

18<sup>th</sup> January 2016

## Big Guitar Festival - 4-6 March 2016

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Join in with Berkshire Maestros as they launch their first ever guitar festival in Newbury over the weekend of 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2016. This will be a fantastic opportunity for guitar lovers, learners and professionals to meet and share their joy of music making with events taking place in a variety of venues across the town centre.

Events include:

- Craig Ogden and Gerard McChrystal performing in concert and masterclass
- Guitarnage! – a weekend long course for primary aged guitarists
- Gala Concert – celebrating 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

Steve Christmas, Head of Guitar at Berkshire Maestros, 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 and 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.”*

# News release



Visit [www.biguitarfestival.com](http://www.biguitarfestival.com) for the full event listings and to book tickets.

## *Big Guitar* **FESTIVAL** **2016**

### **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.
- 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](mailto: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 guitars 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***

# News release



- 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.