various guitar-related topics have been published in six languages. In 1998 Mel Bay Publications launched the Stanley Yates Series—an ongoing series of performance and pedagogic editions.

British-born, Stanley received Performer’s Diplomas from Trinity College (London) and Sandown College of Performing Arts (Liverpool); and graduate degrees from the University of Liverpool and the University of North Texas (where he received the Morgan Dissertation Award for Excellence in Music Performance).

Teacher Profile

Austin Peay State University

By Roger Hudson, Adjunct Instructor of Guitar

People are interesting to me: how they think, what they know, what their perceptions are, what they don't know, what they expect. My experiences with teaching guitar have confirmed and reinforced my interest in people. Here are some of my thoughts regarding the dynamics of teaching guitar and relating to new students.

When I first meet a new student, whether they are a beginning or advanced player, I like to learn a little bit about them. I usually talk with them about why they want to learn the guitar, what kinds of music they like, what they expect to learn and what experiences they have already had (if any) with a teacher. If the student is not a complete beginner, I will then ask him/her to play something for me—anything. Although I primarily teach classical guitar, I can learn a lot about a student by their

playing—whatever style or technique they presently employ. As they play, I particularly listen to their sense of timing. Someone once said that “music is mostly about timing”; admittedly a reference to timeliness as well as keeping time. The reason that I focus so much on timing is that, in my experience, I have found timing to be a

Much like hiking a rugged trail, music has beautiful scenery but requires hard work.

skill that virtually cannot be “taught.” Refinement of a student's natural clock, however, can certainly be made. Rhythmic training definitely should be on the student's agenda. However, and I have heard them, some people truly are “time deaf.” Most of these students frankly don't last too long because their debilitating problem becomes readily apparent to them as well. I usually don't have to tell them that they are wasting their time with the guitar. In fact, in my 25 years of teaching guitar, I can count on one hand how many students that I have encouraged to quit.

Fortunately, most students don't have a timing problem that is so severe that they will never enjoy playing the guitar. The next observations I make about a student concern how their hands work. Do the fingers seem to float easily over the fingerboard? Do the right and left hands seem to be somewhat synchronized? Are there some good habits already in place? What bad habits have been acquired? Addressing these questions allows me to focus on certain areas while not wasting energy on merely muddling through legalistic and unnecessary pedagogical dogma. Conversely, the student will often need to have a thorough understanding of do's and don'ts. Having a perceptive and well-informed teacher is crucial in diagnosing problems in technique just as a good physician focuses his/her attention on problem areas immediately.



The final consideration, and possibly the most important one, concerns what I would call the musical soul of a student. Does the student seem to be able to communicate something about themselves as they play? Is there anything other than sounds from a guitar being communicated? Does this communication seem to come naturally? Does the student seem to be enjoying himself/herself? To some teachers this may sound like fluff. I believe that any musician worth listening to should be communicating something other than orderly sounds. The musical soul of a student is something that I endeavor never to “beat out of” a student. I find that the technical ability of a student can be refined without killing a student’s musical personality. After all, it is ultimately the individual’s musical personality that will make them distinctive artists and attractive performers.

After hearing a new student play, I like to focus on what they did well. Often I will ask them what they think their deficiencies are. Usually, after some more talk, I will play something that I think they will enjoy. For a beginning student that hasn’t heard much classical guitar music, I will likely not play a long complicated piece. I may play something that is not perceived as “classical” at all, but rather demonstrate what can be done using “classical” technique. With complete beginners, I often will play a piece that the student could learn in the

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near future. Many times the student cannot imagine being able to execute such a piece, so it’s fun to hear a student exceeding his/her expectations.

In summary, a new student brings with them a history of experiences and perceptions, desires and dreams. My role as a teacher is to offer to them a new positive experience with music. Sometimes students’ perceptions about music and guitar playing are inaccurate, and they need to be persuaded otherwise. Students can best be persuaded by example rather than by simple badgering. Of course, ultimately the fulfillment of a student’s desires must be self-motivated. Much like hiking a rugged trail, music has beautiful scenery but requires hard work. The trail to musical success can be dark and treacherous with no shortcuts and plenty of detours. An experienced teacher can help a student avoid the obstacles.

Roger Hudson

Roger Hudson offers the musical world a rare and prized combination—exceptional performer and gifted composer. Hudson draws inspiration from the past and present to create music that is enjoyed by guitarists and general audiences alike. In describing

Roger’s CD *Guitararchitecture*, the Guitar Foundation of America’s journal *Soundboard* spoke of “...many gorgeous moments” and “fetching rhythm figurations.” Mel Bay Publications’ Book/CD entitled *The Guitar Collection of Roger Hudson* is described by the British magazine *Classical Guitar* as “sparkling” and “wonderful.” Recently, Hudson has been focusing on guitar compositions with other instruments—the most notable of which being the completion of his first guitar concerto: The Cumberland Concerto for Guitar and Strings. Mel Bay has been so impressed with Roger’s solo guitar compositions as to include them in three guitar anthologies: *Master Anthology of Fingerstyle Guitar Solos Volume One*, *Master Anthology of Jazz Guitar Solos Volume One*, and *Master Anthology of Blues Guitar Solos Volume One*. Hudson compositions and arrangements are also featured in Stanley Yates’ *Graded Repertoire for Guitar* series and *The Contemporary Guitar: An Anthology of New Music*.

As a performer and session guitarist, Hudson has performed for such luminaries as Chet Atkins and Elton John. Roger maintains a busy performing schedule of solo concerts, chamber, and theater engagements. His broad musical palette and ability may find him performing as a classical soloist on one day and an electric session player or producer on the next.

Roger’s journalistic abilities are currently being featured regularly in *Fingerstyle Guitar Magazine*’s segment entitled Fingerstyle Basics. Roger began playing the guitar by ear at age 12 and has since gone on to earn a Master of Music in music theory from Georgia State University.

His recordings include two CDs from Tikal Records: *Guitararchitecture* and *Strings of Light* as well as two CDs featuring hymns with Pamplin Records: *Simplicity* Vols. 2 and 9.

Roger’s CDs and sheet music may be obtained through his website: www.RogerHudson.com

Student's View

APSU Undergraduate Student Perspective

By John-David Sayle

One of my first guitar teachers told me, “If you want to truly master any style of guitar playing you should first study the classical guitar.” With that in mind, I was quite excited when I found out about the quality and convenience, being a Clarksville native, that the guitar program at APSU could offer. Now in my junior year and pursuing a Bachelors’ degree in guitar performance, I realize more and more how much classical guitar studies, through ensembles, private lessons, performances, masterclasses, and commercial music applications, have helped me become a more versatile musician and prepare me for a musical career. As a performer, teacher and studio musician, Dr. Yates offers his students years of experience and insight into developing repertoire, getting your name out, developing teaching skills, attracting your own students, and getting gigs/jobs.

My lessons are very structured. The material we work on in a lesson typically consists of several etudes (for technique) as well repertoire pieces (for performance). Dr. Yates will give suggestions on how to solve technical problems, find good fingerings, improve expression, etc. These often become “mini-lectures” on tone production, practice techniques, and the like. As pieces near performance level, new pieces are assigned; about every four weeks we discuss upcoming performances and the maintenance of the repertoire I’ve already learned.

As we learn from our experiences, practice sessions, and insights from professors and other students, we grow into better musicians.

Private lessons are geared towards specific students’ abilities and goals. For example, I have opted for a commercial application in my studies. So, in addition to studying standard classical guitar repertoire such as Bach, Sor, and Villa-Lobos, etc., I have performed jazz/blues-based music by Roger Hudson and I am working with Mike Christiansen’s *Complete Jazz Guitar Method* book. (The material and concepts from this book have really helped prepare me for the APSU Jazz Combo I’m playing in this semester.) The weekly performance class give guitar majors an opportunity to “practice” performing in front of an audience. This helps us learn to deal with performance nerves/anxieties, as well as learning through the masterclass format.

Through the guitar ensemble classes, I have increased my sight-reading and ensemble-playing skills, and gained valuable experience by playing with other musicians. The repertoire of the ensembles is always interesting, and ranges from Renaissance madrigals to music



by J. S. Bach and Mozart to music by Monty Herman and the Beatles. This variety helps us consider the value of several styles of music. Also, by performing with musicians in addition to guitarists, guitar majors gain important performance experience we can use in the professional music world.

For students seeking commercial music experience, APSU offers Jazz Combo and Jazz Collegians (big band). These groups offer guitarists experience in reading charts and constructing improvised solos, as well as increasing sightreading skills and overall musicianship. I'm playing in Jazz Combo this semester, working on music by Pat Metheny, Theolonius Monk, and Art Blakey. I'm also playing in two classical guitar ensemble groups - a trio and a quartet - working on music by Manuel de Falla, Mozart and Ravel; and in private lessons I'm preparing music by Bach, Garcia, Villa-Lobos, Sagreras and Duke

The weekly performance class give guitar majors an opportunity to "practice" performing in front of an audience.

Ellington for my Junior Recital later this semester.

As we learn from our experiences, practice sessions, and insights from professors and other students, we grow into better musicians. I am grateful for the opportunity to study at a university I know is preparing me for a professional career in the music world.



Student's View II

APSU Graduate Student Perspective

By Alan Mearns

My first encounter with Stanley Yates was during my high school years. I was studying classical guitar at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC under Dr. Douglas James when Stanley played a concert at the Appalachian Guitar Festival. It was the first guitar concert I'd seen that really inspired me on a deep level. I was learning a lot from Dr. James at Appalachian State, but also made sure I could secure a lesson with Stanley whenever he came into town.

Upon finishing my bachelors degree at ASU, I was looking at graduate programs best suited to my intentions (performance and composition) and was also considering the idea of pursuing studio work in Nashville. When I sought the advice of Dr. James and mentioned Nashville, he told me that Stanley Yates was teaching at Austin Peay State University, just down the road from

Nashville. Needless to say, I called Dr. Yates the next day and arranged an audition for the graduate program. Inspired and enthused about the guitar, my wife and I moved to Nashville. Upon arrival I was pleasantly surprised by APSU's helpful and capable faculty, especially their resident composer, Dr. Jeffery Wood.

My first year at APSU has been spent intensely studying Bach and transcribing Mozart with Dr. Yates, and learning compositional technique from Dr. Wood, an amazing composer and teacher. After a year I have learned so many technical "secrets" from Stanley, that I feel confident and excited about entering competitions and performing in general. Various ensemble opportunities have provided me with valuable group situations and performance experiences, normally unavailable to classical guitarists.

A typical lesson with Dr. Yates revolves around the musical essence of the piece being studied; technical difficulties are addressed along the way, if they interfere with the desired musical goal. If the piece is a composition originally written for the guitar, Dr. Yates usually has interesting things to say about the "ideal" performance of the piece, though he is always eager to hear my opinions before offering his own ideas. If the piece is an arrangement, we work from the original score and explore ways to preserve the musical ideas convincingly on the guitar. Sometimes a problem may arise during my performance and a purely technical lesson will ensue concerning, for example, left-hand shifting, left-hand or right-hand preparation, projection, memorization, etc. When I arrived at Austin Peay I was intent on rising to a new technical level under Dr. Yates' supervision. What I have learned from Stanley, is that the next level of guitar playing is musical technique. Gaining control of your digits is one thing, but communicating emotion, color and spirit through your guitar is another thing altogether - a skill that Dr. Yates excels in and delights in passing on to us next generation of guitar professionals.

