

INFO Nr. 246

Oktober 2024
October 2024

Trevi Guitar Week, Umbria, Italy

I had learned about this (not really over-advertised) event - which is actually part of a large-scale, long festival - for many years and I had been planning to check it out for as many years, this year it worked out, at last. However, I was able to spend there just the first two and a half days; August 24, 25, 26 just until noon.

The festival as such is organized by **Stefano Palamidessi** (Civica Scuola delle Arti, Rome, and Frosinone Conservatory) and includes also one of the three “big” yearly guitar events in central Italy. The *Guitar Week* is a part of the big *Federico Cesi* (mostly) classical music festival that lasts as long as nearly three months, from early July through late September. In this week the guitar is absolutely the focus. It started on August 24 and went through August 29. It included (just) two actual classical guitar concerts, for which Andrea Roberto and Sofia Pace (this one took place in Spello, about 1/2 hr. drive away) were selected. (Somebody told me that in the past more concerts by famous performers took place during this week.) The main element of the “week” though is a (very) large number of master classes, all running at the same time and given mostly by Italian

masters and two from abroad (Frank Bungarten and Francois Laurent). The number of important and active Italian cl. grt. performers invited to teach is really considerable; 21, plus four masters of other plucked instruments. The master class attendees receive a total of six lessons (60 min. each), with three different masters of their choice (4+1+1 lessons), for a total fee of 320,00 euros. Unlike other countries, where age-wise the attendance has long become the very opposite, in Italy such classes are attended only by very young people, around 20 y. o. and teenagers. Most of them are conservatory students – I think - in the “triennio” (first three years of Conservatory)*. This is a very interesting difference that shows the big differences in instrumental music education, approach and attitude in general. Obviously, in Trevi many (or maybe most of them) are from Rome.

Also, a relatively short guitar makers exhibit took place, August 25 (from 3 PM to 8 PM) and August 26 (until 2 PM). This year as many as 15 guitar makers from many parts of Italy took part. All their guitars were played in a dedicated big “demo” concert in the packed San Francesco cloister, outdoor and without amplification, Saturday night at 9.30 PM (the usual evening concert time!).

This double recital was given by Stefano Palamidessi and Pietro Locatto, who changed the guitar for every single piece. An acoustic guitar was played by young, impressive Alessandro Cavinato. Basically, the entire program consisted of pieces from the first three decades of the 20th century or around that time. (I would assume this was in the organizer’s intentions, in order to make the comparison easier.)

The classes and the noon and early evening (6 PM) concerts take place in the *Villa Fabri*, which is an astonishing true jewel built in 1604 (just about 4 walking minutes from the very center [town hall]), with rich, colorful frescoes in every single room, and a surrounding park (in front of it, on one side and on the back).

Guitar-wise do not expect offerings on the side, like sheet music, CD, accessories, book or magazine sales, which for me is kind of hard to understand, especially considering the really huge (and very good) production by about all the top guitarists who are there as well as the large attendance at both, classes and concerts. Maybe there is a specific reason for that, I have not asked the organizer about it.

Every festival is different. In Trevi there is actually quite a bit

going on, in many ways, I must say, and nevertheless, all is well-characterized by the typical casual atmosphere hard to find elsewhere. If you need some more tips, directions etc. just let me know. If you want to enjoy the good typical food make sure to reserve a table.

Location and just some travel / stay info

Trevi is located in the Umbria region, “central” central Italy, south of Perugia and Assisi¹, on top of a (relatively steep) hill, so if you happen to come by (airplane and) train arrange beforehand for somebody to pick you up by car at the railway station, which is way down in the plain. If you travel by car, from the *autostrada* (Valdichiana exit) the trip is about 75 min. In summer, if possible, avoid using it on the weekends.

Personally, for me as guest and tourist the town as such does not quite meet the expectations. The (very few, rather small) restaurants are totally unable to cope and stressed out, quite unfriendly, so after the first very disappointing evening I opted for forgetting them altogether. Here the restaurant owners not only decide *when* you eat (odd hours), they decide *whether* you eat or not in the first place. I just don't like that very much. On the other hand, I think the above situation would definitely be better if the guitar week did not take place in August, when lots and lots of tourists from Italy and abroad “invade” the historic places like this.

However, the *Caffè Roma* on Piazza Mazzini (town hall's neighbor) covers basic food needs, is open 7 days/wk. (in Summer) from 7.30 AM and has plenty of outdoor tables.

Rooms are available (I called just a few days earlier), but they are relatively expensive (for rural central Italy, i.e.) and without breakfast (and of course without a parking lot). Also, just for your information, they want the payment in cash, which they did not tell me when I called to reserve the room.

Printed Lessons

A new chapter, for the advanced

A new article has been written, about Scarlatti's **Sonata K 262**, i.e. its transcription for guitar. It is very rarely performed and recorded (on the guitar) and I would say of about the highest technical level, also considering the vivid tempo it is supposed to be played at. The good transcription I am using is by **Rafael Andia** and was published in 1980 (France). I do not know of any arrangement for two (or three) guitars, by the way.

The article is in **Italian**. Translations are made upon request (**English, French, German**).

Zigante master class in November

Frédéric Zigante is giving a two-day/weekend master class **November 9 and 10** in **Jesolo** (Venice province), for the *El Maestro* guitar center. Registration is open for both active and passive attendees. It is the first time a master class by F.Z. takes place at this location, a large town by the Adriatic Sea (very popular and crowded all Summer, esp. with Germans and Austrians).

FFI: www.elmaestro.it

*) Until *roughly* 15 years ago, the **conservatory** study in Italy lasted 10 years and was completed with one graduation diploma. It was gradually changed to just five years (3+2) in an extremely long process, basically due to a globalization in the university systems. It should be noted that Italy has a huge number of conservatories, spread all over the country, much more than other European countries.

Michele Bajo
September 30, 2024

¹ By the way, Costacciaro (Senio Diaz class in early July) is just about 65 km north.