

# TEACHERS WHO CAN

## Performing in Your Own Community, Part 2

By Daniel Roest

*Your teaching and performing careers can both get a boost with a local concert. Here's how to run one and build your community profile. Part 2 of 2.*

### Can Do Spirit

If you're just joining us, we are dispelling the myth that "those who can, do; those who can't, teach" and proving another: "Those who can – do; those who can – and teach – are TEACHING ARTISTS." We begin this column where we left off [link] [last month](#) – we're giving a local concert and we've done the following list:

1. Pick a theme for promotion and pitch the concert to a venue.
2. Assist in the promotion to insure a good turnout.
3. Decide what you're going to play and practice it thoroughly.
4. Plan on what you're going to say throughout the concert.
5. Work on optimizing your sound for that venue.
6. If programs are printed, write the copy and include acknowledgements of your sponsors and key personnel.

Before your local concert, test your set – go out to open mics, play out of the area, play samples for your students, record yourself, but definitely get your confidence up for the concert – you'll need it.

The week before the concert is time to eat right and get enough sleep to be 100% healthy at the concert. Check your strings and gear and really think about how much time everything will take.

You can't be in control of some things affecting your concert, like the weather, economy or events in the news that are on people's minds. Nor can you be in complete control of some of the things you consider your responsibility such as publicity, promotion and attendance. But you can choose to stay completely positive and *just do your best*.

### Talking to the Audience

Each of us has a gift to share with the world – you probably have sensed what yours is long ago and perhaps spent years trying to get the world to recognize it. What's true is that you and your talent are unique, and *that* is what will make you succeed. If you are not used to speaking to an audience, it is something you can learn that will pay huge dividends. I have produced concerts for other artists and seen from backstage how positively audiences respond to verbal introductions and banter. I've also seen the opposite, where the performer left a formal barrier between him- or herself and the audience, and there is a sense of opportunity lost.

At my Folsom concert last fall, I talked almost as much as I played – but as I mentioned last month, there was a standing ovation and line to buy my CD – it must have worked!

### Plan Your Surprises

What helped my concert in addition to playing well was creating a sense of fun and "*what next?*" – **surprises**. There are things that are predictable for both you and the

audience, and there are things that you think up and plan into your set. You need, of course, to welcome everyone. If you have been introduced, thank that person and take control like the driver of a charter bus – *we're all going on a ride and I'll be your driver.*

You and I may have very different playing styles – I can only tell you what worked with my classical guitar concert. Take what works for you, and if you're not sure, try whatever you think might work. So here is a selected assortment of ideas that I used. Near the end of the roughly one-hour concert, one of the surprises was a guest artist to join me in a pair of duets. The notes are a little cryptic but fit on one page I could glance at and recall the entire thought, joke or story.

1. Introduced by Library staff.
2. Welcome, parking, motivated audience. – *I acknowledged that they had made an effort to get there*
3. Let's turn off our cell phones audience. – *We do something together for our common enjoyment*
4. Format, no intermission, straight through, about half as long as a movie. – *Let them know what to expect*
5. Raise hands - How many here have been to a classical guitar concert this year? In the last 5? Now all can. – *This is supply and demand in action*
6. A rule here – no heckling or booing – c'mon the show is free. – *This got a laugh*
7. Sounds of Bells – first track on my CD– *Start with something that you are confident in and you know has general appeal*
8. Can you hear all right? – *Checks that your sound level is adequate and shows good hospitality*
9. Renaissance Faire – include some Lute music – smaller instrument – capo. – *This connected with the Renaissance Faire next door and provided a contrast to the last piece. The capo was a piece of gear to show and use*
10. That was the hard rock head-banging music of the day. – *This also got a laugh and supported my thesis that much of the best classical music is just pop music that stuck around because people kept liking it*
11. I shouldn't be nervous - I practiced, you're a friendly group and I'm wearing my lucky underwear. – *It takes courage to get up in front of people and expect their attention for an hour. A joke can help diffuse the nerves*
12. Bach works well on the guitar – here are two you'll enjoy. – *Everyone wants to be able to enjoy the world's great music – cherry pick those you can play well and that are accessible to non-musicians*
13. Not many people know Bach had a drinking problem – one night in a drunken stupor... – *Another example of something completely unexpected. I threw my guitar out of tune and then, after a made up story about Bach getting drunk and coming up with this tune, I played Bach's Bourrée as if it were perfectly in tune – laughter was heard as I played*
14. 4<sup>th</sup>-Eb 3<sup>rd</sup>-F#; you know I was kidding, right? – *Let them in on the joke*
15. This thing was in tune when I bought - taking it back. – *Don't make them wait long while you are tuning without maintaining contact such as this little joke*
16. The story behind Afro-Cuban Lullaby. – *Every tune you play has a background in your life – a story behind it. Share it. I told of playing the next selection years ago when an elderly, well-dressed Cuban gentleman keyed in on it and sang along. I had no idea there were words, and it took him back to his childhood and made my day*
17. Introduce Matsuoka guitar. I call it the "Buy-my-dream-guitar... diet." – *The audience is interested in your gear and your instruments. When I bought my guitar in 1973, I spent every penny I had and literally could not afford food*
18. Introduce the band. – *Another joke – I looked to the left and right like I expected bandmates to be there*
19. Introduce February 4<sup>th</sup> and sections Morning, Walking Outdoors, Daydream, Work, Homecoming, A Kiss. See if you can spot the Kiss. – *A very personal moment where*

- I explained that my teacher and dear friend has Parkinson's and that I had written this four-minute piece for him*
20. If I got paid by the note I'd be rich. – *A reference to how many notes just went by*
  21. Introduce Prelude for Craig and Study for Margot. – *Again, the personal stories behind the next tunes*
  22. Have you noticed everything is memorized? Pretty impressive – eh? *That explains why I can't find my car keys, my cell phone... used up my brain on this concert*
  23. Something from Brazil? Caçique Tango from my CD – *Another reference to my CD to keep it in mind and also provide another Brazilian piece*
  24. Segovia concert - coughing. – *When the old maestro was giving a concert and someone kept coughing out loud, he got up and demonstrated how to cough into a handkerchief and stifle the noise, much to the delight of the audience. I re-enacted the scene – big laughs*
  25. Commercial announcement – applause for the main sponsor, Nicholson Music Co. – *Acknowledge your sponsors! And let the audience have a chance to do the same*
  26. Introduce Barrios. – *The piece had a poignant story of an old beggar woman the composer helped, who passed away and inspired his last composition*
  27. Introduce surprise guest Sarah Karliner– *Seated in the audience was the flute teacher from Nicholson's – not only could we give a dramatic change to the solo guitar format up to that point, but I could further help the store and a friend*
  28. Let's all stretch. – *I take the audience through a hand stretching routine that both gives them something completely unexpected to participate in, but provides my hands a welcome break*
  29. You've been great – we begin and end with something from my CD – did I mention my CD? – *It's my version of the Moorish Dance. – Let them know you have something to sell and remember the event by, that you appreciate them, that you've all joined together in a party that is about to end*
  30. Thank you so much – let's thank the library staff, Regina Maduel and Debbie Centi for helping today, my guest Sarah Karliner and our sponsor The Nicholson Music Company. I want to thank my wife Alison and our son Craig for helping me today, and I want to offer you all the CD for just TEN dollars – special deal three for 30 ☺ – *Don't forget anyone, and there's that CD again*
  31. Encore Santa Cruz. – *A standing ovation compelled me to play something prepared for the occasion. Show your happiness – be present in the moment!*

## Enjoy Your Hard-earned Success

Well, there you have it. The stars lined up and the weather was good and people were cheerful and the sound was good, and the bus ride was a good one. You, the driver, have brought your audience to their destination through some enchanting scenery, and they are grateful. Autograph your CDs "with many thanks" or something like it, and know that both you and the community have improved for the effort. You can do it! And your students and their families will **definitely** appreciate you – guaranteed!

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**Daniel Roest** (pronounced "roost") started playing guitar at the age of seven and never stopped. Today he has performed in countless solo and ensemble events in nearly every kind of venue, and his concerts are praised for being entertaining and informative. For ten years he served as President and Artistic Director of the South Bay Guitar Society based in San Jose, CA, preparing many successful grant applications, and is now Director Emeritus. He is recognized for presenting gifted guitarists such as Laurence

Juber, Peppino D'Agostino, Muriel Anderson, Jeff Linsky, Franco Morone, Michael Chapdelaine, Richard Gilewitz, Chris Proctor, Mark Hanson, Duck Baker, Sharon Isbin, Lily Afshar, Carlos Barbosa-Lima and many others. His *Great Guitars! 2004* CD received 5-star reviews.

Roest majored in guitar and earned three degrees in music performance. He participated in dozens of masterclasses, including many he produced. He taught guitar and music fundamentals at California State University Stanislaus and De Anza, Foothill and San Jose City Colleges and now maintains a full-time teaching studio in Folsom, CA. He has adjudicated several multi-instrument competitions, presented music clinics and introduced many new audiences to the art of the classical guitar. His original solo composition, *February 4th*, was selected from hundreds of submissions by the ERMMedia "Masterworks of the New Era" CD series. Last year he was selected to be a teaching artist in the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission's Artist Residency Institute. Previous columns for Guitar Sessions include **So You Want to Make a Living with the Guitar**, Parts [1](#), [2](#) and [3](#), and a ten part series, **Expressive Guitar Playing – Tapping Your Student's Inner Artist** [Dynamics](#), [Tempo](#), [The Big Picture](#), [Rhythm](#), [Balance](#), [Rubato](#), [Pitch effects](#), [Tone](#), [Phrasing](#) and [Stage Presence and Heart](#).