

23rd February 2016

Big Guitar Festival in Newbury is fast approaching!

The Big Guitar Festival #bigguitarfestival is fast approaching! Taking place in Newbury over the weekend of 4th to 6th March 2016, this is an event for those who enjoy playing in or listening to guitar music in the classical or flamenco styles. Activities are taking place all over the town and will be of interest to all ages from toddlers to grown-ups! Guitarists from across Berkshire will be coming together to celebrate a wide range of guitar music that is both contemporary and traditional. Whether you are a guitar professional, have just started learning the guitar or even can't play a note and just like listening to guitar music then there is an opportunity for you to meet and share the joy of music making.

This is the first ever guitar festival that has been put on by the Berkshire Music Hub (which is run by Berkshire Maestros) and the festival has attracted some major names in guitar playing and classical music. Number one album selling guitarist Craig Ogden will feature in a professional concert at Newbury Methodist Church and will also be leading a Masterclass at Hogan Music.

The guitar festival will also appeal to those who like saxophone music with the appearance of professional saxophonist Gerard McChrystal. He will share the concert platform with Craig Ogden and will also lead a saxophone Masterclass at Hogan Music.

Other events include:

- Guitarnage! – a weekend long course for primary school aged guitarists
- Gala Concert to celebrate guitar ensembles from across the county
- BYGO (Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra) & Friends – showcasing Maestros' Academy Sax Ensemble and the acclaimed Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra ahead of performances at the Royal Albert Hall and tour of China.
- Guitar teachers' networking day with workshops from Trinity College and a performance by John Mills
- Guitar music from the Renaissance and Baroque eras in a late night concert featuring Matt Nisbet at West Berkshire Museum

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- Toddlers and pre-schoolers can join in with Monty the Maestro and his Marvellous Magical Orchestra at two events held at Newbury Library (this event is free to attend)
- Flamenco and Tapas at El Sabio where you can enjoy fine tapas whilst enjoying the performance by flamenco guitarist Rafael y Lola

Plus many more activities!

Steve Christmas, Head of Guitar at Berkshire Maestros and Festival Co-ordinator, said *"This is a truly exciting event for players, teachers and musicians of all ages in Newbury and across the county of Berkshire.*

"We are delighted to be welcoming Craig Ogden, John Mills, Michael Butten, flamenco guitarist Rafael and saxophonist Gerard McChrystal to the festival and I know that many of our young musicians are looking forward to working with them. We anticipate that the festival will bring about 1000 people into the town of Newbury."

The Big Guitar Festival sees many local businesses working together. Newbury Business Improvement District has been instrumental in supporting the festival and contributions from Hogan Music, West Berkshire Museum, Kent Guitar Classics, El Sabio and Trinity College London have also been vital.

Steve Christmas continued *"We are hugely grateful to the many local businesses that are supporting the festival, especially Hogan Music, West Berkshire Museum, El Sabio and Newbury BID."*

Visit www.biguitarfestival.com for the full event listings and to book tickets.



Ends

Notes to Editors

Berkshire Maestros

- Berkshire Maestros is a charitable trust providing music education opportunities to children and young people in Berkshire. Established in 1982 as the Berkshire Young Musicians Trust, it rebranded as Berkshire Maestros in 2006 and is the provider of music tuition in schools and music centres for Bracknell Forest, Reading, the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, West Berkshire and Wokingham Unitary Authorities.

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- We run hundreds of bands, choirs and orchestras to allow children to build on their lesson experience. These take place at our music centres based in Bracknell, Wokingham, Newbury, Reading and Windsor
- If you would like more information, please contact Vanessa Harbutt, Marketing Officer on 0118 901 2357, or email vanessaharbutt@berkshiremaestros.org.uk

About Craig Ogden

- Australian guitarist Craig Ogden is one of the guitar world's most enthusiastic and experienced concert and recording artists. He has achieved three number one albums, countless tours and concerto performances as well as leading one of the finest and busiest guitar departments in the country at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester.

About Gerard McChrystal

- Originating from Derry in Northern Ireland, Gerard McChrystal has won a vast number of international competitions and has toured in over 35 countries. He has an arm's length list of collaborations including Philip Glass, Soweto String Quartet, BBC NOW, and the Ulster Orchestra. His new programme Stand Up has won two awards from the Arts Council. Gerard is Professor of Saxophone at Trinity Laban, London.

About John Mills

- Born in 1947, John Mills studied with John Williams, Andres Segovia and Julian Bream. Following graduation from the Royal College of Music in 1969, he was appointed Head of Guitar at the RCM's Junior Department and had his official solo London debut at the Wigmore Hall 1971. As well as maintaining an international solo playing career, John Mills has been Head of Guitar at Nelson University, New Zealand, Head of Guitar at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and director of the celebrated International Classical Guitar Summer School & Festival, held at West Dean.

About Michael Butten

- Born in Berkshire, Michael Butten first studied with Berkshire Maestros before continuing his studies at Junior Academy, where he twice won the Lower Strings Prize, and was subsequently awarded a scholarship at the Academy to continue his studies with Michael Lewin. In his first year he won the Julian Bream Prize, adjudicated by Julian Bream, and, shortly afterwards gained the Nervi/Bodrato Prize as the youngest semi-finalist at the Michele Pittaluga Guitar Competition in Alessandria. On completing his BMus degree with first class honours, he received from the Academy one of the Regency Awards and in June 2014, as a postgraduate, became the first guitarist to win the RAM. Club Prize.



Craig Ogden and Gerard McChrystal

