

Afterword

TONY MORRIS

PLAYING A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT is a lot like life: It's a perpetual work in progress. As soon as we think we have it pretty well figured out, we're suddenly faced with new surprises that challenge us and everything we have learned so far.

One of the great joys of producing the internationally broadcast *Classical Guitar Alive!* radio program has been that I have had the great pleasure of interviewing many of the world's foremost classical guitarists, as well as obtaining an education that I could not have ever received from lessons or master classes. When I began producing the program straight out of grad school, it also taught me that no one has all the answers; no one can play everything equally well. Instead, what I discovered was that many people may have many good answers to technique, performance, memorization, and so on.

For example, Mozart would have had great insight into how to compose an Italian *Opera Buffa*, but on the topic of how to make a living as a composer, well, his advice might have been lacking. Similarly, one guitarist who has a great technical gift might not be the best source on advice about how to memorize lengthy music passages.

I have a very simple philosophy about a lot of things (including the guitar): Do what works well. Don't do what does not work well. If someone has a demonstrable success in a particular area in which you wish to excel, then do what they do. This seems simple enough, but often we do things that are perhaps not the most profitable way to spend our time. Habits can take over, and before we know it, we are living a life on auto-pilot.

It is a great blessing to be unsatisfied. It pushes us to be better than we are—that we have more work to do. It is good to question our methods and periodically shake up our routine to get us to the next level of whatever endeavor we are pursuing.

I think that the essays in *Instrumental Influences* offer two important lessons for classical guitarists—and all musicians for that matter: First, that each artist has himself or herself encountered challenges and developed their own personal workarounds to overcome those obstacles. It's the innate drive to be better than we are so we can get closer to that vision of who and what we want to be—for ourselves and for others.

Second, all the essays highlight and underscore how art imitates life, and vice-versa, through the application of self-discipline, concentration, self-sacrifice, self-determination, self-confidence, self-expression, and so on. These characteristics that are so critical to learning a musical instrument also find ways of becoming integrated into our own personas, and in turn, propel us in an upwardly spiraling direction toward achieving our potential as musicians and individuals.

May dissatisfaction always lead us to our future triumphs.

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Tony Morris is heard each week by radio listeners of over 200 stations across the United States, and world-wide via internet broadcasts as the host of the Classical Guitar Alive! program

An indefatigable advocate of music for the classical guitar, Tony actively seeks to expand its repertory by commissioning new works, and by seeking lost or forgotten important works of the past. Composers including Jorge Morel (Argentina), Kaare Norge (Denmark), and Russell Sarre (Australia) have dedicated works to him, and he has performed the world premieres of newly-discovered works including “Aria” for oboe, guitar, and cello by one of the leading 20th Century guitar composers, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968), and “Guitare” by the famed *Les Six* French composer Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983).