

TOWARD A HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE CLASSICAL
GUITAR: VAHDAH OLCOTT BICKFORD (1885–1980) AND THE SHAPING OF
CLASSICAL GUITAR CULTURE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA

by

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Abstract

This dissertation has two primary aims: to demonstrate how women guitarists have been the primary advocates for the construction of a guitar-specific institutional landscape, and — with a specific focus on American guitarist Vahdah Olcott Bickford (1885–19890) — to narrate the history of the establishment of local guitar societies across the United States. Although guitar societies have become ubiquitous in the early twenty-first century, the formation of the first American guitar society in 1923 was a byproduct of women guitarists’ entrance into the workforce and of the longstanding tradition of women’s philanthropy and voluntarism in the arts. Furthermore, the guitar society model derived from national and international institutional precursors. The most important of these precursors were the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists (BMG Guild) and the German guitar societies that emerged between 1899 and 1910. I argue that guitar societies allowed amateur and professional classical guitarists to break from the multi-instrument values fostered by the BMG movement in order to organize and focus their efforts on solely promoting the classical guitar.

As one of the founding members of the American Guitar Society (AGS) and Guitar Foundation of America (GFA), Vahdah Olcott Bickford was one of the main forces behind the establishment of classical guitar organizations in America. Her efforts to establish an American guitar society were not isolated, but rather were inspired by the activities of other women guitarists emerging at the turn of the twentieth century, such as Gertrude Miller, and of women philanthropists in her network in Los Angeles. Through the lens of philanthropy and voluntarism, I show that Olcott Bickford was as an

institutional pioneer and the first American philanthropist who devoted her life to preserving classical guitar culture in America.

Introduction

FILLING IN THE BLANK: FROM THE BMG MOVEMENT TO SEGOVIA

The history of the institutionalization of the classical guitar in America is interwoven with the history of American women in music between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. American guitarist Vahdah Olcott Bickford (1885–1980), one of the primary exponents of the classical guitar in the United States during the twentieth century, was one of the main forces behind the establishment of classical guitar institutions in America. She was a founding member of the American Guitar Society (AGS) and Guitar Foundation of America (GFA), dedicating her life to the promotion of the classical guitar. Her efforts to establish an American guitar society were not isolated. They were inspired by the actions of other women guitarists emerging at the turn of the twentieth century, such as Gertrude Miller, and women philanthropists from Los Angeles, who she met while growing up.

This dissertation aims both to unveil women guitarists as the primary advocates for the construction of a guitar-specific institutional landscape and to narrate the history of the establishment of local guitar societies across America. Furthermore, it highlights Olcott Bickford as an institutional pioneer and the first American philanthropist who devoted her life to preserving classical guitar culture in America throughout the twentieth century. This history is placed within a larger social and historical context to show how the emergence of the first American classical guitar society was a byproduct of women guitarists' entrance into the workforce and of the long-standing tradition of women's philanthropy and voluntarism in the arts. Cultural and societal influences are also drawn

into this framework, most prominently the changing political climate in California, where Olcott Bickford resided for most of her life. Contextualizing the rise of the elaborate California suffrage campaign contributes to fully understanding how Olcott Bickford forged a multifaceted career, achieving recognition as a professional concert artist, composer, philanthropist, teacher, concert organizer, and institutional pioneer in her lifetime.

The term “classical guitar” is used throughout the dissertation to signify the gut/nylon six-string European instrument that derived from the modified five-course baroque guitar, featuring an added sixth string and no doubled strings.¹ The adjective “classical” was not used in America during the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century to describe the guitar. This adjective was adopted in America in the 1920s and 1930s when guitar advocates, such as Olcott Bickford, wanted to clearly distinguish their European nineteenth-century playing tradition from the plectrum tradition that was being used to play “steel-strung” guitars.² The adjectives “classical” and “steel-strung” also became associated with genre divisions, and the steel-strung guitar was directly linked to jazz and popular music.³

The evolution of the classical guitar in the hands of women, from amateur music-making in the middle of the nineteenth century to professional music-making toward the

¹ For a concise history of the classical guitar’s organological development, see Maurice J. Summerfield, “Its Evolution,” in *The Classical Guitar: Its Evolution and Its Players since 1800*, 5th ed. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Ashley Mark Publishing Company, 2002). For a more in-depth history, see Harvey Turnbull, *The Guitar from the Renaissance to the Present Day* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1974).

² Jeffrey J. Noonan, *The Guitar in America: Victoria Era to Jazz* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 155.

³ Ibid.

turn of the twentieth century, follows the emancipation of women's rights and their entrance to the American workforce.⁴ In the first half of the nineteenth century, the classical guitar became established as a cultured instrument "of the American middle-class amateur" and was deemed an appropriate instrument for women along with the piano and the harp.⁵ Its popularity stemmed from its portability and affordability; "a fine instrument could be had for \$25 and a serviceable one for half that, while a piano might cost several hundred dollars."⁶ And its repertoire was primarily European classical music that required players to read music, and performances were commonly presented in parlors.⁷ Because the classical guitar was identified as an instrument appropriate for young women's education, it was widely included in curricula by the 1850s and its instruction took place privately at pupils' homes or teachers' studios and at educational institutions, such as women's seminaries.⁸

Although plectral instruments, such as the classical guitar, were included in

⁴ This progression has been studied and documented in the scholarly work of Judith Tick and Christine Ammer. See Judith Tick, *American Women Composers Before 1870* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983), 13–31; and Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music*, 2nd ed. (Portland: Amadeus Press, 2001).

⁵ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 11.

⁶ Phillip F. Gura, *C.F. Martin & His Guitars, 1796–1873* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 17.

⁷ Locke and Barr, "Patronage—and women—in America's Musical Life," in *Cultivating Music in America*, ed. Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 24–27. It is important to point out music literacy because during the nineteenth century the main classification factor between the label popular and classical was music notation and the ability to read it and interpret it.

⁸ Judith Tick, "Towards a History of American Women Composers Before 1870" (PhD diss., The City University of New York, 1979), 94–119, and Gura, *C.F. Martin & His Guitars*, 17.

women's education curricula, young women studying these instruments were discouraged from pursuing professional careers as soloists and primarily performed in all-women ensembles to benefit charitable causes or for domestic recreation.⁹ Although these views evolved at the turn of the twentieth century, they set the context for women guitarists during much of the nineteenth century. In 1900, Miss Edna May Sayers, a mandolinist and the co-editor of "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm" column published in *Stewart's* journal, commented on women's presence in the plectral instrument world in the following way:

Some literary education is very necessary to the modern woman, but she is apt to be a little too practical unless the refining influence of some art is added. What is more charming in a home than music, with the assistance it gives in the interesting of the family circle. Now, if some of our bright minds will step forward, if only as an example and encouragement for others to follow, we may yet discover some genius or geniuses among us.¹⁰

These comments adhere to nineteenth-century views on young women's education, but also signal Sayers' hope for women's musical advancement. The "geniuses" Sayer was hopeful would eventually emerge not only did appear but, in the case of the classical guitar, presided over the creation of institutions that would champion the classical guitar as a solo instrument on a par with the violin and piano.

⁹ The inclusion of music in young women's education was conditional to strict achievement parameters. Although young women were encouraged to learn to play the approved feminine instruments, such as the harp, piano, and guitar, accomplishing a mastery of these instruments was strongly discouraged. This rigidity stemmed from the perception of women music-making as a domestic craft rather than an art. For more information on the societal constructs limiting women's education in the eighteenth and nineteenth century in America, please see Judith Tick, *American Women Composers Before 1870*, 13–31.

¹⁰ Edna May Sayers, "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm," eds. Edna May Sayers and Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 1 (December 1900): 4.

At the time Sayers's comments were published, the classical guitar was associated with the Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar (BMG) movement, a label that businessmen used around the first years of the twentieth century to identify "themselves, their customers, and others devoted to the plectral instruments."¹¹ The movement was led by magazine editors and owners, who began publishing journals to promote their own instrument manufacturing and music printing businesses.¹² Jeffrey J. Noonan dates this period from the 1890s to the 1930s and it is within the backdrop of this movement that professional women guitarists began to emerge.¹³

According to Noonan, the classical guitar had a complex standing within the movement. While this movement's name suggested equality among the instruments, the banjo took precedence and the classical guitar acquired a subordinate role.¹⁴ The homogenization of the plectral instruments under the BMG label bolstered the popularity of the "elevated banjo" and the mandolin among cultured amateur players while

¹¹ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 21.

¹² *S. S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* (1882–1903) was founded, published, and edited by Samuel Swaim Stewart, who additionally was a primary contributor to the journal. *Cadenza* (1894–1924) was founded by Clarence Partee, who also was its editor and contributor; this journal was sold to Walter Jacobs in 1907. *Crescendo* (1908–34) was founded by Herbert Forrest Odell, who also acted as a primary contributor. *Stewart's*, *Cadenza* and *Crescendo* were the most important periodicals of the movement and can be found almost in their entirety in digital archives. For more information about other BMG periodicals and their founders and editors, see Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 21–40.

¹³ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 22. Noonan specifies that the BMG movement was active from the late 1890s to the 1920s, but that BMG magazines were published until the 1930s.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21–40.

promoting the creation of plectral ensembles around the country.¹⁵ Meanwhile, the classical guitar was used as a proxy for Eurocentric culture and refinement and the development of its solo tradition was relegated to the periphery of the movement.

As Noonan shows, leaders of the BMG movement primarily utilized the classical guitar as a means of repositioning the banjo in terms of cultural hierarchies, to “replace the guitar in its role as the music world’s most refined plucked instrument.”¹⁶ Prior to the rise of this movement, the banjo was “a new and different type of entertainment” in the life of Americans and its popularity was tied to minstrel shows.¹⁷ Public and cultural perception associated the instrument with the popular music sphere because minstrel shows were prominent entertainment within the working class. Racist and elitist views attacking the African origins of the banjo and its use in the minstrel show complicated efforts from the white middle-class to rebrand the banjo as what they considered to be an elevated or cultured American instrument.¹⁸ These efforts were amplified by BMG manufacturers and banjo advocates who relied on the problematic attitude of continuing

¹⁵ Ibid, 16–17. In his writings about the Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar movement, Jeffrey J. Noonan utilizes the terms “elevated banjo” and “elevated banjoists.” With these terms he is able to differentiate between the banjo utilized for popular music, such as minstrel shows, and the banjo promoted as an instrument fit for the high-brow music sphere by manufacturers, such as S.S. Stewart, and players, such as Frank Converse. Although, not different in construction, the playing techniques were different. Furthermore, as the BMG movement developed, the banjo underwent organological transformations and hybrid instruments were also created. For more information on this term, see Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 16–20.

¹⁶ Ibid., 18.

¹⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹⁸ An example of a comment relating to the Banjo’s position with regard to race was that “there are so many persons who think that the banjo has no right to an existence except in the negro quarters.” “News, Concerts, Etc.” *Cadenza* 7, no 3 (November 1900): 22.

to adopt the classical guitar's technique and Eurocentric repertoire while spreading xenophobic views about the classical guitar. By the late 1860s, banjo players had adopted a similar notational system, right-hand technique, and fretting system to the classical guitar.¹⁹ Nevertheless, in writings, banjo advocates viewed the classical guitar negatively as the instrument of foreigners (Italian and Spanish immigrants primarily), constantly disparaging it to favor the "American" banjo.²⁰

Women's presence in the early days of this movement was sparse but crucial because it established precedents that helped smooth the entrance of a newer generation of women instrumentalists.²¹ Guitarists such as Meta Bischoff-Henning and Dominga Lynch were the pioneers who opened the door to concertizing and composing for women guitarists emerging in the first decades of the twentieth century, such as Gertrude Miller and Vahdah Olcott Bickford. As members of the BMG movement, this new generation of women guitarists became key players in the formation of American organizations that would solely champion the classical guitar at a time when all plectral instruments were promoted under one label—BMG—and instrumental independence was not encouraged.

As a component of the BMG period, the classical guitar was represented in BMG

¹⁹ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 16–17.

²⁰ For a useful history detailing these promotional efforts in favor of the rise of the American banjo, see *ibid.*, 16–40.

²¹ Noonan provides short biographic sketches of pioneering women guitarists such as Meta Bischoff-Henning and Dominga Lynch, and young women guitarists who followed in the steps of Bischoff-Henning and Lynch, such as Elsie Tooker and Jennie M. Durkee. See Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 64–68. In contextualizing Bischoff-Henning's and Lynch's endeavors, he concludes that although these women "played a pioneering role in America's late-century guitar community... the BMG community reflected the values of America's late Victorian society and neither woman could transcend conventional expectations and roles." *Ibid.*, 65–66.

journals via monthly columns written by American guitarists of the day. Its presence in monthly columns helped cultivate readers, but expanding the classical guitar's audience came at a pedagogical cost for the instrument. While guitar teachers were given the option to grow their studios, they were pressed to put specialization aside and give in to market demand for versatile instructors who could teach all the plectral instruments.

Olcott Bickford, the main subject of this dissertation, was a fierce advocate against this phenomenon. She believed teachers who did not specialize in only one instrument lowered the standards of the BMG instruments and cheapened the public's perception of the plectral instruments as mere "musical toys."²² She often used comparisons to the piano, violin, voice and cello to exemplify the lifelong devotion that instruments worthy of study deserved, advocating for classical guitar teachers to specialize in this instrument in order to become fully aware of its capabilities and to be prepared to teach those capabilities to the next generation of classical guitarists.²³

Vahdah Olcott Bickford was born on October 17, 1885 in Norwalk, Ohio. Her birth name was Ethel Lucretia Olcott and at the age of two her family moved to New Mexico, finally settling in Los Angeles when she was three years old.²⁴ According to Purcell, Olcott Bickford began her studies when she was eight years old, meeting George C. Lindsey at the age of nine and forging a student-teacher relationship with him that would last until his death in 1943. Lindsey introduced Olcott Bickford to Mexican

²² Ethel Lucretia Olcott, "Anent Commercialism Among Teachers of Guitar, Banjo & Mandolin," *Crescendo* 3, no. 16 (June 1911): 6.

²³ *Ibid.*, 6, 21.

²⁴ Ronald Purcell, "Vahdah Oclott-Bickford: The International Guitar Research Archives," *Guitar Review*, no. 111 (Winter 1998): 6–7.

American guitarist Manuel Ygnacio Ferrer. She studied with Ferrer during her childhood and, between 1903 and 1904, she was invited to live at the Ferrer residence to study daily with the maestro.²⁵ Upon his death, Olcott Bickford returned to Los Angeles, publishing her first musical arrangement in 1905 with George J. Birkel Company; Appendix A contains a list of her publications, including her compositions and arrangements. There she began to establish a career as a performer and teacher; Appendix B contains a list of the concerts she played between 1902 and 1957 not including AGS concerts. Concert records show that during her 1913 tour of the Midwest she met Myron A. Bickford, a

²⁵ All of the biographical sketches Purcell wrote about Olcott Bickford consistently indicate that she studied with Ferrer towards the end of his life, between 1903 and 1904 specifically. But, Olcott Bickford's short biographical sketches in *Cadenza*, which were published during her lifetime, do not specify when she studied with the Mexican American guitarist and suggest that she began studying with him earlier than 1903. The one published in 1906 only mentions that she "studied the instrument in San Francisco with the late celebrated M. Y. Ferrer." And the one published in 1909 details that she "began the study of the instrument (guitar) in San Francisco, Cali., with the late M. Y. Ferrer." Furthermore, the entries published in contemporary biographical encyclopedias, such as Bone's *The Guitar and Mandolin* and Prat's *Diccionario de Guitarristas*, give conflicting information about when Olcott Bickford began her studies with Ferrer. Prat's *Diccionario de Guitarristas* mentions: "At the age of 9 she began to study guitar with professor Manuel Y. Ferrer" ("A los 9 años de edad comenzó a estudiar la guitarra con el professor Manuel Y. Ferrer"). See Domingo Prat, *Diccionario Biográfico, Bibliográfico, Histórico, y Crítico de Guitarras (instrumentos afines), Guitarristas (profesores, compositores, concertistas, lahudistas, amateurs) y Guitarreros (luthiers)* (Buenos Aires: Casa Romero Fernández, 1934), 228. Bone's *The Guitar and Mandolin* indicates: "At the age of nine she commenced the study of the guitar under a local teacher and...she was one of the last pupils of Manuel Ferrer, residing in the master's house and receiving daily instruction and invaluable supervision of her studies." See Philip J. Bone, *The Guitar and Mandolin: Biographies of Celebrated Players and Composers*, 2nd ed. (London: Schott & Co. Ltd., 1954), 37. Her correspondence with Pratt and Bone indicates Olcott Bickford provided the biographical information published in both biographical encyclopedias. Because Prat's dictionary was published in Spanish, it is possible there was translation error. Nevertheless, in an article Olcott Bickford wrote in 1959, she stated the following: "I studied under him when I was a child and again during the last year of his life when he already seventy-five." Vahdah Olcott Bickford, "The Guitar in America," *Guitar Review*, no. 23 (June 1959): 18. Thus, published records reveal that Purcell's biographical information about her studies is incomplete.

renowned mandolinist, the director of the Cleveland Mandolin Orchestra, and an active member of the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists, and Guitarists (BMG Guild). By November of that year, they formed a duo known as The Bickford-Olcott Duettists, playing concerts in Ohio and meeting once more in 1914 at the BMG Guild's national convention. Toward the end of 1914, Olcott Bickford and Myron A. Bickford moved to New York City, where they established their teaching studios, got married, and changed their names.²⁶ Myron became Zarh and Ethel became Vahdah; these names were chosen in connection their interest in astrology. The Bickford's were happily married until Zarh's death in 1963. Throughout their marriage, they continued to play together in duets featuring different instrument combinations, to compose together, and in the 1920s they founded a music publishing company (Zarh Publishing Company) and a recording company (Zarvah Arts Record Company). After Zarh's death, Olcott Bickford remarried on November 11, 1968, to Robert Revere. She passed away on May 18, 1980, at age 94. In publications and writings, Olcott Bickford's name was published in many different combinations due to her first name's change and her two marriages, some are Vahdah E. L. Olcott and Vahdah E. L. Olcott-Bickford. Nevertheless, throughout her life, as suggested by her scrapbooks, by AGS publications, and by correspondence she wrote or edited, she did not hyphenate her name and she commonly signed her correspondence as "V.O.B." Therefore, in this document I refer to her as Vahdah Olcott Bickford, without a hyphen, but I have left the other formulations intact where they appear in the record (such

²⁶ Myron A. Bickford was married and had a child when he met Olcott Bickford. It is unclear when his divorce was finalized, but they moved to New York by December 1914. The news of their move was reported in *Cadenza*, see "Personals," *Cadenza* 21, no. 6 (December 1914): 14.

as in the name of the Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection).

William Foden (1860–1947) and Vahdah Olcott Bickford were two of the best known classical guitarists who promoted their instrument and its soloist tradition during the height of the BMG period. Although Foden was twenty-five years older than Olcott Bickford, she “stood shoulder to shoulder with Foden on the pages of *Cadenza* and *Crescendo* and in the eyes of much of the BMG community.”²⁷ Foden led *Cadenza*’s column, “The Guitarist,” from 1911 until 1914 while Olcott Bickford ran *Crescendo*’s column, “Guitarists Round Table,” from 1912 until 1916. In 1916, Olcott Bickford and Foden switched journals and she began writing for *Cadenza*’s guitar column and he led *Crescendo*’s guitar column. According to Olcott Bickford, this switch took place because after marrying Zarh Myron Bickford, who was a regular columnist for *Cadenza*, she felt that she couldn’t write or work for “rival magazines.”²⁸ Thus, Odell engaged Foden to replace Olcott Bickford and she went to work for *Cadenza*. Olcott Bickford wrote for *Cadenza* until 1922 and in 1927 she began to work for *Crescendo* once more, writing for that journal until 1929.²⁹

As guitar exponents, Foden and Olcott Bickford followed in the footsteps of nineteenth-century American guitarists and pedagogues James Ballard, Justin Holland, Charles de Janon, Luis T. Romero, Manuel Y. Ferrer, and others.³⁰ Like Ballard and

²⁷ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 153.

²⁸ Vahdah Olcott Bickford, “The Guitar in America,” 19.

²⁹ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 146.

³⁰ For more information on these guitarists, please see Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 61–64.

Holland, Foden and Olcott Bickford published guitar methods during their careers.³¹ Foden published *Foden's Grand Method for Guitar* in two volumes in 1920 and 1921, and Olcott Bickford published *The Olcott-Bickford Guitar Method*, op. 85, in 1921, and *Advanced Course for the Guitar*, op. 116, in 1924. Similarly, like de Janon, Holland, Romero, and Ferrer, both Olcott Bickford and Foden wrote original compositions and made arrangements of popular classical pieces, including works structured as theme and variations based on operatic pieces. Foden was primarily self-published, but he did publish certain compositions and arrangements for guitar with Siegel-Myers and William J. Smith Music Company.³² Olcott Bickford, on the other hand, published her compositions and arrangements primarily with the leading American music sheet publishing houses, Carl Fischer and Oliver Ditson.³³ As performers, both Foden and Olcott Bickford played concerts and toured the United States. Olcott Bickford gained popularity in the first decades of the twentieth century as a classical guitarist through her innovative solo concerts and vanguard programming, which included compositions of

³¹ James Ballard published *Elements of Guitar Playing* in 1838 and Justin Holland published *Comprehensive Method for the Guitar* in 1874 and *Modern Method for the Guitar* in 1876. For general information on these methods, please see Phillip F. Gura, *C.F. Martin & His Guitars, 1796–1873* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 24–29; and Aaron Shearer, “A Review of Early Methods,” *Guitar Review*, no. 23 (June 1959): 24–26. For more detailed information on Ballard’s method, please see Peter Danner, “A Noteworthy Early American Guitar Treatise: James Ballard’s ‘Element’ of 1838,” *Soundboard*, vol. 8, no. 4 (1981): 270–276. For more detailed information on Holland’s 1876 method, please see Jimmy Everett Moore, “The Significance of Justin Holland’s *Modern Method for the Guitar*” (DMA Treatise, Florida State University, 2009).

³² Vahdah Olcott Bickford, *Guitar Music Collection of Vahdah Olcott-Bickford*, comp. Ronald Purcell, ed. Darien S. Mann (Northridge: Music Library of California State University, Northridge, 1991), 94–96.

³³ *Ibid.*, 21–37.

Spanish composer Francisco Tárrega, J. K. Mertz, American guitarist composers, and even Fernando Sor's *Introduction et Variations sur un Theme de Mozart*, Op. 9.³⁴ They became fixtures of the BMG period and promoted the classical guitar within a complicated movement.³⁵

Around the 1920s, other classical guitarists emerged within the BMG movement, engaging with the community primarily as journalists and new columnists. Among these new figures were George C. Krick and Sophocles Papas. Krick, one of Foden's star pupils, began to report about the development of the classical guitar in Europe in 1924.³⁶ His writings "documented the domination of the European guitar scene by three Spaniards: Miguel Llobet (1878–1938), Emilio Pujol (1886–1980), and Andrés Segovia (1893–1987)."³⁷ Furthermore, Krick's article for *Crescendo* titled "The Mandolin and Guitar in Europe" constituted "the first notice of Andrés Segovia in a BMG periodical."³⁸ In March of 1929, *Crescendo*'s guitar advice column, "The Guitarists Round Table," underwent a makeover becoming "The Guitar and Steel Guitar Round Table." Accompanying the name change was a new writer, Sophocles Papas, who replaced Olcott Bickford. Papas was a late comer to the classical guitar scene, beginning to seriously

³⁴ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 22.

³⁵ William Foden was known as "The Wizard of the Guitar" and Vahdah Olcott Bickford was regarded as "The Grand Lady of the Guitar." For information about them and the development of their careers within the BMG period, please see Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 138–154.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 158.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

study the instrument when he was twenty-five years old.³⁹ His career as a teacher and performer during the 1920s and 1930s fell in line with the BMG movement's promotion of versatile instructors who could teach all the plectral instruments.⁴⁰ Papas's tenure as a writer for *Crescendo* did not accomplish the goal of inclusivity steel guitar lovers had hoped for. Instead, his tenure was short lived, only lasting until June 1930, and "despite the promised inclusion of the Hawaiian guitar as an equal subject," Papas's newly acquired friendship with Segovia became the prominent subject in his writings.⁴¹

At the turn of the twentieth century, BMG editors founded organizations with the mission of promoting the plectral instruments, their teachers, and performers. The commercial nature of the BMG fueled competition among manufacturers, periodical owners, and editors, and the foundation of these pioneering plectral instrument organizations showcases efforts made by the leaders of the movement to maintain cohesion in a ruptured environment. Among these organizations were the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists (1902–1953); the Banjo, Mandolin, Guitar and Zither Teachers' League of Philadelphia (1900–?); and the National Qualified Teacher's League of Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar (1902–1907). Each had varying levels of success and longevity, but the organization that showed the most viability within this group was the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists, which will be referred to as the BMG Guild throughout this dissertation. As an organization of national

³⁹ Elisabeth Papas Smith, *Sophocles Papas: The Guitar, His Life* (Chapel Hill: Columbia Music Company, 1998), 6.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴¹ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 166–167. In 1928, Papas and Segovia met in New York at Segovia's American debut.

scope, the BMG Guild was successful in sponsoring annual gatherings, which promoted fraternizing among the members of the community, but it failed to accomplish their foundational mission of establishing pedagogical and repertoire standards among the BMG community.

As the BMG Guild emerged as an institution focused on the plectral instruments, across the Atlantic, organizations in Germany were focused on only promoting the classical guitar. These German organizations were the Internationale Guitarristische Vereinigung (IGV), which was formed in 1899, and the Freie Vereinigung zur Förderung guter Gitarremusik (FVFGG), which was formed in 1904 after its members seceded from the IGV. The presence of these new organizations in Germany did not go unnoticed by American classical guitarists as initial reports of these organizations and their activities were reported in BMG periodicals, offering a precedent for the work of Olcott Bickford and others.

Women guitarists of the BMG movement spearheaded the formation of the first guitar societies in America, but their contributions as pioneers have remained unexamined. As members of the BMG period, they stayed informed about the development of the American and German plectral and plucked instruments organizations, which influenced their philanthropic efforts. The first attempts to form an organization of this kind date to 1905, when Gertrude Miller, who was editor of “The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Realm” column between 1902 and 1903, penned an article asking her fellow American guitarists to join her in forming the first guitar society in the country. Although her efforts were unsuccessful, Miller’s call to action ignited backing from the classical guitar community, and young women guitarists

such as Jennie M. Durkee and Olcott Bickford were quick to answer the call and support Miller's proposed institution.⁴² Although Olcott Bickford was engaged as a BMG columnist in the 1910s, in 1905 she was just entering the performing circles in Los Angeles and her support of Miller's proposal indicate her early interest in guitar societies. In 1923, Olcott Bickford acted on this interest and, inspired by Miller's early attempts to form an American guitar society, became a founding member of the first American guitar society. In an article written by Olcott Bickford in 1959 about the history of the guitar in America, she acknowledged Miller's pioneering attempts and recognized Miller as "the first person to ever try to start a guitar society in America."⁴³ The creation of the American Guitar Society (AGS) in 1923 generated a new classical guitar movement in the twentieth century, which propelled the birth of local classical guitar societies across the country.

The labor of the women guitarists of the BMG period is comparable to the philanthropic endeavors of American women who were members of music clubs and became founders and supporters of symphonic institutions in their communities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴⁴ Kathleen McCarthy defines the term

⁴² Gertrude Miller, "The American Guitar Society," *Cadenza* 12, no. 3 (November 1905): 12–13; and Gertrude Miller, "The American Guitar Society," *Cadenza* 12, no. 10 (June 1906): 15–16.

⁴³ Olcott Bickford, "The Guitar in America," 18.

⁴⁴ For an overview detailing the culture of women music clubs, see Linda Whitesitt, "Women as 'Keepers of Culture': Music Clubs, Community Concert Series, and Symphony Orchestras," in *Cultivating Music in America*, eds. Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 65–86.

philanthropy within a broad scope “that couples giving with voluntarism.”⁴⁵ This broader definition matches the nineteenth-century understanding of the term, and, instead of only including the contributions of a privileged few, it is inclusive of the many Americans who “donated their time and often modest sums for public ends.”⁴⁶ The extensive and unremunerated work conducted by Olcott Bickford on behalf of AGS is a key example of philanthropy, and will be analyzed as such throughout this dissertation.

Within the broader context of voluntarism and nonprofit organizations, McCarthy and Arlene Kaplan Daniels use the term “invisible careers” to define the philanthropic endeavors of women in full-time jobs with no monetary remuneration.⁴⁷ This term acknowledges the volunteering endeavors of women leaders who led the charge as “community service professionals.”⁴⁸ Within this framework, I argue that Olcott Bickford was one of the many women guitarists who had an invisible career as an institutional founder and pioneer.

Musical Institutions, Women Philanthropists, and Vahdah Olcott Bickford

Over the last half century, the study of women’s contributions as composers, conductors, performers, patrons, and philanthropists in European and American music

⁴⁵ Kathleen D. McCarthy, *American Creed: Philanthropy and the Rise of Civil Society, 1700–1865* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Arlene Kaplan Daniels, *Invisible: Women Civic Leaders from the Volunteer World*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), xix–xxvi; and Kathleen McCarthy, “Parallel Power Structure,” in *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 1–34.

⁴⁸ Kaplan Daniels, *Invisible*, xix.

has blossomed. With their pioneering studies in the second half of the twentieth century, scholars such as Judith Tick, Ruth A. Solie, Jane Bowers, Susan McClary, and Ellen Koskoff redefined the fields of musicology and ethnomusicology to include the histories of women in diverse social and cultural contexts. Through the lens of philanthropy, scholars such as Carol Oja, Cyrilla Barr, Ralph Locke, and Linda Whitesitt have explored the practices of women who, through volunteer work, financial donations, or both, contributed to the construction of musical culture and institutions in the United States.⁴⁹

By the turn of the twentieth century these women established a tradition of voluntarism that set an example for a younger generation, one that continues to be a staple of American democracy.⁵⁰ For the most part, American women patrons in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries came from a narrow social sector and did not represent diversity in race or class. They were white and affluent, and their privilege gave them

⁴⁹ Women across America worked for the establishment of musical institutions. In the twentieth century, Claire Reis was one of them. For more information on her role as founder of the League of Composers in 1923, see Penny Thomas, “Claire Reis: Advocate for Contemporary Music” (PhD diss., University of Florida, 1991); Cole Freeman, “Educating American Audience: Claire Reis and The Development of Modern Music Institutions, 1912–1930” (Master’s Thesis, University of North Texas, 2013). In the case of symphonic institutions, the Cincinnati Symphony was the first symphony to be “established and managed largely, indeed, in this case almost exclusively, by a group of women,” as Linda Whitesitt reports. For more about the endeavors of Helen Herron Taft and the women of the Ladies’ Musical Club of Cincinnati, see Whitesitt, “Women as ‘Keepers of Culture,’” 74–76. For a full history of the symphony, see Louis Russell Thomas, “A History of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra to 1931” (PhD diss., University of Cincinnati, 1972). Adella Prentiss Hughes belongs to the early generation of women impresarios. Her work expands from managing the symphony orchestra concerts presented by Cleveland’s Fortnightly Music Club to becoming the founder of The Cleveland Orchestra. For more information about her and her endeavors, please see Adella Prentiss Hughes, *Music is My Life* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1947). For more information on women patrons and activists making a difference in New York during the 1920s, see Carol J. Oja, *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 201–230.

⁵⁰ McCarthy, *American Creed*, 1–9.

time and access to financial networks, which they employed to support and foster music culture.

Women's philanthropy is embodied in the history of the plucked and plectral instruments and, as scholars look at the birth of American musical institutions, Olcott Bickford emerges as a compelling case study with regard to the classical guitar. Although the phrase, "nation's cultural custodians" has been used to describe these women's philanthropic endeavors, scholars such as Kathleen D. McCarthy have challenged this notion by detailing the limited power these women held within art institutions.⁵¹ Furthermore, according to McCarthy, "far from assuming a custodial role," American women philanthropists in the arts were "inveterate pioneers."⁵² The study of the history of the institutionalization of the classical guitar reveals that, as primary actors, women guitarists of the BMG movement were indeed pioneers who successfully lobbied for and established American guitar societies in which they could hold power and maintain cultural and artistic control. Furthermore, the central creative products of Western Art music are usually understood to be compositions in a canon that is dominated by white males, but the activities of pioneers such as Vahdah Olcott Bickford invite us to continue to rethink how we define creative activity and how these pioneers shaped important cultural enterprises. The establishment of these instrument-specific organizations can also be contextualized in direct contrast with the all-male organizations that were established by BMG advocates at the turn of the twentieth century, such as the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists, and Guitarists.

⁵¹ Kathleen D. McCarthy, *Women's Culture*, xi.

⁵² *Ibid.*, xiv.

Olcott Bickford's pioneering efforts and entrepreneurial skills form a link between the amateur women guitar players of the early nineteenth century and the modern-day women managers and executive directors of guitar organizations.⁵³ She was able to carve out for herself an invisible career as an institutional pioneer while negotiating gender stereotypes within the American guitar community. Like the women of the music clubs, Olcott Bickford was a white woman with a robust music education, and a founding member of an institution where she managed the day-to-day operations and set their cultural agenda. Unlike the women of the music clubs, though, Olcott Bickford was not from a wealthy family nor was she an amateur performer; her professional career as a classical guitarist informed and influenced her role as an institutional pioneer. Age is another difference. Institutional symphonic pioneers such as Adella Prentiss Hughes, who was forty-nine years old when she became the founder of the Cleveland Orchestra in 1918, were older than Olcott Bickford when they ventured into founding institutions and had a long trajectory of service in music clubs and other musical boards. Although Olcott Bickford had been a member of G.C. Lindsey's Guitar Club in her late teens, she was thirty-eight years old when she joined forces with other Los Angeles guitarists to establish AGS and did not have the same robust experience.

From 1923 until her death, Olcott Bickford prioritized her philanthropic endeavors on behalf of the AGS and was fundamental in keeping it financially stable and thriving. Her dedication to that institution and the reputation she built as an institutional

⁵³ Among the women leading guitar organizations today is Martha Masters. She has been the president of The Guitar Foundation of America since 2010 and between 2005 and 2010 she was its Executive Director. "Executive Committee," Guitar Foundation of America, accessed October 10, 2019, <https://www.guitarfoundation.org/page/ExecCommittee>.

pioneer influenced the rapid growth of guitar societies around the country and contributed to the institutional independence of the classical guitar from the BMG movement. Her invisible career was defined by her role as an institutional founder, her life-tenure as AGS's Musical Director, her transcribing and editing work for AGS's Publication Fund, her role as AGS's historian and lecturer in-residence, her fifty years of service as AGS's corresponding secretary, her diligent note-taking for meeting minutes as AGS's secretary, her marketing ventures on behalf of AGS, and her work as AGS's treasurer and bookkeeper.

Literature Review

The literature on Olcott Bickford and the history of the institutionalization of the classical guitar in America can be divided into four topics: biographical information, AGS activities, her relationship to the International Guitar Research Archive, and her Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar movement presence. Overall, these writings are not analytical, and the sources utilized in these studies are limited. Besides reviews of her concerts and activities in the BMG periodicals, the oldest article recognizing her extraordinary involvement with AGS was authored by her first husband, Zarh Myron Bickford. It appeared in the June 1959 issue of *Guitar Review* at the request of the editor and is titled "A Brief History of the American Guitar Society."⁵⁴ He included a narrative of the society's work throughout its thirty-five-year lifespan up to that point and described some of Olcott Bickford's philanthropic endeavors. He mentioned Olcott Bickford's efforts as editor, arranger, collector, and funder of AGS's Publication Fund, as

⁵⁴ Zarh Myron Bickford, "A Brief History of the American Guitar Society," *Guitar Review*, no. 22 (June 1959): 20.

well as her service as AGS's appointed Secretary-Treasurer and Musical Director "for life." He also recalled volunteering their home for AGS meetings during the depression years. Although no details are provided in this brief recollection to substantiate Olcott Bickford's impact on the organization's success, it is valuable in that it offers a first-hand account of her work.

In 1998, Ronald Purcell (1932–2011) echoed Zarh's praises and amplified the scope of Olcott Bickford's institutional involvement. That year, Purcell published two articles, one for *Guitar Review* and another for *Soundboard*; their contents are a mixture of recycled biographical material from Olcott Bickford's *Overture* obituary—which he wrote—and information about the International Guitar Research Archive (IGRA) and its contents.⁵⁵ Since its creation in 1980, the IGRA has become the main research center for guitar studies in the United States.⁵⁶ Although Ronald Purcell was the mastermind behind the establishment of the IGRA, its inception was primarily possible thanks to Olcott Bickford and her generous gift to California State University at Northridge (CSUN). In his *Guitar Review* article, he stated that "after the death of her first husband" and "not long before the earthquake of 1971" Olcott Bickford decided to change her will and donate her belongings to CSUN.⁵⁷ The donated collection encompassed her entire music library, journal and periodical collection, all her correspondence, and AGS business

⁵⁵ Olcott Bickford's obituary was reprinted in *Soundboard*, please see Ronald Purcell, "In Memoriam: Vahdah Olcott Bickford Revere," *Soundboard* 7, no. 3 (August 1980): 120.

⁵⁶ It currently houses four collections: The Brindle Collection, the Gómez Collection, the Lutwak Collection, and Vahdah's collection. Also, as of this writing, it will soon add the GFA's archive to its holdings.

⁵⁷ Ronald Purcell, "Vahdah Oclott-Bickford: The International Guitar Research Archives," 4.

documents (including correspondence of the organization, accounting books, programs, minutes, among other miscellaneous items). Purcell was a student of Olcott Bickford's starting in 1955, and they developed a very close mentor-student relationship; it is plausible that he was instrumental in convincing Olcott Bickford to change her 1965 will.⁵⁸ After her death, Purcell enlisted the Special Collections staff at CSUN and his graduate students (he was the head of the guitar department at the time) to tackle the enormous task of removing the collection from her residence in Whitley Heights.⁵⁹ The archival process was not able to begin until after 1987, the year CSUN was finally allowed to take possession of the collection due to probate issues; it concluded in 2012 when the collection was processed by archivist Julieta Garcia.⁶⁰

Guitar scholars conducting research at IGRA have focused primarily on the music collection and the journals housed at CSUN. Indeed, its music collection, which contains

⁵⁸ Her archives contain three old wills. One is dated December 31, 1961; the second one is dated September 2, 1963; and the third one dated May 5, 1965. All of these wills state that Olcott Bickford wanted to leave her guitar music library to the Music Department of the Los Angeles Public Library. Her first husband, Zarh Myron Bickford, died in March of 1961, which means that the 1961 will was drafted after his passing. The will that specified her donation to CSUN does not survive in her archives and I have been unable to obtain it. Olcott Bickford's connection to CSUN was Ronald Purcell, who joined its music department's faculty in 1971 after graduating with a master's degree from that institution. It is therefore plausible that Purcell's 1971 appointment influenced Vahdah to consider gifting her precious musical collection to CSUN, resulting in the change of her will that Purcell reported.

⁵⁹ Olcott Bickford's home was condemned by the city of Los Angeles in 1976 due to severe damage caused in the February 9, 1971 earthquake. While she was forced to move to an apartment nearby, the full collection remained in the home. See Ronald Purcell, "Vahdah Olcott-Bickford: The International Guitar Research Archives," *Guitar Review*, no. 111 (Winter 1998): 4.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 5; and Patricia Ward Biederman, "'Motherly Instincts' and a Passion for Guitar," *Los Angeles Times*, September 21, 1998, accessed September 12, 2020, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1998-sep-21-ss-25409-story.html>.

thousands of scores—a large percentage of them out-of-print North American and foreign guitar scores donated by Olcott Bickford—is rare and unique. Nevertheless, several other documents on the archives, as Purcell said, preserve “an important account of guitar history” waiting to be studied.⁶¹

Purcell’s 1998 *Soundboard* article showcases how well he knew Olcott Bickford’s collection and its contents.⁶² The article is structured in two sections, “The Early Vahdah” and “Vahdah the Letter Writer,” and their content can be directly traced to article clippings and letters found in Olcott Bickford’s collection at CSUN. He constantly referred to her as “a pioneer of the American classical guitar,”⁶³ and in the realm of pedagogy and education, he asserted that Olcott Bickford’s work “was North America’s equivalent to the work Segovia had been doing for more than fifty years.”⁶⁴ In his 1998 *Soundboard* article, written to commemorate AGS’s seventy-fifth anniversary and GFA’s twenty-fifth anniversary, Purcell credited Olcott Bickford as having played a role in the inception of these two organizations:

Vahdah was immediately sought after by one J. L. Larralde to join the Los Angeles Guitar Club. The rest is history. The American Guitar Society was formed and directed by Vahdah for the next 57 years.... In 1973, at the age of 88, she again made her expertise in the formation of the Guitar Foundation of

⁶¹ Purcell, “Vahdah Olcott-Bickford: The International Guitar Research Archives,” 1.

⁶² As IGRA’s Director and curator (formerly called the Vahdah Olcott Bickford Library), Purcell had unlimited access to Olcott Bickford’s collection. With this access, he cataloged her entire music sheet collection, which was published in 1991. To locate this catalog, see Olcott Bickford, *Guitar Music Collection of Vahdah Olcott-Bickford*.

⁶³ Purcell, “Vahdah Olcott-Bickford: The International Guitar Research Archives,” 8; and Purcell, “In Memoriam: Vahdah Olcott Bickford Revere,” 120.

⁶⁴ Purcell, “Vahdah Olcott-Bickford: The International Guitar Research Archives,” 8

America. Vahdah, one of the first chartered board members, advised and counseled this group (now celebrating 25 years), until her death in 1980.⁶⁵

Furthermore, during his tenure as GFA's inaugural president, Purcell sought recognition for Olcott Bickford by introducing a resolution in the October 1975 meeting to award her "lifetime honorary membership in the GFA."⁶⁶ Unanimously passed, the measure recognized her status as the founder of both the GFA and the AGS. Purcell's recognition of Olcott Bickford's accomplishments and the lifetime honorary membership awarded to her in 1975 constitute the only information available about Olcott Bickford's connection to both institutions. After Ronald Purcell's death in 2011, these assertions were forgotten and very little is known about Olcott Bickford's role in the inception of GFA. Documents found in her collection pertaining to her involvement in GFA's creation are discussed in the last part of this dissertation, showing that she was instrumental in providing advice and support to a new generation of American guitarists who wanted to establish a national foundation on behalf of the classical guitar.

Jeffrey Noonan's groundbreaking work on the history of the guitar in America traces the presence of the classical guitar in the BMG movement.⁶⁷ In Noonan's writings,

⁶⁵ Ronald Purcell, "Vahdah Olcott-Bickford and the 75th Anniversary of the AGS or: Vahdah Olcott-Bickford and the 25th Anniversary of GFA," *Soundboard* 25, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 19–20.

⁶⁶ Thomas F. Heck, "Newsworthy," *Soundboard* 3, no. 3 (August 1976): 45.

⁶⁷ For more information on his writings, see Noonan, *The Guitar in America*; Noonan, "Culture, Commerce and Aesthetics in Late Nineteenth Century America: The Guitar in America's BMG Movement," *Soundboard* 31, no. 1 (Summer 2005); and Noonan, "The Guitar in America as Reflected in Topical Periodicals, 1882–1933" (PhD diss., Washington University, 2004). Noonan is also the editor of the BMG Periodical index, which is an incredible data resource for any scholar conducting research within the years of the BMG movement. See Noonan, ed., *Guitar in American Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Periodicals, 1882-1933* (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, Inc., 2009).

Olcott Bickford is usually presented to the reader in contrast and comparison with American guitarist William Foden (1860–1947).⁶⁸ Although Foden and Olcott Bickford “virtually ignored each other on the pages of the BMG magazines,” Noonan concludes that they were “the most important American players and apologists for the guitar in the first half of the twentieth century.”⁶⁹ In his analysis, Noonan proposes that both Foden and Olcott Bickford tailored their self-promotion strategies to match the virtues that the BMG community attributed to their specific genders. He states that Olcott Bickford’s “insistent promotion of the expressive capabilities of the guitar aligned [her] with the perceived sensual, feminine side of music-making, opposing her to a more masculine, scientific, and technical approach” that Foden championed.⁷⁰

Olcott Bickford’s activities as a philanthropist fall outside the scope of Noonan’s research. Although his work covers a span of fifty years (the 1880s to the 1930s), it only reflects the first twenty to twenty-five years of Olcott Bickford’s eighty-year-long career. She was born when the BMG movement was emerging in the 1880s and her career flourished with the height of the movement. Her activities as a guitarist began to appear

⁶⁸ In his book, the eight chapter is titled “Interlude: The Wizard and the Grand Lady.” Throughout the chapter both Foden and Olcott Bickford are briefly introduced biographically and then Noonan talks about their careers within the BMG movement. Always placed in juxtaposition with each other, comments such as the following permeate the narrative of the book when addressing Olcott Bickford: “That same year [1904] a nineteen-year-old who was to prove Foden’s closest competitor for the role of America’s premiere guitarist made her first appearance in the BMG magazines.” Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 144. In earlier chapters, this pattern is also evident: “The most significant American guitarist of the generation following Foden, she offered a marked contrast to Foden both as a columnist and as a performer and personality.” Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 84.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 148.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 152.

in the pages of BMG periodicals around 1904 and, through her acute sense of self-promotion, she stayed visible in the news sections of periodicals. By 1912, she landed a job with *Crescendo* as the regular columnist for its guitar corner, “Guitarists Round Table,” becoming an in-demand columnist.⁷¹ As the BMGs movement’s influence was in decline in the 1920s, she moved to Los Angeles and ventured into philanthropy as one of AGS’s founding members. Until this dissertation, this part of her life has yet to be the primary focus of any work.

During Olcott Bickford’s lifetime, she appeared in two of the most comprehensive biographical dictionaries compiled in the first half of the twentieth century: Philip J. Bone’s *The Guitar and Mandolin: Biographies of Celebrated Players and Composers*, and Domingo Prat’s *Diccionario de Guitarristas*.⁷² She was in correspondence with both authors and contributed to both of the publications. After examining Olcott Bickford’s correspondence with Pratt, I was able to deduce that her biographical sketch in Pratt’s publication was of her authorship. In a letter from Pratt dated August 3, 1931, he tells

⁷¹ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 85. Olcott Bickford’s archive at CSUN contains letters from BMG community members who wanted to congratulate her on the new appointment. A letter from William Place Jr. reads: “Allow me to extend to you sincere congratulations upon your appointment as conductor of the Guitarists Round Table in the *Crescendo*. The writer has always enjoyed your articles keenly, not particularly because of his interest in matters pertaining to the guitar, but because the articles were intended to lift the instrument and because the abdominal egotistical illusions so common in the writings of many musicians were not forthcoming at every available opportunity.” William Pace Jr. to Ethel Lucretia Olcott, June 26, 1912, box 134, folder 2 (Place–Purcell), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA. Her first article as the new writer for this column was published in September of that year, see Ethel Lucretia Olcott, “Guitarists Round Table: The Value of a Good Guitar,” *Crescendo* 5, no. 3 (September 1912): 21.

⁷² Philip J. Bone, *The Guitar and Mandolin*, 37–38; and Domingo Prat, *Diccionario Biográfico, Bibliográfico, Histórico, y Crítico de Guitarras*, 228–229.

Olcott Bickford that he is close to finishing his book and asks her to send to him “any details of her engagements as a guitarist, the names of her teachers if she had any, and her date and place of birth.”⁷³ In this biographical sketch, she identifies herself as an “American guitarist performer and composer” and mentions her East Coast and West Coast tours, her residence in New York, and her engagement as AGS’s Music Director.⁷⁴ The sketch also details that in 1922 she gave the American premiere of Mauro Giuliani’s Concerto No. 3, op. 36 accompanied by a string quartet in New York’s Town Hall, and, in 1915, Paganini’s quartet in New York’s Wanamaker auditorium.⁷⁵

Her extensive correspondence with English mandolinist Philip J. Bone reveals that Olcott Bickford provided invaluable assistance for the compiling and publishing of this biographical dictionary. As Purcell states in his 1998 *Soundboard* article, she was “a ghostwriter for Philip J. Bone’s book.”⁷⁶ Correspondence as early as 1912, showcases the fact that Olcott Bickford edited a significant portion of the book and provided biographical sketches of American guitarists. For instance, in a letter dated December 17, 1912, Bone wrote to Olcott Bickford confirming the receipt of de Janon’s sketch.⁷⁷

⁷³ “Estamos por terminar mi libro “Biografías de Guitarristas...” le estimaria me mandase datos de usted al respecto de su actuación cual hubiese sido y sea con respecto a la guitarra, como tambien si ha tenido maestros, como se llaman ellos y por fin cuando nació y en donde.” Domingo Pratt to Vahdah Olcott Bickford, August 3, 1931, series II, box 134, folder 2 (Place–Purcell), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

⁷⁴ Prat, *Diccionario Biográfico*, 228–229.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁷⁶ Purcell, “Vahdah Olcott Bickford and the 75th Anniversary,” 19.

⁷⁷ Philip J. Bone to Ethel Lucretia Olcott, December 17, 1912, series II, box 132, folder 8 (Bone–Bryant), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar

Furthermore, in a letter dated July 4, 1914, Bone wrote to Olcott Bickford that “the volume is completed!!” and credited her with the name of the publication, writing that she asked “for the work to be titled The Guitar & Mandolin, now, haven’t you noticed it is?”⁷⁸ Olcott Bickford also acted as the American liaison for sales and helped market the book.⁷⁹ According to a letter dated July 19, 1913, Bone was planning to include both his and Olcott Bickford’s biographies in the publication as the only “living players.”⁸⁰ Nevertheless, neither biographical sketch was included in the first edition of the book, published in 1914, and there was no mention of Olcott Bickford’s arduous work. In 1954, when the second edition was published, both sketches were included, and hers included a line at the end that credited (albeit minimally and vaguely) her work on behalf of the first publication of this book: “It was through the intense enthusiasm, encouragement and practical assistance of Mrs. Bickford that the first edition of this volume was produced.”⁸¹

Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA. For De Janon’s entry, see Phillip J. Bone, *The Guitar and Mandolin: Biographies of Celebrated Players and Composers* (London: Schott & Co. Ltd., 1914), 161–162.

⁷⁸ Philip J. Bone to Ethel Lucretia Olcott, July 4, 1914, series II, box 132, folder 8 (Bone–Bryant), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

⁷⁹ Philip J. Bone to Ethel Lucretia Olcott, February 11, 1913, series II, box 132, folder 8 (Bone–Bryant), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA. And Philip J. Bone to Ethel Lucretia Olcott, February 15, 1915, box 132, folder 8 (Bone–Bryant), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

⁸⁰ Philip J. Bone to Ethel Lucretia Olcott, July 19, 1913, series II, box 132, folder 8 (Bone–Bryant), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

⁸¹ Philip J. Bone, *The Guitar and Mandolin*, 38.

Short biographies of Olcott Bickford can be found in contemporaneous guitar literature, but her philanthropic endeavors remain condensed to a line or two.⁸² Overall, there is limited information available about women guitarists who emerged during the BMG, and Noonan is one of the few scholars who has delved into this topic.⁸³ Chapter One of the present work complements Noonan's findings by providing more detail on these women's multifaceted careers and their philanthropic endeavors.

The Sources

This dissertation relies on a multiplicity of primary sources that range from articles published in BMG and guitar periodicals to personal correspondence. Primarily, my research was conducted at the International Guitar Research Archive (IGRA), located in Special Collections at CSUN's University Library (previously known as Oviatt Library). There, I was able to access Olcott Bickford's extensive collection, which is divided into seven series: 1) scores, 2) correspondence, 3) personal and subject files, 4) periodicals, 5) American Guitar Society files, 6) photographic material, and 7) sound recordings. Series two, three, five, and six proved invaluable during my writing process. They contain Olcott Bickford's personal scrapbooks; scrapbooks she made highlighting AGS's activities; AGS programs and meeting minutes; and personal and institutional

⁸² Thomas F. Heck, "Bickford (Revere), Vahdah Olcott [née Olcott, Ethel Lucretia]," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Peter Danner, accessed September 14, 2020, www.oxfordmusiconline.com; Summerfield, *The Classical Guitar*, 58–59; and Ernie Jackson, *Guitar: The Only Book You'll Ever Need* (Newton Abbot: F+W Media International, 2011).

⁸³ In his work, Noonan provides biographical information and lists some career achievements of BMG women guitarists such as Gertrude Miller, Jennie M. Durkee, and Metta Bischoff-Henning. See Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 61–76.

correspondence, among other items. In addition, I conducted further research in the personal collection of scores, letters, and ephemerae of Nancy Yerkes, who was a student of Olcott Bickford's in the 1910s and a close friend of the Bickford's throughout their lives. This collection was in possession of Angie Hougen, member of the AGS's Board of Directors. It had been donated to AGS by one of Nancy Yerkes's descendants and was made available to me during a visit to California.

As mentioned above, probate issues impeded CSUN from taking possession of Olcott Bickford's collection until 1987; in 1991, Purcell mentioned this struggle in the introduction to the catalog that he compiled of Olcott Bickford's music collection, writing that she left:

A legacy of American and foreign guitar music prints and history to the Music Department of California State University, Northridge. Due to a very complicated probate settlement, beginning in 1981 and lasting more than six years, the majority of her estate was auctioned off to satisfy various claims against the estate thus delaying the cataloging of the special library. Ten years late this unique guitar music collection, is now catalogued and contains over 6,000 titles of 19th and early 20th century editions, many printed in 19th century America.⁸⁴

A letter found in the private collection of Nancy Yerkes dated June 12, 1985, and addressed to Ronald Purcell from David Yerkes, Executor of Robert Revere's estate, further details the long probate battle. After Zarh's death in 1961, Olcott Bickford remarried and, in 1968, Robert Revere became her second husband. After her death in 1980, his will created many problems in the distribution of their estate. According to the letter sent by Yerkes to Purcell, there were many parties disputing ownership of Olcott Bickford's instruments, family documents, correspondence, music collection, journal collection, and photographs. These were CSUN, the American Guitar Society, Norman

⁸⁴ Olcott Bickford, *Guitar Music Collection of Vahdah Olcott-Bickford*, v.

Olcott Tiffany (Olcott Bickford's nephew), and a client represented by McWhinney and McWhinney. In 1983, CSUN submitted a proposal of settlement, but this was still being reviewed by all parties in 1985. At the time this letter was sent, some progress had been made with particular items, such as the "full-length oil of Vahdah by Modra" and "the gold medal awarded Vahdah by Caruso," but specific instruments, her sheet music collection, and recordings continued to be contended items.⁸⁵ On June 20, 1985, selected estate properties and instruments were auctioned off, and it was not until 1987, that CSUN was finally allowed, by a court-ordered mandate, to access the private facility where Olcott Bickford's collections were stored.⁸⁶ While her collection was stored in that facility, "many instruments were stolen, including a baroque guitar by Joachim Tielke and a Martin guitar dated 1875."⁸⁷

Olcott Bickford's collection at CSUN contains several documents that were written or owned by Ronald Purcell. For instance, throughout my first research trip to the archives, I discovered a draft of Purcell's 1998 *Soundboard* article in Series 5 of her collection. Purcell's 1971 full time appointment to the music faculty at CSUN was likely a determining factor as to how her collection ended up housed at that institution, and,

⁸⁵ The full-length oil of Olcott Bickford painted by Modra, the Primo framed certificate of a competition Olcott Bickford won, the framed photograph of Olcott Bickford as a girl, the photograph of Vahdah with guitar, and the gold medal awarded Vahdah by Caruso were all transferred to the American Guitar Society in 1985, as documented in a letter from David Yerkes to Ronald Purcell on June 12, 1985; the letter is found in Nancy Yerkes private collection. Olcott Bickford's oil painting hung in Purcell's CSUN office for many years (Biederman, "'Motherly Instincts' and a Passion for Guitar").

⁸⁶ David Yerkes to Ronald Purcell, June 12, 1985, Nancy Yerkes private collection.

⁸⁷ Purcell, "Vahdah Oclott-Bickford: The International Guitar Research Archives," 5. The whereabouts of her Hauser guitars is also unknown.

knowing Purcell's involvement in the process of obtaining the collection and his later appointment as the founder and director of the IGRA, I was aware of the fact that he had constant access to the collection before 2012, when it was finally processed by Oviatt Library's Special Collections and Archives.⁸⁸ My suspicions of potential cross-contamination were confirmed when I found drafts of Purcell's articles and his correspondence in several folders.⁸⁹ Ronald Purcell's collection was donated to CSUN after his death in 2011; once it is processed, it will be necessary to examine its contents and determine whether it contains any documents that are currently missing from Olcott Bickford's collection.

Chapter Summary

Chapter One of this dissertation contextualizes Vahdah Olcott Bickford within the BMG period and delves into the careers of pioneering women that came before her. The first part of the chapter provides an overview of the societal changes that facilitated women's entrance to the work force as music teachers, composers, and performers during the late nineteenth century. Then, utilizing BMG periodicals as primary sources, the second part of the chapter focuses on the lives and accomplishments of the women guitarists of the BMG period. This section is divided into four parts: 1) early women guitar pioneers, such as Meta Bischoff-Henning and Dominga I. Lynch; 2) Olcott

⁸⁸ Olcott Bickford's collection was originally housed in the Music Department under the curatorship of Ronald Purcell. In 2003, it was moved Oviatt Library's Special Collections and Archives. Ronald Purcell and Tony Gardner, "Historical Vibrations: The Oviatt Library Celebrates the Guitar," noted from an exhibition that opened on October 23, 2010 (CSUN's Special Collections and Archives records).

⁸⁹ Julieta Garcia, interview with author, Los Angeles, August 17, 2018.

Bickford's contemporaries, such as Elsie Tooker, Jennie M. Durkee, and Gertrude Miller; 3) the writings of BMG women columnists and editors, such as Edna May Sayers, who actively encouraged other women in their endeavors as professional or amateur plectral instrumentalists; and 4) women plectral instrument orchestras. Chapter One ends with a section devoted to the history of the classical guitar in California from the middle of the nineteenth century to the turn of the twentieth century. It analyzes the influence of the women's rights movement and the philanthropic example set by members of women's clubs in the life of Angelenas entering the workforce at in the 1900s, such as Olcott Bickford and Tooker.

Chapter Two examines American and German plucked and plectral instrument organizations funded at the turn of the twentieth century. Scholarship on this area is extremely limited, which is why this chapter will provide crucial information about the struggle behind the creation of such organizations and how they relate to the American guitar society model.

Chapter Three narrates the AGS's history and the context that surrounded the creation of the first American guitar society. The first section of this chapter delves into the first attempts made by a BMG guitarist to form a guitar organization in America. The rest of the chapter provides historical information about when, how, and who established the AGS in 1923 along with details about its initial governing documents and the diverse projects that members adopted to promote the classical guitar in America. Throughout these sections, I showcase Olcott Bickford's invisible career as AGS's operations, musical, and financial director while focusing on her positionality as a well-to-do white

woman who was able and willing to serve the classical guitar, cultivate its repertoire, and promote its playing tradition in Los Angeles.

The conclusion examines the legacy of the American classical guitar model through the lens of the AGS's activities and Olcott Bickford's philanthropic endeavors. This part of the dissertation provides an analysis of both the regional and broader legacy of the AGS. Additionally, it addresses the symbiotic relationship between the culture of women's philanthropy and the creation of the first American guitar society.

For the second and third chapters, I primarily relied on several BMG periodicals and guitar magazines. These were *S. S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal*, *Crescendo*, *Cadenza*, *Guitar Review*, *Soundboard*, *The Serenader*, and *American Music Journal*.

CHAPTER 1

WOMEN IN A MAN'S WORLD: A HISTORY

Feminist historical surveys of American music detail the transition of women musicians from amateur performers to professionals. These narratives illustrate how society evolved from valuing women's music-making from an accomplishment or a craft throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century to an acceptable profession in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The classical guitar is embedded in the history of American women's music, as it was one of the instruments that was deemed appropriate for young women's musical education in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the 1880s, the BMG movement emerged in America, promoting the teaching and performing of plucked and plectral instruments amidst a changing cultural landscape that was beginning to accept professional women musicians. With changing attitudes and more robust opportunities to pursue a thorough musical education, young women guitarists began to break glass-ceilings and embarked on professional careers as performers, composers, and teachers.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the changing narratives that facilitated women's entrance to the work force as music teachers, composers, performers, and philanthropists during the late nineteenth century. This section includes current scholarship on these topics and illustrates the evolution of women musicians from amateurs to professionals. The second section of this chapter elucidates the presence of women during the BMG movement by introducing women pioneers and contemporaries of Vahdah Olcott Bickford. Women

were a minority in the BMG period, but, like the men of the BMG movement, their careers were multi-faceted. Biographical sketches and periodical notices published in BMG journals reveal that women of this period made their living not just from teaching, but also from composing, performing, and writing. The final section of this chapter delves into the fight for women's suffrage in California and how this progressive movement fostered independence and community activism among young women who, like Olcott Bickford, grew up in California and forged professional careers at the turn of the twentieth century.

Women's Road to Professional Careers in Music

Within the domestic sphere (the imprecise but useful concept used by gender-focused literature on women in music written in the 1980s and 1990s to define the home and similar private spaces), the non-academic concept of feminine accomplishments was developed, nourished and promoted during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹ Manuals from this period enumerated accomplishments as dancing, embroidery, painting, dress, and music.² These activities were permissible because they were associated with the virtues of humility, sensibility, subordination and femininity, and because they were viewed as social skills taught "as part of a traditionally functional educational curriculum" and not a formal art.³ Furthermore, and with respect to music, "there was a

¹ Judith Tick, *American Women Composers Before 1870* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983), 1–2.

² Judith Tick, "Towards a History of American Women Composers Before 1870" (PhD diss., The City University of New York, 1979), 2.

³ Tick, *American Women Composers Before 1870*, iv.

rigid sexual distinction among various instruments.”⁴ As Carol Neuls-Bates states, instrument such as the keyboard, guitar and harp were deemed “feminine” because “no alteration in facial expression or physical demeanor” was required during playing.⁵ These instrumental gender-based divisions were inherited from the English and remained through much of the nineteenth century.⁶ The strict and restricted curriculum that dictated women’s education throughout this period resulted in the birth of the lady amateur and the notion of music as a craft in the hands of women who wanted “to gain masculine favor.”⁷

Citing grace and femininity, instruments that required an altered facial expression or body exertions, such as the violin, cello and flute were categorized as appropriate for only male musicians. These instrumental gender-based divisions were inherited from the English and remained through much of the nineteenth century. During this period, the guitar was deemed an appropriate instrument for women along with the piano and the harp. The strict and restricted curriculum that dictated women’s education throughout this period resulted in the birth of the lady amateur and the notion of music as a craft in the hands of women who wanted “to gain masculine favor.”

This stereotype of the superficial and romanticized musical lady amateur dominated women’s history in early American music in a monolithic and uncontested historiography until the publishing of works by feminist musicologists, such as Judith

⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁵ Carol Neuls-Bates, *Women in Music* (New York: Harper, 1982), xiii.

⁶ Tick, “Towards a History of American Women Composers,” 67–68.

⁷ Ibid., 38.

Tick, in the 1970s and 1980s. Tick's *American Women Composers Before 1870* was published in connection with her groundbreaking 1979 dissertation, "Towards a History of American Women Composers Before 1870," which was the "the first study of American women composers and attitudes towards female musicians before 1870."⁸ Both of these publications promoted a new look into the opportunities and choices women found in a changing social climate around the mid-nineteenth century.

Although women musicians living during the years right before the revolutionary war to post civil war were considered amateurs, Tick's research concludes that there was a visible progression in women's musical skills that correlated with their ability to obtain a more substantial musical instruction. Curriculum advancements in women's education brought forth by the rise of female seminaries in the 1830s contributed to a new meaning of the concept of female accomplishments.⁹ Classes at these seminaries favored a more well-rounded education for the female population during their formative years. The music curriculum at female seminaries included "instrumental instruction, music appreciation, and even occasionally theory."¹⁰ Furthermore, some seminary schools also featured organ lessons in their curriculum, and exceptional educational institutions included orchestral instruments in addition to the domestic instruments (the piano, harp and guitar).

⁸ Ibid., vii.

⁹ Female seminaries were private schools for girls between the ages of fourteen and seventeen. For more information pertaining the methods books used at these schools, the subjects offered, and the schools that excelled in the education of women in their formative years, please see Tick, "Towards a History of American Women Composers," 76–119.

¹⁰ Ibid., 77.

American women's accumulation of musical skills during the late eighteenth and nineteenth century contributed directly to their venture into professions such as music teaching and composing for commercial publications and inspired their philanthropic endeavors. The long tradition (and business) of promoting music as a desirable accomplishment for women resulted in greater opportunities for women to grow their musical skills and show their appreciation for music.

Philanthropy as a Means to Effect Change

During the nineteenth century, social, political and constitutional norms dictated women's second-rate social status on the basis of gender; they lacked a direct avenue to effect change. As American historian Anne Firor Scott states, "In the 1790s, women could neither vote nor hold office, and they were customarily excluded from most public institutions."¹¹ The condition of women's status in public settings described by Scott was evident since the very inception of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and remained unchanged in the nineteenth century.¹² Following the call for service and

¹¹ Anne Firor Scott, "Women's Voluntary Associations: From Charity to Reform," in *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 36.

¹² During this period, the only state that granted women equal voting rights from 1776 until 1807 was New Jersey. "It has long been seen as one of the flukes of American Political history.... The state was the first—and for a long time the only—to explicitly enfranchise women, in laws passed more than a century before the 19th Amendment enshrined the principle of gender equality at the polls in the United States Constitution." Newly surfaced documents prove that New Jersey's women did exercise their right to vote until it was suppressed in 1807 when the state's legislature passed a law "explicitly limiting the franchise to white men." Jennifer Schuessler, "On the Trail of America's First Women to Vote," *The New York Times*, published February 24, 2020 and updated February 25, 2020. It is also stated in this article that "after scouring archives and historical societies across New Jersey, researchers at the Museum of the American

seeing the need for public help in a developing nation, women stepped into new leadership roles outside of their family settings. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, philanthropy became a tool for women “to wield power in societies intent upon rendering them powerless.”¹³ And women-organized benevolent societies started to appear “in all the seaboard cities,” such as Boston and New York City.¹⁴ These benevolent societies were designed to aid with social problems relating to homelessness, poverty and health. In addition, their mission was broadened to include the development and cultivation of the arts in a new, developing nation.

American musical institutions were the beneficiaries of the financial and organizational structure put in place more than two hundred years ago by extensive waves of music patronage in America. This began with amateur music making in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which “provided the fertile soil from which many of the musical institutions of America that support and promote ‘serious’ or ‘classical’ music sprang,” as Ralph Locke and Cyrilla Barr have argued.¹⁵ Since upper and middle class white women constituted a large percentage of the amateur music makers during this era, their education played a critical role in their love and appreciation for certain kinds of

Revolution in Philadelphia have located poll lists showing that women really did vote in significant numbers before the right was taken away.”

¹³ Kathleen McCarthy, “Parallel Power Structure,” in *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 1.

¹⁴ Scott, “Women’s Voluntary Associations,” 36.

¹⁵ Ralph Locke and Cyrilla Barr, “Patronage—and Women—in America’s Musical Life: An Overview of a Changing Scene,” in *Cultivating Music in America*, eds. Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 26.

music, which, in the following decades, transformed into voluntarism and activism to promote European classical music in America.¹⁶

Linda Whitesitt has demonstrated that “the entry of women into the arena of the entrepreneur was not... a sudden transformation, but rather an evolution from amateur performer to public impresario.”¹⁷ Locke and Barr have called the 1830s “the first real ‘wave’ of patronage,” recognizing the “organizational and promotional labors” of Lowell Mason and the Handel and Haydn Society.¹⁸ Scholarship focusing on women’s activities during that period has unveiled the crucial role women parishioners of the First Reformed Church of Hudson, NY, and the Presbyterian Church of Honesdale, PA, played through such activities as fundraising to buy organs for their congregations and playing for services, without pay, “if a professionally trained male organist was not available or could not be afforded.”¹⁹ This wave of voluntarism was followed in the next decades by women’s music clubs, of which, as Whitesitt reports, there were more than 600 by 1919.²⁰

¹⁶ Ibid., 2. In her autobiography, Adella Prentiss Hughes reminisces about her time at Vassar College, where she was the leader of the glee club and founded the banjo club her senior year. As early as her Vassar year, Prentiss Hughes was organizing concerts and, in 1890, she organized “Vassar’s first concert by the combined glee and banjo clubs.” Adella Prentiss Hughes, *Music is My Life* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1947), 29–30.

¹⁷ Linda Whitesitt, “Women as ‘Keepers of Culture’: Music Clubs, Community Concert Series, and Symphony Orchestras,” in *Cultivating Music in America*, eds. Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 65.

¹⁸ Locke and Barr, “Patronage,” 27.

¹⁹ Stephen L. Pinel, “Women and Church Organs, 1830s–1860s,” in *Cultivating Music in America*, eds. Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 54.

²⁰ Whitesitt, “Women as ‘Keepers of Culture,’” 66–67.

Through their philanthropic endeavors, the women of the music clubs paved the way for female entrepreneurship in music institutional management. In her writings about women's philanthropic activities and their impact on American society, Kathleen D. McCarthy concluded that "one of the most important contributions of women's giving and voluntarism [during the Gilded Age] was their role in opening a growing array of female careers."²¹ McCarthy's conclusion can be observed when studying the history of music patronage in the United States. Whitesitt states that as the music clubs' members entered the "public arena of concert promotion and management," they quickly acquired entrepreneurial skills, becoming impresarios.²² Among the many women involved in these clubs were Helen Herron Taft (1861–1943) in Cincinnati, Frances Anne Wister (ca. 1870–1956) in Philadelphia, and Adela Prentiss Hughes (1869–1950) in Cleveland, who in collaboration with their local women's committees worked for the "establishment of permanent symphony orchestras in their communities."²³

Women of the music clubs' intensive labor played a significant role in the cultivation of the arts and the creation of musical institutions devoted to promoting a Eurocentric, all-male repertoire. Although nowadays we recognize their immense labor and highlight their contributions, during their lifetimes, they were constantly excluded

²¹ McCarthy, "Parallel Power Structure," 17.

²² "Of this generation of women impresarios, two in particular must be singled out: Ella May Smith (1860–1916), president of the 3,000-member Music Club of Columbus from 1903 to 1916, and Adella Prentiss Hughes (1869–1950), a charter member of Cleveland's Fortnightly Music Clubs." Whitesitt, "Women as 'Keepers of Culture,'" 69. For more information on the early careers of women impresarios, see Linda Whitesitt, "The Role of Women Impresarios in American Concert Life, 1871–1933," *American Music* 7, no. 2 (Summer, 1989): 159–180.

²³ *Ibid.*, 73.

from holding seats on boards of directors at the institutions that they helped establish. Their participation took place separate from the all-male boards, which were the public faces of the newly established musical institutions.²⁴

Like the symphonic institutions, plectral instrument organizations founded at the turn of the twentieth century, such as the BMG Guild, created a similar leadership glass ceiling for women. As Chapter Two will show, women of the BMG period were excluded from administrative boards, officer positions, and even performances at annual conventions for more than a decade. In comparison, the American Guitar Society (AGS) and guitar societies founded after 1923 were relatively more progressive because their creation was influenced by women guitarists emerging at the turn of the twentieth century such as Olcott Bickford and Gertrude Miller. AGS included women among its founders and maintained a proportional number of women in its board and officer positions. Nevertheless, as Chapter Three and the conclusion examine, women such as Olcott Bickford continued navigating gender stereotypes and chose their involvement as officers carefully while respecting seniority and power boundaries. In the case of Olcott Bickford, although she held a myriad of officer positions on behalf of the American Guitar Society since she was thirty-eight and worked tirelessly on behalf of the organization, she was not

²⁴ Whitesitt, “Women as ‘Keepers of Culture,’” 73–78. As Whitesitt writes, Helen Herron Taft was “a woman of considerable means who [had] taken music lessons as a child” and was part of the Ladies’ Musical Club in Cincinnati that decided, in February 1894, to establish a symphony orchestra in their city. Because of societal power structure, she had to conduct her work in the periphery as a member of the female governing board of directors that worked below the one led by men. While the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra’s female governing was in charge of raising funds and the daily management of the orchestra, the male governing board’s “responsibility was to oversee the finances and function in the larger public sphere as a liaison between the orchestra and the business and professional community.” *Ibid.*, 74.

elected president until 1966. From 1923 until 1966, AGS's office of the presidency was only held by male members who were older than her such as Zarh Myron Bickford, who served from 1923 until 1961, and Herbert Gray, who served from 1961 until 1966.

Women Composers

During the nineteenth century, there were women composers in America who displayed artistic ambition by writing and publishing parlor and educational pieces.²⁵ In her research, Tick concludes that women composing between 1790–1830 were professional musicians who composed on the side as an “adjunct to their teaching rather than a primary activity.”²⁶ By analyzing the records of published sheet music, Tick dates the earliest known appearance of a piece composed by a woman in an American commercial publication to 1789 (“Graceful Move” by Caterina Galli). Additionally, she dates the earliest known pieces composed by an American woman, or one living in the United States, to appear in an American commercial publication to 1793 (“The Cheerful Spring Begins Today” and “Asteria’s Fields” by a Lady of Philadelphia).

Tick’s conclusions can inform the understanding of women composers in the early decades of the BMG period. The few pieces that were published in BMG journals during the 1880s and 1890s reveal that women guitarists composed to complement their work as teachers. Like English guitarist Madame Sidney Pratten (1824–1895), American

²⁵ Tick, “Towards a History of American Women Composers,” 120–136.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 125–126.

women guitarists composed and published educational pieces for their pupils, such as Dominga I. Lynch's *The Enterprise Waltz*.²⁷

Tick's findings also date the emergence of the first generation of professional American women composers—meaning women composing and publishing music for the commercial market as a form of income—between 1840 and 1850. These women were “a transitional generation” that connects the “musical lady amateur” with later figures such as Amy Beach and Margaret Lang.²⁸ In the guitar world, the first generation of professional American women composers did not come until the twentieth century with figures such as Vahdah Olcott Bickford. Olcott Bickford is the first American woman guitarist who consistently published her own compositions, transcriptions, and arrangements with leading publishing houses, such as Oliver Ditson and Carl Fischer.

Women as Music Teachers

There are reports of woman teachers as early as before the revolutionary war and scholars have concluded that in America “it is as teachers that women musicians have

²⁷ Dominga I. Lynch, *The Enterprise Waltz*, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 12, no. 4 (October–November 1895): 16–17. For more information on Madame Sydney Pratten's life and compositions (born Catharina Josepha Pelzer), see Stewart William Button, “The Guitar in England 1800–1924” (University of Surrey, PhD dissertation, 1984), 124–128 and 144–150; and Frank Mott Harrison, *Reminiscences of Madame Sidney Pratten: Guitariste and Composer* (Bournemouth: Barnes & Mullins, 1899).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 191. This generation featured figures such as Marion Dix Sullivan, Jane Sloman, Augusta Brown, Faustina Hasse Hodges, and Mrs. E. A. Parkhurst. The biographies of these women reveal that all but Sullivan were professional performers as well as composers. For more information on the lives and compositions of these women, see Tick, “Towards a History of American Women Composers,” 188–237.

been most visible.”²⁹ For instance, Tick refers to a Miss Ball advertising her services as a singing teacher in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1730.³⁰ When addressing the presence of women in the music education profession during the eighteenth century it is vital to highlight the social parameters under which they could work. During this century women exercised the profession of private music teachers, a job that took place within the confinements of the home. The public music education jobs, such as those at the singing schools, were, nevertheless, out of reach for women.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century and over the course of the nineteenth century, women music teachers began to enter the realm of public education. As women gradually began to teach at music schools and continued to work primarily as private music teachers, they began to participate in musical conventions. Established in the 1820s by Lowell Mason, at these conventions “music teachers met annually and exchanged information.”³¹

The emergence of the suffragette movement in the middle of the nineteenth century gave rise to the entrance of more women to the work force between 1870 and 1900. Tick’s research concludes that during these later decades of the nineteenth century music education (with emphasis on the piano) and instrumental performance “became a major female occupation.”³² Women’s participation in music education organizations and conferences remained a constant. For instance, women actively participated in the Music

²⁹ Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music*, 2nd edition (Portland: Amadeus Press, 2001), 282.

³⁰ Tick, “Towards a History of American Women Composers,” 32.

³¹ Ammer, *Unsung*, 283.

³² Tick, “Women as Professional Musicians,” 97.

Division of the National Education Association (NEA), a division that was established in 1884, “by presenting papers, performing, and serving on committees.”³³

Although women’s participation was present in music education organizations, it must be noted that they were excluded from becoming officers or members of executive boards until around the turn of the twentieth century, much like the women patrons whose work helped build musical institutions. Sondra Howe reports that “although there were no women officers in the NEA Department of Music Education from 1885 to 1894, women held positions as vice president and secretary between 1895 and 1907.”³⁴

Another example of women’s limited governmental involvement in these organizations can be seen in the history of “the first national music teacher’s organization in the United States.”³⁵ The Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) was another music education organization in which women were active since its inception in 1876.

Nevertheless, MTNA “was a men’s organization that barely acknowledged that many women were teaching and attending conferences. The officers and committee members were men, except for Mrs. S. E. Sexton from West Rudolph, Vermont, one of the vice presidents for 1885.” It was not until the 1969–1973 term when the first woman president, Celia Mae Bryant, was elected.³⁶

³³ Sondra Wieland Howe, “A Historical Perspective on Contributions of American Women Music Educators,” *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 22, no. 2 (April 2001): 150.

³⁴ Sondra Wieland Howe, *Women Music Educators in the United States: A History* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2013), 100.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Women On Stage

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries women from musical or theatrical families, most of whom were European, were seen performing in recitals and concerts across America and Europe.³⁷ These women did not belong to the upper-class and supplemented their household incomes with public performances. Due to social prejudices surrounding women performers, female amateurs who wanted to maintain their respectability while venturing beyond the parlor scene had to start testing the imposed boundaries through a charitable and philanthropic lens. Throughout the nineteenth century the sexual definitions of instrumental performance and composition transitioned into no longer being “exclusively ‘sex typed’ as male.”³⁸ This evolution of thought resulted in the first steps towards the acceptance of all women performers into the recital halls.

The road towards the acceptance of women performers was built by women pioneers, influencers, and a powerful marketing strategy based on curiosity. For instance, in the case of the violin, women pioneers such as Maud Powell (1867–1920) and Camilla Urso (1840–1902) “established precedents for other women”; influencers such as the founder of the Boston Conservatory of Music, Julius Eichberg, promoted equal instruction for women and men leading by example; and all-women string orchestras “exploited the prejudice that made them oddities.”³⁹ Urso was an early pioneer emerging

³⁷ Adrienne Fried Block, “Women in American Music, 1800–1918,” in *Women & Music: A History*, 2nd ed, ed. by Karin Pendle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 193.

³⁸ Tick, “Women as Professional Musicians,” 95.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 99–100.

as a child prodigy in the middle of the nineteenth century. Her biographical background as a foreigner and a girl born into a musical family fell within the previously mentioned permissible parameters that facilitated women performers to step into concert halls in America.⁴⁰ Powell, on the other hand, was an American-born violin virtuoso trained in Europe who emerged as a child virtuoso during the late part of the nineteenth century.⁴¹ Both of these women had long lasting touring careers and played key roles in the slow acceptance of women as professional violinists, soloists, and orchestra members. Urso's careers expanded through a period of over 35 years, touring all around the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Europe between 1853 and 1888. Powell's professional career began in 1885 with her Berlin Philharmonic debut. She toured extensively in the United States and Europe and "was always interested in presenting new works," including works by American women composers such as Amy Beach and Marion Bauer.⁴² Similarly to the way Maud Powell and Camila Urso created precedents for women violinists, there were women guitarists who paved the way for the emergence of a figure like Vahdah Olcott Bickford in the twentieth century. The following section of this chapter is devoted to them and their contributions as performers, composers, writers, and philanthropists.

⁴⁰ For more information on Camilla Urso's pioneering role and her biography, see Charles Barnard, *Camila: A Tale of a Violin* (Boston: Loring, 1874); Jennifer Schiller, "Camilla Urso: Pioneer Violinist (1840–1902)" (DMA document, University of Kentucky, 2006); and Christine Ammer, "The 'Lady Violinists' and Other String Players," in *Unsung*, 35–40.

⁴¹ For more information on Maud Powell's pioneering role and her biography, see Karen A. Schaffer and Neva Garner Greenwood, *Maud Powell: Pioneer American Violinist* (Ames: Iowa State Press, 1988); Catherine C. Williams, "'The Solutions Lie with the American Women': Maud Powell as an Advocate for Violinists, Women, and American Music" (master's thesis, The Florida State University, 2012); and Ammer, "The 'Lady Violinists' and Other String Players", 43–46.

⁴² Ammer, "The 'Lady Violinists' and Other String Players," 45.

Women of the BMG Movement

It was not uncommon for women to play the classical guitar in America and Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Because the guitar was categorized as a domestic instrument, women were instructed to play the guitar as part of their accomplishment-based education. Nevertheless, the widespread acceptance in musical circles of professional women guitarists pursuing multi-faceted careers as performers, composers, and writers relied on pioneers.

During the BMG movement, women guitarists were a very small minority, and their contributions, accomplishments, and compositions are scattered across BMG journals. It seems that during this period, youth was a contributing factor to secure press coverage. All of the women guitarists who appeared in the pages of BMG journals were in their twenties at the time their biographical sketches were published. Moreover, only a few women guitarists were able to maintain a constant presence in these publications past the initial mention, and only Olcott Bickford retained her job as a monthly columnist for a significant number of years.

Biographical sketches reveal that women guitarists taught for a living, and adjacently performed, composed, and wrote for selected journals. A semantic analysis of these sketches exposes the fact that young women guitarists emerging in the late nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century had to carefully negotiate pre-existing societal and cultural parameters. The language in their biographies highlight virtues of modesty and subordination, unlike the biographies of their male peers. For instance, the following excerpt on Elsie Tooker highlights her humility and compliance:

In spite of her great talents, Miss Tooker's ideal is yet far above herself and she is ever striving to further her progress by conscientious study and practice. Miss

Tooker is yet under 20 years of age, vivacious, sprightly and ever obliging; and being exceedingly modest concerning her attainments has not reached that condition of inflated head that cause some of our best guitarists to refuse to grant a moment of enjoyment to those who express a desire to hear them play.⁴³

The contrast with an excerpt from the same *Cadenza* issue on Myron Bickford, who was only three years older, is stark:

He strives to elevate the banjo, mandolin and guitar by showing what they are capable of producing in the way of good music, and is demonstrating this through the performances of three banjo, mandolin and guitar clubs under his direction.... He is deservedly successful in his profession because he is studious, intelligent, able and enterprising.⁴⁴

Furthermore, perhaps to showcase their playing abilities and validate their position as accomplished players, all of the sketches of young BMG women guitarists include a list of their repertoire. In comparison, men's biographical sketches did not include repertoire lists possibly because readers would have assumed that since these artists were men, they were not limited by skill level; rather, they featured notices of new publications or performing/conducting engagements.

In addition to the cultural and societal limitations women musicians faced during the first decades of the BMG movement, women guitarists also had to confront the movement's disparaging attitudes toward the guitar. Editors such as Samuel Swaim Stewart, who owned "the first American periodical devoted to the guitar and related

⁴³ "Miss Elsie Tooker, of San Jose, CAL.," *Cadenza* 5, no. 6 (July–August 1899): 2.

⁴⁴ "Myron A. Bickford, of Greenfield, MASS.," *Cadenza* 5, no. 6 (July–August 1899): 22.

instruments,” degraded the guitar on sexist grounds as distasteful and instead promoted the banjo as a more proper instrument for women:⁴⁵

The guitar, as a ladies’ instrument, when compared with the banjo, is decidedly vulgar. The position of holding the guitar (its manner of construction compelling its rest upon the left leg) covering the pelvis, when compared with the graceful picture of a young lady holding the banjo upon the right thigh is decidedly contrastive, and the contrast is all in favor of the banjo. There is nothing graceful about a young lady playing guitar.⁴⁶

Within a commercial movement that favored the banjo over the guitar, banjo manufacturers such as Stewart used their journals to encourage more “society ladies” to take up the banjo and learn to play it well.⁴⁷ Furthermore, I argue that Stewart’s intentions to demean the guitar to obtain new clients slowed the acceptance of women guitarists during the first decade of the movement. First published in 1882, Stewart’s periodical did not prominently feature women guitarists, and from 1882 to 1900 it only published two biographical sketches of young women guitarists.⁴⁸

Early Women Pioneers in the BMG Movement

Meta Bischoff-Henning and Dominga I. Lynch were early women guitar pioneers who appeared in the pages of *Stewart’s* at the end of the nineteenth century. Little

⁴⁵ Jeffrey J. Noonan, *The Guitar in America: Victoria Era to Jazz* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 26.

⁴⁶ S. S. Stewart, “The Banjo vs. Guitar, as a ‘Ladies’ Instrument,” *S.S. Stewart’s Banjo and Guitar Journal* 3, no. 1 (December 1884 and January 1885): 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ The two biographical sketches were those of Meta Bischoff and Domina I. Lynch. See “Miss Meta Bischoff,” *S.S. Stewart’s Banjo and Guitar Journal* 3, no. 9 (April–May 1886): 12–13; and “Dominga I. Lynch,” *S.S. Stewart’s Banjo and Guitar Journal* 11, no. 5 (December 1894– January 1895): 2.

biographical information is known about both of them, but more is known about Bischoff-Henning thanks to a biographical sketch published in an 1889 issue of *Stewart's*; Figure 1.1 shows her portrait, published alongside the sketch.⁴⁹

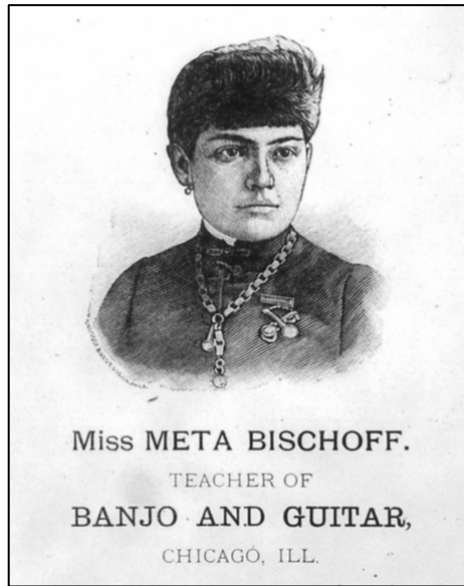


Figure 1.1. Meta Bischoff-Henning. Portrait published in *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 3, no. 9 (April–May 1886), p. 12.

Bischoff-Henning was born into a musical family, which facilitated her entrance to the performing circles. Her father Wilhelm F. Bischoff was an immigrant from Germany and her teacher. It is very possible that although Bischoff-Henning was born in New York City, her standing as the daughter of an immigrant could have also contributed to her recognition as a performer, composer and teacher within the BMG community. Reported to have started teaching “when only eleven years of age,” Bischoff-Henning continued teaching in the Chicago area after marrying banjoist John Henning.⁵⁰ As far as

⁴⁹ “Miss Meta Bischoff,” 12–13.

⁵⁰ A notice published in 1889 mentions that the couple had “opened a banjo, guitar and mandolin academy, in connection with a complete line of musical merchandise” in Kansas City, MO. See “J. E. Henning,” *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 6, no. 3 (October–November 1889): 5. It is unclear from this notice whether they

her performances go, it is unclear whether she was paid for her playing. The biographical sketch in *Stewart's* mentions her musical success at a “benefit banjo and guitar concert,” and a mention of this event was also published in “The Banjo World” column.⁵¹

Although Bischoff-Henning’s first appearance in *Stewart's* is published as a biographical sketch, a pattern of portraying women’s success as subordinate — and indebted — the work of men appears in the last paragraph:

The Elite News, of February 27th, has the following: We are pleased to learn that the benefit banjo and guitar concert given to Miss Meta Bischoff was a grand success both as a musical venture and financially. The lovers of the banjo owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Henning for his endeavors to create and build up an interest in this instrument. Miss Bischoff is one of the finest lady performers, on both banjo and guitar, in the country. Mr. Henning is thus far to be congratulated upon his success in these concerts.⁵²

Bischoff-Henning’s career after her marriage was tied to that of her husband’s. All of the notices published after her biographical sketch featuring information about her endeavors are located in the news sections announcing Mr. Henning’s endeavors. In these announcements she was referred to as “his accomplished wife,” “his wife,” or “his charming wife.”⁵³ Although these references were extremely common for the time, her

relocated to Kansas around this time or whether they just opened an additional academy there. A biographical note about J.E. Henning published in 1900, seems to suggest the latter. “Mr. Henning is ably assisted by his charming wife... They live in a pleasant home near the lake shore at 825 Greenleaf Ave., in Chicago’s most beautiful suburb.” “John E. Henning,” *Cadenza* 6, no. 3 (January– February 1900): 12.

⁵¹ Ibid., 3.

⁵² “Miss Meta Bischoff,” 13.

⁵³ For examples of this, see “J. E. Henning,” *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 3, no. 12 (October– November 1886): 5; “The Hennings,” *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 4, no. 4 (June– July 1887): 7; “J. E. Henning,” *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 6, no. 3 (October– November 1889): 5; “John E. Henning,” *Cadenza* 6, no. 3 (January– February 1900): 12.

identity as purely a guitarist was put aside, perhaps willingly, to favor her husband's banjo career and their Banjo, Guitar and Mandolin academy in Chicago.

Dominga I. Lynch was another American woman guitarist pioneer who achieved some recognition among the BMG community as a teacher and composer. She was first mentioned in *Stewart's* in the December 1894–January 1895 issue; Figure 1.2 shows her portrait, again published alongside the sketch.⁵⁴



Figure 1.2. Dominga I. Lynch. Portrait published in *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 11, no. 5 (December 1894– January 1895), p. 2.

From this biographical sketch it is known that she was a musician and guitarist residing and teaching in Philadelphia. No birth year is provided, only the mention that she “showed at a very early age a most decided talent for music, singing correctly all the melodies from popular operas before she has reached her fourth year; but, being a somewhat delicate child, no application to the study of music was exacted or even permitted until she had passed the years of childhood.”⁵⁵ Her guitar studies appear to

⁵⁴ “Dominga I. Lynch,” 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

have begun with Ferrar, a Spanish guitar virtuoso, in Paris around 1889, but they only lasted a year. Upon her return to America she studied theory and graduated from the musical academy of Professor R. Zeckwer. Following her introductory biographical sketch, Lynch wrote an article for *Stewart's* titled "Hints to Guitar Students." It contained advice to students about not acquiring a guitar in Europe and bringing it back to the states citing that the difference in climate would cause the instrument to break or become damaged. Also, it contained technical advice about the mechanisms necessary to create artificial harmonics, a skill she learned from her Spanish teacher, and it recommended that guitarists avoid using metal strings even if they were to save "thirty to twenty cents a month."⁵⁶ There are no more known articles written by her in the BMG periodicals; although she does publish her reply to a letter from "Wolverine," who was seeking advice on technical matters, in the June–July 1895 *Stewart's* issue.⁵⁷ Lynch's 1895 article is the earliest record of a published piece offering technical advice written by an American woman guitarist.

There are records of three pieces Lynch authored: *The Enterprise Waltz*, *Far From Thee*, and *St. Louis March*.⁵⁸ Overall, the musical language in these compositions

⁵⁶ Dominga I. Lynch, "Hints to Guitar Students," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 11, no. 6 (February– March 1895): 5.

⁵⁷ For this advice exchange between "Wolverine" and Lynch, see "Mandolin and Guitar Notes," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 12, no. 2 (June– July 1895): 9. In her reply, her name is misspelled as "Domingo" instead of "Dominga."

⁵⁸ Both *The Enterprise Waltz* and *Far From Thee* survive. They were published in *Stewart's*. See Dominga I. Lynch, *The Enterprise Waltz*, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 12, no. 4 (October– November 1895): 16– 17; and *Far From Thee*, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 10, no. 5 (December 1893– January 1894): 20– 21. However, *St. Louis March* only appears advertised in *Stewart's*. See "St. Louis March for Guitar by D. I. Lynch," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 12, no. 4 (October– November 1895): 29.

seems tailored to beginning students. This observation is corroborated by the way *The Enterprise Waltz* was introduced in *Stewart's* as a piece that would “no doubt meet with the approval of teachers of that instrument; being quite easy and pretty.”⁵⁹ This waltz was certainly written for beginner students and its purpose is congruent with her endeavors as primarily a guitar teacher. It shows a slight degree of technical difficulty with the introduction of fretboard agility beyond first position; see measures 5–7 and 9–10 in Figure 1.3.



Figure 1.3. Dominga I. Lynch, *The Enterprise Waltz*, mm. 1–12. Published in *The Enterprise Waltz*, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 12, no. 4 (October–November 1895), p. 17.

Noonan concludes that both Lynch and Bischoff-Henning constructed pioneering careers in the BMG community within the restricted societal parameters that restricted women's professional endeavors:

Each of these women played a pioneering role in America's late-[nineteenth] century guitar community. Bischoff-Henning appears to be one of the first native-born guitarists to display an accomplished technique in public performance;

⁵⁹ “Mandolin and Guitar News”, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 12, no. 4 (October–November 1895): 9.

Lynch's articles represent some of the earliest serious discussions of applied guitar technique in the BMG periodicals. Nonetheless, the BMG community reflected the values of America's late Victorian society and neither woman could transcend conventional expectations and roles.⁶⁰

In the 1890s, both of them disappeared from the pages of *Stewart's* even though the journal was published until 1903.

Their disappearance may be attributed to the emergence of new women guitarists, such as Elsie Tooker and Vahdah Olcott Bickford, and a saturated market that would only view women guitarists as token figures. In the case of Bischoff-Henning, her disappearance from the pages of *Stewart's* was linked to her husband's venture into "marketing his own instruments and music" and ceasing to endorse and distribute Stewart's instruments.⁶¹ Samuel Swaim Stewart, the owner and editor of *Stewart's* until 1898, was known to dislike competition and to voice his opinions vociferously.⁶² Once Mr. Henning decided to become an independent agent and venture into the publication of his own magazines (*The Elite Banjoist* from 1890–91 and *The Chicago Trio* from 1897–98), Bischoff-Henning, who was usually associated with his ventures, quickly vanished from the pages of *Stewart's*. After the death of Stewart, *Stewart's* went through a brief restructuring, which further displaced Lynch and Bischoff-Henning in favor of featuring new rising players.

⁶⁰ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 65.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 28.

Olcott Bickford's Contemporaries

At the turn of the twentieth century, four women guitarists became regulars in the pages of the BMG periodicals: Elsie Tooker (1879–c. 1934), Jennie M. Durkee (1877–1941), Gertrude Miller (b. 1879–?), and Vahdah Olcott Bickford. As colleagues, they knew each other, played together at certain events, and, most important, supported each other's endeavors. Although Tooker, Durkee, and Miller were contemporaries of Olcott Bickford, they were all featured in the periodicals as rising artists five to six years before Olcott Bickford first appeared in *American Music Journal* and *Cadenza* (see Table 1.1). Noonan's research points out that "unlike many BMG soloists cited in the magazines, Tooker and Durkee did not promptly disappear but continued to garner positive notices in the periodicals."⁶³

Table 1.1. First publication of American women guitarists' biographical sketches in BMG periodicals

Year	Details
1886	Meta Bischoff-Henning's biographical sketch appears in <i>Stewart's</i>
1894/95	Dominga I. Lynch's biographical sketch appears in <i>Stewart's</i>
1899	Gertrude Miller's and Elsie Tooker's biographical sketches appear in <i>Cadenza</i>
1900	Jennie Durkee's first biographical sketch appears in <i>Cadenza</i>
1906	Ethel Lucretia Olcott's first biographical sketch appears in <i>American Music Journal</i> and <i>Cadenza</i>

Source: Data from *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* and *Cadenza*

Elsie Tooker, a San Francisco-based guitarist, was born on September 1, 1879 in Utah; Figure 1.4 shows her portrait, which was published in the cover of *Cadenza* in

⁶³ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 66.

1899.⁶⁴ She worked primarily as a teacher and was the co-editor of *Stewart's* "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm" column from its first issue on November 1900 until May 1902. Her biographical sketch mentions that she began studying the classical guitar at the age of seven with her mother, who also was a guitarist.⁶⁵ As a classical guitarist emerging in California, Tooker furthered her guitar studies under the wing of Mexican American guitarist Manuel Y. Ferrer, who was recognized during the BMG movement as one of the prominent figures of the early development of the classical guitar in the West.⁶⁶ Section Three of this chapter expands on his involvement in the development of the classical guitar in California and on his role as the teacher of figures such as Luis T. Romero, Miguel Arévalo, Olcott Bickford, his daughters, and Tooker.



Figure 1.4. Elsie Tooker. Portrait published in *Cadenza* 5, no. 6 (July– August 1899), p. 1.

⁶⁴ "Miss Elsie Tooker, of San Jose, CAL.," 1–2.

⁶⁵ "It is chiefly owing to her mother's tutelage and patient efforts that Miss Tooker has gained her proficiency." *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁶ Vahdah Olcott Bickford, "The Guitarist: Sidelights on the Careers of Famous Masters of the Guitar," *Cadenza* 24, no. 10 (October 1917): 10.

According to Olcott Bickford, who wrote about her in one of her *Cadenza* monthly columns, Tooker was one of the few American women guitarists who travelled the country performing as a guitar soloist.⁶⁷ Although concert programs do not survive, there are references of Tooker's travels in newspapers, such as *The San Francisco Call* and *The Philadelphia Journal*.⁶⁸ The December 2, 1900 notice published in *The San Francisco Call* about her travels mentions that in 1900 Tooker performed in New York and in other Eastern cities, which are not specified. This short article also mentions that "leading music critics" called her "The Queen of Guitarists" during her tour and reprints a review of one of her concerts in Philadelphia, which was published in *The Philadelphia Journal*: "Her technique is absolutely faultless, she performs the most difficult of music with an easy grace that is charming in the extreme, while her shading and general interpretation are those of a heaven-born artist."⁶⁹ In the absence of concert programs, *Cadenza*'s 1899 biographical sketch provides a glimpse of the type of repertoire she would have performed at those concerts. Tooker arranged pieces such as Beethoven's *Adagio* and Paderewski's *Minuet a l'Antique* for the guitar, which were unpublished and "for her own use."⁷⁰ Among the pieces that were in her repertoire were Giulio Regondi's *Introduction et Caprice*, op. 23, and several pieces arranged by her teacher, Manuel Y. Ferrer, such as Chopin's *March Funèbre* and a theme and variations based on Donizetti's *Lucretia Borgia*.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ "Mrs. C. J. Tooker and her Daughter," *The San Francisco Call*, December 2, 1900, accessed October 9, 2020, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/>.

⁶⁹ Ibid., accessed December 15, 2020, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/>.

⁷⁰ "Miss Elsie Tooker, of San Jose, CAL.," 2.

Tooker was the first woman guitarist to hold an editorial post in a BMG journal, using her writings to encourage and promote her colleagues' activities. Her published writings are discussed in the following sub-section.

Gertrude Miller was a progressive guitarist, teacher, performer, writer, and the first guitarist to propose the formation of an American guitar society in a BMG journal; Figure 1.5 shows her portrait.⁷¹ She was born in Wisconsin in 1879, but her career flourished and developed in Vinton, Iowa, where her father was the Director of Music at the Iowa College for the Blind.⁷² Taught to play the guitar by her father, Prof. J. M. Miller, she made her first public appearance at the age of thirteen.⁷³

⁷¹ Gertrude Miller, "The American Guitar Society," *Cadenza* 12, no. 3 (November 1905): 12–13.

⁷² "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm," eds. Elsie Tooker and Edna May Sayers, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 6 (May 1901): 2. Miller lived in Portage, Wisconsin for a number of years between 1901 and 1906. First announced in the ladies' pages, in 1901, she had the intention of "leaving Vinton in the Fall...and locate in a larger city." *Ibid.*, 2. In 1906, she moved back to Vinton, Iowa. Gertrude Miller, "The American Guitar Society," *Cadenza* 12, no. 10 (June 1906): 15–16.

⁷³ "Miss Gertrude T. Miller of Vinton, Iowa," *Cadenza* 6, no. 2 (November–December 1899): 2.



Figure 1.5. Gertrude Miller. Portrait published in *Cadenza* 6, no. 2 (November–December 1899): p. 2.

Her biographical sketch links her to two leading European guitarists, J.K. Mertz and Zani de Ferranti.⁷⁴ It also mentions that she had “received many manuscript pieces among which are: *Walpurgis-Night Caprice Fantastique* (Ferranti) and *Grand Fantasia Original* (Mertz) both of which are unpublished, and also Ferranti’s unpublished guitar school.”⁷⁵ The repertoire listed in her biography showcases her status as an accomplished performer and a progressive guitarist who programmed pieces by fellow American composers. In addition to playing works by European figures such as Giulio Regondi’s *Introduction et Caprice*, op. 23 and Fernando Sor’s *Cinquième Fantasia*, Miller performed pieces by American guitarist/composers such William Foden’s theme-and-variations arrangement of the song *Alice, Where Art Thou*. As a teacher, she gained

⁷⁴ Noonan’s research corroborates the fact that “the Miller family appears to have had a connection to Josephine Mertz, the widow of the guitar virtuoso Johann Kaspar Mertz, as well as to the family of Italian guitarist Zani de Ferranti.” See Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 67–68 & 193–194.

⁷⁵ “Miss Gertrude T. Miller of Vinton, Iowa,” 2.

experience assisting her father “in his work at the college, teaching in the mandolin and guitar department” when she was in her late teens.⁷⁶ She later established her own studio, but there is little information available about her success as a private teacher after 1906.

Miller was also a writer who fiercely advocated for qualified guitar teachers, better playing technique, and good quality instruments.⁷⁷ She published several articles in BMG journals between 1901 until 1906 and was the editor of *Stewart’s* “The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm” column from June 1902 to October of that year. In 1902, Miller was enthusiastic about the formation of the American Guild, hoping its organization would “do much in behalf of the guitar.”⁷⁸ Nevertheless, there is no record of her involvement with the organization and, in 1905, she wrote an article that paved the way for the formation of the first American guitar society.⁷⁹ This article is discussed further in Chapter Three.

Jennie Mercedes Durkee was a talented guitarist who embodied the archetype of the BMG movement’s versatile and multi-instrumentalist teacher; Figure 1.6 shows her portrait. She was born in Chicago on December 5, 1877. Her father, George B. Durkee, was an instrument inventor and builder, working as Lyon & Healy’s factory

⁷⁶ “The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm,” eds. Elsie Tooker and Edna May Sayers, *S.S. Stewart’s Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 6 (May 1901): 2.

⁷⁷ Gertrude Miller, “Alert, there! Guitarists,” *S.S. Stewart’s Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 12 (December 1901): 6–7; Miller, “Notes by a Keen Observer” in “The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm,” ed. Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart’s Banjo and Guitar Journal* 19, no. 3 (March 1903): 3; and Miller, “Notes by a Keen Observer” in “The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm,” ed. Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart’s Banjo and Guitar Journal* 19, no. 4 (May 1902): 5.

⁷⁸ Miller, “Notes by a Keen Observer” in “The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm,” 5.

⁷⁹ Miller, “The American Guitar Society,” 12–13.

superintendent and Washburn's plectral instrument inventor throughout his career.⁸⁰

Beginning her music studies at an early age, she studied with Professor Lynn of Chicago until the age of fourteen and then went to St. Louis to study with William Foden.⁸¹ Like Miller, Durkee also programmed works by American guitarist/composers such as Foden and de Janon.⁸² An early biographical sketch highlights her successful endeavors as "a teacher of the guitar, mandolin, banjo and harmony" based in Chicago.⁸³ Around the 1910s, "she took up the ukulele" and included this instrument in her teaching advertisements, publishing her own ukulele method in 1917.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ "Miss Jennie M. Durkee, of Chicago, ILL.," in "Prominent Teachers and Players," *Crescendo* 10, no. 5 (November 1917): 7.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² "Miss Jennie M. Durkee, of Chicago, ILL.," *Cadenza* 6, no. 4 (March–April 1900): 12. Charles de Janon was born in Cartagena, Colombia in 1834, but his family emigrated to New York when he was six years old (in 1840). De Janon was a naturalized American who built his career as a guitarists, arranger, composer, and teacher during the BMG movement. Bone, *The Guitar and Mandolin*, 1st ed., 161–162.

⁸³ "Miss Jennie M. Durkee, of Chicago, ILL.," in "Prominent Teachers and Players," 7.

⁸⁴ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 67; and Tom Walsh, "Ukelele Ladies," *The Journal of the Ukelele Hall of Fame*, accessed on September 22, 2020. https://www.ukulele.org/?Ukulele_Journal. Her Ukelele method, *The American Way of Playing Ukelele Solos* was self-published. In 1919, it was revised, re-published, and distributed by Lyon & Healey. This latter publication is in Olcott Bickford's music collection, see Olcott Bickford, *Guitar Music Collection of Vahdah Olcott-Bickford*.



Figure 1.6. Jennie M. Durkee with her Terz guitar and a ukulele. Portrait found in series V, box 158, Item 3, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

Throughout her life, she had several health issues, which began early in her childhood.⁸⁵ Due to a severe illness, in 1903, she “was ordered by her physician” to move to another climate.⁸⁶ Choosing to relocate to Denver, CO, Durkee had to re-build her teaching studio from the ground up. In Chicago, where she had taught for twelve years, she had developed “the reputation of being the finest guitar soloist in that city,” but Denver was new territory for her.⁸⁷ Upon her arrival to the city, she opened her new studio in the Colonial Building, successfully entering Denver musical circles and thriving

⁸⁵ “Miss Jennie M. Durkee, of Chicago, ILL.,” 12.

⁸⁶ “Miss Jennie M. Durkee, of Chicago, ILL.,” in “Prominent Teachers and Players,” 7.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

as a teacher and performer. In 1911, “she returned to Chicago very much improved in health,” resuming her teaching and performing engagements in the Windy City.⁸⁸

According to different biographical sketches published in BMG journals between 1900 and 1925, Durkee was a progressive and curious guitarist.⁸⁹ She knew about instrument construction from her father and built two guitars with him.⁹⁰ One of them was a beautifully decorated Terz guitar that had “a carrying quality equal to that of any concert harp,” which was appraised in 1905 at \$500.⁹¹ She was also an avid music collector:

Her library comprises one of the finest collections of music for the guitar in the United States, and among the many valuable instruction books therein is the complete series of lessons on the guitar by late Madam Sidney Pratten, of London, England, which is highly prized by Miss Durkee.⁹²

As a composer, it seems Durkee wrote a small number of works; one was titled *Reverie*, but these scores do not survive. Unlike other contemporaries of Olcott Bickford, Durkee was not engaged as a BMG columnist by any journal. Nonetheless, she was an active member of the community, writing letters to BMG editors when she saw a need.⁹³

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ The term “curious” is being used to describe Durkee’s inquisitive nature and her desire to find out more about other musical activities such as manufacturing and collecting music.

⁹⁰ “Miss Jennie M. Durkee, of Chicago, ILL.,” in “Prominent Teachers and Players,” 7.

⁹¹ “Jennie M. Durkee,” *Cadenza* 11, no. 9 (May 1905): 31.

⁹² “Miss Jennie M. Durkee, of Chicago, ILL.,” 12.

⁹³ Jennie M. Durkee to Editor of *Cadenza*, April 16, 1900, in *Cadenza* 6, no. 5 (May–June 1900): 27.

Olcott Bickford and Durkee knew each other. They were both in attendance and performed at the BMG Guild's twenty-first annual convention, which was held in New York City in 1922.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Durkee relocated to Los Angeles around 1923. Her last documented engagement in Chicago was a radio performance that aired on May 1922 on Station KYW of Chicago.⁹⁵ In 1923, Olcott Bickford and Durkee were in attendance at the first meeting of the American Guitar Society in 1923 and became founding members of the organization.⁹⁶ It is possible that Durkee's own musical collection influenced Olcott Bickford to begin collecting music scores and methods. Although no correspondence between both women regarding this topic survives, Durkee began collecting music before 1900 and Olcott Bickford would have seen the BMG notice detailing Durkee's hobby because, as her collection shows, she was an avid reader of plectral instrument magazines. AGS scrapbooks and meeting minutes do not mention Durkee as an active member or a member of its ensemble, but on May 12, 1925, Durkee played the hymn *Flee As a Bird* at the funeral of another founding member of the American Guitar Society, Lillian Weller Kemp.⁹⁷ Durkee passed away in 1941 in Los Angeles, California, at the age of 64.

⁹⁴ "The Story of the Twenty-First Annual Convention and Concert," *Cadenza* 29, no. 6 (June 1922): 8–11. Olcott Bickford performed on Tuesday evening at a recital in the Wurlitzer Hall, and Durkee performed an arrangement of selections from *Il trovatore* on her ukulele during the last day's banquet.

⁹⁵ Walsh, "Ukelele Ladies."

⁹⁶ H. F. Odell, "Editorial," *Crescendo* 17, no. 6 (December 1924): 10.

⁹⁷ "News," *Crescendo* 18, no. 1 (July 1925): 8.

The Ladies' Pages

In 1900, after almost two decades of publication, *Stewart's* began publishing a new column tailored for a new demographic. "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm," commonly referred to as the Ladies' page among BMG members, was the first column published in an American plectral instruments journal that was led by women, featured women, and was written for women. It was devised by *Stewart's* new editor, Mr. Morris, who had succeeded S. S. Stewart after his death.⁹⁸ Looking for two new up-and-coming women instrumentalists, he hired Elsie Tooker, a classical guitarist, and Edna May Sayers, a mandolinist who was a member of the Imperial Orchestra of Watertown, NY (Figure 1.7 reproduces Sayers's portrait as published in *Stewart's*).⁹⁹ The Ladies' page provided a pioneering safe space for women, amateur as well as professional, to be recognized within the BMG movement and to comment on their standing within the movement, their personal goals, and hopes for the field.

⁹⁸ As a commercial venture, magazine ownership and publishing was strictly controlled by men. Thus, this column was devised by a man at a time when women's magazines were quite popular.

⁹⁹ Very little is known about Edna May Sayers. There is only a very brief biographical paragraph published in 1901 introducing her to *Stewart's* readers. In that paragraph she is described as "an accomplished young lady, and a thorough musician." See "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm," eds. Edna May Sayers and Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 2 (January 1901): 4. There is some information about the Imperial Orchestra of Watertown, NY. It was a mixed-gender ensemble that allowed both women and men players and it was directed and managed by Burt S. House. For more information and a portrait of the ensemble, see "The Imperial Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar Orchestra, of Watertown, N.Y." *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 16, no. 2 (June–July 1899): 7.



Figure 1.7. Edna May Sayers. Portrait published in *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 2 (January 1901), p. 4.

As co-editors, Sayers and Tooker used their writing to champion other women and “give the ladies a chance.”¹⁰⁰ This column was fundamental in providing a safe environment for women to ask questions about a variety of subjects ranging from technique to sensitive matters such as the lack of women composers in the field. In her writings, Sayers advocated for equal opportunities for women and she was particularly passionate about encouraging women to play in plectral ensembles that accepted both women and men. Like American orchestras, plectral ensembles established in the late nineteenth century and at the turn of the century were segregated by gender; this context is further explained in the following section of the chapter. In 1901, when Sayers was asked by a reader about whether some young ladies of a mandolin and guitar club should

¹⁰⁰ Edna May Sayers, “The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm,” eds. Edna May Sayers and Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 17, no. 4 (October–November 1900): 7.

accept the offer to merge with a men's club, she not only encouraged the merger, calling it "the chance of a lifetime," but she also issued this statement:

But speaking seriously, I cannot see any reason why women should not be able to have a place in a banjo, mandolin and guitar club as well as men. If we can do the work required of us, why should we hesitate to compete with men? Do not women stand on an equal footing with men in other lines of business. Why not in the musical line as well?¹⁰¹

In her writings, Tooker engaged with readers about the lack of women participating in the area of music composition using a direct and honest tone. When asked why more women did not go into composing, she reminded her readers that women instrumentalists had only recently begun to publish their compositions while stating that hope was not to be lost:

Firstly, we must remember that the gentler sex have only comparatively recently taken some of the time formerly devoted to home duties to explore new fields of thought and labor. Secondly, that custom and old-fashioned ideas have proclaimed her unfitted for the work of the great thinkers, and perhaps she is. But we already have a good many geniuses in the field of literature and art, although their number is small compared to the number of equally gifted men. We must then hope that with the lapse of time, spent in study, thought, experience and improvement, we may, some of us, create something to equal a Beethoven or a Mozart.¹⁰²

Tooker's answer is a reminder of the bleak landscape women creators encountered at the turn of the twentieth century (and continue to encounter) when entering the field of music composition.

Sayers and Tooker also used their writings to support, encourage, and promote fellow women players. One of these women was Jennie M. Durkee:

¹⁰¹ Edna May Sayers, "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm," eds. Edna May Sayers and Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 2 (January 1901): 5.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

I hear splendid reports of Miss Jennie Durkee's work in Chicago. Surely, she is to be congratulated on her superior achievements. One rarely hears her equal as a guitarist, for she is an artist, indeed. It is a pleasure to place her high in the esteem of her own sex, and wish her every success and prosperity.¹⁰³

Durkee was mentioned with some frequency in the Ladies' page:

Miss Jennie Durkee, we hear, is still progressing and advancing the standard of the guitar. She is an artist, and the work she does in this generation will not be forgotten in the next—for we are each keeping watch of the work of our several artists, and “merit cannot go unrewarded.”¹⁰⁴

Tooker and Sayers also reported on other women's activities and careers in an uplifting manner, such as banjoist Ida M. O'Day:

In Miss Ida M. O'Day we have a lady banjoist par excellence. Miss Tooker, who is an excellent judge of good music, has pronounced her to be one of the best banjo players she has heard.¹⁰⁵

The Ladies' page was not a permanent fixture of the BMG movement and its editors only remained in their posts for months at a time. By November 1901, Sayers was no longer listed as an editor, and by May 1902, Tooker decided to “retire to a back seat” citing time constraints.¹⁰⁶ The reason behind Sayers departure is unknown, but it can be

¹⁰³ Elsie Tooker, “The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm,” eds. Edna May Sayers and Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 4 (March 1901): 2. Tooker and Durkee meet in 1900, when Tooker visited Chicago. Throughout her two-hour visit, they played for each other and engaged in “lively conversation.” Elsie Tooker, “The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm,” eds. Edna May Sayers and Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 17, no. 4 (October–November 1900): 7.

¹⁰⁴ “The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm,” eds. Edna May Sayers and Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 8 (July 1901): 2.

¹⁰⁵ “The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm,” eds. Edna May Sayers and Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 2 (January 1901): 4.

¹⁰⁶ “The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm,” ed. Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 19, no. 4 (May 1902): 5.

speculated that Sayers disappearance from the column could have contributed to a bigger workload for Tooker, which then resulted in Tooker's need to take a step down from her duties as an editor to focus on "her duties and studies" as a performer and teacher.¹⁰⁷ In addition, she was having some health issues, needing to reduce her work load.¹⁰⁸

Tooker's newly available editorial role was offered to another rising guitarist, Gertrude T. Miller, who gladly accepted the position. Miller had been contributing pieces to the Ladies' column since March of that year and, as a new editor was taking charge of the journal, her appointment was organic but short-lived. Under the leadership of Fred S. Stewart, S. S. Stewart's son, the journal did not thrive, and it was discontinued after its one hundred and forty-fourth number in July 1903. During her short tenure as editor of the Ladies' page, Miller focused on covering guitar technique and issues related to furthering guitarists' education such as the need for players to seriously study "harmony, counterpoint, analysis and musical history." In one instance, she came to the defense of men who played the guitar, after a London writer issued a blank statement denominating the guitar an "effeminate instrument" that men should not play:

"The guitar," writes a London critic, "is certainly to our Northern eyes an effeminate instrument, and the man who plays upon it in an English drawing room can no more hope to preserve any appearance of manly dignity than if he were piping upon a flageolet or blowing into that most ludicrous of all instruments—the flute." Any broad-minded person reading this article can readily see that the writer's views in regard to music are intensely cold-blooded and prejudiced, and according to his standpoint, a man in order to appear manly would have to be beating a bass drum. I think any one [*sic*] will agree that his verdict is a most

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Fred S. Stewart, "Editorial Comments," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 19, no. 4 (May 1902): 1.

unjust one, as the flute and guitar have many admirers in every land, and they are by no means all feminine ones either.¹⁰⁹

This statement not only defended male guitar players, but it furthered women guitarists' claim for equality by pointing out prejudicial comments made about guitarists and the instrument itself. After her position as the editor of the column was discontinued, her contributions to BMG periodicals greatly diminished but she continued to advocate for the classical guitar by trying to form the first American guitar society, which will be discussed in Chapter Three.

While the Ladies' page provides modern readers with a glimpse of the past, throughout the years the column was published, it contributed to the slow acceptance of women guitarists, banjoists, mandolinists and other instrumentalists. Between 1900 and 1902, BMG members read about women's professional activities such as concert playing, composing, and teaching, and philanthropic activities such as concert organizing and fundraising.

The Ladies Mandolin and Guitar Orchestras in America

The tradition of orchestral playing was developed in America with a clear gender division. During the second half of the nineteenth century, ladies' orchestras appeared all across Europe and the United States as "practically the only opportunity for women instrumentalists to engage in orchestral and even ensemble playing."¹¹⁰ Christine Ammer

¹⁰⁹ Gertrude Miller, "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 19, no. 3 (March 1902): 3.

¹¹⁰ Ammer, *Unsung*, 46. For more information on ladies' orchestras in the nineteenth century, see Ammer, "Apartheid—The All-Women Orchestras," in *Unsung*, 118–138; Philip Rudd, "Countess, Conductor, Pioneer: Lady Radnor and the Phenomenon of the Victorian Ladies' Orchestra" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2017);

has called this exclusion of women from conventional orchestras an “apartheid” driven by economic reasons, citing that the main cause for this discriminatory practice relied on a zero-sum mentality: “Any post given to a woman meant one less opening for a man.”¹¹¹ While restricted to performing on the periphery, women in the ladies’ orchestras did not receive “equal pay for equal work” and “had to take what was offered.”¹¹² Furthermore, their repertoire needed to be flexible in order to keep the ensembles afloat and remain in the good graces of the more conservative circles, who stood by the idea that female instrumentalists could only play “light repertoire.”¹¹³

Along with the appearance of ladies’ orchestras in the second-half of the nineteenth century, was the formation of all-women ensembles, including what were known as ladies’ mandolin and guitar bands. The latter flourished in Europe and the United States during the BMG movement.¹¹⁴ Similarly to the all-women orchestras that appeared in the mid-nineteenth century, these guitar and mandolin bands were segregated by gender. When looking at research conducted about plucked and plectral instruments

and Judith Tick, “Women as Professional Musicians in the United States, 1870–1900,” *Anuario Interamericano De Investigación Musical* 9 (1973): 100–104.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 118.

¹¹² Tick, “Women as Professional Musicians,” 104.

¹¹³ Ibid., 101–103. The repertoire of the lady orchestras was primarily a mixture of vaudeville routines, symphonies, and popular music.

¹¹⁴ The English and American all-women plectral and plucked instruments ensembles derived from the Italian mandolin and guitar mixed-gender bands. “The first formally organized guitar and mandolin band in Italy was the ‘Reale circolo mandolinistico Regina Marguerita,’ founded in Florence in March 1881 under the patronage of Queen Marguerita.” Paul Sparks, “Clara Ross, Mabel Downing and Ladies’ Guitar and Mandolin Bands in Late Victorian Britain,” *Early Music* 41, no. 4 (November 2013): 621.

and their all-women ensembles, the literature found is limited to European guitar and mandolin bands.¹¹⁵ Paul Sparks was one of the first scholars to write about the conditions that contributed to the popularity of these ensembles in England. His research presents two study cases of female entrepreneurs who used ladies' mandolin and guitar bands to expand their careers: "the composer Clara Ross and the band leader Mabel Downing."¹¹⁶ As previously mentioned, women's respectability was a major factor determining the parameters under which they were allowed to perform in public. And since many of the players performing in these ladies' bands were members of the aristocracy, these amateur ensembles were limited to philanthropic activities, playing for fundraisers and benefits.¹¹⁷ The Ladies' Guitar Band is reported as the first London-based ensemble of this kind, founded around 1886.¹¹⁸ According to Sparks's findings, "by the early 1890s, dozens of all-female ensembles could be found throughout London, at many levels of society, and

¹¹⁵ Even research in this area is limited. Margaret Myers concludes that scholarship on this topic is minimal because it falls under the purview of women instrumentalists, and their repertoire was consistently thought of as popular music. See Margaret Myers, "Searching for Data about European Ladies' Orchestras, 1870-1950," in *Music and Gender*, ed. by Beverly Diamond and Pirkko Moisala (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 205.

¹¹⁶ Sparks, "Clara Ross, Mabel Downing," 621.

¹¹⁷ The term "amateur" is not utilized to signify low musical quality or technical ability; rather, it is employed to differentiate the performance activities of the English women's bands from those of foreign professional ensembles such as the Viennese Lady Orchestra and the Spanish Students troupes (for instances, the Granados).

¹¹⁸ It was formed by Lady Marry Hervey and Miss Augusta Hervey and featured students of Madame Sydney Pratten, who arranged/composed for the ensemble. Sparks, "Clara Ross, Mabel Downing," 623.

with varying degrees of musical accomplishment.”¹¹⁹ While women instrumentalists’ concert appearances in public events signaled new opportunities for women musicians, their role on stage reflected “a role subordinate to men.”¹²⁰ Male composers were primarily featured in these ensembles’ programming and, in the majority of the public performances, male conductors directed the bands. The Ladies’ Guitar Band and, in particular, the ensemble led by composer Clara Ross (The Kensington Mandolinists, later renamed Miss Clara Ross’ Ladies’ Mandolin and Guitar Band) were exceptions. The Kensington Mandolinists primarily played compositions by their leader—most of which have survived in reduced formats such as mandolin and piano and arrangements for two mandolins and guitar.¹²¹

In England, entrepreneurial women teachers who noticed instrumental trends and saw an opportunity to tailor and grow their businesses, both their teaching studios and composing careers, founded guitar and mandolin ensembles. In recent scholarship, bibliographical studies of women who organized plectral and plucked instruments ensembles reveal that there was also a matter of personal and artistic fulfillment attached to these ensembles, one that provided enjoyment through music-making with other

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 625. Although Sparks uses the adjective “all-female,” I have chosen to employ “all-women” throughout this dissertation in accordance to the writings of feminist scholars such as Christine Ammer and Judith Tick.

¹²⁰ “In some instances, when women do perform on instruments, their position in an ensemble reflects a role subordinate to men.” Jennifer Post, “Erasing the Boundaries,” in *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*, ed. Susan C. Cook and Judy S. Tsou (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 35–51.

¹²¹ Sparks, “Clara Ross, Mabel Downing,” 626.

women.¹²² Sarah Clarke’s work exemplifies the new research that is being conducted on this topic and the importance of including personal correspondence and family documents as primary sources. Looking beyond newspaper reviews and periodicals of the time allows for a more thorough understanding of these women’s endeavors.

No research has been conducted about the ladies’ guitar and mandolin bands that appeared in America during the BMG movement. Research detailing the rise of BMG orchestras primarily focuses on the development of professional and amateur male ensembles and the different instruments featured in these orchestras. Notices and articles published in BMG journals indicate that American BMG ensembles appeared in the 1880s and 1890s, featuring not only mandolins and guitars but also banjos and hybrid instruments, such as the mando-cello and the harp-guitar.¹²³ Some were professional ensembles, such as the Boston Ideal Club, but, in their majority, these were “semiprofessional and amateur bands.”¹²⁴ BMG ensembles were mostly called “clubs,” and became very popular in high school, colleges, and women’s seminaries.¹²⁵ The ensembles were overwhelmingly led by male directors such as schoolteachers, university faculty, or professional players with private teaching studios.

¹²² Sarah Clarke, “Augusta Hervey: Lady of ‘The Ladies’ Guitar and Mandolin Band” (paper presented at the International Women and/in Musical Leadership Conference, London, UK, March 7–9, 2019).

¹²³ For more information about the development of American BMG ensembles and the different hybrid instruments they featured, see Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 57–60, 77–80, and 117–137.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

From Edna May Sayers's writings in the Ladies' pages, it can be concluded that even at the turn of the twentieth century plucked and plectral instrument ensembles composed of both sexes were the exception.¹²⁶ Mixed-gender ensembles, like the one Sayers played in (the Imperial Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar Orchestra of Watertown, NY), only started to appear around the United States in the late 1890s and became the norm by the 1920s.¹²⁷ Like all-male BMG clubs being formed at local schools and universities, all-women amateur clubs emerged in women's seminaries in the 1880s and 1890s:

It is very gratifying to see what numbers of ladies are devoting their attention to our instrument. All over the country ladies' clubs and orchestras are coming to the fore. One of the finest organizations of this kind is the Hanmer Ladies' Mandolin Orchestra, consisting of fifteen clever lady musicians and their director, Mr. G. Arthur Depew.¹²⁸

The inclusion of plucked instruments, such as the mandolin and banjo, at all-women music schools' curriculums contributed to the rise of these types of ensembles. As previously stated, the guitar had been included in female seminaries' curriculum in the 1830s and plectral instruments were added to the curriculum around 1880s and 1890s with the rise of the BMG movement in America.

¹²⁶ Sayers, "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm," eds. Edna May Sayers and Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 2 (January 1901): 4.

¹²⁷ For instance, the Imperial Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar Orchestra was established in 1897, and by 1923, when the American Guitar Society established their guitar orchestra, there were more mixed gender plectral and plucked ensembles.

¹²⁸ "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm," eds. Edna May Sayers and Elsie Tooker, *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 1 (December 1900): 4.

The Ladies' pages provide a record of two American all-women amateur clubs: The Hanmer Ladies' Mandolin Orchestra and the St. Johns Ladies' Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar Orchestra. The Hanmer School of Music and Languages, which was founded and directed by Mrs. L.C. Hanmer since its establishment in 1881 (see Figure 1.8 for a portrait of Mrs. Hanmer), was one of the schools that featured a ladies' mandolin ensemble.¹²⁹ The Hanmer Ladies' Mandolin Orchestra was associated with Detroit's famous music school and its curriculum was advertised as "most comprehensive," consisting of the following subjects: piano, rhythm, voice, guitar, violin, mandolin, flute, harp, harmony, sight reading, physical culture, public reading, dramatic expression, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, Greek, English, and higher mathematics.¹³⁰ The roster of professors at the Hanmer School consisted of seventeen teachers, of which more than half were women. The mandolin orchestra featured one guitar player among its instrumentalists and a cellist (Miss Daisy Rhines). Although the school had a woman as a mandolin teacher, like the majority of ensembles that emerged in England and in America, the Hanmer Ladies' Mandolin Orchestra was directed by a male professor

¹²⁹ The article published in the Ladies' Page mentioned: "Mrs. Hanmer began her good work eighteen years ago and now the Hanmer School is one of the best conservatories in the country." From this article, the establishment date of the school can only be approximated to around 1882, since that column was published December of 1900. Fortunately, the Hanmer School of Music and Languages advertised in journals such as *The American Tyler* and *The School Record*. In an advertisement published in the former, a journal "devoted to Freemasonry," it is indicated that the "Hanmer School of Music and Languages was established in 1881." See "The Hanmer School of Music and Languages," *The American Tyler* 14, no. 11 (December 1, 1899): 329.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 329.

named G. Arthur Depew.¹³¹ The longevity of this school and its mandolin orchestra is unknown.



Figure 1.8. Mrs. Hanmer. Portrait published in *The School Record* 6, no. 1 (September 1897), p. 10.

Another all-women club was the St. Johns Ladies' Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar Orchestra. Unlike the Hanmer Ladies' Mandolin Orchestra, the St. Johns ensemble was not associated with a seminary school and was an amateur ensemble founded and directed by H. G. Pulfrey to feature his students. Pulfrey was a well-known local teacher in St. Johns, Michigan; in addition to his directing and teaching responsibilities, he also arranged the music for the ensemble. According to the information published in the Ladies' pages, the ensemble was organized in February 1899 "as a pleasant pastime among the young ladies of St. John's, but soon developed into serious study." Its ranks were formed by young women "from the best circles of St. Johns" and it featured three first mandolins, two second mandolins, one bajo, and three guitars (see Figure 1.9 for a

¹³¹ In 1899, Miss Florence W. Woolfenden was the mandolin professor. She was lauded in the Ladies' pages as "one of the cleverest mandolinists in Detroit" and "a decidedly valuable acquisition to both School and Orchestra. "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 1 (December 1900): 4.

photo of the whole ensemble).¹³² Like the previously mentioned all-women BMG ensemble, the longevity of Pulfrey's ensemble is unknown.



Figure 1.9. St. John's Ladies' Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar Orchestra. Portrait published in *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 1 (December 1900), p. 4.

The two examples highlighted in this section provide an overview of the presence of all-women BMG clubs in America, but further research is needed on this subject. In general, these were amateur ensembles that featured young women studying at a particular institution or with a teacher who was the founder of a local ensemble. Led by male directors, as was the case in England, American all-women BMG ensembles performed at fundraising events, and those that were associated with educational institutions performed at school events. In my research, I have found no record of any professional all-women BMG ensembles in the nineteenth nor the twentieth century.

¹³² "St. John's Ladies' Orchestra," in "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 1 (December 1900): 4.

Conclusion

Women guitarists of the BMG movement primarily thrived as amateur players, but there was a small group of young women guitarists who were able to establish professional careers. They were Meta Bischoff-Henning, Dominga I. Lynch, Elsie Tooker, Jennie M. Durkee, Gertrude Miller and Vahdah Olcott Bickford. Each of these women played a significant role in breaking glass-ceilings and, in their writings, these women supported each other's endeavors. Like their male counterparts, BMG women guitarists had multi-faceted careers as teachers, performers, and in some cases columnists, and/or composers. They were also members of BMG Guilds and participated at conferences, but their power within these organizations was extremely limited as women were not members of the executive boards nor served as officers.

Ensemble playing was a popular activity during the BMG movement and, during the nineteenth century, young women amateurs played together in BMG clubs segregated by gender. There is limited record of Tooker's, Durkee's, Miller's, and Olcott Bickford's ensemble activities as members or directors of BMG clubs. As young guitarists emerging in different states across America during the twentieth century, each encountered different types of ensembles. The following section delves into Olcott Bickford's and Tooker's experiences.

California: A State Full of Opportunity for Women Guitarists

It is no coincidence that two out of the four young women guitarists introduced in the previous section as Olcott Bickford's contemporaries grew up in California (Olcott Bickford and Tooker), and that three out of that group ended up establishing careers in

California (Olcott Bickford, Tooker, and Durkee). In the 1890s, the state was home to a well-organized women's movement fighting for women's suffrage and an active classical guitar community. This environment empowered young women such as Olcott Bickford and Tooker to pursue an education and a professional career, becoming active citizens in their communities.

Fighting for the Vote

California was home to an elaborate suffrage campaign. As early as 1879, women in this state mobilized to amend Article II of the 1849 constitution, which granted the right to vote to "every white male."¹³³ After a significant defeat in 1896, in 1910, California women lobbied the new governor and legislative body and achieved a big win when the following question was included in 1911 ballot: Should women be allowed to vote? Embarking on an eight-month campaign, women mobilized across the state and publicized their cause in pin-back buttons, pennants, posters, postcards, shopping bags, pamphlets, and billboards. By only 3,587 votes, on October 11, 1911, California became the sixth American state to grant women the right to vote. Women's clubs and organizations that were part of this elaborate suffrage campaign were the California Equal Suffrage Association, the Votes for Women Club, the Political Equality League, the Woman's Parliament of Southern California, the California Business Woman's Association, and the Friday Morning Club.¹³⁴

¹³³ California 1849 Constitution, art. 2, sec. 1.

¹³⁴ The historical information detailed in this paragraph has been obtained from the following sources: Gayle Gullett, *Becoming Citizens: The Emergence and Development of the California Women's Movement 1880–1911* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000); and Robert P. J. Cooney, Jr., "A Brief Summary of the

Newspaper clippings and concert programs carefully preserved in Olcott Bickford’s scrapbooks indicate that she was immersed in this activist environment, playing at benefit events organized by women’s clubs and possibly interacting with their philanthropic members. As Table 1.2 shows, she played at events organized by organizations that actively supported the fight for the vote, such as the Friday Morning Club, the Woman’s Parliament of Southern California, and the California Business Woman’s Association.

Table 1.2. Olcott Bickford’s participation in concerts organized by suffrage groups

Date	Organizer	Name of Event	Performer
10/10/1905	Woman’s Parliament of Southern California	Musical Program	Ethel Lucretia Olcott
5/5/1907	California Business Woman’s Association	Concert organized by Mrs. O. H. Burbridge	La Bandurria trio (Ethel Lucretia Olcott, director)
6/1/1907	Friday Morning Club	Musical Fête: Fundraising for the Building Fund of the Animal Rescue Home	La Bandurria trio (Ethel Lucretia Olcott, director)

Source: Data from box 157, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

There is no record of whether Olcott Bickford or her mother (Jennie Olcott) were members in any of the above-mentioned organizations. Nevertheless, her playing at this type of engagement connects her to women patrons who supported the right to vote and point to the fact that she was an active member of the Los Angeles musical community in her late teens and early twenties. While Olcott Bickford might not have cultivated friendships with older philanthropic Angelenas, she was surrounded by their

1911 Campaign,” California Secretary of State, accessed October 22, 2020, <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/celebrating-womens-suffrage/california-women-suffrage-centennial>.

philanthropic activities, which provided a clear framework for volunteering which she adopted upon her return to Los Angeles in 1923.

The Classical Guitar Community in California

In addition to holding a progressive coalition that supported women's right to vote, during the nineteenth century California had an active classical guitar community. It was the home of Mexican American guitarist Manuel Ygnacio Ferrer (1828–1904), Mexican American guitarist Miguel Santiago Arévalo (1842–1900), Spanish-American guitarist Luis Toribio Romero (1854–1893), George C. Lindsey (1855-1943), and Mrs. C. J. Tooker (Elsie Tooker's mother).

Manuel Ygnacio Ferrer was a fixture of the San Francisco guitar community from the 1850s to the 1900s, garnering recognition from the BMG community throughout his career. He was born in Baja California, Mexico, and made his San Francisco debut at the Metropolitan Theater September 18, 1854.¹³⁵ Like other BMG teachers, Ferrer was the director of a club named La Mandolinata, which consisted of mandolin and guitar players joined by an Italian lute player and was active in the 1880s and 1890s.¹³⁶ He garnered a solid reputation as a teacher and “taught several generations of guitar students.”¹³⁷

¹³⁵ John Koegel, “Manuel Y. Ferrer and Miguel S. Arévalo: Premier Guitarist-Composers in Nineteenth-Century California,” *Inter-American Music Review* 16, no. 2 (Spring–Summer 2000): 47.

¹³⁶ Ethel Lucretia Olcott, “Personal Reminiscences of the Late M. Y. Ferrer,” *American Music Journal* 6, no. 5 (December 1906): 34. Note that Olcott Bickford misspelled the name of the club in her article where it appears as “El Mandolinita.” Some of its activities were reported in Californian newspapers. See “Local Brevities,” *San Jose Daily Mercury*, June 27, 1887, “In Aid of the Free Ward,” and *The San Francisco Call*, April 16, 1898.

¹³⁷ Koegel, “Manuel Y. Ferrer and Miguel S. Arévalo,” 47.

Among his students, were Luis T. Romero, Olcott Bickford, Tooker, and his own children. In addition, according to Olcott Bickford, Miguel Arevalo also studied with Ferrer for a brief period of time.¹³⁸ Olcott Bickford was Ferrer's most celebrated pupil, residing in the Ferrer family home while studying daily with him during the last year of his life.¹³⁹ Ferrer's daughter, Adela Ferrer Wightman, followed in the steps of her father, becoming a well-regarded guitarist and teacher. In her youth, she performed in trios with her father and sister Carmelita, who played the mandolin.¹⁴⁰ In 1891, Ferrer Wightman toured the east coast with two of her siblings, Carmelita on the mandolin and Ricardo on the violin. This tour featured performances in the White House and the Vanderbilt's mansion.¹⁴¹

Mrs. C. J. Tooker, who was Elsie Tooker's mother and first teacher, also resided in San Francisco with her daughter at the turn of the twentieth century. They had a successful private teaching studio located at 1008 Bush Street.¹⁴² Periodical notices and newspaper advertisements document that the Tookers moved from San Jose to San

¹³⁸ Olcott Bickford, "The Guitarist: Sidelights on the Careers of Famous Masters of the Guitar," 10.

¹³⁹ José Luis Navarro, "Manuel Ygnacio Ferrer: primer compositor México-americano," *Revista Redes: música y musicología desde Baja California* 1, no. 1 (July-December 2006): 25–36; Purcell, "Vahdah Oclott-Bickford: The International Guitar Research Archives," 7; and Purcell, "In Memoriam: Vahdah Olcott Bickford Revere," 120.

¹⁴⁰ Olcott Bickford, "The Guitar in America," 18.

¹⁴¹ Koegel, "Manuel Y. Ferrer and Miguel S. Arévalo," 47. The program of the White House concert is reproduced in Koegel's article, see *ibid.*, 48.

¹⁴² Educational Classified Ads, *The San Francisco Call*, September 15, 1899, accessed October 4, 2020, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/>.

Francisco in 1899.¹⁴³ In their new home, the Tookers played at society events and organized musicales; furthermore, Elsie Tooker led the Cap and Bells Club Orchestra in 1906, which was composed of women mandolin and guitar players.¹⁴⁴ A 1900 newspaper clipping documents that Mrs. Tooker accompanied her daughter during Elsie Tooker's 1900 tour of the East Coast.¹⁴⁵ It is very likely that she might have accompanied her daughter in other travels and, by all surviving accounts, it seems Mrs. Tooker was supportive of her daughter's performing engagements.

¹⁴³ Elsie Tooker's first notice in *Cadenza* is titled "Miss Elsie Tooker, of San Jose, Cal." This biographical sketch was published in the July-August 1899 issue, which leads me to think that daughter and mother lived in San Jose when this notice was sent to *Cadenza* publishers. By September 1899, Mrs. C. J. Tooker and Elsie Tooker purchased an ad in *The San Francisco Call*'s classified adds that was published on September 15. There is no record that they published any previous ads in this paper, which leads me to believe that, as new guitar teachers in San Francisco, the Tookers purchased that add to advertise their services to a new clientele. According to an ad published in the same paper in 1900, they resided in 1157 Octavia Street in San Francisco. "Mrs. C. J. Tooker and her Daughter," *The San Francisco Call*, December 2, 1900, accessed October 9, 2020, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/>.

¹⁴⁴ For notices of the Tookers' performances and concert organizing, see "Musical Fiesta at Native Sons' Hall Proves Brilliant Social and Financial Success," *The San Francisco Call*, April 4, 1902; and "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm," eds. Edna May Sayers and Elsie Tooker, *Stewart's* 18, no. 9-10 (August-September 1901): 9. The Cap and Bells Club was a women's club formed in 1904 in San Francisco. Elsie Tooker does not appear in the membership charter, but according to a newspaper article dated March 16, 1906, Tooker led the mandolin and guitar ensemble that year. See Zoe Green Radcliffe, "Rain follows Cap and Bells to Oakland," *The San Francisco Call*, March 16, 1906. By 1908, Mr. Richard J. Carpenter is listed as the director of the ensemble in newspaper articles, which means that Tooker did not stay in the position for very long. See "Social Day planned by Cap and Bells Club: Local Organization will give Dramatic Program and Reception," *The San Francisco Call*, November 13, 1908; and "Women Players furnish Program: Orchestra Section of Cap and Bells entertains Assembly at California Club," *The San Francisco Call*, February 8, 1909, accessed October 9, 2020, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/>.

¹⁴⁵ "Mrs. C. J. Tooker and her Daughter," accessed December 10, 2020, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/>.

Los Angeles also had a dynamic guitar scene. This city was the home of Miguel Santiago Arévalo. Like Ferrer, Arévalo was a Mexican American guitarist who arrived to this city in 1871 to enjoy an active teaching and performing career. According to John Koegel, Arévalo was “one of the few Hispanic professional musicians accepted by elite Southern California Anglo-American society.”¹⁴⁶ Before Arévalo arrived to Los Angeles, he lived in San Francisco where he taught Luis Toribio Romero. An article in *Stewart’s* credits Romero with the creation of the first plectral instrument club in California, which was established in 1887 and was called La Lira de Orfeo.¹⁴⁷ Romero did not stay in California and to advance his career he moved to Boston between the 1880s and 1890s.¹⁴⁸ Arévalo was also Lillian Weller Kemp’s teacher. She was another young woman guitarist from Los Angeles, whose biographical sketch was published in the pages of *Cadenza* in the 1900s.¹⁴⁹ Kemp Weller’s repertoire featured works by Mertz, Ferrer, De Janon,

¹⁴⁶ Koegel, “Manuel Y. Ferrer and Miguel S. Arévalo,” 52.

¹⁴⁷ “Guitar Notes,” *S.S. Stewart’s Banjo and Guitar Journal* 8, no. 5 (December 1891–January 1892): 2. I have been unable to verify that Romero formed the first plectral instrument club in California. My research indicates that La Lira de Orfeo was established in 1887 and held its first concert in May of that year. See “The City,” *Daily Alta California*, May 19, 1887. Although I have not found a newspaper clipping indicating the year Ferrer’s club was founded, his club, La Mandolinata, was active in 1887 featuring plucked and plectral instruments. After looking at the instrumentation of each club and articles published in *Stewart’s*, I have come to the conclusion that *Stewart’s* definition of a plectral instrument club included the banjo as a featured instrument. Therefore, Ferrer’s club would not have been defined as a plectral instrument club by *Stewart’s* editors.

¹⁴⁸ Koegel, “Manuel Y. Ferrer and Miguel S. Arévalo,” 56. For more information about Romero’s life, see “Guitar Notes,” *S.S. Stewart’s Banjo and Guitar Journal* 8, no. 5 (December 1891–January 1892): 2–3; and “Luis T. Romero,” *S.S. Stewart’s Banjo and Guitar Journal* 10, no. 6 (February–March 1894): 5.

¹⁴⁹ “Lillian Weller,” *Cadenza* 12, no. 3 (November 1905): 31. Her portrait was included in the cover of this *Cadenza* issue.

Romero, and one of her arrangements.¹⁵⁰ She was a close friend of Olcott Bickford's and became an active member of the AGS from 1923 until her premature death in 1925.¹⁵¹

Another figure that was part of the Los Angeles guitar community, and who played an important role in Olcott Bickford's life, was George C. Lindsey (1855-1943). Lindsey was a local guitar shop owner, a teacher and the director of the G.C. Lindsey's Mandolin and Guitar Club. Although Olcott Bickford was born in Ohio, her family moved to California when she was three years old. In Los Angeles, Olcott Bickford began learning to play the guitar and at the age of nine she met Lindsey, who became her teacher, friend, and supporter until his death in 1943. Olcott Bickford became involved with guitar clubs and began playing in guitar ensembles as a member of the G. C. Lindsey's Mandolin and Guitar Club of Los Angeles. Furthermore, Lindsey introduced Olcott Bickford to Ferrer, which led to her intensified studies with the renowned Mexican American guitarist between 1903 and 1904. As noted in Chapter Three, Lindsey continued to play an important role in the development of the classical guitar in Los Angeles until his death in 1943. He served as AGS's vice-president from 1923–1943, funded the cost of printing concert programs, and played in AGS's concerts as member of the guitar orchestra, guitar septet, and the Bickford Mandolin Quintet.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ "News," *Crescendo* 18, no. 1 (July 1925): 8.

¹⁵² All of Olcott Bickford's biographical information in this paragraph comes from the following sources: Purcell, "Vahdah Oclott-Bickford: The International Guitar Research Archives," 6–8; Purcell, "In Memoriam: Vahdah Olcott Bickford Revere," 120; "Ethel Lucretia Olcott," *Cadenza* 13, no. 2 (October 1906): 31; "Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott," *Cadenza* 15, no. 9 (March 1909): 11–12.

Lindsey's club was not the only BMG club in Los Angeles; the C. S. de Lano Mandolin and Guitar Club was also quite active, featuring many concerts including an annual season of ten concerts at the Orpheum in the 1898–1899 season.¹⁵³ It was formed primarily by women and was directed by another active guitarist and member of the California BMG community, C. S. de Lano; see Table 1.3 for a list of members. Olcott Bickford, de Lano, and Lindsey knew each other. Program records and newspaper articles indicate that there was cooperation among them. They organized concerts together and were members of local teacher organizations. Local newspaper articles detail that Olcott Bickford and de Lano participated in the first concert presented by the Los Angeles Association of Mandolin, Guitar and Banjo Teachers, which was held on October 24, 1907:

An unusually interesting concert will be the one given at Temple auditorium October 24 by the Los Angeles association of guitar, mandolin and banjo teachers. Features on the program will be the mandolin-guitar orchestra of 160 members, who will give a potpourri from "Tannhauser," under the direction of C. S. DeLano; the teachers' mandolin and guitar orchestra, who under the direction of A. V. Holmes, former, of Washington, D. C, will give Suppé's "Pique Dame" overture. Mr. Holmes is also to direct the banjo club of twenty members. Mrs. J. M. C. Brinton has charge of the juvenile' orchestra. Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott, the guitar soloist, will direct the guitar club of seventy-five members.... C.S. DeLano will give two guitar solos, "Rondo d' Archers," by Coten and his own composition, "Premier Gallop;" Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott, guitarist, will give Ferrer's famous fantasia on "Lucretia Borgia" (one of the most difficult solos ever

¹⁵³ Catherine Parsons Smith, *Making Music in Los Angeles: Transforming the Popular* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 44. For selected notices of their concerts and programs, see "Musical Melange. News Notes, Concerts, Etc.," *Cadenza* 10, no. 12 (August 1904): 35– 36; and Mr. A. A. Farland, banjoist, Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott, guitarist, and The C. S. de Lano Mandolin and Guitar Club, Blanchard Hall, Los Angeles, March 13, 1908, box 157, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

written for the guitar and her own arrangement of the chorus and sextet from 'Lucia.'¹⁵⁴

This event was well reported in the local press and, in addition to the *Los Angeles Herald* announcement of the concert, *The Los Angeles Record* also publicized the event:

One of the largest concerts of the season, from the participants' standpoint at least, will be that given by the Los Angeles association of guitar, banjo and mandolin teachers at the Auditorium, Thursday evening, Oct. 24. There will be a big mandolin orchestra of 150 players under the direction of C. S. DeLano, which will play a potpourri from Tannhauser [*sic*]. One of the most interesting features of the program will be several selections by a guitar club of 75 under the direction of Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott. This young woman has made her name both as a soloist and a director. Her club is said to be one of the largest in the country.¹⁵⁵

Reviews of this concert were also published in local newspapers, which corroborate Olcott Bickford's and de Lano's participation in the historic event:

It is plain that the Los Angeles public still cherishes a traditional love for the music of the guitar and mandolin. The concert given last week by the Los Angeles Association of Guitar, Banjo, and Mandolin Teachers crowded the Auditorium.... Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott won several recalls by her guitar solos from 'Lucrezia Borgia' and "Lucia." Her playing of her own transcription of the chorus and the sextette from "Lucia" showed not only the technique of the clever young soloist but it proved that the guitar could be employed for the interpretation of a class of music generally considered quite beyond the possibilities of their instrument. Miss Olcott played her difficult numbers with fine discrimination and she showed not only a remarkable technique but an artistic temperament.... The guitar club of seventy-five performers under Miss Olcott's direction made a hit with "La Paloma" and Bellini's aria, "Sad Hour of Parting." The mandolin orchestra of 150 under the baton of C. S. DeLano presented most enjoyable numbers.¹⁵⁶ The sounds familiar to the grandee and senorita of pueblo days were heard again last night at the Auditorium.... Ethel Lucretia Olcott, the guitarist, had a lion's share in the entertaining, rendering 'Lucretia Borgia and her own arrangement of the sextet and chorus from 'Lucia,' and directing the guitar club of seventy-five instrument.... The orchestra of mandolins, guitars and other instruments which

¹⁵⁴ Genevra Johnstone-Bishop, "The Musical World," *Los Angeles Herald*, September 22, 1907. This newspaper column featured a photo of Olcott Bickford with the following subtitle: "Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott, clever guitar artist."

¹⁵⁵ "Miss Olcott is to direct a Big Club," *The Los Angeles Record*, October 21, 1907.

¹⁵⁶ "Guitar and Mandolin Concert," *The Pacific Outlook*, November 2, 1907.

was revealed when the curtain rose was of proportions that made the audience gasp. Then C. S. DeLano raised his baton and the body of 200 swung into the strains of ‘Adieu, My Love,’ a waltz novelty written for the mandolin. It was the second time that the assemblage of such an army of players on mandolin, guitar, and allied orchestral instruments had been attempted in this country, the previous attempt having been made in Chicago, with its countless amateur musicians to draw on.¹⁵⁷

The first concert of the Los Angeles Association of Mandolin, Guitar and Banjo teachers attracted a full house to the Auditorium last Thursday night. The playing of the massed orchestras produced a splendid volume of sound, but the guitar solos of miss Ethel Olcott were robbed of their effect in the great Auditorium. This is the more unfortunate as Miss Olcott is perfect mistress of her instrument and understands to perfection the art of handling it.¹⁵⁸

Table 1.3: Members of the C. S. de Lano Mandolin and Guitar Club

Women	Men
Cora Glass	F. Lambert
Gladys Cross	T. B. Seebalt
Clara Baldwin	C. H. Lips
Hazel Daly	C. H. Bolton
Marie Holway	D. L. MacKay
Isabelle Forbes	L. V. Brunner
S. Johnson	
Ruth Daly	
Nina Forbes	
Florence Peebles	
Ada Forbes	

Source: Data from program concert of Farland, Olcott, and The C. S. de Lano Mandolin and Guitar Club, Blanchard Hall, March 13, 1908, box 157, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

Another instance of cooperation between Olcott Bickford, de Lano, and Lindsey took place on March 13, 1908. Record of this event is preserved in Olcott Bickford’s personal scrapbook, where a full concert program is displayed. According to the program, this concert featured the C. S. de Lano Club, Olcott Bickford, and banjoist A. A. Farland.

¹⁵⁷ “Big Audience Hears Mandolin Concert: 200 Performers on Metal String Instruments Render Program,” *Los Angeles Examiner*, October 25, 1907.

¹⁵⁸ Concert review, *Graphic*, November 2, 1907.

The Lindsey Music Company was also involved in the planning and operations of this concert, as well as other concerts organized by C. S. de Lano, handling ticket sales and reservations. The fact that de Lano's club and Olcott Bickford shared the stage at concerts and benefit events further indicates that the Los Angeles BMG community was welcoming to women guitarists and showcases the important role Olcott Bickford held in the city as a guitar exponent prior to leaving for New York.¹⁵⁹

Young Woman Guitarists Enter the Workforce in California

As young women guitarists growing up in California and entering the work force at the turn of the twentieth century, both Olcott Bickford and Tooker encountered favorable professional environments and a vibrant guitar community. Progressive attitudes in California, such as the acceptance of women in the workplace and professional associations, were the result of decades of women's clubs' activism, lobbying, and organization. Women of the late nineteenth century called it "organized womanhood."¹⁶⁰ Tooker and Bickford, and many other young women, were the direct beneficiaries of such activist forces. Tooker and her mother ran a successful private studio, while Olcott Bickford enjoyed a robust performing and teaching career at local seminaries and colleges.

¹⁵⁹ For more information on the March 13 concert, see Farland, Olcott, and The C. S. de Lano Mandolin and Guitar Club, Blanchard Hall, March 13, 1908. For notices of benefit concert in which Olcott Bickford and the de Lano shared the stage, see "Benefit Program" in "The City," *Los Angeles Herald*, January 23, 1907.

¹⁶⁰ "Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement. Context: Women's Rights in Los Angeles," City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning and Office of Historic Resources, published October 2018, accessed October 10, 2020, https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/5782cf57-db18-4097-88c8-94571f241051/Womens%20Rights%20in%20Los%20Angeles_1850-1980.pdf.

When Olcott Bickford entered the workforce in 1905 as a music teacher, she encountered a stimulating professional environment, being surrounded by other women professionals. As a faculty member at seminaries and music schools in California between 1905 and 1914, Olcott Bickford collaborated with fellow women faculty members and students to present a variety of concerts in their community. Table 1.4 lists Olcott Bickford's teaching engagements throughout her lifetime. According to concert programs found in her scrapbook, Olcott Bickford was a faculty member at the Ocean Park School of Music and Fine Arts from 1905 until around 1908. At that school, her colleagues were Elizabeth DeWitt Towbridge (reading and entertainment faculty), Florence Stratton (violin faculty), and Olah M. Hicks (voice faculty).¹⁶¹ Olcott Bickford collaborated with DeWitt Towbridge and presented a concert with her on December 7, 1906 at the Gamut Club auditorium (see Appendix B for a full list of concerts given by Olcott Bickford throughout her career). In addition, a concert program survives from a concert held at the Business College Hall on June 8, 1906 in which Olcott Bickford and DeWitt Towbridge presented their Ocean Park School of Music students. According to surviving concert programs, in 1909, Olcott Bickford was teaching at Page Seminary and, from 1911 to 1913, she was part of the California College of Music and Arts' faculty.

¹⁶¹ Mr. Bartlett R. Bishop, piano, Miss Olah M. Hicks, soprano, Miss Lucretia Olcott, guitar, Miss Florence Stratton, violin, Mrs. Elizabeth DeWitt Trowbridge, reader and entertainment, "Faculty Recital: Ocean Park School of Music," Seaside Theatre, Ocean Park, CA, November 10, 1905.

Table 1.4. Olcott Bickford’s teaching record

Year	School	State
1905–1908	Ocean Park School of Music and Fine Arts	California
1909	Page Seminary	California
1911–1913	California College of Music and Arts	California
1917	Hassell Conservatory of Music	New York
Before 1923 ¹⁶²	The Finch School	New York
Before 1923 ¹⁶²	Miss Gardener’s School	New York
1927	Zoellner Conservatory of Music	California
~1950s ¹⁶³	Los Angeles Conservatory of Music and Arts ¹⁶⁴	California

Source: Data from box 157 and 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA; Biederman, “‘Motherly Instincts’ and a Passion for Guitar;” and Vahdah Olcott Bickford, “Vahdah Olcott Bickford (1885–1980) Concert Artist, Composer, Teacher, Writer, and Founder of America’s Guitar Society,” *Rosette* (July–August 1975), published online by Ronald Purcell on the American Guitar Society website, accessed through WayBack Machine on September 2, 2020.

Her tenure at California College of Music and Arts resulted in a long-lasting friendship. One of her pupils at the California College of Music and Arts was Nancy Yerkes. They developed a close friendship, corresponding extensively throughout the years and speaking over the phone. After Olcott Bickford departed for New York City,

¹⁶² In the article Olcott Bickford wrote for the *Rosette*, the Lincoln Guitar Society newsletter, she stated that during her residence in New York City she taught at both of those schools. I have not able to find any official records, but she would have taught at these schools between 1915 and 1923.

¹⁶³ In 1955, Ronald Purcell was a student of Olcott Bickford at this institution. It is very likely that Olcott Bickford taught at this conservatory prior to 1955 and after that year, which is why I have made an estimation for the entry on this table. The California Institute of the Arts Archive, which houses the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music files, has been closed since March 2020 due to COVID-19 and will not be reopening until 2021. I look forward to looking at the teacher rosters in this collection once the archives can be accessed.

¹⁶⁴ The Los Angeles Conservatory of Music and Arts was founded in 1883. “Twenty Graduates from Conservatory,” *Los Angeles Herald*, June 23, 19017. In 1961, The Los Angeles Conservatory of Music and Arts merged with the Chouinard Art Institute to form the California Institute of the Arts. “Guide to the California Institute of the Arts Collection,” *Online Archive of California, California Digital Library*, created February 22, 2006, accessed October 27, 2020, <https://library.calarts.edu>.

she sent many scores to Yerkes with warm notes; some of the scores were new publications of Olcott Bickford's compositions or arrangements and some were works Olcott Bickford had purchased from European catalogs. These scores survive in Nancy Yerkes personal collection and the majority of them contain handwritten notes from Olcott Bickford. Yerkes' score of Olcott Bickford's guitar solo arrangement of Beethoven's *Minuet in G*, which was published by Geo. Stannard in 1915, reads: "To Nancy, in loving remembrance of happy hours together." These notes showcase Olcott Bickford's devotion to fostering relationships with fellow women musicians and past students; they also highlight her love of collecting scores and the value she placed on each of them as she would send them as Christmas gifts and birthday presents. In 1916, Olcott Bickford dedicated one of her published arrangements, *Believe Me if all those Endearing Young Charms, Fantasie op. 36*, to Yerkes. The dedication reads: "To Nancy of the 'endearing charms.'"¹⁶⁵ And in 1921, she dedicated one of her compositions, *November, An Autumn Impression*, op. 83, to Yerkes. After Olcott Bickford returned to California, their friendship was strengthened and, in 1927, Yerkes became an AGS member, serving as the organization's secretary for one year, playing at AGS concerts, and hosting AGS's annual Halloween parties until 1930. In 1930, Yerkes corresponded with Olcott Bickford regarding her need to step back from being an active AGS member. She mentioned family engagements as one of the reasons but continued to pay her annual dues for that year and to attend AGS concerts and lecture recitals when she could.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Vahdah Olcott Bickford, *Believe Me if all those Endearing Young Charms, Fantasie op. 36* (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1916).

¹⁶⁶ Nancy Yerkes to American Guitar Society, September 25, 1930; Nancy Yerkes to American Guitar Society, October 3, 1930; and American Guitar Society to Nancy Yerkes, October 11, 1930, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar

Olcott Bickford and Yerkes remained friends until their old age, and Olcott Bickford continued sending her dear friend dedicated scores of AGS publications until the 1940s. Their families also maintained a close relationship and in the 1980s Yerkes' son, David Yerkes, became the Executor of the Estate of Olcott Bickford's third husband, Robert Revere.¹⁶⁷

In Los Angeles, Olcott Bickford also found comradeship on stage with fellow women guitarists. Between 1905 and 1914, she was an active and well-regarded performer in the Los Angeles musical scene, directing two all-women chamber ensembles, the Angelus Guitar Quartet and La Bandurria Guitar Trio. These groups primarily played at fundraising events and local private parties, and its members were Olcott Bickford's pupils at Ocean Park School of Music and Fine Arts.¹⁶⁸ The Angelus Guitar Quartet was active around mid-1906 and the beginning of 1907.¹⁶⁹ Its members

Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA. Digital Collection, <https://digital-collections.csun.edu/digital/collection/VOBCorr/search/order/identi/ad/asc>, accessed on October 27, 2020.

¹⁶⁷ As mentioned in Chapter One, David Yerkes was the lawyer representing Robert Revere's estate during the long probate battle that ensued over the ownership of Olcott Bickford's instruments, family documents, correspondence, music collection, journal collection, and photographs.

¹⁶⁸ I have reached that conclusion because a program that survives from Olcott Bickford's days teaching at Ocean Park School of Music and Fine Arts lists the Angelus Guitar Quartet as one of the performing ensembles. That program was a pupils' recital featuring Olcott Bickford's and DeWitt Trowbridge's students. See Pupil's Recital: Ocean Park School of Music, Business College Hall, June 8, 1906, box 157, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA. This concert is listed in Appendix B.

¹⁶⁹ The Angelus Guitar Quartet first appeared in the pages of the *Los Angeles Herald* on July 28, 1906 in a notice detailing the upcoming musicale hosted by Mr. and Mrs. John S. Woollacott of Redondo Hotel, which took place on July 28, 1906. At this event the Angelus Quartet performed Balfe's *Fantasia from The Bohemian Girl* and

were Leora Blum, Regina Bischoff, Margaret Freytag, and Olcott Bickford; see Figure 1.9 for a portrait of the ensemble. At the end of 1906, Olcott Bickford also formed a trio, which she named La Bandurria Guitar Trio. In its inception, this trio featured three members of the Angelus Guitar Quartet: Blum, Bischoff, and Olcott Bickford. But, by the end of 1908, Blum is no longer listed as a member of the trio and Hazel Henderson, one of Olcott Bickford's private students, becomes the third member.¹⁷⁰ An analysis of Olcott Bickford's activities with both ensembles reveals that Olcott Bickford created a second ensemble being mindful of student turnover and with the intention of keeping her students active in the performing scene.

Olcott Bickford's *Cupid's Wireless Telegram*. For notices of the musicale hosted by Mr. and Mrs. John S. Woollacott, see "Will Give Musicale" in "Leaves from Society's Note Book," *Los Angeles Herald*, July 22, 1906; and "Hotel Musicale an Artist's Treat," *Los Angeles Herald*, July 23, 1906. Records also show that the Angelus Quartet performed at a benefit for the firemen's relief fund held on January 24, 1907. For that notice, see "Benefit Program" in "The City," *Los Angeles Herald*, January 23, 1907. For a full list of concerts in which the Angelus Guitar Quartet played see Appendix B.

¹⁷⁰ I have not been able to determine when Henderson became Olcott Bickford's private student, but it is likely that Henderson began her studies around 1907. The earliest mention of Henderson in Olcott Bickford's scrapbooks corresponds to a concert program dated April 3, 1908. This concert was organized by Olcott Bickford with the intention of presenting Henderson as her pupil. The concert also featured La Bandurria Guitar Trio, with Blum, Bischoff and Olcott Bickford performing. See Guitar Recital, Symphony Hall, April 3, 1908, box 157, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA. In 1924, Henderson was as a member of AGS. She is listed under her married name, Hazel Henderson-Conti, in the description of a photo taken of the AGS. See Cover, *Crescendo* 17, no. 6 (December 1924).



Figure 1.9. Angelus Quartet. Portrait published in the *Los Angeles Express*, July 28, 1906; newspaper clipping found in box 157, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection.

California's progressive environment and its guitaristic landscape contributed to the type of career young guitarists such as Tooker and Olcott Bickford were able to have. In Los Angeles, Olcott Bickford was surrounded by a rich tradition of women's clubs and women-led organizations, which had a long impact in her life. The qualities of cooperation and collaboration that these clubs exemplified can be observed in Olcott Bickford's early career and her collaborations with fellow women colleagues and performances with her pupils in small chamber ensembles. Furthermore, the example of voluntarism and community service set by members of women's clubs at several of the fundraising event where Olcott Bickford played remained with her and inspired her to live a life of service on behalf of the classical guitar.

Conclusion

Industrialization and mass-production fueled the development of the BMG movement in America. The creation of plectral and plucked instruments factories, BMG

music publishing houses, and the BMG magazine culture translated into the need for new types of professional musician. These new musicians were versatile teachers, performers, monthly columnists, writers, composers, and arrangers. Women were a minority within this movement, but they were active contributors who challenged societal restrictions and built multi-faceted careers like their male colleagues.

Guitarists Metta Bischoff-Henning and Dominga I. Lynch were early pioneers. Records of their activities can be found across the pages of *Stewart's*, which indicate that they were both teachers and performers who pursued other professional activities such as composing and writing. Bischoff-Henning and Lynch were precursors, who opened the door for the next generation of professional women guitarists, which emerged around the turn of the twentieth century. This new generation featured four young guitarists: Elsie Tooker, Jennie M. Durkee, Gertrude Miller, and Vahdah Olcott Bickford. The group was praised for their virtuosity and reports detailing their activities were published in *Cadenza* and *American Music Journal*, along with biographical sketches. From these records and their published writings, it can be concluded that they knew each other and even met at conferences or along their travels.

As members of the BMG movement, these young guitarists played other plectral and plucked instruments and taught privately while maintaining other professional activities and hobbies. Their professional endeavors shattered many glass-ceilings and helped normalize the presence of women guitarists in America. Tooker was the first American women guitarist to be hired by a BMG journal as a columnist. She used her position as the co-editor of the Ladies' pages to promote sisterhood and support fellow women colleagues in their endeavors. Her supportive tone influenced the writings of her

successor in the Ladies' pages, Miller, and Olcott Bickford. Durkee was an avid music collector, a hobby she shared with Olcott Bickford, and was one of the first American women guitarists who was involved in instrument manufacturing. Gertrude Miller succeeded Tooker as editor of the Ladies' pages and was the first known proponent of forming an American guitar society, which will be discussed at length in Chapter Three. Finally, Olcott Bickford was the first American women guitarist to direct and conduct a mixed-genre ensemble (1907), to publish a guitar method book (1921), to tour the country under the representation of a manager (impresario L.E. Behymer), to form an all-women professional chamber ensemble (1906), and to build an invisible career as the musical director and operations manager of the first American guitar society (1923–1980).

CHAPTER 2

THE ROAD TO THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE CLASSICAL GUITAR

Across America, there are sixty registered guitar societies and clubs.¹ They promote the classical guitar and energize their communities' classical music scene by presenting concert series, sponsoring educational projects, organizing local ensembles, forming partnerships with universities to host events, and granting financial support to young guitarists. Membership at local guitar societies is composed of guitar teachers, guitar students, amateur guitarists, and guitar advocates. This current institutional landscape is one-hundred years old and owes its beginning to the grassroots efforts of classical guitar amateurs and professionals around the 1920s and 1930s whose goal was to promote the classical guitar. As members of the BMG community, founding members of the first American guitar society forged an independent path for their instrument of choice by defying BMG's tradition of promoting all plectral instruments and women, such as Olcott Bickford, were at the forefront of organizing and mobilizing. Although the formation of these instrument-specific organizations had immediate positive consequences, in the long term, it contributed to the isolation of the classical guitar from the rest of America's classical music scene until the

¹ "Find a Guitar Society," *Guitar Foundation of America*, accessed 20 August 2020, <https://www.guitarfoundation.org/page/Societies>. This list was compiled by the Guitar Foundation of America a while ago and is currently outdated. Guitar societies included in this list that do not have working websites have been removed from the official count.

emergence of concert artists with international careers such as Andrés Segovia.² Due to their complexity, these consequences are analyzed and discussed in the Conclusion.

The guitar society concept, defined as an organization governed by an elected body, regulated by bylaws and formed to champion the classical guitar through the establishment of national and local goals, was not an original nor unprecedented idea. On the contrary, this type of social organization derived from national and international institutional precursors: the American plucked and plectral instrument organizations, the German guitar societies, and the culture of BMG clubs popularized in America during the late nineteenth century.

Understanding these institutional precursors and their diverse goals is vital to constructing a history of the institutionalization of the classical guitar and the role women played in its growth. All of these organizations were led by men and, as women were not even selected to serve in their executive boards, power was only held by BMG male advocates, players, and teacher. These institutional precursors focused on building community through national conventions, some attempted to adopt pedagogical goals to set technique and repertoire standards, and a few ventured into publishing. Since these organizations have been little researched, this chapter is designed to fill the knowledge gap currently present in guitar history scholarship.

Cooperation, or the lack thereof, is a recurrent theme throughout this chapter. As each organization developed, it faced the challenge of recruiting and maintaining unity

² As guitar societies became presenting arts organizations, some began to partner with other local classical music organizations, such as their local chamber music society or local symphony. In these new cooperative ventures, guitar societies have aided the promotion of the classical guitar beyond its closed community. These examples are examined in the conclusion of this dissertation.

among its members. These difficulties were not overcome, and each of these institutional precursors discontinued its activities and disappeared. Cooperation was (and in some communities still is) a quality identifiable with women's work and the American culture of women's clubs, nevertheless, since women were not involved in the creation of these institutional precursors, their input was limited. The lack of women involved in leadership roles in these organizations and BMG businessmen's unfamiliarity with cooperative work and voluntarism emerge as possible contributing factors to the institutions' inability to weather organizational challenges throughout the years.

Plectral instrument organizations left two legacies. On the one hand, the vestiges of division inherited from this period (1890s–1920s) informed the creation of local—and not national—guitar societies throughout the country. The classical guitar was not championed by an organization with national reach until 1973, the year the Guitar Foundation of America (GFA) was established. On the other hand, their diverse goals influenced AGS's overarching mission, which adopted the formation of a large ensemble, annual gatherings, and a publication series. Being a pioneering institution, AGS itself became a model for the guitar societies that sprung after the 1930 and, as each new society came to form what I am defining in this dissertation as the current guitaristic institutional American landscape, they adopted and adapted similar goals in their communities. To this day, guitar societies continue to uphold the visionary goals of the first organizations established to champion plucked and plectral instruments.

This chapter is organized in two sections. The first one details the formation, operations, and accomplishments of the first American plucked and plectral instruments organizations. The second one describes the establishment of German guitar societies at

the turn of the twentieth century and how they influenced BMG guitarists to form independent organizations outside of the homogenous BMG label.

American Institutional Precursors: Early Champions of Plucked and Plectral Instruments

Early American organizations founded to champion plucked and plectral instruments are primarily named in passing in historical surveys, and they have also been erroneously dated.³ These organizations were the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists; the Banjo, Mandolin, Guitar and Zither Teachers' League of Philadelphia; and the National Qualified Teacher's League of Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar. They were formed within the BMG movement with the primary mission of establishing pedagogical standards within their communities and furthering their professions. Since their successful chartering and longevity was closely tied to their effectiveness in persuading members to join, some organizations (such as the BMG Guild) proved to be effective at launching persuasive marketing campaigns, while others did not (such as the National Qualified Teacher's League). The study of these

³ Noonan mentions early American plectral instrument organizations when discussing the different sources available to study the BMG movement. He lists both the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists and National Qualified Teacher's League of Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar when narrating the endeavors of two periodical editors, Clarence Partee and F.O. Gutman. Jeffrey J. Noonan, *The Guitar in America: Victoria Era to Jazz* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 35–36. Furthermore, a current article published by the National Association for Music Education also mentions the BMG Guild. Like Noonan, Ricardo Paz erroneously dates the foundation of the BMG Guild to 1900 and incorrectly attributes its inception to Partee. Ricardo Paz, "History of the Guitar in the United States," *NAFME*, published July 16, 2019, accessed February 28, 2020, <https://nafme.org/history-guitar-united-states/>; and Paz, "Sharing Global Musics: Guitar Study in the United States—A Brief Overview," *Music Educators Journal* 106, no. 3 (March 2020): 16–17.

organizations reveals the pioneering journey of BMG apologists, including their challenges, victories, shortcomings, and inexperience. It also sheds light on the organizers' unavoidable conflicts of interest as they played crucial roles in the creation and leadership of these institutions while maintaining their commercial involvement as manufacturers and publishers.

An Idea is Planted: Organizing and Unifying the BMG Community

The concept of organizing the first American plectral instruments organization emerged in 1895. As BMG advocates brainstormed about organizing national gatherings, Clarence L. Partee, the editor and owner of *Cadenza*, planted the seed to form “an association of the profession similar to the Music Teachers’ National Association [MTNA], with a President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.; each member to joining to pay an entrance fee and subsequent dues which would amount to a sufficient sum to pay the cost of the convention, the expenses of those attending to be paid by the association.”⁴ The suggestion to form an association of banjo, mandolin, and guitar players similar to MTNA, which accepted both men and women as members, was welcomed among *Cadenza*’s readers. For instance, on August 9, 1895, Claude S. Minter wrote a letter from

⁴ Clarence L. Partee, “The Proposed Convention of Banjoists,” *Cadenza* 1, no. 6 (July–August 1895): 4. In 1895, banjoist Frank B. Converse suggested to hold “a national convention of banjo teachers and players... who might meet in session and settle at once and forever all disputed points in regard to correct fingering, general method of teaching, and other important issues.” *Ibid.*, 4. Partee’s proposal to form an association of this kind was prompted by Converse’s suggestion. Frank Buchanan Converse was a banjoist and the author of *Cadenza*’s “Banjo Reminiscences” column, which was published from June 1901 through September 1902. Among banjo scholars, he has been referred to as “the father of the banjo.” For more information about his writings, see Paul Heller, ed., *A History of the Banjo: Frank Converse’s Banjo Reminiscences* (Charleston: Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011).

Little Rock, AR, in favor of the proposal to form such a national organization, and on August 14, 1895, Frank S. Morrow wrote a letter from Harrisburg, PA, about the “prospect of holding a convention of banjo teachers and players.”⁵ Nonetheless, as this section demonstrates, feuds among BMG periodical editors stopped the momentum needed to form a coalition that would support the formation of the first American plucked and plectral instruments organization and delayed this process.

The rise of the magazine publishing industry within the BMG movement was marked and defined by the negative response to competition exhibited by editors, such as S.S. Stewart. A pioneer in his own right, in 1882, Stewart turned to content marketing strategies to promote and sell his instruments. That year he began publishing the first American periodical devoted to plucked and plectral instruments, *Stewart’s*, as “a promotional arm of his company” aimed at educating consumers about his brand. As his new business plan proved successful in attracting customers, “several competitors, contributors, and even protégés” followed his steps and ventured into the magazine publishing business.⁶

Stewart’s monopoly on the publication of periodicals only lasted five years, and as new periodicals specializing in plucked and plectral instruments hit the press, such as *Gatcomb’s Musical Gazette* (founded in 1887) and *Cadenza* (founded in 1894), he began a discrediting campaign against any competitor. His attacks against *Cadenza*, which was in its infancy when Partee suggested the formation of an association, had long-lasting consequences.

⁵ Both letters were published in *Cadenza*. For a full transcript, see “Correspondence,” *Cadenza* 2, no. 1 (September–October 1895): 14.

⁶ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 28–29.

The editorials exchanged between Partee and Stewart after *Cadenza*'s 1895 June–July issue gravely hindered the chances of cooperation among BMG apologists and halted the formation of the United States' first plucked and plectral instruments association. In 1896, their feud was documented into the pages of BMG periodicals. In an article titled "The Wind Blew, Etc.," Stewart belittled Partee's "first and only" book as unoriginal, repetitive, and contributing close to nothing to current banjo literature:

Mr. Partee evidently thinks that "his book" has not received the praise its merits warrant, but the ground covered therein, it is quite safe to say, has been fully covered in previous works, such as "OBSERVATIONS ON BANJO PLAYING," which appeared as a serial some time ago in this *Journal*, and which now forms a portion of the AMERICAN BANJO SCHOOL, Part First.... Indeed, it would be difficult to find ground in the "banjo world," up to this date, that is not well covered in literature, and which was not covered already before Mr. Partee entered the field with his book.⁷

In response, Partee defended his work and ironically accused Stewart of condemning self-promotion efforts, a business tactic Stewart had implemented throughout his career:

It shall never be said that the editor of this magazine attempted to discredit or belittle the efforts of others, but the idea of the publisher of the *Banjo and Guitar Journal* accusing another of "blowing," when he has "blown his own horn" so long, so loudly and so persistently for years, as to earn the title of "The Philadelphia Windbag," is enough to make a mummy smile; it is indeed the richest joke of the season.⁸

As these fiery exchanges continued, towards the end of 1896, Partee opted for a new strategy he hoped would show the "facts" and "expose" Stewart's "pretenses:"

As to the other statement, CADENZA is nothing if not original, therefore we challenge S. S. Stewart to prove his assertion or eat his own words. The conditions are these: Upon proof that any article appearing in CADENZA with C. L. Partee's name attached was copied, either wholly or in part, from *Stewart's Journal* or any other *Journal* we will donate fifty dollars to start a fund to be used toward organizing a convention of banjoists or any other purpose for the benefit

⁷ Stewart, "The Wind Blew, Etc.," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 13, no. 1 (April–May 1896): 10.

⁸ Partee, "Editorial," *Cadenza* 2, no. 5 (May–June 1896): 6.

of the profession at large. It being provided that in case Stewart fails to prove his charge he (Stewart) shall donate the fifty dollars to said fund.⁹

This new strategy proved unsuccessful and in an evasive response, Stewart avoided providing any clear instances of plagiarism and moved on to insulting other contemporaneous BMG journals such as *Gatcomb's Musical Gazette*, *The Troubador*, *Cadenza*, and *Albrecht's Musical Enterprise*. Among the heated comments, Stewart mentioned the proposed convention without issuing any support:

The "assistant editor" has put his wits to work. And lo! A novel scheme for the raising of \$50.00, with which to set in motion a proposed grand Banjo Convention, has been hatched. But it does not *rush*. In fact, the gait of the proposed "convention" seems to lag. "Air Castles," indeed, based upon visionary schemes, do not seem to catch the breeze at this time of the year. The convention appears to be a noble and manly object, the harvest being plenteous, but the willing laborers too few. Another bond syndicate, we fear, may have to be formed for the purpose. *Cadenza*, doubtless, *means* well, but it is said that Hades is paved with such intentions.¹⁰

Worn down after a year of insults and name-calling, Partee issued one last editorial regarding this feud vowing "to call a halt, and spare our readers further infliction."¹¹

Although, the vicious exchanges between Partee and Stewart ceased after April 1897, these exchanges took place in the public eye and may have diffused confidence in the proposal because no coalition was formed to support the proposed convention or association. Instead, the concept was put on hold, and it was not reassessed until after

⁹ Partee, "A Few Cold Facts," *Cadenza* 3, no. 2 (November–December 1896): 6.

¹⁰ Stewart, "A Few Gutteral Sounds from the 'Partition de Cartee:' The Cadava has a Disgruntle in the Shape of Whistling Wind, Wafting a *Cadenza* through Partee's Whiskers," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 13, no. 6 (February–March 1897): 4.

¹¹ Partee, "Dodged the Issue," *Cadenza* 3, no. 4 (March–April 1897): 7.

Stewart's death on April 6, 1898.¹²

The BMG Guild and Its Competitors

The first national organization established to champion plucked and plectral instruments in the United States was the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists. According to the American Guild of Music website, in 1900 a small group of musicians had the vision to establish an organization “to serve the interests of music and of the fretted instruments they loved so well—Banjos, Mandolins and Guitars.”¹³ This visionary group of musicians was led by several BMG magazine editors, Charles Morris and Clarence Partee in particular, who after an intense two-year advocacy and marketing campaign established their guild on Wednesday, January 22, 1902, in Boston, MA. The editorials, articles, and correspondence published in BMG periodicals throughout this two-year window corroborate this date and fully document how the guild came to be.¹⁴

¹² Mr. Stewart's death was reported in several periodicals. For notices of death, see “Editorial,” *Cadenza* 4, no. 5 (May–June 1898): 9.

¹³ “History,” *American Guild of Music*, accessed September 10, 2019, <http://www.americanguild.org/full-history>. The American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists became the American Guild of Music in 1953, this transition is also documented in this webpage and is referenced at the end of this section.

¹⁴ The official formation of the much-expected guild was reported by both *Stewart's* and *Cadenza* in their February issues. See Charles Morris, “A Memorable Day for Boston: The Launching of the Guild and the Holding of a Festival,” *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 19, no. 2 (February 1902): 2–4; and Clarence Partee, “The American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists: A Report on the Preliminary Work Accomplished and Prospectus of the Future Work to be Undertaken by the Guild,” *Cadenza* 8, no. 6 (February 1902): 10–12. The establishment of the guild was also reported by the *Boston Herald* on January 23, 1902. This article was reprinted in *Cadenza's* February issue; to access the full article see “Banjo, Mandolin, Guitar: Men Interested in These Three Instruments Form Guild,” *Cadenza* 8, no. 6 (February 1902): 16.

These documents reveal that there were three factors that contributed to the establishment of the guild: changes in BMG editorial boards, national teaching associations' discriminatory policies against plucked and plectral instruments, and a long advocacy and marketing campaign spearheaded by BMG magazine editors (who served as the organizing committee). Among the challenges the organizers faced were the rise of the Teachers' League of Philadelphia, the challenging task of convincing BMG members to join their organization, and the struggle to set examination standards and proficiency standards. These are described in detail in this section.

Roster changes in the BMG magazine industry helped foster cooperation within the movement's apologists. In 1898, after Stewart's death, Charles Morris became the new editor of *Stewart's*. Under his leadership, the journal became more amicable towards its competitors, and Partee's idea of forming "an association of the profession similar to the Music Teachers' National Association" was resurrected by the new editor.¹⁵ In an article titled "A Suggestion," Morris advocated for the formation of a guild of banjoists, mandolinists and guitarists, which would become the first national organization of its kind in the United States:

Bands and orchestras have their trade unions, and music teachers their hybrid sort of protective associations; these the JOURNAL has no sympathy with whatever, for they are all based on sordidness.... Trade unionism of any kind is played out, and should be relegated to the ash heap with all other recollections of barbarianism. Now to the point, whether it is or is not premature to make the suggestion, it does seem advisable that the forming of a Guild of banjoists, mandolinists and guitarists be formed, somewhat on the line of the organists' guilds.¹⁶

¹⁵ Partee, "The Proposed Convention of Banjoists," 4.

¹⁶ Charles Morris, "A Suggestion," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 16, no. 6 (February–March 1900): 4.

In his remarks, Morris also alluded to his dislike for the MTNA, a popular sentiment among the BMG community and one that fueled their desire to form a separate organization rather than lobby for inclusion in MTNA's membership roster.

During much of the nineteenth century, national teaching associations, such as the MTNA, showed blatant non-inclusive (and discriminatory) policies against plectral and plucked instruments. Founded in 1876, MTNA did not promote the teaching of the guitar and the mandolin. The organization's leaders purposely excluded these plectral instruments because they did not consider them among the traditional classical instruments and associated them with the popular sphere and folk music. Although the BMG movement had not yet flourished in the United States at the time of MTNA's founding, the non-inclusion of these instruments later caused grave animosity in the BMG community, whose mission was to establish and legitimize plucked instruments (particularly the banjo) as classical music instruments. It was not until 1897 that the MTNA "publicly recognized" the mandolin and the guitar "as legitimate musical instruments" during their national convention held in New York City on June 24–28.¹⁷ It was too little too late because, as Morris' statement reveals, MTNA's long exclusion of plucked instruments forced BMG apologists to lobby for their own organization instead of joining the MTNA.

As plans to form the proposed guild developed, BMG editors formed an organizing committee "for the purpose of making the Guild known to the profession and putting the organization under way."¹⁸ This organizing committee was announced on the

¹⁷ Partee, "Editorial," *Cadenza* 3, no. 6 (July–August 1897): 6.

¹⁸ Partee, "Editorial," *Cadenza* 7, no. 2 (October 1900): 10.

October 1900 *Cadenza* editorial and its members were the following editors: Charles Morris, Clarence Partee, C. Adams, F. Keates, Otto Albrecht, and Charles Graeber. Each editor was given the position of either District Secretary or Assistant District Secretary, which entailed the responsibilities of promoting the formation of the guild in their respective journals and collecting membership applications from interested parties. According to this editorial, all committee members were “working entirely without remuneration of any sort, and only with the best interest of the profession in view.”¹⁹

Table 2.1 contains more information about each organizing committee member.

Table 2.1: American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists Organizing Committee

Name	BMG Journal	Guild Organizing Committee Role
Charles Morris	<i>Stewart's Journal</i> , Director and Editor	District Secretary
Clarence L. Partee	<i>Cadenza</i> , Editor	District Secretary
C. C. Adams	<i>The Concerto</i> , Editor	District Secretary
F. L. Keates	<i>Stewart's Journal</i> , Associate Director & <i>The Major</i> , Editor	Assistant District Secretary
Fred C. Meyer	<i>The Tempo</i> , Editor *	Assistant District Secretaries
Otto H. Albrecht	<i>The Enterprise</i> , Editor *	Assistant District Secretaries
Charles F. Graeber	<i>The Reveille</i> , Editor	Assistant District Secretaries

Source: Data from “The American Guild of Banjoists Mandolinists and Guitarists: Organizing Work,” *Cadenza* 7, no. 2 (October 1900): 21.

* Members of the Philadelphia Teachers’ League

In nineteenth- and twentieth-century America, white women of means were the primary actors in the philanthropic realm, having built volunteering and funding networks on behalf of the arts, but no woman was engaged to serve in the organizing committee. Instead, this committee was formed by businessmen who had commercial interests and no formal education as music teachers. As Chapter One has shown, women were a minority in the BMG movement, but at the turn of the century there were young

¹⁹ Ibid.

instrumentalist establishing well regarded careers who could have been approached to serve in the organizing committee. For instance, Elsie Tooker would have been a great addition because in the role as the co-editor of the Ladies' pages she could have advertised the formation of this BMG organization among women readers and mobilized women in the West. Certainly, the businessmen's attempt to serve the BMG community without any remunerations must be recognize. Nevertheless, not engaging a section of the community that was experienced in volunteering, mobilizing, fundraising, and working with others might have limited the organizing committee's outreach.

Cadenza's October 1900 issue also contained a two-page article that enumerated the guild's proposed goals, offered a plan of action, and attached a membership application (see Figure 2.1). The "need and object" of the guild was outlined as follows:

- a) To further advance the interest of the instruments in their literature, music and manufacture.
- b) To set the standard of competence and establish a higher average of ability among those desiring to teach.
- c) To provide a bureau of acknowledged authority in technical and all other questions relating to the instruments and their study.
- d) To conduct examinations, and grant diplomas throughout the Unites States.²⁰

These goals were consistent with the pedagogical mission previously mentioned in BMG editorials and the advocates' expressed concern about needing to unify the technique and playing standards used by professionals. While citing that there was "not a recognized college, school, or guild in the United States" that granted diplomas to teachers and graduates of the banjo, mandolin and guitar, proponents of the guild hoped this national organization would fill that void. The plan of action, which had been decided on a

²⁰ "The American Guild of Banjoists Mandolinists and Guitarists: Need and Oject of the Guild," *Cadenza* 7, no. 2 (October 1900): 20.

meeting in New York City on August 25 (1900) by Morris and Partee, consisted of three important stages: active recruitment of member applicants, publication of full member applicant lists by a set date, and election of officers who would be entrusted to draw up the constitution and by-laws of the guild.²¹ Prospective members interested in “becoming qualified members of the Guild” were instructed to fill out and sign the attached membership contract and mail it back before January 1, 1901 to any of the District Secretaries.²² Once a full list of member applicants was compiled, it was to be published in BMG journals and mailed to each qualified member so that each could cast a vote to elect the guild’s officers and committee. The completion of this plan of action was heavily delayed due to low number of interested applicants; the full list of members was not published until October 1901 and the governing body was not elected until January 1902.

²¹ The scheduled meeting “to confer... regarding the plans for the forming of the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists” was reported in the editorial pages of *Cadenza*’s September 1900. It mentioned that on that occasion “definite results” would be accomplished and lamented the fact that Keates could not join the conference. “Editorial,” *Cadenza* 1, no. 1 (September 1900): 10.

²² Partee, “Editorial,” *Cadenza* 7, no. 2 (October 1900): 10.

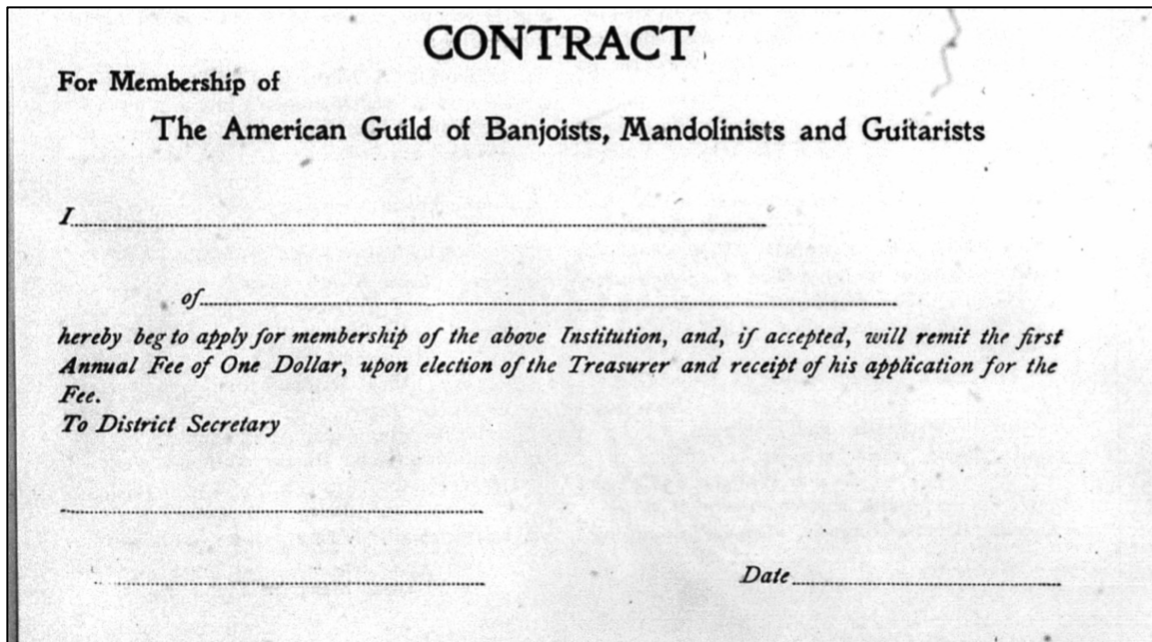


Figure 2.1: The American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists 1900 Membership Application. Published in “The American Guild of Banjoists Mandolinists and Guitarists: Organizing Work,” *Cadenza* 7, no. 2 (October 1900): 21.

Although this initial article demonstrates the BMG Guild had the goals of establishing pedagogical and repertoire standards within the BMG community, these goals were too ambitious and, unfortunately, they were never achieved. Morris’s proposal to form a guild of banjoists, mandolinists, and guitarists was inspired by the formation of the American Guild of Organists (AGO) in 1896. He wanted to form an institution that, like AGO, had the authority to set teaching and playing proficiency standards by granting diplomas to those of its members who passed required examinations.²³ In 1900, he wrote about this when he first suggested the BMG should form an organization:

Now to the point, whether it is or is not premature to make the suggestion, it does seem advisable that the forming of a Guild of banjoists, mandolinists and guitarists be formed, somewhat on the line of the organists’ guild. An institute to

²³ “History and Purpose,” *American Guild of Organists*, accessed September 28, 2020, <https://www.agohq.org/about-the-ago/history-purpose/>; and Rita H. Mead, “American Guild of Organists,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. N. Lee Orr, accessed September 28, 2020, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

belong to which would be both an honor and a guarantee of capability, an institute to which merit and passing heavy examination courses alone was the key of admittance, and an institute based on sound business principles in order to be solvent.²⁴

As owners and editors of BMG magazines and other music businesses, the organizing committee had at their disposition free column space in the leading BMG journals, such as *Stewart's* and *Cadenza*, to advertise its cause, but limited experience with voluntarism and music education. As the following details illustrate, although the organizing committee was successful in building a coalition of support among the BMG community after a two-year advocacy campaign, the committee struggled and failed to establish examination entrance exams and a diploma-granting system as the American Guild of Organists had.

Proponents of the guild underestimated the challenging task of promoting a new organization in the fractured and commercially minded BMG movement. Even before the formation of the guild's organizing committee in October 1900, Partee and Morris encountered resistance from members of a newly formed local organization who were skeptical of the proposed guild. Reported in the BMG periodicals as the first organization "to accomplish something substantial towards uniting the local teachers," the Banjo, Mandolin, Guitar and Zither Teachers' League of Philadelphia was established in the first months of 1900, preceding the formation of the guild by two years.²⁵ An article reporting

²⁴ Morris, "A Suggestion," 4.

²⁵ "With the beginning of the new year [1900] a dozen or more of our best teachers in Philadelphia came together and discussed the possibilities of organizing some sort of League.... The first effort was crowned with success and indicated a promising future and the Banjo, Mandolin, Guitar, and Zither Teachers' League was an assured fact, to my knowledge the first in the United States." Maurice Jacobi, "Letter to *Stewart's*" in "The Proposed American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists, and Guitarists:

its pioneering creation was published in *Cadenza*'s 1900 March–April issue alongside an editorial supporting Morris's proposed guild.²⁶ The fact that this local organization was a reality by 1900 and Morris' guild was a mere proposal did not elude this report. In his editorial, Partee did not merely report the facts surrounding the establishment of this new organization; he praised the “fraternal spirit” of the Teachers' League of Philadelphia's members and encouraged teachers in other cities to emulate their efforts.²⁷

The Teachers' League of Philadelphia was slow in cooperating with the proposed guild and BMG editors had to actively encourage the league's members to “join the Guild and lend active aid to the cause.”²⁸ Having already established its own autonomy and governing body by the time the guild was proposed, the Teachers' League of Philadelphia's first communication to address Morris's proposal expressed skepticism rather than support:

The last number (116) of the JOURNAL has an editorial in the form of ‘A Suggestion.’ The matter under consideration, is to bring all banjo, mandolin and guitar players together and to establish some means of interchange of work and thought. The object in view is worthy of all consideration and support, but will it work; will the efforts of those that suggest this plan be crowned with success? It is doubtful.... Clubs are nothing than the combined efforts of this kind on a very small scale, too small to exercise an influence for a general cause and then they have so many petty jealousies in each individual club that an idea so noble and generous as suggested by the JOURNAL could not develop.²⁹

Progress Report No. 1,” *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 17, no. 1 (April–May 1900): 11.

²⁶ Partee, “Editorial,” *Cadenza* 6, no. 4 (March–April 1900): 11.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Partee, “Editorial,” *Cadenza* 7, no. 9 (May 1901): 11.

²⁹ Jacobi, “Letter to *Stewart's*” in “The Proposed American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists, and Guitarists: Progress Report No. 1,” 11.

Upon receiving the above-mentioned communication from the vice president of the league, Maurice Jacobi, Morris moved to reassure members of the Teachers' League of Philadelphia that the proposed guild's mission of establishing pedagogical standards across the BMG movement would not conflict with the league's community building:

The real object was, and is, to establish an indisputable [pedagogical] standard for individuals and Leagues to work up to, and the object would be greatly assisted by the existence of the Philadelphia League, and that of all the other Leagues that may spring up through the country.³⁰

Morris's reassurances were the start of a marketing campaign spearheaded by BMG editors, such as Partee, to convince the members of the Teachers' League of Philadelphia and other BMG apologists to join the guild. Partee took particular interest in promoting the proposed guild among members of the local Philadelphia organization. Although well intentioned, Partee's early supportive remarks about the Teachers' League of Philadelphia were, in hindsight, a bit problematic for him as he moved to promote the guild during the next two years. During the first year of the campaign (1900), he exercised caution and adopted a conciliatory tone that was in line with his desire to endorse both the Teachers' League of Philadelphia and the proposed guild:

While fully favoring the idea of local Teachers' Leagues in every city, we think these organizations should also join the Guild proposed by Mr. Morris. The latter is a scheme of national magnitude and importance and, as such, it is essential that all become interested in order to strengthen it to effective proportions. With the coming of the fall season, no doubt, much of value will be accomplished in that direction.³¹

This approach was moderately successful. By October, two Philadelphia's Teacher's League members, Fred C. Meyer and Otto H. Albrecht (editors of *The Tempo* and *The*

³⁰ Morris, "The Proposed American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists, and Guitarists: Progress Report No. 1," 11.

³¹ Partee, "Editorial," *Cadenza* 6, no. 6 (July–August 1900): 11.

Enterprise respectively), accepted offers to serve as Assistant District Secretaries. Their new involvement with the organizing committee likely continued to build trust between both organizations and encouraged other Philadelphia's Teacher's League members to join the proposed guild.

As the proposed guild started to take shape and struggled to boost their membership, by 1901 Partee shifted to a more direct appeal. In new editorials, he focused on emphasizing the core differences between these organizations:

It is proposed to organize the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists along lines entirely different from any other existing association of professional or amateur devotees of the stringed instruments. While the other organizations striving to advance the interests of the profession are including artistic, fraternal, social and commercial features in their general plans, the aims of the Guild will be exclusively artistic and fraternal; to set a standard of competency and to elevate the artistic and moral standing of its members....For the reason stated, members of other organizations should not hesitate to send their membership application to the Guild. It will not conflict, in any sense, with the scope or purposes of other Leagues or associations of musicians in this line, and all should lend their support to the work.³²

By categorizing the Teachers' League of Philadelphia as an organization with a "commercial aspect" and the guild as one that would primarily champion artistic standards, Partee seemed to be positioning the guild on morally superior ground, perhaps as a way of attracting more member applicants. It is unclear whether this new strategy helped sway opinions on the matter and gain more applicants among Philadelphia Teachers' League members, but there was a reported increase of approximately twenty more member applications after May 1901; see Table 2.2 for more detail on member applications.

³² Partee, "Editorial," *Cadenza* 7, no. 9 (May 1901): 11.

Table 2.2: Timeline tracing the number of member application submissions for the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists

Date	Reporting Magazine	Membership Number Reports
October 1900	<i>Cadenza</i>	Membership contract is published.
November 1900	<i>Cadenza</i>	Four
December 1900	<i>Cadenza</i>	Received fourteen, totaling twenty.
January 1901	<i>Stewart's</i>	Twenty-one
February 1901	<i>Cadenza</i>	Received thirty-eight, totaling sixty-five or more.
February 1901	<i>Stewart's</i>	Over seventy
March 1901	<i>Cadenza</i>	Count neared one hundred
August 1901	<i>Cadenza</i>	One hundred and nineteen

Source: Data from *Cadenza* published between October 1900 and August 1901.

The task of convincing the BMG community to join the proposed guild went beyond persuading the Philadelphia Teachers' League members to join. District Secretaries and Assistant District Secretaries were tasked with promoting the guild among their readers and encouraging them to file a membership application before January 1, 1901. Each editor confronted this difficult task differently. Some, like Morris, opted for an optimistic and encouraging tone, and while others, like Partee, applied more direct, honest, and disappointed tone. In November 1900, only a month after the member contract had been published, Partee reported receiving four membership applications and said the following:

We sincerely hope that many more will be inspired to follow the example of these gentlemen and help to organize the Guild by first becoming members and afterwards lending their efforts towards creating further interest in the good work.³³

These numbers were low but considering that the organization had just launched its full plan to action (and it was not the digital age), they were not discouraging. By December, Partee was able to report that more applications had reached his hands and he published

³³ Partee, "Editorial," *Cadenza* 7, no. 3 (November 1900): 10.

the names of fourteen new membership applicants (Myron A. Bickford was among them). Progress had been made, but it was not enough — certainly not the outpouring the district secretaries had expected. In his December editorial, Partee voiced his disappointment about the low number of applications received to date for the first time and challenged the field to “wake up:”

The membership applications sent to CADENZA office this far number twenty, all told. Out of several thousand professionals who read this magazine every month, who claim to be progressive and enterprising workers in the interests of the art, there should be many times twenty who are sufficiently broad-minded and enterprising to recognize the desirability of joining such an organization as the proposed Guild and to realize its value in future united work. We consider that the profession has made a very poor showing in relation to interest in the Guild, and, we again invite professionals to “wake up” and send in their applications for membership without further delay. It is necessary that the Guild have 200 or more members before completing organization.³⁴

Meanwhile, in the pages of *Stewart's*, Morris did not report specific numbers and continued to use an encouraging tone, asking the many interested friends who had corresponded with him to mail their membership contracts:

I am pleased to say applications for Guild membership are being regularly received. Several friends have written asking to have their names placed on the list, and to these I would say that in order to have everything “in order,” it is essential that all applications be made by means of the Contract Form, copies of which can be had in any quantity for the asking, if not already in the hands of those who desire to become Guild members.³⁵

As the campaign to promote the proposed guild progressed, and the unrealistic deadline approached, the low turnout of member applicants was discouraging. By expecting to receive more than 400 memberships, the District Secretaries had grossly

³⁴ Partee, “Editorial,” *Cadenza* 7, no. 4 (December 1900): 10.

³⁵ Morris, “The Proposed American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists: Progress Report No. 5,” *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 1 (December 1901): 17.

overestimated the number of BMG members who would be interested in joining the proposed guild. To put these numbers into perspective, when the American Guild of Organists was founded in 1896, it had around one hundred and fifty members.³⁶ Morris's remarks after the discouraging turnout were more positive and measured as he continued to encourage more individuals to mail their membership contracts:

The list would be much larger if those ladies and gentlemen who have signed their intention to make application would only send in their application by means of the contract form. In order to put the Guild through, and deal with State Government it is necessary that the dealings be by documents.... Considering all things, we are progressing steadily and surely, even if not so fast as could be desired. Rome was not built in a day, and we have a vast track of territory to cover, and incessant detailed work to do that occupies considerable time.³⁷

After having underestimated the BMG movement's commercial environment and the challenging task of convincing this community to cooperate and unite, editors began to come to terms with the reality of the situation. Aware that their organization would not attract thousands of applicants, they expressed their willingness to keep extending the deadline until the list reached "at least two hundred before taking final action in organizing" and continued to advocate for the formation of the proposed guild for another year.³⁸

During this second year, District Secretaries focused their efforts on answering

³⁶ Samuel A. Baldwin, "The American Guild of Organists," *The Musical Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (April 1946): 290; and Mead, "American Guild of Organists."

³⁷ Charles Morris, "The Proposed American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists: Progress Report No. 6," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 2 (January 1901): 10.

³⁸ Clarence Partee, "Editorial," *Cadenza* 7, no. 7 (March 1901): 10. *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* also reported the deadline shift, see Charles Morris, "The Proposed American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists: Progress Report No. 8," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 4 (March 1901): 6.

questions from the community regarding matters such as the examination courses and the overarching goals of the proposed organization. Although entrance examinations were extremely crucial to the proposed guild's pedagogical goals, throughout the advocacy campaign's first year questions regarding these examinations were left unanswered even as some interested applicants considered them as a "terror."³⁹ Instead of releasing lengthy explanations about the exams, guild apologists easily dismissed concerns by reassuring interested applicants that "none should hesitate" to submit their membership contracts out of "fear of not being eligible, or on account of doubting their ability to successfully pass the examinations."⁴⁰ This approach was primarily adopted because the organizing committee still had to make critical decisions regarding the different proficiency levels, its rubrics and exams. Hoping to become a diploma-granting institution, the organizing committee moved to scheduling meetings to address this pressing need and provide more information about the examinations.

After a months-long process of careful consideration, in August 1901, an editorial with information regarding the proposed examinations and certification levels was published in *Cadenza*.⁴¹ The information was also published in *Stewart's*, alongside an

³⁹ Charles Morris, "The Proposed American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists: Progress Report No. 7," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 3 (February 1901): 22.

⁴⁰ Clarence Partee, "Editorial," *Cadenza* 7, no. 6 (February 1901): 10.

⁴¹ Clarence Partee, "Editorial: The American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists," *Cadenza* 7, no. 12 (August 1901): 10. The publication of this document was severely delayed. Having been first mentioned by Morris in April 1901, it was identified early on as a potential informative tool that could help address some questions regarding the examination courses (the subjects member applicants would have to know in order to pass each examination). Charles Morris, "The Proposed American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists: Progress Report No. 9," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 5 (April 1901): 7. Nevertheless, after several meetings held between May

up-to-date membership list with 119 applicants.⁴² In comparison with the American Guild of Organists, which had 145 founding members, by August 1901, the proposed guild was approaching the benchmark set by the organists' guild but was still twenty-six members short.⁴³

The information published in August 1901 detailed the District Secretaries' plan to establish pedagogical and repertoire standards within the guild and across the BMG movement.⁴⁴ Although it was never realized, their plan was inspired by American Guild of Organists' certifications system. While the organists' guild had two levels of certification, associate and fellow, the organizing committee suggested establishing three "grades:" primary, intermediate, and graduate.⁴⁵ The "grades" were analogous to school grades, showing a progression from elementary subjects to more advanced concepts.

and July, the District Secretaries could not finalize the examinations' outline and the publication of the document was postponed until August. Charles Morris, "The Proposed American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists: Progress Report No. 11," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 8 (July 1901): 23.

⁴² *Cadenza* reported one hundred and nineteen names. See Clarence Partee, "Editorial: The American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists," 10. *Stewart's* list contained the names of one hundred and twenty-one member applicants. See Charles Morris, "The Proposed American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists: Progress Report No. 12," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 9 & 10 (Augusts–September 1901): 30–31. *Stewart's* issue number 129–130 came out on September 10 of 1901, almost a month after *Cadenza* published its August issue. This differential period explains the number discrepancy, since by September two more applications could have easily reached the District Secretaries.

⁴³ Baldwin, "The American Guild of Organists," 290. The American Guild was able to boost its membership after its foundation. By April 1902, Partee reported one-hundred and fifty-six members. Partee, "Editorial: The American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists III," *Cadenza* 8, no. 8 (April 1902): 22.

⁴⁴ Partee, "Editorial," *Cadenza* 8, no. 1 (September 1901): 23.

⁴⁵ Partee, "Editorial: The American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists," 10.

Members were to have room for upwards mobility within the grades, especially those members entering at the lower level. Furthermore, each plucked and plectral instrument was welcomed in the guild and was allocated its own three grades.

After an onerous two-year advocacy campaign, on January 22, 1902, district secretaries and guild member applicants attended a “preliminary organization” meeting in Boston.⁴⁶ This meeting became known as the guild’s founding and its first annual convention and festival concert.⁴⁷ At the meeting, the assembled guild members voted to elect their representatives to the BMG Guild’s governing body. Table 2.3 details the names of each elected member and their officer roles.

Table 2.3. List of the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists’ 1902 governing body

Name	Officer Position
Ira H. Odell	President
Charles Morris	Vice-president
Clarence L. Partee	Secretary and treasurer
A. A. Farland	Executive Committee Member
Samuel Siegel	Executive Committee Member
W. J. Kitchener	Executive Committee Member
George L. Lansing	Executive Committee Member
H. F. Odell	Executive Committee Member

Source: Data from “The Guild is Formed: Representative Members of the Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Industries, with Teachers and Publishers of Music Get Together in a Practical Way,” *Cadenza* 8, no. 7 (March 1902): 14–15.

⁴⁶ This two-year recruiting period was similar to the “nearly two years” that it had taken the founder of the American Guild of Organist, Gerrit Smith, to gather support for his guild. Baldwin, “The American Guild of Organists,” 290.

⁴⁷ Morris, “A Memorable Day for Boston,” 2–4. The meeting was scheduled in conjunction with the Grand Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Festival Concert held in Boston and organized by Walter Jacobs. As Partee later acknowledged, these circumstances established the precedent of always featuring concerts throughout the BMG Guild’s annual conventions. Partee, “Editorial,” *Cadenza* 8, no. 5 (January 1902): 23.

Like the BMG Guild's organizing committee, the newly elected governing body did not include women. Furthermore, according to historical records, women were not even present at the Boston meeting.⁴⁸

The lack of women's presence in the formation of the BMG Guild may be connected to the fact that district secretaries had more traditional values and adhered to cultural boundaries that normalized the presence of boards segregated by gender. As Whitesitt reports, in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century all-male boards were the public faces of musical institutions while women served in all-women committees or clubs.⁴⁹ While it is unclear what personal views each member of the BMG Guild governing body held regarding women's public roles, there is no record documenting any efforts made to include women's input or to invite them to serve in positions of leadership. Although women did not serve as officers, records show that some of them, such as guitarists Elsie Tooker and Vahdah Olcott Bickford and banjoist Fannie Heinline, were active members, presenting papers and playing concerts at annual conventions. In 1904, Heinline was the first woman ever engaged to co-headline the

⁴⁸ Morris, "A Memorable Day for Boston," 2. Present at this historical meeting were thirty-seven member applicants and one journalist: C. L. Partee, Charles Morris, Walter Jacobs, D. L. Day, G. L. Lansing, B. E. Shattuck, A. A. Babb, A. C. Robinson, W. P. Hovey, H. F. Odell, Giuseppe Pettine, Samuel Siegel, Thos. J. Armstrong, O. H. Albrecht, Frank Perry, Harry N. Davis, Daniel H. Day, Frank X. Audet, A. E. Squier, Myron A. Bickford, Fred J. Bacon, A. C. Crashaw, R. M. Northrop, C. C. Williams, Ernest H. Swaney, W. A. Cole, Peter W. Foley, John E. Russell, J. J. Derwin, Edward J. Hussey, Fred C. Martin, Thomas R. Lincoln, James J. McKerman, R. T. Hall (of the *Boston Herald*), Charles J. Dorn, H. M. Bronson, A. C. Burnham, Harry Wolff.

⁴⁹ Linda Whitesitt, "Women as 'Keepers of Culture': Music Clubs, Community Concert Series, and Symphony Orchestras," in *Cultivating Music in America*, eds. Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 73–78.

annual convention's main concert, which was held in Carnegie Hall that year.⁵⁰ Also, concert reviews published in *Cadenza* and Olcott Bickford's testimony reveal that she performed at the BMG Guild annual conventions that were held in Cleveland, OH (1914); Providence, RI (1915); Washington D.C (1916); Boston, MA (1917); Atlanta, GA (1920); Los Angeles, CA (1921); and New York City, NY (1922).⁵¹

After an onerous two-year advocacy campaign, on January 22, 1902, the BMG Guild's governing body had its work cut out for them. The next challenge became drafting, approving, and submitting legal documents such as chartering papers, a constitution, and by-laws. Since one of the original goals of the BMG Guild was to become a diploma-granting institution (like the American Guild of Organists), it became imperative to charter the organization and establish the examination process. Unfortunately, although the newly elected governing body had a vast experience building their manufacturing and music publishing businesses, and performing and teaching locally, they faced a steep learning curve when it came to establishing organizations and pedagogical standards. They were clueless about chartering laws and did not know much about nonprofits.⁵²

⁵⁰ Clarence Partee, "Editorial: The New York Mandolin, Guitar and Banjo Concert a Great Success," *Cadenza* 10, no. 6 (February 1904): 22.

⁵¹ Vahdah Olcott Bickford, "Vahdah Olcott-Bickford: About Myself," *Rosette* (July–August 1975), transcript published on the American Guitar Society website, accessed July 18, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20081120185352/http://www.americanguitarsociety.org/prinarticles.html>.

⁵² Ira H. Odell and his son H. F. Odell were owners of an instrument manufacturing and sheet music printing company, H. F. Odell & Co. In addition, Ira H. Odell built a career as a band leader in Boston and published instrumental methods. His son continued his legacy as an educator by becoming a BMG teacher, and the director of the 60-piece Langham Orchestra (later renamed the Odell Orchestra) and other

In May 1902, Partee updated his readers on the status of the guild's chartering. He mentioned that they were still consulting attorneys on how to proceed and were looking into the possibility of applying for a charter through the University of the State of New York or the University of Pennsylvania:

In the matter of obtaining a charter for the Guild, we have been advised by eminent attorneys that it would be a long and expensive proceeding to attempt to secure a charter from the Government, if not impossible, and that it would require special legislation, most likely.... Men prominent in the legal profession, who have the interest of the Guild at heart, and who are not working for pay, but simply desire to help us place the organization on the proper footing, are now making inquiries and looking up precedents with the intention of applying for a charter through one of the institutions named.⁵³

There was a precedent of a similar organization being chartered by the University of the State of New York that dated back to 1896. In that year, "The American Guild of Organists was chartered... by the Board of Regents, University of the State of New York, to administer a comprehensive series of examinations for professional certification."⁵⁴

ensembles. Also, Odell was the owner of *Crescendo*, a journal that ran from 1908–1934. For information on Odell father and son, see Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 37–38; "Prominent Players and Teachers—Herbert Forrest Odell (1872–1926)," *Crescendo* 18, no. 10 (April 1926): 9; and "Herbert Forrest Odell, 1872–1926," *Crescendo* 25, no. 10 (October 1933): 1. Clarence L. Partee was a BMG composer and arranger, and the owner of his own music publishing company. In addition, he was the owner and editor of *Cadenza* from 1894–1907. Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 32–33. Charles Morris was the editor of *Stewart's* between 1898–1902. The Executive Committee was composed of virtuoso BMG players and teachers. Alfred A. Farland was a virtuoso banjo player; Samuel Siegel was a mandolin virtuoso; W. J. Kitchener was a mandolinist and a versatile multi-instrumentalist teacher; and George L. Lansing was a banjoist who was a Boston-based teacher and Lincoln B. Gatcomb's business partner—who was the owner of *Gatcomb's* journal.

⁵³ Partee, "Editorial," *Cadenza* 8, no. 9 (May 1902): 22.

⁵⁴ "Certification," *American Guild of Organists*, accessed September 30, 2020, <https://www.agohq.org/certification/>.

The BMG Guild was never chartered by the University of the State of New York, and I have been unable to find any records that it was chartered as a nonprofit in any state.

On the account of drafting self-governing documents, the elected governing body was ultimately successful. Between 1902 and 1904, there were two drafts. A preliminary constitution was published in June 1902.⁵⁵ In 1904, a second document was published after formally being adopted at the fourth annual convention and festival concert, which was held in New York City.⁵⁶ The 1904 adopted constitution differs from the 1902 preliminary constitution in that it does not contain language regarding the guild's educational and pedagogical aspirations. The phrase "to conduct examinations and grant diplomas throughout the world" was taken out of Article I and mentions of the examination system and its grades were also eliminated.

I have found no evidence suggesting that the BMG Guild ever established an examinations system. According to Baldwin, one of the original founders of the American Guild of Organists, establishing a diploma-granting guild was a rather convoluted and lengthy process.⁵⁷ In the case of that organization, although it obtained a charter the year they were founded, it was unable to set up an examinations system with the same speed. It was not until the term of Warden R. Huntington Woodman (1901–1903) that the group started granting associate and fellow certifications.⁵⁸ The BMG

⁵⁵ "The American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists: Constitution," *Cadenza* 8, no. 10 (June 1902): 22–23.

⁵⁶ "Constitution and By-Laws of The American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists," *Cadenza* 10, no. 8 (April 1904): 13–15.

⁵⁷ Baldwin, "The American Guild of Organists," 294.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Guild governing body not only had to navigate a complicated process, but it received intense pushback against standardized testing from guild members.⁵⁹ In 1904, the newly adopted constitution officially dismissed an examination system in favor of a testimonial-based system.⁶⁰

Even though the BMG Guild failed to accomplish its proposed mission of setting up pedagogical, technical and manufacturing standards throughout the BMG movement, this organization was pioneering in its own right. It achieved national success among the plectral instrument community for half a century by continuing to hold annual conventions and concerts and promoting unity within plucked and plectral instrument apologists, teachers, performers and amateurs.

By 1904, the BMG Guild successfully held three annual conventions—the first was held in Boston in 1902, the second one in Philadelphia in 1903 and the third one in New York City in 1904. In conjunction with these conventions, adjacent festival concerts were privately managed and organized by guild members (or member applicants in the case of Jacobs) who wanted to contribute to furthering the stature of plucked and plectral instruments in the concert scene. Each concert featured leading BMG artists and was organized at the expense of the manager(s), who undertook great managerial and financial burdens. In 1902, the Boston Festival concerts were organized by the Festival

⁵⁹ Partee, “The American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists: A Report on the Preliminary Work,” 11.

⁶⁰ Article four of the 1904 constitution stated that “any teacher or player of the mandolin, guitar or banjo of good moral character and recognized ability” was eligible for membership, and applicants “whose standing as musicians or teachers” was not known needed a “special examiner for the guild” or guild officer(s) to vouch for their abilities.

Association of which Walter Jacobs was the manager.⁶¹ It featured mandolin virtuoso Samuel Siegel, the Boston Ideal Club, famous banjoist Sylvester Louis (Vess) Ossman, the Bacon Quintette, and a Festival Orchestra of one hundred and fifty players as headliners.⁶² In 1903, the Philadelphia festival concerts were held over the course of two evenings, January 9 and 10, and were managed by former Assistant District Secretaries Albrecht and Meyer. The talent booked for this concert included artists who had appeared in the Boston concert such as Vess Ossman and Samuel Siegel, emerging BMG artists such as mandolinist Hilda Hempel, and local ensembles such as the Philadelphia Banjo Club.⁶³ In the pages of *Cadenza*, the Boston and Philadelphia Annual Festival Concerts were described in 1903 as “the largest and most successful banjo, mandolin and guitar concerts ever given in this country, or any other, so far as known.”⁶⁴ In 1904, the festival concert took place on Carnegie Hall’s main stage and was “under the exclusive management of Clarence L. Partee.”⁶⁵ This concert featured the Boston Ideal Club, banjoist Fannie Heinline, German guitarist C.D. Schettler, banjoist George L. Lansing, mandolinist Giuseppe Pettine, the Bacon Banjo Quintette, mandolinist Hilda Hempel,

⁶¹ Other members of the Festival Association were D. L. Day of the A. C. Fairbanks CO., the members of the Boston Ideal Club, and G. L. Lansing, who was the director of the Boston Ideal Club. Clarence Partee, “Editorial,” *Cadenza* 8, no. 11 (July 1902): 23.

⁶² Charles Morris, “The Festival,” *S.S. Stewart’s Banjo and Guitar Journal* 19, no. 2 (February 1902): 4.

⁶³ “Music Melange: News Notes, Concerts, Etc.,” *Cadenza* 9, no. 6 (February 1903): 37–38.

⁶⁴ Clarence Partee, “Editorial: The Guild Convention and Concerts at Philadelphia,” *Cadenza* 9, no. 6 (February 1903): 23.

⁶⁵ Clarence Partee, “Editorial: The New York Mandolin, Guitar and Banjo Concert,” 22.

mandolinist Valentine Abt, banjoist Frederick J. Bacon, and American guitarist William Foden. *Music Trade* reported that there were about 1,700 attendees on January 29, 1904 and *Cadenza* reported that “about 2,000 people listened to a program that was perfect in every detail.”⁶⁶ Figure 2.2 reproduces the program distributed to all attendees at Carnegie Hall. After the New York City annual convention and festival concert, the BMG Guild adopted a measure to “conduct, manage and finance the future annual concerts” and a planning committee was created.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ibid. For a full transcript of the *Music Trade* article, please see “An Imposing Gathering,” *Cadenza* 10, no. 6 (February 1904): 38.

⁶⁷ Partee, “Editorial: The New York Mandolin, Guitar and Banjo Concert,” 22. Article eight of the 1904 constitution

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PROGRAMME

Part I

1. MANDOLIN QUARTETTE
 - a. Overture—Bridal Rose *Levaller-Jacobs*
 - b. Fantasie Petite *Granado*

BOSTON IDEAL CLUB
GEORGE L. LANSING, Director
2. BANJO SOLO
 - a. My Old Kentucky Home *Foster-Farland*
 - b. Perpetuum Mobile, Op. 24 C. M. *Von Weber*

MISS FANNIE HEINLINE
3. GUITAR SOLO
 - a. Ernani *Verdi-Mertz*
 - b. Fantasie—Sur une Melodie Russe *Petitoletti*

MR. C. D. SCHEITLER
4. BANJO SOLO
 - a. Bolero *Moszkowski*
 - b. Potpourri *Arranged by Lansing*

MR. GEORGE L. LANSING
5. MANDOLIN SOLO
 - First Concerto, Op. 16 *De Bero*

SIGNOR GIUSEPPE PETTINE

Programme continued on second page following

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 - a. Grand Operatic Potpourri *Arranged by Bacon*
 - b. Famous Scotch Airs *Arranged by Bacon*

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FREDERICK J. BACON, Director

Part II

1. MANDOLIN SOLO
 - a. Bizarria Capriccio di Concerto *Munier*
 - b. Chant d'Amour (Love Song), duo style *Munier*

MISS HILDA HEMPEL
2. BANJO ENSEMBLE
 - a. March Militaire *Morse*
 - b. Dixie Land *Haines*

THE BOSTON IDEAL CLUB
3. MANDOLIN SOLO
 - a. Concerto, Op. 64 *Mendelssohn*
 - b. Allegro

MR. VALENTINE APT
4. BANJO SOLO
 - a. Valse de Concert, Op. 3 *Wieslawski*
 - b. Grand Concert Polka *Bartlett*

MR. FREDERICK J. BACON
5. GUITAR SOLO
 - a. Sextette from Lucia, Transcription *Donizetti-Foden*
 - b. La Favorita Fantasia *Donizetti-Mertz*
 - c. Alice, Romanza, varied *Ascher-Foden*

MR. WM. FODEN
6. BANJO QUINTETTE
 - a. Selection from Il Trovatore, Fantasia *Ve di-Bacon*
 - b. The Nightingale and the Frogs *Eilenberg*

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Figure 2.2: C. L. Partee's Mandolin, Guitar and Banjo Grand Concert Program. Source: Carnegie Hall Archives)

The BMG Guild proved to be a resilient organization that was able to fend off competing organizations. In 1902, Francis O. Gutman, a music publisher, manufacturer, and teacher based in Cleveland, OH, founded the National Qualified Teacher's League of Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar.⁶⁸ According to Noonan, Gutman was trying to unify the BMG field with his new organization, but it was unable to stand apart from the BMG Guild and it failed to recruit members on a national scale.⁶⁹ To become a member one had to submit two letters of recommendation from other members and have five years of teaching experience. Gutman's league was more demanding in vetting its member applicants than the BMG Guild, which, as previously mentioned, by 1904 adopted a similar but less complex recommendation-based system.

Despite its initial difficulties, the Guild was a lasting achievement. It survived the eclipse of the BMG movement during the 1930s, and, historically speaking, it provided an institutional legacy that was emulated by guitar advocates in the 1920s and 30s. The architects of the BMG Guild laid out the foundation for an organization that became the first American institutional precursor to the modern guitaristic landscape. As Partee wrote in 1902, "There must be pioneers in every line, and in this case we intend to do the pioneering ourselves."⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 34–36; and "F.O. Gutman of Cleveland, O.," *Cadenza* 4, no. 3 (January–February 1898): 12–13. He owned his own music publishing and instrument manufacturing company, The F. O. Gutman Music Company, and two journals, F.O.G. Journal (1899–1904) and The American Music Journal (1905–1907). In the 1890s, Gutman also directed the Ladies Euterpean Club, an all-women BMG ensemble.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 35–36.

⁷⁰ Clarence Partee, "Editorial: The American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists III," *Cadenza* 8, no. 8 (April 1902): 23.

After promoting the plectral instruments for five decades, in 1953, the BMG Guild went through a dramatic change. Its name was changed to the American Guild of Music and its original mission was broadened to welcomed non-fretted instruments.⁷¹ In 1957, members who wanted to maintain the legacy of only promoting the plucked and plectral instrument seceded from the American Guild of Music and created their own organization, the Fretted Instrument Guild of America—which became All Frets, an “international nonprofit musical enthusiasts organization.”⁷² As of the early twenty-first century, both the American Guild of Music and All Frets continue to operate.

International Institutional Precursors: The German Guitar Societies

At the time the American BMG community was coming together to form the BMG Guild, news of the formation of guitar societies in Germany was first arriving to America. Although guitar clubs were a feature of the German guitaristic environment since the formation of Leipziger Gitarre Club (Leipzig Guitar Club) in 1879, news of their activities did not reach the American BMG community until 1900.⁷³ These reports

⁷¹ “History,” *American Guild of Music*.

⁷² “About All Frets,” *All Frets*, accessed September 12, 2019, <http://www.allfrets.com/about-all-frets.html>.

⁷³ The forerunner of the German guitar clubs and societies was the Leipziger Gitarre Club (Leipzig Guitar Club), which was founded on July 16, 1879 by Otto Schick. The Leipzig Guitar Club was active until the late 1880s. In 1881, another guitar society appeared in Germany, the Internationalen Gitarre-Vereins (International Guitar Society). Founded by Richard Löpke, the organization began publishing its journal on October 1, 1883; it was titled *Internationale Gitarre-Zeitung* and Löpke was its editor. On September 17, 1899, another German organization was founded in Munich. Its name was the International Gitaristische Vereinigung (IGV, International League of Guitarists). IGV also published a journal, which was titled *Mitteilungen des Internationalen Gitaristen-Vereins* in its inception but was later renamed *Der Gitarrefreund*. In 1904, some members of the IGV split off and formed their own organization, the Freie

were influential and set an example of cooperation which was followed by American BMG members who were trying to form the first plucked and plectral instruments organization and its first guitar society.

During the summer of 1900, an article titled “The International League of Guitarists” appeared in the pages of *Cadenza*. It contained a “circular letter sent to guitarists throughout the world” from the Internationale Guitarristische Vereinigung (IGV, the International Society of Guitarists). The IGV was a German guitar organization formed during the first German *Guitaristentage* (Guitar Festival), which was held in Munich on September 16–17, 1899.⁷⁴ The group’s letter published in *Cadenza* informed American BMG readers about the formation of the IGV while expressing that one of the reasons behind its organizing was the classical guitar’s loss of prominence and popularity in Germany and its desire to elevate and promote the instrument:

It is a deplorable condition that the guitar should be so near a state of oblivion. In the beginning of the past century, it enjoyed a general popularity and prominent virtuosi like Giuliani, Diabelli, Legnani, Mertz and other delighted with their guitar playing not only those in their immediate surroundings, but also received the distinction of the musically educated as being great artists and masters. Since then, have our never-resting times, with their daily increasing number of inventions, created considerable transformations, also pertaining to music and

Vereinigung zur Förderung guter Gitarremusik (FVFGG, Independent Society for the Promotion of Good Guitar Music). They were led by Otto Hammerer and Franz Sprenzinger. In 1909, the IGV and the FVFGG rejoined forces to form the Gitaristische Vereinigung (Society of Guitarists). For more information about the nineteenth century German guitar societies, see Andreas Stevens, “Das Fachzeitschriftentum für Gitarre als Schnittstelle zwischen professionellem Anspruch und Liebhabertum,” *Phoibos: Zeitschrift für Zupfmusik* (2010): 85–100; Karl Huber, *Die Wiederbelebung des künstlerischen Gitarrespiels um 1900 : Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte des Laienmusikwesens und zur Tradition der klassischen Gitarre* (Augsburg: Lisardo, 1995); and Luiz Carlos Mantovani Junior, “Ferdinand Rebay and the Reinvention of Guitar Chamber Music” (PhD diss., Royal College of Music, 2019), 1–57.

⁷⁴ The circular letter was in German, but Maurice Jacobi translated it. Only the translation was published. “The International League of Guitarists,” trans. Maurice Jacobi. *Cadenza* 6, no. 6 (July-August 1900): 19.

construction of instruments, and hereby has the guitar in an unjustified was been more and more deprived of prominence. At concerts the guitar was entirely omitted, and where perchance it would be heard, it could not be considered an artistic performance; the guitar had degenerated and had reached that stage of being a cheap and inadequate substitute for accompaniments.⁷⁵

Sentiments about the classical guitar's subordinate conditions and displacement in the musical scene bear some resemblance to the writings of American BMG guitarists at the turn of the twentieth century.

Gertrude Miller and Elsie Tooker wrote about the diminished popularity of the classical guitar in America in 1901. As the Ladies' page co-editor, Tooker engaged with this particular subject from a macro perspective and tied the classical guitar's decline in popularity to the emergence of the "mechanical age" and the rise in popularity of "mechanical instruments," such as the gramophone and phonograph.⁷⁶ According to the article, her published findings were based on interviews she conducted with one music store owner and two leading teachers in California; unfortunately, she did not include the interviewees' names.

Tooker's findings document that the classical guitar was not only competing in the amateur music-making market against other plectral instruments, but also with the development of new sound-reproducing technology. The music store owner reported that there had been a notable decline in sales of BMG instruments but an increase of sales of phonographs and gramophones. He even expressed that "the firm could not get phonographs and gramophones in big enough orders to supply the immense demand."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ "The International League of Guitarists," 19.

⁷⁶ Elsie Tooker, "Series no. 10" in "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Realm," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 18, no. 11 (November 1901): 2.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

The music teachers reported that although their private studios had a smaller number of students in comparison to other, the current students were “serious students who studied for many terms.”⁷⁸

A month after Tooker’s article was published, Miller voiced her opinion about the classical guitar’s standing in the BMG community, stating that the instrument was underappreciated and not properly taught.⁷⁹ Her article, “Alert, there! Guitarists,” expressed that there were not enough “good, thorough teachers,” who were knowledgeable about pedagogy and repertoire. She viewed this as incredibly problematic and stated that these conditions were compromising student’s progress:

I think one great drawback to the study of the guitar is the scarcity of good, thorough teachers. So many of them cannot play at all, and if they do it is some *trashy nonsense* which gives their pupils a poor idea of the capabilities of the instrument, and naturally the pupil imitated his teacher and plays music of the same grade. Very often one has pupils come to them who claim that they are quite advances, and when asked to play they know nothing of scales, but can play the Spanish Fandango and other similar trash.⁸⁰

Although her remark about the “Spanish Fandango” could be interpreted as diminishing popular and folk music, the comment is instead tailored as a direct critique of student’s technique development and the need for a curriculum that would teach the student more than strumming. Since this article was published in 1901, at a time when the BMG Guild’s organizing committee was trying to put forth a proposal for establishing pedagogical and repertoire standards, the fact that Miller was not engaged to serve in the organization’s leadership seems like a missed opportunity.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Miller, “Alert, there! Guitarists,” 6–7

⁸⁰ Ibid., 7.

News of the formation of the IGV alerted American BMG guitarists of the possibility of forming instrument-specific organization. Those who perceived that the classical guitar lacked musical independence within the BMG movement, such as Miller and Olcott Bickford, were receptive to the news and in the latter years mobilized to form a similar organization in America (these women's endeavors are discussed at length in Chapter Three). Furthermore, the IGV's activities were published in *Cadenza* around the same time BMG editors were beginning to mobilize to form the BMG Guild. Thus, reports of the IGV's formation also motivated BMG editors and the BMG community to follow in the footsteps of the Germans and mobilize throughout its two-year advocacy campaign. Table 2.4 provides a timeline of the articles published in American BMG journals from July 1900 until October 1902 regarding the IGV and its activities. This table also lists specific instances in which BMG editors mention the IGV to motivate Americans to support the formation of BMG organizations.⁸¹

⁸¹ In December 1900, Maurice Jacobi urged the American BMG community to follow in the steps of the Germans by supporting organizations such as the proposed BMG Guild because they were more advanced in matter of organization. Maurice Jacobi, "League Meeting," *Cadenza* 7, no. 4 (December 1900): 12.

Table 2.4. Timeline tracing mentions of the IGV and its activities in American BMG journals

Date	Reporting Magazine	Notice Details
July-August 1900	<i>Cadenza</i>	Mention of the IGV in editorial asking American “to co-operate” and to join the BMG proposed guild.
July-August 1900	<i>Cadenza</i>	Publications of “The International League of Guitarist” article translated by Maurice Jacobi
December 1900	<i>Cadenza</i>	Maurice Jacobi urges the American BMG community to follow in the steps of the Germans by supporting organizations such as the proposed BMG Guild.
December 1900	<i>Cadenza</i>	Publication of “League Meeting” article by Maurice Jacobi.
February 1901	<i>Cadenza</i>	Publication of “Report of the Second Convention of the International League of Guitarists” translated by Maurice Jacobi
May 1901	<i>Cadenza</i>	Editorial announcing news about the most recent IGV’s activities
July 1901	<i>Cadenza</i>	Publication of letter from Sprenzinger updating Americans on the IGV’s activities
September 1901	<i>Cadenza</i>	Publication of “International League of Guitarists” article
December 1901	<i>Cadenza</i>	Publication of letter from Sprenzinger updating Americans on the IGV’s activities and announcing the purchase of J.K. Mertz manuscripts from her widow
October 1902	<i>Cadenza</i>	Publication of concert program of the IGV’s third <i>Guitaristentage</i>

Source: Data from *Cadenza* published between July–August 1900 and October 1902.

The IGV’s mission, which was translated by Jacobi as “the elevation and promotion of guitar playing to the utmost extent,” resonated with Olcott Bickford and provided a model worth imitating in order to solely champion the classical guitar and its playing tradition in America.⁸² The term “promotion” appeared in both the BMG Guild’s and the IGV’s mission; it was also used in 1923 by AGS founding members. In order to accomplish its mission, the IGV sponsored the following projects: plan annual

⁸² “The International League of Guitarists,” 20.

conventions featuring concerts where the classical guitar could be presented as a soloist or in chamber music format; establish local leagues that would promote ensemble playing amongst members; publish a journal; compile a catalog of instrument makers, scores, and books about the history of the instrument; include scores in the journals and assist members with the difficult task of obtaining “music out of print or difficult to obtain;” aid in the purchase of “instruments, music, and the like;” and feature guitar manufacturer and music publisher exhibitions at the convention.⁸³

The 1900 circular letter documented the names of the IGV’s inaugural governing body. This list is reproduced in Table 2.5 to highlight that although there was regional diversity in its governing body, there was no gender diversity and not a single woman was elected to serve in any of the eleven spots. The majority of the governing body was from Munich, but guitarists from other cities, such as Augsburg and Innsbruck, were also elected to serve in the newly formed governing body. Otto Hammerer and Franz Sprenzinger became the IGV’s inaugural *Vorsitzander* (chairman) and Secretary, respectively. They emerged as prominent players in the formation of German guitar associations in the years to follow. The circular letter also announced the publication of the IGV’s journal, *Mitteilungen des Internationalen Guitarristen-Verbands* (Communication from the International League of Guitarists), which had been printed since May 1, 1900.

⁸³ Ibid.

Table 2.5. List of the Internationale Guitarristische Vereinigung 1899-1900 governing body

Name	City
O. Hammerer	Augsburg
A. Mehlart	Munich
E. Kuhles	Munich
F. Sprenzinger	Augsburg
A. Helmensdorfer	Munich
E. Risch	Munich
A. Gotz	Innsbruck
H. Halbing	Munich
H. Raab	Munich
H. Scherrer	Munich
M. Schwerdhofer	Augsburg

Source: Data from “The International League of Guitarists,” trans. Maurice Jacobi. *Cadenza* 6, no. 6 (July-August 1900): 19.

Unlike the American BMG community, German guitarists were used to organizing. The rich history of nineteenth century guitar clubs established a culture of cooperation among guitarists and IGV members inherited this tradition. The IGV’s fast growing membership numbers showcase the level of collaboration and enthusiasm among German guitarists. Stevens’ research indicates that when the IGV was created on September 16–17, 1899, there were forty charter members. He also mentions that within months there were more than one hundred members.⁸⁴ The circular letter reports that, almost a year after its formation, the IGV’s membership count numbered one-hundred and fifty members.⁸⁵

News of the IGV’s second guitar festival were published in *Cadenza* in December 1900, allowing American BMG members and enthusiasts to follow the progress of this

⁸⁴ Stevens, “Das Fachzeitschriftentum für Gitarre als Schnittstelle zwischen professionellem Anspruch und Liebhabertum,” 86–87.

⁸⁵ “The International League of Guitarists,” 21.

organization.⁸⁶ The article, written by Jacobi, narrated the success of the event, which took place on September 23–25 in Augsburg, and gave further information about the IGV's monthly journal. The IGV's journal ran from May 1900 until August 1900 under the name *Mitteilung des Internationalen Guitarristen-Verbandes*. In September of that year, the journal was published with a new name: *Der Gitarrefreund* (The Guitar Friend). In 1910, its name was once again modified slightly to account for changes in the German language becoming *Der Gitarefreund*.⁸⁷ According to the index compiled by Robert Coldwell, the last issue of this journal was published in 1931.⁸⁸

The IGV's international design was visionary, but socio-political factors and regional differences quickly became a problem, threatening the longevity of the organization. The circular letter published in *Cadenza*'s July–August issue, reported that there were “three local leagues: Munich, 50 members; Augsburg, 15 members; Moscow, Russia, 25 members.”⁸⁹ In addition, it also listed “individual members in other parts of Germany, Austria, Russia, Switzerland, Sweden, England, Italy and France.” Although Americans were following the IGV's activities, their involvement in the IGV was

⁸⁶ Jacobi, “League Meeting,” 12; and “Report of the Second Convention of the International League of Guitarists,” translated by Maurice Jacobi, *Cadenza* 7, no. 6 (February 1901): 7, 12.

⁸⁷ Information about the IGV's journal was obtained from the following sources: Stevens, “Das Fachzeitschriftentum für Gitarre als Schnittstelle zwischen professionellem Anspruch und Liebhabertum,” 85–86; and Thomas F. Heck, “Guitar Societies and Journals,” *Guitar Foundation of America*, accessed September 12, 2019, <https://www.guitarfoundation.org/page/ArchSocJourn>.

⁸⁸ Robert Coldwell, “Der Gitarrefreund,” *Digital Guitar Archives*, published August 12, 2017, updated December 31, 2019, accessed September 13, 2019, <https://www.digitalguitararchive.com/2017/08/der-gitarrefreund/>.

⁸⁹ “The International League of Guitarists,” 20.

minimal. Maurice Jacobi was one of the few Americans who was an IGV member since around the time of the formation of the organization; in 1902, Jacobi was elected to serve in the IGV's board of directors.⁹⁰ Furthermore, in 1900, C. L. Partee, Jacobi, and Ed. A. Meyer donated music score to the IGV.⁹¹ Aside from the obvious transatlantic factor, language barriers can be analyzed as another factor behind the lack of American involvement, and potentially other nations' involvement, in the IGV. Initially, the IGV's journal was published in German and, although the organization began to include other languages such as English and French in its publications, these were used with significantly less frequency. The first article in English appeared in the July–August 1900 issue of *Der Gitarrefreund* written by C.D. Schettler, but it was not until the February 1902 issue that another article was published in English.⁹² French was featured with more frequency than English, but primarily in a restricted capacity as it was employed to publish announcement rather than articles. The September 1900 issue of *Der Gitarrefreund* published an announcement titled “Avis à nos membres parlant français” (Announcement to our French speaking members), posing a question to readers on whether the journal should also be published in French. The announcement ended with a request to all those French speaking members to write letters with their opinions regarding the matter, all which would be read at their next assembly taking place on

⁹⁰ Franz Sprenzinger, “Correspondence,” *Cadenza* 9, no. 2 (October 1902): 41.

⁹¹ “Report of the Second Convention of the International League of Guitarists,” 12.

⁹² Coldwell, “Der Gitarrefreund.”

September 23, 1900 in Augsburg.⁹³ The report from that meeting appeared in the following issue of *Der Gitarrefreund*, announcing the approved measure to include French articles in the journal.⁹⁴ By December 1900, Jacobi announced in *Cadenza* that the IGV's journal had upgraded to "contributions... in the German, French and English languages."⁹⁵ Jacobi's reports was correct but the IGV's plan to feature content in English and French was seldomly carried out, limiting the international outreach of the organization. The primary bulk of articles published in *Der Gitarrefreund* were in German and announcements from *die Centralleitung* (The Board of Directors) were translated to French but rarely to English.⁹⁶

Although German guitarists were quick to organize and establish guitar societies, their institutions' longevity was compromised by factors including disagreements among members. In the case of the IGV, disagreements caused seismic change in the organization. As the organization approached its fifth year of operation, some IGV

⁹³ "Il s'agit de la question: Notre organe devrait-il paraître en deux langues, en allemande et en français? Il importe avant tout que les intéressés fassent connaître leur opinion à ce sujet, soit en écrivant de petites propositions relatives ou en venant personnellement au congrès." "Avis à nos membres parlant français," *Der Gitarrefreund*, no. 5 (September, 1900): 5.

⁹⁴ "Assemblée générale du 23. septembre 1900 à Augsburg," *Der Gitarrefreund*, no. 6 (November, 1900): 3–4.

⁹⁵ Maurice Jacobi, "League Meeting," 12.

⁹⁶ An index of the contents of each *Der Gitarrefreund* publication was compiled by Robert Coldwell, see Coldwell, "Der Gitarrefreund." Correspondence and editorials published in *Cadenza* in 1901 show the fact that Clarence Partee and Franz Sprenzinger, IGV's secretary, were in contact. They also shed light on talks regarding the possibility of recycling English articles from *Cadenza* in *Der Gitarrefreund*. A letter from Sprenzinger from May 20, 1901 petitions Partee for the permission to "copy occasionally an article concerning the guitar from CADENZA" [original emphasis]. Franz Sprenzinger, "Correspondence," *Cadenza* 7, no.11 (July 1901): 26.

members, Otto Hammerer and Franz Sprenzinger included, were unsatisfied by the way the IGV was achieving its publishing goals and had negative views about the lack of regional representation in its board of directors. This situation led to disagreements about the IGV's centralization, which directly resulted in the split of the organization and the formation of another German guitar society.⁹⁷

These events were reported in *Cadenza*, allowing American BMG guitarists and other members to follow what was happening in Germany closely. In 1904, *Cadenza* printed a letter from Franz Sprenzinger dated February 10, 1904 announcing that several IGV members, like himself, had given up their memberships due to the following problems:

Out of nine members of the direction there have been up to the present seven persons of Munich, which is a disproportion non-admissible in an international society.... The striking favoring of the old lute music and of old love songs, revised or composed by the club director at Munich, and the great neglect of both the beautiful music of our classics and of our modern masters have been for a long time the complaint of all true lovers and first authorities of the guitar.⁹⁸

Since these differences were irreconcilable, Sprenzinger's letter reported on the formation of a new German guitar society. Its name was Freie Vereinigung zur Förderung guter Gitaremusik (FVFGG, Independent Society for the Promotion of Good Guitar Music) and its mission was to publish guitar compositions that were out of print or in manuscript form.⁹⁹ The organization was only active from 1904 until 1908, publishing a

⁹⁷ Stevens, "Das Fachzeitschriftentum für Gitarre als Schnittstelle zwischen professionellem Anspruch und Liebhabertum," 86–87.

⁹⁸ Franz Sprenzinger, "Society of Guitarists, Augsburg, Germany," *Cadenza* 10, no. 7 (March 1904): 18-19.

⁹⁹ Since Sprenzinger's had been translated from German to English in order to be published in *Cadenza*, he name of the new German guitar organization was also translated. It appeared as "Society of Guitarists, Augsburg."

periodical titled *Mitteilungen der Freien Vereinigung zur Förderung guter Gitarremusik* (Communications of the Independent Society for the Promotion of Good Guitar Music).¹⁰⁰ Its journal, which was first published on Easter 1904, was consistent in including announcements and articles in all three languages, German, French, and English.¹⁰¹

Like the IGV, the FVFGG was an international guitar organization. Its charter members were from four different countries, Switzerland, France, Germany, and Russia. Additionally, its members were amateur guitarists who possessed large guitar music collections, which contained manuscripts of music by Regondi, Mertz, Brand, Klinger, and Franz.¹⁰² These amateur guitarists made their collections of rare solo guitar works available to the society for publishing “at a moderate price” and with each *Mitteilungen der Freien Vereinigung zur Förderung guter Gitarremusik* issue selected scores were published.¹⁰³ Table 2.6 provides a list of this organization’s charter members, their profession and the cities where they resided. As was the case with the IGV’s governing

¹⁰⁰ In 1909, Freie Vereinigung zur Förderung guter Gitarremusik merges with the IGV to create a new organization named Gitaristische Vereinigung (Society of Guitarists). Stevens, “Das Fachzeitschriftentum für Gitarre als Schnittstelle zwischen professionellem Anspruch und Liebhabertum,” 86–87.

¹⁰¹ To view an index of the contents in each issue, see Robert Coldwell, “Mitteilungen der Freien Vereinigung zur Förderung guter Gitarremusik (e. V.),” *Digital Guitar Archives*, published August 12, 2017, accessed October 24, 2020, <https://www.digitalguitararchive.com/2017/08/mitteilungen-der-freien-vereinigung-zur-forderung-guter-gitarremusik-e-v/>. He also indicates where each journal is available and provides hyperlinks to the digitized Boije collection.

¹⁰² “What We Want,” *Mitteilungen der Freien Vereinigung zur Förderung guter Gitarremusik*, no. 1 (Easter 1904): 2–3.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 3. Coldwell’s index also provides a list of the scores published with each issue, see Coldwell, “Mitteilungen der Freien Vereinigung zur Förderung guter Gitarremusik (e. V.),” *Digital Guitar Archives*.

body and the BMG Guild, although there was regional diversity, women were not involved in the creation of the FVZFGG.

Table 2.6. List of the Freie Vereinigung zur Förderung guter Guitaremusik charter members

Name	City	Profession
C.O. Boije af Gennäs	Stockholm	Mathematician
J. Alder	Zurick	Professor
Narziss Bergmiller	Augsburg	Owner of an artificial mill
Otto Hammerer	Augsburg	Factory owner
A. Cottin	Paris	Composer and Professor of Music
Sr. D. Sajajtsky	Moscow	Imperial councilor
Vinzenz Bergmiller	Augsburg	Landowner
A. Oehler	Ausburg	Lawyer
A. Damberg	Kursk	Imperial councilor
J. Stockmann	Kursk	Imperial councilor
H. Gauhe	Hechingen	District Judge
F. Sprenzinger	Augsburg and Lechhausen	Accountant

Source: Data from “What We Want,” *Mitteilungen der Freien Vereinigung zur Förderung guter Guitaremusik*, no. 1 (Easter 1904): 3.

American involvement in the FVFGG was also minimal. On February 1904, Sprenzinger reported two American members, American guitarist William Foden and his student George C. Krick.¹⁰⁴ In order to attract more American members, in 1906, the FVFGG placed an advertisement in the pages of *Cadenza* to market their membership and the “eight lithographed books of music of about eight pages each” the organization published and sent to members at no extra cost.¹⁰⁵ This advertisement is reproduced in Figure 2.3. It is unknown whether the FVGG managed to attract more American members with this advertisement placement because communications from Sprenzinger are no longer published in *Cadenza* after June 1904.

¹⁰⁴ Sprenzinger, “Society of Guitarists, Ausberg, Germany,” 19.

¹⁰⁵ “Guitar Music,” advertisement, *Cadenza* 12, no.7 (March 1906): 7.



Figure 2.3. Freie Vereinigung zur Förderung guter Gitaremusik advertisement published in *Cadenza* 12, no.7 (March 1906): 7.

On February 2, 1905, Otto Hammerer passed away, leaving an institutional legacy as one of the IGV's and the FVGG's founders and the IGV's first president.¹⁰⁶ Years after his death, in 1909, the IGV and the FVGG rejoined forces and formed a new organization, Gitarristische Vereinigung (GV, Society of Guitarists).¹⁰⁷ Fritz Buek was elected president of this new organization and the GV took over *Der Gitarrefreund's* publication; the GV was active until the 1930s.¹⁰⁸

Maurice Jacobi's translations of the IGV's announcements, letters, and reports and Franz Sprenzinger's letters regarding the IVG's and the FVGG's endeavors allowed American BMG members to follow the creation and development of German guitar societies. These communications were published in American BMG journals between

¹⁰⁶ His obituary was published in *Der Gitarrefreund*. See "Otto Hammerer (2. Februar 1905)," *Der Gitarrefreund* 6, no.1 (January–February 1905): 3. Although it was written in German, an English version was also published. See, "Otto Hammerer (died 2nd February 1905)," *Der Gitarrefreund* 6, no.1 (January–February 1905): 18–19.

¹⁰⁷ Stevens, "Das Fachzeitschriftentum für Gitarre als Schnittstelle zwischen professionellem Anspruch und Liebhabertum," 87.

¹⁰⁸ Coldwell's index lists volume 32, no. 9–10 as *Der Gitarrefreund's* last issue. This issue was published as the September–November 1931 issue. See Coldwell, "Der Gitarrefreund," *Digital Guitar Archives*.

1900 and 1904, igniting and propelling the formation of American BMG organizations by setting a fundamental example for cooperation and institutionalization. It is hard to determine whether American guitarists would have been aware of the state of affairs of the German guitar societies after Sprenzinger's correspondence stopped being published in *Cadenza* in 1904, but it is certain that George C. Krick was one of the few Americans who kept up with the development of the GV after the merger. In 1924, George C. Krick published an article for *Crescendo* reporting on his three-month visit to Europe earlier that year. His report mentioned two German BMG organizations, one analogue to the American BMG Guild and a guitar society. He does not use the German names of the organizations but refers to "The German Mandolin and Guitar Society" and "The German Guitar Society." Krick's mention of "Mr. F. Buck [*sic*]" as the president of "The German Guitar Society" leads me to believe that he was reporting on the GV's activities because Buek was still president of this organization in the 1920s.¹⁰⁹

Another American who followed the GV's endeavors and was inspired by its projects and goals was Olcott Bickford. Her extensive collection reveals that she was a well-informed BMG member who read BMG journals, such as *Cadenza* and *Crescendo*, between the 1900s and 1930s, and that she was a *Der Gitarrefreund* subscriber. There are many similarities between the German guitar societies' projects and the ones sponsored by the organization Olcott Bickford helped fund and sustain, the American Guitar Society. The most salient one was the American Guitar Society's publication of classical guitar albums of solo music containing out of print scores and Olcott Bickford's

¹⁰⁹ George C. Krick, "The Mandolin and Guitar in Europe," *Crescendo* 17, no. 6 (December 1924): 6, 27.

transcriptions and arrangements. Chapter Three discusses this publication initiative in detail.

Conclusion

The American guitar society model that emerged in the 1920s had many institutional precursors. The most important of these precursors were the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists (BMG Guild) and the German guitar societies that emerged between 1899 and 1910. American BMG members were able to keep up with these organizations' endeavors thanks to the reporting and correspondence published in BMG journals, such as *Cadenza* and *Crescendo*.

The BMG Guild was the first national American organization established to champion plectral and plucked instruments. Its formation was a huge accomplishment for the American BMG community and set a precedence for cooperation within the context of a highly commercial movement. Although the idea to form such an organization was planted in 1895, rifts between BMG editors stopped the momentum needed to form a coalition that would stand behind such an ambitious project. In 1900, shifts in BMG journals' editorial boards opened new possibilities for cooperation and the plan to form the BMG Guild was put in motion. This plan was led by important BMG editors, such as Charles Morris and Clarence L. Partee, and consisted of a two-year advocacy campaign aimed at motivating BMG teachers and students to become member applicants of the proposed organization. On January 22, 1902, at a gathering in Boston, the organization became a reality, sponsoring successful annual gatherings and concerts from its formation in 1902 until its rupture in 1957. These conventions promoted networking among BMG members and built cohesion among the community through shared experiences, such as

banquets and concerts. In its infancy, the BMG Guild attempted to issue certificates of competency, but this pedagogical initiative was never accomplished.

German guitar societies set a unique example for BMG classical guitar advocates and its instrument-specific model inspired the formation of similar organizations in America. In Germany, guitar societies began emerging in the late 1870s, establishing a long tradition of amateur organizing and mobilizing on behalf of the classical guitar by the turn of the twentieth century. In America, such activism did not emerge until the 1920s and 1930s primarily because the majority of American classical guitarists who identified themselves as members of the BMG movement were multi-instrumentalists and focused their endeavors on the development of BMG clubs, such as the ones discussed on Chapter One, and their private teaching studios. With the emergence of young women guitarists, such as Olcott Bickford, Miller, and Tooker, a new wave of guitar advocates appeared in the pages of BMG journals. Their desire to preserve the American classical guitar tradition transformed into activism, influencing and lobbying for the formation of an institutionalized path for the promotion of the classical guitar in America.

American participation in German guitar societies was minimal, but knowledge of them and their activities was wide-ranging. Translated reports printed in *Cadenza* regarding Internationale Guitarristische Vereinigung (IGV) and its activities along with correspondence from Franz Sprenzinger, the IGV's secretary, are crucial sources to determining the extent of the American BMG community's knowledge of what was going on in that part of Europe during the first decades of the twentieth century. After 1904, Sprenzinger's correspondence reported on the formation of another German organization, Freie Vereinigung Zur Förderung guter Gitarremusik (FVGG), which leads

to the conclusion that American BMG members who were *Cadenza* subscribers were aware of both the IGV and the FVGG.

Olcott Bickford was well versed on the guild's activities and goals and she followed closely the activities of the German guitar societies. She was an active member of the BMG Guild and her husband was its president during the 1921–1922 season, also serving as a member of the guild's board of directors during the 1917–1918 season. In her capacity as the Musical Director of the first American guitar society, she drew inspiration from these institutional precursors to establish diverse projects. Among these were the publication of guitar albums containing out of print scores and her transcriptions, which bear much resemblance to the music score supplements that were printed and distributed by the German guitar societies with each of their journals. The next two chapters delve into the activities and projects of the first such American organization, the American Guitar Society.

CHAPTER 3

OLCOTT BICKFORD AND THE AMERICAN GUITAR SOCIETY

The first American guitar society was founded in 1923 in Los Angeles and its name was the Los Angeles Guitar Society. Nowadays, this organization is known as the American Guitar Society (AGS) because members of the organization voted to change its name in 1924. As the first guitar society established in America, AGS was the prototype for alike organizations appearing in the 1930s and subsequent years, such as the New York Society of the Classic Guitar (founded in 1936 by Vladimir Bobri) and the Segovia Society in Washington D.C. (founded in 1936 by Sophocles Papas).¹

Placed within the larger context of professional assembly, the American guitar society derived from the nonprofit model of musical guilds and associations, which sprung across the country during the nineteenth century. As we have seen in Chapter Three, plectral and plucked instrument institutional precursors were the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists, and Guitarists (BMG Guild) and two German guitar societies.

Although guitar societies have become ubiquitous today, the formation of the first American guitar society was a revolutionary concept. Guitar societies allowed amateur and professional classical guitarists to break from BMG multi-instrument values in order to organize and focus their efforts on solely promoting the classical guitar, rather than all plectral and plucked instruments. Furthermore, as the BMG movement began to fade

¹ “About,” *New York Classical Guitar Society*, accessed November 12, 2020, <https://nyccgs.com/about/>; and Papas Smith, *Sophocles Papas*, 40.

from the public eye in the 1920s, the creation of local guitar societies contributed to the cultivation of the American classical guitar school and its repertoire among amateur players and guitar students within the American music appreciation movement. Inadvertently, the formation of these organizations had long-term consequences, such as the isolation of the classical guitar in the American musical landscape and the imposition of genre barriers in order to differentiate the classical guitar from the steel-strung guitar. These complex issues are discussed in the Conclusion.

Professional women guitarists supported and advocated for the formation of guitar societies in America. In fact, Gertrude Miller was the first American guitarist to organize and mobilize to make this concept a reality. The first section of this chapter describes her efforts and describes how her call to action inspired Vahdah Olcott Bickford.

The rest of the Chapter Three aims to discuss AGS's founding and provide a survey of its programs and projects. Section two details the events that lead to AGS's formation and lists the founding members of the organization. Section three delves into the charter documents of the nonprofit, its constitution, and by-laws. Sections four through six focus on AGS's activities and the programs they sponsored, such as the guitar orchestra, local concerts, and music publishing, providing a closer look onto Olcott Bickford's life of service on behalf of AGS. These sections illustrate her invisible career as an institutional pioneer and the musical director and operations manager of the first American guitar society.

Gertrude Miller's American Guitar Society

The first efforts to form a guitar society in the United States date to 1905, when the guitarist Gertrude Miller published a call to action directed at fellow American

guitarists. Miller was known in the BMG community for her position as the editor of the Ladies' Pages between 1902 and 1903, and other articles she wrote for *Stewart's*. Her call to action was published in the November 1905 issue of *Cadenza* and was titled "The American Guitar Society."

The article urged fellow guitarists to join her in forming a guitar society that would be — as specifically stated in the article — the American analogue of the Internationale Guitarristische Vereinigung (IGV, which had been formed in Munich, Germany in 1899 and had been advertised in the July-August 1900 *Cadenza* issue):

A large number of our guitarists, and guitar lovers in this country have long been urging that we form an American Guitar Society, similar to the International Society of Guitarists in Germany, and now a movement is on foot to put this plan into action.²

The German guitar society's influence is evident in this passage and directly links the foreign institution to the American guitar society model. Furthermore, in order to avoid any friction with IGV members, Miller included a non-competing disclaimer in her article stating that the German guitar society had "no American members" because it was "impracticable for Americans to belong." The impracticalities she was alluding to were likely the difficulties of travelling to Europe and the resources and time flexibility needed to make such journey. Furthermore, as Chapter Two describes, there were also language barriers that made the IGV's journal inaccessible to Americans who did not speak German, resulting in limited information available to non-German speaking members and their inability to read upon the society's latest activities. In the 1910s, the start of World

² Gertrude Miller, "The American Guitar Society," *Cadenza* 12, no. 3 (November 1905): 12–13.

War I eroded any further possibility of American involvement in the IGV, which had changed its name to the Gitarristische Vereinigung by 1909.

Miller's article outlined two goals for the proposed society, which largely resembled projects sponsored by the IGV and the BMG Guild. The first goal was to "publish manuscript music, hitherto unpublished... and modern compositions by good American composers;" and the second goal was to "meet in conventions and give concerts." As detailed in Chapter Three, one of IGV's initial goals was to publish out of print and hard to obtain scores in their journal, and another one was to plan annual conventions featuring concerts. Similarly, although the BMG Guild was not interested in score publishing, it sponsored annual conventions and concerts.

The nationalistic angle of the publishing goal can be connected to the larger American music scene and the rise of American musical nationalism in the late nineteenth century. In the BMG movement, nationalism was promoted through labels such as "the American banjo," a "new American sitting position" for guitarists, and the promotion of repertoire composed by Americans.³ BMG women guitarists emerging in the twentieth century included pieces composed by American composers in their repertoire and promoted American pieces in their columns when asked by their readers about repertoire suggestions.⁴ Although the inclusion of American guitarist composers in their repertoires was linked to the fact that they played their teachers' compositions

³ Jeffrey J. Noonan, *The Guitar in America: Victoria Era to Jazz* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 41–51

⁴ For some instances in which these women promoted repertoire by American composers, see Ethel Lucretia Olcott, "Questions and Answers," *Crescendo* 7, no. 5 (November 1914): 19; and Elsie Tooker, "Series No. 12" in "The Ladies of the Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar Realm," *S.S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal* 19, no. 1 (January 1902): 6.

(Durkee studied with Foden and Tooker and Olcott Bickford studied with Ferrer), there were also works by other American guitarist composers as well. For instance, Tooker played Ferrer's and Foden's operatic arrangements and Luis T. Romero's *Fantasia Americaine*; Durkee included works by Foden and de Janon in her concerts; Olcott Bickford performed Ferrer's operatic arrangements and works by George C. Lindsey, Foden, de Lano, de Janon, Carrie V. Hayden, and her own works (Appendix B lists the repertoire she performed concerts from 1902 until 1957); and Miller's repertoire included works by Foden in her concerts.⁵ All of these young women also embraced the "new American sitting position," which consisted of holding the guitar in an upright position with "both feet on the floor" and the lower bout of the guitar resting on the right side while the player held the instrument "steeply angled with its neck pulled back toward the left shoulder" (Miller's portrait in Chapter One, Figure 1.4, demonstrates this sitting position).⁶ Noonan argues that the adoption of this sitting position was a countermeasure against S. S. Stewart's characterizations of women guitarists' usage of a footstool as "vulgar" and ungraceful.⁷ After these attacks were published in *Stewart's* December 1884 and January 1885 issues, and American guitarists adopted this new playing position as early as 1895, Olcott Bickford and her contemporaries were taught to play the guitar with it. They inherited it from their teachers and promoted as part of the American classical guitar school.

⁵ For more details about these women's repertoire, see "Miss Elsie Tooker, of San Jose, CAL.," *Cadenza* 5, no. 6 (July–August 1899): 2; "Miss Jennie M. Durkee, of Chicago, ILL.," *Cadenza* 6, no. 4 (March–April 1900): 12; and "Miss Gertrude T. Miller of Vinton, Iowa," *Cadenza* 6, no. 2 (November–December 1899): 2.

⁶ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 48.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 48–50.

Miller's call to action, although not logistically innovative, was visionary and driven by nationalistic tones. It proposed to unify the American classical guitar tradition through formal organization and to provide institutional support for contemporary American guitar composers. This type of instrument specialization was not uncommon in America, as there was the precedent of the American Guild of Organists, but Miller's proposal was in direct competition with the BMG Guild and the BMG movement's tradition of promoting all plucked and plectral instruments under the same label.

Hoping to receive backing from the BMG guitar community, Miller left direct instructions for those interested in this matter asking that "any guitarist who now cares to join please send his name and address, with a 2-cent stamp, to Miss Gertrude Miller, Portage, Wis., who will act as secretary of the Society."⁸ The response from the BMG community was mixed but initial membership rosters foreground women's desire to be involved with such an organization. By November 1905, there were some guitarists who were supportive, but there were very few of them. As Table 3.1 shows, there were three women among the nine members and Miller's colleague, Jennie M. Durkee, was one of them.

⁸ Gertrude Miller, "The American Guitar Society," 12–13.

Table 3.1. List of Members of Miller’s American Guitar Society (1905)

Name	Region
C. F. Jansen	Chicago, Illinois
Gertrude Miller	Portage, Wisconsin
Helen Decker Edwards	Denver, Colorado
Jennie M. Durkee	Denver, Colorado
Johnston Bane	-
Mr. Newcombe	Chicago, Illinois
Everett McNeil	-
Mr. Mouratt	Chicago, Illinois
Mr. Eckdall	Chicago, Illinois

Source: Data from Miller, “The American Guitar Society,” *Cadenza* 12, no. 3 (November 1905): 13.

By June 1906, Miller received twenty more membership applications, but not enough to “formally organize,” so she followed up with a second request to get the American Guitar Society up and running.⁹ The second article was published in the June 1906 *Cadenza* issue and it informed the guitar community that there was still time to sign up.¹⁰ It also included an updated list of members, which featured the names Ethel Lucretia Olcott and Myron A. Bickford (Olcott Bickford’s future husband and renowned mandolinist). Table 3.2 lists the 1906 members; notably, the membership continued to be centered on the Midwest, with Olcott Bickford as one of only two California members, illustrating the mostly regional reach of this early attempt at an American guitar organization.

⁹ Miller, “The American Guitar Society,” *Cadenza* 12, no. 10 (June 1906): 16.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15–16.

Table 3.2. List of Members of Miller's American Guitar Society (1906)

Name	Region
Philip J. Bone	Luton, England
Myron A. Bickford	Springfield, Massachusetts
Jennie M. Durkee	Denver, Colorado
Salvatore Tomaso	Chicago, Illinois
Ethel Lucretia Olcott	Los Angeles, California
Johnston Bane	-
C. F. Jansen	Chicago, Illinois
Gertrude Miller	Vinton, Iowa
Helen Decker Edwards	Denver, Colorado
Mr. Newcombe	Chicago, Illinois
I.X. Linn	Denver, Colorado
Everett McNeil	Denver, Colorado
Mr. Mouratt	Chicago, Illinois
Mr. Eckdall	Chicago, Illinois
G. E. Willey	Chicago
E. C. Root	Portage, Wisconsin
George B. Durkee	Chicago, Illinois
John Santschi	South Bend, Indiana
Henry Hapke	Moline, Illinois
J. M. Sheppard	New York, New York
G. W. Darling	Greensburg, Pennsylvania
T. J. Kugler	Chicago, Illinois
Harry Ferry	Kent, Ohio
G. A. Graeber	Lawrence, Kansas
William Sherman	Orillia, Canada
Thomas Tyler	Mason City, Iowa
G. W. Robinson	Providence, Rhode Island
Florence Boyle	Alameda, California
Charles Ford	Mansfield, Ohio

Source: Data from Miller, "The American Guitar Society," *Cadenza* 12, no. 3 (November 1905): 13.

This list is evidence of the fact that three out of the four young women introduced in Chapter One (Miller, Olcott Bickford, and Durkee) were interested in the formation of the first American guitar society and supported it.

Noonan's research concludes that Miller's organization was centered in the upper Midwest and was short-lived and unsuccessful.¹¹ There is no evidence that contradicts his

¹¹ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 16

conclusion in BMG journals; furthermore, Miller disappeared from the pages of BMG journals after 1906. But although it was unsuccessful, Miller's efforts to form the first American Guitar Society had ripple effects, inspiring one of her young woman colleagues, Olcott Bickford, to take action and advocate for the formation of an American guitar society in the following decades. In the 1920s and 1930s, the BMG movement began to fade from the public eye as publications of journals such the *Cadenza* and *Crescendo* were discontinued and BMG instruments, such as the banjo and the mandolin, became linked to other genres such a bluegrass.¹² Classical guitar players and advocates preserved the instrument's presence in local communities through the formation of guitar societies in the 1920s and 1930s. This new landscape is tied to Miller's efforts.

Olcott Bickford never forgot Miller's pioneering role and the lasting effects this first campaign had on her. In an article she wrote for *Guitar Review* in 1956 about the history of the classical guitar in America, she acknowledged Miller as the first American guitarist who tried to form a guitar society in America and described the impact Miller's actions had on her:

A little town in Iowa nurtured three guitarists, probably never heard of elsewhere. However, I deeply feel that I must pay them tribute for the part they played in my work for the guitar.... These three were J. Miller, the father, and Gertrude Miller and Emily Miller Burton, his daughters. Mr. Miller taught his daughters to become excellent guitarists performers. Gertrude Miller was the first person to ever try to start a guitar society in America. Though the child died aborning, she gave me the "seed" and the earnest desire to try again to persevere and succeed in such an undertaking. It led me to organize *The American Guitar Society* in Los Angeles in 1923, which at present is the oldest guitar society uninterruptedly in existence in the entire world.¹³

¹² Ibid., 172–178. *Cadenza* was published from 1894 until 1924 and *Crescendo* was published from 1908 until 1934.

¹³ Vahdah Olcott Bickford, "The Guitar in America," *Guitar Review*, no. 23 (June 1959): 18.

Almost two decades after the first attempt was made at unifying the American guitar community, on September 27, 1923, Miller's dream came to fruition at a gathering at the Los Angeles Stock Exchange Building. This meeting changed the institutional landscape of the classical guitar in America for decades to come.

A Gathering at the Los Angeles Stock Exchange Building: AGS is Born

On the evening of September 27, 1923, Los Angeles classical guitar enthusiasts and professionals came together to form the first American guitar society. On that day, the Los Angeles Guitar Society—later to be known as the American Guitar Society—was born.

The meeting was scheduled for 8 p.m. and took place at the office of J. A. Larralde located in the Los Angeles Stock Exchange Building. It was organized by Larralde, a Los Angeles guitar amateur and enthusiast who was interested in forming a local guitar club and who wanted to meet the famous guitarist by the name of Vahdah Olcott Bickford who had recently arrived in Los Angeles from New York City. According to Olcott Bickford's appointment book, she arrived in Los Angeles with her husband, Zarh Myron Bickford, on June 28, 1923.¹⁴ Busy organizing the encounter, Larralde sent out invitation letters to fellow guitar amateurs, teachers, and students in anticipation of the meeting. This letter template survives in Olcott Bickford's collection (see Figure 3.1). In his letter, Larralde listed the proposed object of the "club" as "to create popularity for the guitar." (Although throughout this dissertation the term classical

¹⁴ Olcott Bickford 1923 Appointment Book, box 164, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA. Her appointment book documents that a crew began packing their New York residence on June 20 and they left for California on June 24.

guitar is used to reference the gut/nylon six-string European instrument, the adjective “classical” was adopted in America the 1920s and 1930s to clearly distinguish their European nineteenth-century playing tradition from the plectrum tradition that was being used to play “steel-strung” guitars.¹⁵ Therefore, Larralde’s use of the standalone term “guitar” would have referred to what we now identify as the classical guitar.)

¹⁵ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 155.

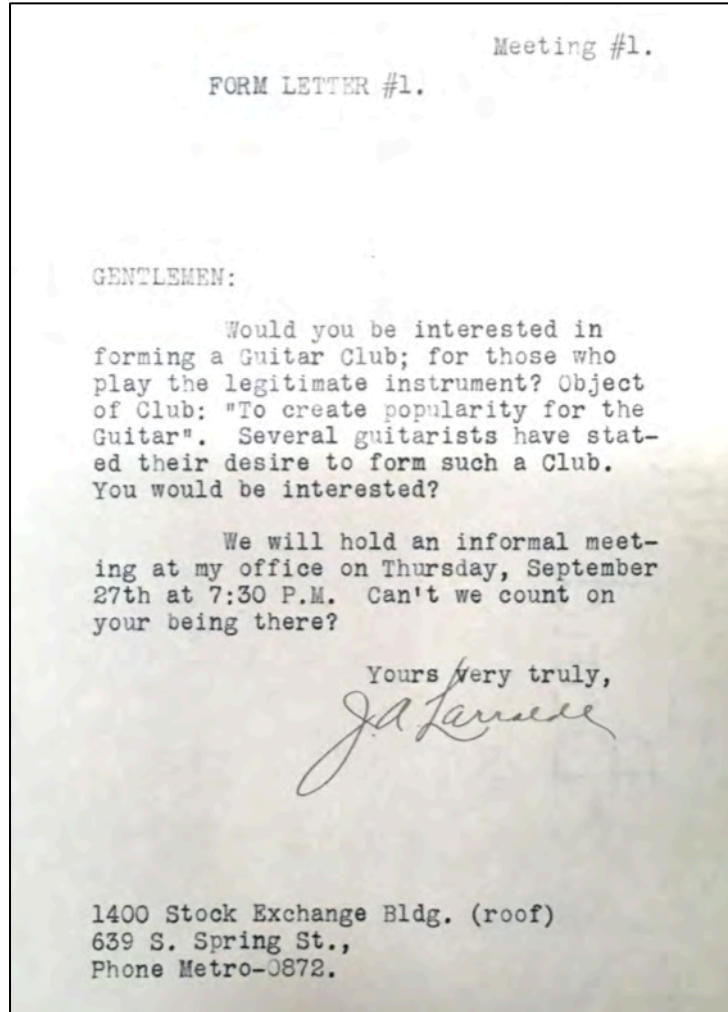


Figure 3.1. Larralde's invitation to the September 27, 1923 meeting. *Source:* Series V, box 152, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection.

The historic meeting was very productive, and, after a long discussion, the Los Angeles Guitar Society was founded, officers and members of the Executive Board were elected, and a committee was formed to re-write the society's Constitution and By-laws based on the outline Larralde provided at the gathering. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

There are two first-hand accounts of what transpired in that meeting, and the meeting's minutes also survive. The first account was written by Zahr Myron Bickford in 1959:

Vahdah Olcott Bickford's arrival in Los Angeles marked the beginning of activities which led to the formation of what was first called the Los Angeles Guitar Society. This was the first guitar society to appear in the United States. Inspired by the presence of such a well-known guitarist, teacher and writer as V.O.B., Mr. J. A. Larralde, a local guitar enthusiast, invited—one day in September, 1923—a group of guitarists, teachers, students, etc., to come together at his office in the Los Angeles Stock Exchange Building to meet this new, vital personality. This gathering of 30 or 35 people, intended as an informal social function, evolved finally as the inauguration meeting of the society. V.O.B. quickly vetoed the rather arbitrary plans—first presented—of meeting weekly, playing and talking shop by saying she wouldn't be interested in such an aimless group. Her ambitious dynamism fired them all with the desire to take part in her plans for a definite educational program to promote interest in the classical guitar. She wanted to actively sponsor concerts, encourage composers to enrich the literature in all music publications. The group unanimously and immediately appointed her Musical Director of the Society.¹⁶

The second was written by Olcott Bickford at the age of ninety and was published in *Rosette*, the Lincoln Guitar Society's newsletter. In this article, she mentioned that she was inspired to advocate for the formation of a guitar society by two foreign publications, one of which was connected to one of the institutional precursors introduced in Chapter Two; notably, she did not mention Miller's society despite her earlier acknowledgment of that group, and she even claimed that the new organization was the first guitar society in America. The first inspiration she listed was "Giuliani's Guitar Society in England," which referenced *The Giulianiad*, a journal that was published in England between 1833 and 1835.¹⁷ The second inspiration she reference was "the German Guitarfreund," which referenced the IGV's journal *Der Gitarrefreund*:

¹⁶ Zarh Myron Bickford, "A Brief History of the American Guitar Society," *Guitar Review*, no. 22 (June 1959): 20.

¹⁷ Robert Coldwell, "Giulianiad," *Digital Guitar Archive*, published February 26, 2012, accessed December 17, 2020, <https://www.digitalguitararchive.com/2012/02/giulianiad-contents/>. According to Colwell, it is well accepted within historians that Ferdinand Pelzer, father of Madame Sydney Pratten and Giulia Pelzer, was involved in the publication of this journal.

You are right about the organization date of the American Guitar Society: 1923 (the last week of September). We had just arrived from my nine years as a New York City resident, in Los Angeles (my childhood home), to make our permanent home. A few guitar teachers and aficionados gave a large party, to meet me and to talk about the possibility of some little club. When the discussion arose, I declared that a kaffee-klatch type of meetings would not interest me in the slightest degree. I was then quizzed as to what sort of stable group I would approve and support. I thereupon expressed the wish that I had buried deep in my heart since I was a little girl, a pre-teenager, of starting a really worthwhile Guitar Society, with definite goals, standards, et cetera. My idea had been inspired by Giuliani's Guitar Society in England, during its short life, and by the German Gitarfreund, which had survived a little longer.

There had never been a guitar society in America, and I felt that the time had come. The 25 or 30 participants took to my suggestion like ducks to water, and in moments the first Guitar Society in America was born. Officers were elected, and it was given the working title of "The Los Angeles Guitar Society."¹⁸

The meeting's minutes can be found in Appendix C.

Contrary to the formation of the BMG Guild and the German guitar societies two decades prior, women guitarists were deeply involved in the formation of the first American guitar society. They were invited to the historic meeting and were elected as officers and executive board members. Larralde was behind the idea to form a guitar club in Los Angeles, organizing the first meeting and inviting local amateur and professional guitarists. Among the eight women who attended this first meeting were four well-regarded professional guitarists: Jennie M. Durkee, Adele Ferrer Wightman, Lillian Weller Kemp, and Olcott Bickford (the guest of honor). As detailed in Chapter Three, Durkee and Weller Kemp were two of Olcott Bickford's contemporaries. They were featured in *Cadenza* in the 1900s and their activities were published in biographical sketches and concert notices. Adela Ferrer Wightman was considered California guitar

¹⁸ Olcott Bickford, "Vahdah Olcott-Bickford: About Myself," accessed July 18, 2020.

royalty as the daughter of Manuel Y. Ferrer and was a close friend of Olcott Bickford. At AGS's inaugural meeting, Olcott Bickford and N. K. Russill were elected Executive Board members and Olcott Bickford was elected Musical Director. On January 7, 1924, Weller Kemp joined Olcott Bickford and Russill as a member of the Executive Board after H. C. Allen resigned the post.¹⁹ Weller Kemp's involvement with AGS was cut short by her premature death in 1925, but while she was alive she was very invested in the organization, serving in the executive board and playing a member of the AGS guitar ensemble. Ferrer Wightman's biographical information is unknown and there is limited record of her involvement with the AGS after 1923.

AGS's founding members were a mixture of professional musicians, amateur classical guitarists, professional guitar players, and a local BMG local store owner. Olcott Bickford, Jennie M. Durkee, and Adele Ferrer Wightman were professional guitarists with active private teaching studios. George C. Lindsey was a local BMG businessowner and in the 1900s he was the leader of his own BMG club. Zarh Myron Bickford was a professional musician who had a longstanding career as a BMG multi-instrumentalist, playing the classical guitar quite well although his primary BMG instrument was the mandolin, and he was a conductor, including of BMG ensembles. Among the amateur guitarists were Roy E. Poehler, J. A. Larralde, and Lillian Weller Kemp, who had retired

¹⁹ "Meeting Minutes, Jan 7, 1924," box 152, folder 11, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA. Allen submitted his letter of resignation on January 3, 1924, citing his desires to take on another hobby and needing to leave his responsibilities with AGS to dedicate his time to this new hobby. Allen's resignation survives in AGS's archives, see H. C. Allen to J. A. Larralde, AGS Secretary, January 3, 1924, box 149, folder 1, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

from her professional career as a concert guitarist after marriage. This diverse roster resembled IGV’s membership roster, which Karl Huber reports as featuring professional orchestral musicians, private guitar teachers, instrument makers and music publishers, and amateur players.²⁰ Table 3.3 shows AGS’s full list of founding members and indicates the members elected to serve as officers and Executive Board members.

Table 3.3 Founding members of the American Guitar Society

Women	Men
Adela Ferrer Wightman	George C. Lindsey (President)*
Vahdah Olcott Bickford* (Musical Director)	Zarh Myron Bickford (Vice President)*
Jennie M. Durkee	H. C. Allen*
N. K. Russill*	Dr. J. H. Cleaver
R. W. Manahan	Edward Philbrook
Lillian Weller Kemp	Roy E. Poehler
Dorothy A. Freeman	E. A. Johnson
Ruth Elledge	Frank M. Vogt
	Hugo H. Possner
	J. A. Larralde (Secretary and Treasurer)

*Members of the Executive Board

Source: Data from “Minutes of Meeting of September 27, 1923,” box 152, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

One of the reasons I believe professional and amateur guitarists in Los Angeles were successful at forming the first American guitar society was the fact that California had a strong tradition of organizing and welcomed the involvement and leadership of women. As discussed in the last section of Chapter Three, women’s clubs were the backbone of the nonprofit and service sector in Los Angeles and, by 1907, BMG teachers in that city had formed their local teachers’ association. In the long run, Olcott Bickford’s

²⁰ Karl Huber, *Die Wiederbelebung des künstlerischen Gitarrespiels um 1900: Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte des Laienmusikwesens und zur Tradition der klassischen Gitarre* (Ausburg: Lisardo, 1995): 61; and Luiz Carlos Mantovani Junior, “Ferdinand Rebay and the Reinvention of Guitar Chamber Music” (PhD diss., Royal College of Music, 2019), 24–25.

willingness to dedicate much of her life to public service and nonprofit management contributed to the longevity of the organization. She pursued a life of voluntarism, following in the steps of the women she had meet as a teenager at fundraisers and women's clubs' meetings.

The formation of AGS was Olcott Bickford's dream come true, and her work on behalf of this organization was a labor of love and artistic fulfillment. As records published in BMG journals and letters show, Olcott Bickford had longed for the formation of a guitar society in America for decades and was willing and prepared to step up as a leader; Figure 3.2 shows a portrait of Olcott Bickford around 1911.



Figure 3.2. Portrait of Olcott Bickford with her Martin guitar around 1911 as printed in her memorial program. Courtesy of Gregory Newton and the American Guitar Society.

In 1906, she had been one of the guitarists to answer Miller's call to action and in 1915 she wrote an article that very much resembled Miller's 1905 and 1906 articles. Found in

her archives, it is an unpublished article titled “Guitarists’ Society of America.”²¹ In this unpublished call to action, Olcott Bickford volunteered to become the society’s secretary and a member of the publication committee that would determine which compositions met the standards for release. Although some of her writings have been previously discussed by scholars, this article has never been referenced and its existence was unknown until I stumbled upon it when looking through box 166 of her collection, which resides at the International Guitar Research Archive (IGRA). A full transcript of this article can be found in Appendix D.

This unpublished article detailed the objects of her proposed society as follows: to publish manuscript music of the old and modern composers; to meet in annual conventions and give concerts; to extend tokens of appreciation to the veteran guitarists; and to have the doings of the society chronicled in a magazine. These goals bear some resemblance to the initiatives that were sponsored by the institutional precursors introduced in Chapter Two, such as the IGV’s journal and the BMG Guild’s annual convention, but they are also different and demonstrate distinct motivations. Unlike the BMG Guild proponents (led by Partee and Morris), in this 1915 article, Olcott Bickford did not propose to set academic standards for the field through a system of exams and certifications. This difference may be rooted in the fact that since Olcott Bickford was a

²¹ “Guitarists’ Society of America,” box 166, folder 9, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA. The article states that “those who send in their names before Jan. 1st, 1915 will be charter members of the society.” This line is critical in determining when Olcott Bickford may have written this article. I have searched throughout BMG journals published between 1914 and January 1915 to no avail. Since Olcott Bickford was a columnist for *Crescendo* during that time, it would be most logical for her to have published this article with that journal. The fact that this is not the case, leads me to believe that this article was never published.

well-informed member of the BMG community, she did not want to propose a goal that was not received well in the 1900s by BMG members and which ultimately failed. In addition, Olcott Bickford's proposal to "extend tokens of appreciation to old and modern composers" reveals that one of the motivations behind her proposal was to bring recognition to classical guitarists who had expanded the instrument's repertoire and thus conferring a sense of prestige to a cultural practice. This goal echoes Miller's intentions, which were published in 1905 with her first call to action:

As a rule guitarists receive little appreciation in this century. Mertz died a poor man, and his widow now wants for a few luxuries in her aged life! Then, there are Chas. De Janon, and M. Y. Ferrer, *now* veteran teachers, formerly "wizards" of their instruments. How I should like to see some token of appreciation extended to them now, by appreciative guitarists, instead of waiting until it is "*too late*."²²

The similarity in wording (they both use the term "appreciation") further reveals Miller as a precedent of Olcott Bickford. Furthermore, it seems that what Olcott Bickford was proposing is connected to the common organizational practice of giving awards, such as lifetime achievement awards, or, within the world of classical guitar, the Guitar Foundation of America's Distinguished Service and Artistic Achievement Awards.

After the Los Angeles Guitar Society was established, the name of the organization was reconsidered. In a meeting held on March 3, 1924, Los Angeles Guitar Society members voted to change the name of their organization. "It was moved, seconded and carried by unanimous vote that the name of the Society be changed to the American Guitar Society."²³ The name change reflected the organization's historical

²² Miller, "The American Guitar Society," 13.

²³ "Meeting Minutes, March 3, 1924," series V, box 152, folder 11, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

importance as the first guitar society formed in America and allowed the organization to widen its scope and reach as it planned to sponsor its first national project. In September 1925, the AGS proudly announced the publication of its guitar album, *Schubert Album for Guitar*, which contained a biographical sketch of Schubert and information about his relationship to the guitar along with solo and duo arrangements of his compositions.²⁴ Miller must also be foregrounded here, as it was her organization nearly twenty years before — an organization of which Olcott Bickford was a member — that initially went by the name of American Guitar Society.²⁵

AGS's Mission and Constitution

The AGS's Constitution and By-Laws were approved during the October 6, 1923, Executive Board meeting. Unfortunately, these early documents do not survive in her collection. Nevertheless, the organization's correspondence, BMG editorials, and surviving meeting minutes provide some information pertaining the early years of the organization, its objects, and its projects. In December 1924, *Crescendo* published an editorial announcing the formation of the American Guitar Society and noting that group's goals "are to promote the interest and welfare of the classic guitar in every possible manner."²⁶ AGS members set up to accomplish this goal through two projects. One was to form a classical guitar ensemble and the second one was to sponsor lectures

²⁴ Olcott Bickford, *Schubert Album for Guitar*, Op. 117 (Los Angeles: American Guitar Society, 1925), 1–14.

²⁵ Miller, "The American Guitar Society," 13.

²⁶ Herbert Forrest Odell, "Editorial," *Crescendo* 17, no. 6 (December 1924): 10.

on classical guitar history.²⁷ These projects were promptly realized. There is evidence of weekly rehearsals directed by Olcott Bickford as early as October 11, 1923, and the 1924 *Crescendo* editorial reported on “the bi-monthly lectures with musical illustration given by Mrs. Bickford.”²⁸

The AGS’s goal to sponsor lectures on guitar history can be contextualized within the music appreciation movement that developed in America between the 1890s and the 1940s. Julia J. Chybowski argues that music appreciation was a broad-based American cultural movement with a variety of advocates, ranging from music critics to radio broadcasters, who “provided Americans consumers with historical narratives, composers’ biographies, and discussion of works.”²⁹ Music appreciation was present in the BMG movement, and the education of the amateur player on all things related to the BMG instruments, composers, performers, and repertoire was highlighted in the pages of BMG journals. For instance, the BMG women guitarists’ biographical sketches discussed in Chapter One can be considered as manifestations of the American music appreciation movement in the BMG period. Similarly, the AGS’s lectures can also be analyzed as displays of the music appreciation wave. These lectures included biographical sketches of

²⁷ A Letter found in Olcott Bickford’s archive, describes AGS’s early projects as holding weekly ensemble rehearsals and “half-hour historical lectures on the guitar with demonstration.” AGS to Non-Members, December 20, 1923, box 152, folder 11, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

²⁸ Odell, “Editorial,” 10.

²⁹ Julia J. Chybowski, “Developing American Taste: A Cultural History of the Early Twentieth-Century Music Appreciation Movement” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2008), 4. Chybowski gives a thorough overview of why she classifies music appreciation in American as a movement and an ideology in her introductory chapter, see Chybowski, “Developing American Taste,” 1–33.

classical composers, such as Schubert and Beethoven, and guitarist composers, such as Aguado and Carcassi, ending with performances of their compositions. Because Olcott Bickford was in charge of organizing and presenting these events, in retrospect, these lectures link her to the American music appreciation movement as an advocate who facilitated classical guitarists' general education. More information about these lectures, which I refer to as "lecture-recitals" in order to acknowledge the performance component, and Olcott Bickford's connection to this movement is provided in the following sections of this chapter.

There is also evidence of the type of memberships the AGS offered during its first year. According to *Crescendo's* editorial and a brief handwritten note found among meeting minutes, there were two types of membership. The active membership (\$5 annually) was designed for those who wanted to take part on ensemble playing and weekly rehearsals and was reserved only for guitar players, either amateur or professional. The associate membership was broader in nature and was designed for those guitar enthusiasts and lovers who did not want to play in the organization's guitar ensemble but enjoyed being part of the community. The particular pre-requisite of playing the classical guitar to be eligible for active membership in the AGS signaled a rejection of the BMG community's promotion of the multi-instrument player in favor of instrument specialization. Simultaneously, although hybrid guitar players, such as harp-guitarists and Terz guitarists, were eligible for active membership, banjoists and mandolinists were not unless they also played the classical guitar.

Another early initiative was "Guitar Week," which, according to surviving correspondence between the AGS's 1924 secretary, Amelia A. Hetrick, and Fred H.

Martin, consisted in organizing events to bring awareness and commercial interest around the classical guitar during a specific week of the year.³⁰ AGS members were unsuccessful in organizing such a week during their first year (1923), as the holiday season impeded any sort of collaboration between them and local instrument stores. But they were able to succeed during their 1924–1925 season. The first Guitar Week took place during the first week of February in 1925 with the cooperation of “the four largest music houses in Los Angeles,” according to a notice published in *Crescendo*.³¹ One of this music houses, was the Southern California Music Company, which devoted “a window to the attractive display of guitars,” gave AGS publicity in their ads, and invited AGS’s ensemble “to play on the main floor of the store on the Saturday evening of that week.”³² The AGS’s records, including official correspondence, do not mention Guitar Week after the success of the 1925 event, which leads me to believe that this initiative was discontinued after 1925.

The earliest surviving record of the AGS’s governing documents is a pocket-sized booklet that contains the organization’s constitution and by-laws. Figure 3.3 shows the

³⁰ Amelia A. Hetrick to Fred H. Martin, January 1, 1924; and Amelia A. Hetrick to Fred H. Martin, November 12, 1924, box 149, folder 1, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

³¹ “News,” *Crescendo* 17, no. 9 (March 1925): 8. The success of this second “Guitar Week” was also mentioned in letters sent by AGS’s 1924–1925 Secretary. See Amelia A. Hetrick to H. F. Odell, February 6, 1925; and Amelia A. Hetrick to Mr. Hazard, February 18, 1925, box 149, folder 1, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

³² Amelia A. Hetrick to Fred H. Martin, November 12, 1924, series V, box 149, folder 1, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

cover of this booklet and Appendix E contains a full transcript of these governing documents.³³ This small booklet is one of the items found in one of Olcott Bickford's scrapbook and among Nancy Yerkes's documents, which leads me to believe that these booklets were given to AGS members when they joined the organization. The booklet does not contain a date of publication, but based on the fact that it lists a third type of membership, "the Membership at Large," it may have been published as early as 1925 because this newly added membership category was first announced on *Crescendo's* August 1925 issue.³⁴

The Membership at Large was adopted to support a new publishing initiative. It was designed to provide the American classical guitar community with selected publications of solo and duo guitar music through an annual membership. Members-at-Large paid \$5 annually and received a free copy of every AGS publication; each "album," which were musical publications, "containing Mrs. Bickford's autograph" was sent to members.³⁵ As indicated in the AGS's Constitution, in Article III, Section 3, the Membership at Large fees were collected in a restricted fund that was only used to fund the publication of the albums.³⁶ The design of this new type of membership mimicked similar strategies employed by the FVGG and American BMG journals, but while these

³³ "Constitution and By-Laws," series V, box 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

³⁴ "News," *Crescendo* 18, no. 2 (August 1925): 26.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁶ "Constitution and By-Laws," series V, box 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

other organizations/businesses published magazines with supplemental music scores, the AGS only published music scores. The AGS's publications are discussed later in this chapter.

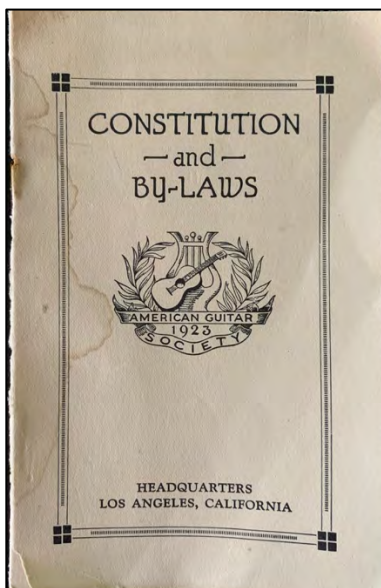


Figure 3.3. AGS pocket-sized booklet containing its constitution and by-laws found in Nancy Yerkes private collection.

The AGS's surviving constitution and by-laws provide a precise record of the organization's primary objects. These were listed in the following order: to promote an interest in classical guitar; to encourage the publication of high-grade works; to promote a higher standard of efficiency among teachers and players; to organize a guitar ensemble; and to meet in weekly rehearsals. Interestingly, the word "appreciation," which had been previously used by Miller in 1905 and Olcott Bickford in 1915, is not used. The word "promote," however, is used. The term "promotion" had been previously used in the mission statements of both the BMG Guild and the IGV. This word choice foregrounds the type of projects the AGS hoped to sponsor and, perhaps, even signifies the governing body's desire to wield influence in the American musical scene. Throughout the years, the AGS sponsored a variety of programs, such as the AGS's

guitar ensemble, lecture-recitals and local concerts, and twenty publications, but it never delved into educational standards or teacher training and its influence in the Los Angeles musical scene was extremely limited.

The AGS's by-laws clearly stated that concert programs and the group's publications were organized and managed by the musical director, which was the most active role in the organization. According to Article I, Section 4, the musical director was responsible for directing all rehearsals, arranging all concert programs, selecting the music to be played by the ensemble, and deciding upon all the music that was to be published.³⁷ As the person who held this position from 1923 until 1980, Olcott Bickford directed all of the organizations' musical activities as a volunteer, forging an invisible career as a concert organizer, artistic manager, and publication's editor. Her role in each of the AGS's projects and initiatives is discussed in the following sections of this chapter individually.

The AGS's national reach was limited to its publication efforts. Attempts to make the AGS a national organization with branches across America, as stated in Article VII of its Constitution, received limited interest from the guitar community. On December 1924, *Crescendo* reported that "Chapters of the American Guitar Society are about to be formed in New York City and Sioux City, Iowa."³⁸ In addition, correspondence between Olcott Bickford and guitarist Sophocles T. Papas from 1925 shows that he wished to form a

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Odell, "Editorial," 10.

branch society in Washington D.C.³⁹ In his letters, Papas makes no indication that he was successful at establishing an AGS branch, though he was a Member at Large from September 1925 until October 1931.⁴⁰ There are no announcements detailing the formation of an AGS branch in BMG journals nor in Olcott Bickford's scrapbooks and correspondence, which leads me to conclude that none of the above-mentioned possibilities ever came to fruition.

In general, the AGS was a unified organization that promoted the classical guitar locally, with community music-making initiatives such as their guitar ensemble, and nationally, with the publication of albums that were shipped to members across the country. Before World War II, the AGS also had some international outreach with its publication series, securing some Members-at-large from abroad. Unfortunately, their involvement was compromised with the start of the war and it is unclear if any renewed their membership after the war ended. Unlike the BMG Guild and the German societies, the AGS thrived and maintained its local presence as an amateur and professional guitar association in Los Angeles, where, even in 2020, it continues to hold meetings and ensemble rehearsals. In the educational realm, the AGS did not adopt programs aimed at teacher training or certifications. Instead, from 1923 until the 1970s, it focused on

³⁹ Olcott Bickford to Sophocles T. Papas, October 14, 1925, CSUN's Library Digital Collections, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://digital-collections.csun.edu/digital/collection/VOBCorr/id/54/rec/3>.

⁴⁰ Sophocles T. Papas to Olcott Bickford, September 21, 1925, CSUN's Library Digital Collections, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://digital-collections.csun.edu/digital/collection/VOBCorr/id/429/rec/10>. In 1931, Papas discontinues his AGS and BMG Guild memberships because of the Depression and his need to "cut expenses." Sophocles T. Papas to Olcott Bickford, October 2, 1931, CSUN's Library Digital Collections, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://digital-collections.csun.edu/digital/collection/VOBCorr/id/63/rec/5>.

sponsoring lecture-recitals that aimed to explore the classical guitar's history and canonical works. Since these lecture-recitals were designed for a local audience of amateur guitarists and students, they can, as has been discussed above, be placed within the American music appreciation movement. The following sections delve into each of the AGS's projects and address issues of reception, programmatic diversity, genre divisions, and financial solvency.

AGS's Guitar Orchestra and Ensembles

From its inception, the AGS was tailored to follow in the steps of the BMG clubs and its tradition of ensemble music-making, but it did so by ushering on a more progressive era. Recruitment letters sent in the early days of the organization indicate that one of the many perks of being an AGS member was participation, regardless of gender, in its newly formed guitar ensemble, which began rehearsing on October 11, 1923.⁴¹ The ensemble was directed by Olcott Bickford, who selected the repertoire, arranged, transcribed and copied the parts, and directed all rehearsals and performances. By 1923, Olcott Bickford was a seasoned player and had experience both as a teacher and an ensemble director. Her appointment as Musical Director was a milestone for women

⁴¹ During its infancy, AGS adopted a mass-mailing campaign in order to grow its membership and keep its current members informed about upcoming meeting times and dates. Being that Larralde served as AGS's Secretary from 1923 to 1924, he oversaw this campaign and created invitation templates for each upcoming meeting. These templates survive in Olcott Bickford's archives. The template Larralde created for AGS's second meeting, held on October 11, 1923, asks interested guitarists and members who wanted to participate in the guitar ensemble to bring their "guitar and music stand." "Meeting #2: Form Letter #2," series V, box 152, folder 11, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

guitarists as no woman had ever been appointed as the director of a mixed-gender ensemble during the BMG movement. The AGS's members were proud of having her direct their ensemble and she was well-received. Letters written by the AGS's 1924–1925 Secretary, Amelia A. Hetrick, reflect this sentiment, such as one calling Olcott Bickford “the world’s authority on the guitar” and another proclaiming that “when we say we have V.O.B. with us, guitarists know that we have the musical ability and material to make it a success.”⁴²

At the time Olcott Bickford accepted to become the AGS's musical director in 1923, it was agreed that she would receive a salary for her work. Unfortunately, the AGS was a very small organization, with only eighteen members in its first year, and membership dues were allocated to other expenses, such as stationery, postage, and rent for the group's office in Los Angeles.⁴³ The organization's economic situation did not improve nor deteriorate during the following years, but with such tight budgets it became impossible to pay Olcott Bickford for her time, expertise, and resources. In a letter Olcott Bickford sent to Papas in 1927, she talks candidly about her work as the AGS's musical director:

⁴² Amelia A. Hetrick to J. J. Schubert, December 31, 1924, box 149, folder 1, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.; and Amelia A. Hetrick to Mr. Aschcraft, February 22, 1925, series V, box 149, folder 1, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

⁴³ In 1924, *Crescendo*'s cover detailed that the AGS had fourteen members. Their names were published as follows: Mrs. N. K. Russell, Misses Dorothy Freeman, Nancy Yerkes, Amelia Hetrick, Ida M. Trask, Zarh Myron Bickford, Frank L. Collins, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford, Mark M. Vogt, George C. Lindsey, Lillian Kemp, J. A. Larralde, Hazel Henderson-Conti, A. H. N. Kennedy, Edward H. Philbrook, Roy H. Poehler, Misses Ruth Elledge, and Jennie M. Durkee. Cover, *Crescendo* 17, no. 6 (December 1924): 1.

When the Society was organized over four years ago and I was elected Musical Director, I was supposed to receive a salary, but this has never been forthcoming and during this period I have never missed conducting the Society in its weekly rehearsals except two or three times when I was seriously ill in bed. I have copied literally hundreds of pages of music for their use to save them music copyist's bills—I have made dozens of arrangements for the use of the Ensemble for which I have never received a penny, I have given up lucrative concert engagements on several occasions for the purpose of being present at the Society rehearsals...⁴⁴

Even though Olcott Bickford never received economic remuneration, she served the AGS willingly and with dedication. Her conviction to serve her community and profession was rooted in the example set by the Angelenas she met in her teens at benefit concerts and was facilitated by her and her husband's comfortable economic standing by the 1920s.

During the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, jobs for American classical guitarists did not include salaried academic posts or international solo careers. In place of those modern careers, the BMG classical guitarists built multifaceted careers as teachers, columnists, performers, composers, and arrangers. Their private teaching studios were their livelihood, which was supplemented by other professional activities. Within this context, Olcott Bickford and her husband, Zarh Myron Bickford, managed to establish themselves as leaders in their fields. They held jobs as columnists for the leading BMG journals, published their scores and methods with prominent sheet music publishing houses, taught at certain conservatories and private schools, maintained successful private teaching studios, and Zarh also conducted orchestras. Their arduous work brought financial stability to their family, which allowed Olcott Bickford to, in addition to all of her jobs, volunteer her time on behalf of AGS's well-being. Although Olcott Bickford did not inherit financial wealth like other women patrons who supported

⁴⁴ Olcott Bickford to Sophocles T. Papas, January 10, 1927, CSUN's Library Digital Collections, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://digital-collections.csun.edu/digital/collection/VOBCorr/id/427/rec/1>.

the development of music culture in America, her own income as a professional classical guitarist gave her the flexibility to serve her profession and her community. Although she and Zarh enjoyed a prosperous career between the 1910s and 1940s, it is unclear what their economic standing may have been in the remaining years. The decline of the music publishing business in the 1920s and 1930s would have negatively impacted their royalty payments and their music publishing business, Zarvah Publishing Company. In addition, although Olcott Bickford and her husband were quick to invest in the recording industry, establishing Zarvah Art Record Co. in 1921, their business did not bloom but rather struggled to compete with classical music record company giants such as Victor and its Red Seal.⁴⁵ Furthermore, in 1929, Olcott Bickford stopped writing for *Crescendo* and by the 1930s most of the BMG journals were discontinued, which reduced the availability of writing engagements for both of them. In interviews with the author, Olcott Bickford's students John F. Steiner, Gregory Newton, and Wilbur Cotton, who studied with her at different periods between 1950s and 1970s, reported that Olcott Bickford continued to teach privately at her home until the late 1970s.⁴⁶ They also mentioned that the roof at the Bickford's home was not in good condition and they believe money was not available

⁴⁵ Noonan, *The Guitar in America*, 149–150. Not a lot is known about the Bickford's recording label, but according to Noonan, "the Bickfords spent time in the recording studio in the 1920s." One of the first advertisement that was published in a BMG journal appeared in *Crescendo*'s October 1922 issue, see "Study with the Bickfords through Zarvah Art Records," Advertisement, *Crescendo* 15, no. 4 (October 1922): 20. In addition, there are several flyers advertising the release of new records in Olcott Bickford's scrapbooks, see series V, box 157, folder 4, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA. These flyers document that Zarvah Art Records published seventeen standard 78 rpm 10-inch records.

⁴⁶ John F. Steiner, Zoom interview with author, December 12, 2020; Gregory Newton, Zoom interview with author, December 10, 2020; and Wilbur Cotton, phone interview with author, December 17, 2020.

to make the necessary repairs.⁴⁷ After Zarh Myron Bickford passed away in 1961, Olcott Bickford became the solo bread winner, relying on her private teaching as her main source of income. It is unclear if Bickford may have had a pension from his teaching engagements at schools and conservatories throughout the years or if they may have had large savings since those records were sealed during the court case that settled probate issues with her estate.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, Olcott Bickford continued to volunteer on behalf of the AGS until her last years, continuing to make voluntarism an integral part of her life.

The AGS's guitar ensemble did not feature other plectral and plucked instruments other than classical guitars and two guitar hybrid forms, the Terz guitar and the harp-guitar. In its inaugural year, it featured twelve classical guitars, of which two were sometimes Terz guitars, and one harp-guitar.⁴⁹ A photo of the AGS's inaugural ensemble appeared in *Crescendo*'s December 1924 issue. The same photo is also featured in one of the AGS's scrapbooks, detailing the names of each member; it is reproduced in Figure 3.4. Unfortunately, the harp-guitarist's name was left out of the handwritten description, which must have been an oversight. His name was E. H. Philbrook, and he was a bass baritone who also played the harp-guitar.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ A typed obituary for Zarh Myron Bickford, which survives in draft form in Olcott Bickford's collection, details that he had an extensive teaching career. He taught at Smith College, the Taft School for Boys, St. John's Academy, Miss Dow's School for Girls, and the Zoellner Conservatory. Furthermore, during the time he resided in New York, he was the director of Columbia University's mandolin club. It is likely that this obituary was written by Olcott Bickford because it resembles her writing style. "Zarh Myron Bickford," series V, box 152, folder 2, Vahdah Olcott Bickford Collection, California State University, Northridge.

⁴⁹ Odell, "Editorial," 10.



Figure 3.4. American Guitar Society Ensemble, 1924. *Source:* Series V, box 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection.

The decision to exclude other BMG instruments was intentional and in accordance to the organization's aim to focus its efforts on solely promoting the classical guitar. Nevertheless, other BMG instrumentalists, such as Olcott Bickford's husband

Zarah Myron Bickford, were welcomed in the ensemble if they picked up a guitar. After Zarah Myron Bickford organized the Bickford Mandolin Orchestra in Los Angeles in December 1923, meeting minutes indicate that both ensembles collaborated to present concerts and hold rehearsals.⁵⁰

The AGS's guitar ensemble was representative of a new kind of BMG ensemble, one that featured men and women equally. As Figure 3.3 shows, the ensemble was formed by seven women and six men, and the fact that a woman conducted a mixed gender ensemble was striking progress. Its programming also included some ensemble arrangements made by women. Although these constitute a very small percentage of the repertoire the guitar ensemble performed, their presence must be acknowledged as uncommon attempts at including the output of women composers and arrangers.

Olcott Bickford was an avid music collector and her correspondence showcases how she actively looked to purchase new works, of which some were by women composers. Correspondence between her and Madame Giulia Pelzer indicates that Olcott Bickford purchased compositions and guitar ensemble arrangements by Madame Sidney Pratten, who was Pelzer's sister.⁵¹ Table 3.4 illustrates instances in which the ensemble performed some of these newly acquired works.

⁵⁰ For more information on the formation of The Bickford Mandolin Orchestra, see Cover, *Crescendo* 17, no. 3 (February 1925): 1.

⁵¹ Giulia Pelzer to Vahdah Olcott Bickford, May 10, 1924, CSUN's Library Digital Collections, accessed October 23, 2020, <https://digital-collections.csun.edu/digital/collection/VOBCorr/id/1686/rec/4>.

Table 3.4. Works and arrangements by women composers played by the AGS's Guitar Ensemble

Date	Name of Program	Piece	Composer
05/27/1927	Lecture Recital devoted to the Life and Works of Francesco Caligari	<i>Addio a' Napoli</i>	Italian Folk Song arr. Madame Sydney Pratten
05/27/1927	Lecture Recital devoted to the Life and Works of Francesco Caligari	<i>Il Gondoliero</i>	Italian Folk Song arr. Madame Sydney Pratten
09/15/1946	Second Concert Devoted to Music of the Sea	<i>Gondoliera</i>	Anonymous arr. Madame Sydney Pratten
09/23/1943	All-American Program (20 th anniversary concert)	<i>Manikin Dance</i>	Vahdah Olcott Bickford
02/09/1947	British Composers' Program	<i>Absence</i>	Augusta Hervey

Source: Data from box 150, 152, 153, 157, and 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

The AGS's guitar ensemble performed in many of the recitals of the organization until the 1940s. By the 1950s, it no longer appeared in AGS's programming as frequently, but chamber music continued to be a constant feature.

AGS's Concert Programming

Concerts and performances at meetings were an organic part of the AGS's activities. Under Olcott Bickford's leadership these events evolved overtime from members' performances at the ends of meetings to more elaborate concerts that were programmed to feature specific themes, ranging from early music to Latin American composers. At these events, members were able to build comradeship with each other while being entertained. Each concert was programmed in advance in order to encourage

members to learn to play new pieces, which contributed to their overall musical education and knowledge of the history of the classical guitar and its repertoire as a byproduct.

Early notices reporting the organization's happenings mention "bi-monthly lectures with musical illustrations" and performances by members.⁵² The bi-monthly presentations were lecture-recitals covering the life and oeuvre of specific composers. These were given by Olcott Bickford, who, for instance, presented on Berlioz, Schubert, Aguado, Carulli, Tárrega, among others between October 1923 and December 1924.⁵³ The early emphasis on the "great composers" shows some influence from the American music appreciation movement, which, as Chybowski describes, aimed to develop the American public's taste "for European symphonic music and opera" by providing educational materials such as listening guides, program notes, radio programs, and textbooks.⁵⁴

In the 1930s, these concerts became more elaborate. Olcott Bickford began to curate programs, providing an overarching theme for each event and naming them. Most of these events had printed programs that were distributed on the day of the concert; some survive in Olcott Bickford's archive and scrapbooks. After reviewing the surviving concert programs and meeting minutes, I estimate that she organized between four to five hundred concerts on behalf of the organization and its members throughout her tenure as

⁵² For notices reporting on these musical events happening at meetings, see Odell, "Editorial," 10; "News," *Crescendo* 17, no. 10 (April 1925): 21; and "News," *Crescendo* 17, no. 11 (May 1925): 8, 21.

⁵³ Odell, "Editorial," 10.

⁵⁴ Chybowski, "Developing American Taste," 1.

musical director (1923–1980).⁵⁵ In almost every concert, she performed as a soloist, in duet or trio with her students, or in diverse chamber configurations.

John F. Steiner, a student of Olcott Bickford from 1956 until 1960 and a young AGS member starting in 1957, remembers these meetings as being structured and serving as “monthly lessons” to him:

In the 1950s, the group most often met in the homes of members and supporters. Before each meeting Mrs. Bickford sent notices of dates, times, and addresses on postcards she typed herself. Proper attire was a jacket and tie for men, and evening dress for women. As in her teaching, Mrs. Bickford brought structure and discipline to the meetings. She and Zarh, who was president of the group for many years, sought to pass on their knowledge of music history and their vision of appropriate repertoire. In a way, the meetings were a monthly lesson. Each had a theme—the music of nature, folk songs, and dances, 19th-century composers, contemporary composers—and the program strictly adhered to it.⁵⁶

In 1957, Steiner was twelve years old, but he remembers Olcott Bickford fondly and continues to refer to her as Mrs. Bickford.⁵⁷ Although, as Steiner reports, most of these concerts took place at members’ and supporters’ homes, the AGS would also rent certain venues for some of their events. In the 1930s, it rented Southland Masonic Temple and the hall at the Olga Steeb Piano School, but during the 1940s, the organization held its meetings exclusively at members’ homes due to World War II. During the 1950s, the AGS met with frequency at the Woman’s Club Room in the

⁵⁵ I arrived at this calculation because, according to notices and meeting minutes, between 1940 and 1974 AGS featured monthly concerts, which would amount to a total of four hundred and eight concerts. Considering that in the early years she was also giving bi-monthly lecture recitals, but no record of these programs exists, it is my estimation that she might have organized around one hundred concerts between 1923 and 1940.

⁵⁶ John F. Steiner, “Memories of My Teachers,” *Soundboard* 46, no. 3 (September 2020): 20.

⁵⁷ John F. Steiner, Zoom interview with author, December 12, 2020.

American Federations of Musicians building. By the 1960s, Newton reports that Olcott Bickford negotiated an agreement with the Theosophical Society, of which she was a member, to rent Besant Lodge for AGS meetings and concerts.⁵⁸ Programs from this decade usually list Besant Lodge in the location information. In the 1970s, according to Newton, the Theosophical Society wanted to renegotiate the agreement and asked for more money.⁵⁹ Uncompromising, Olcott Bickford did not agree to the new fees and the AGS returned to member's homes until 1974, when it entered in an agreement with CSUN.

To date, I have found and cataloged two-hundred and sixty programs; Appendix F contains a list of all of the cataloged concerts. In order to show Olcott Bickford's programmatic tendencies and overall thematic concept, I have classified those programs into five categories: historical programs, national identity programs, composer portrait program, thematic concerts, and special programs. Each category has been named bearing Olcott Bickford's concert titles in mind in order to capture her intentionality and the overall "lesson" that she was trying to convey to the AGS's members and audience. As a columnist, Olcott Bickford and other classical guitarists complained about the lack of versatility in performer's programs and the limited knowledge guitarists possessed about their instrument's repertoire. Through her responsibilities as the AGS's musical director, she was able to showcase the expansiveness of the classical guitar repertoire across the centuries and regional areas, bringing new appreciation for its repertoire and encouraging members to learn pieces that were outside of the known repertoire. For those reasons,

⁵⁸ Gregory Newton, Zoom interview with the author, December 10, 2020.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

these categories are not based on genre classifications and are not intended to convey a sense of the frequency with which certain pieces were performed.

The first category, historical programs, refers to programs dedicated to specific musical periods such as the nineteenth century. The second category, national identity programs, includes programs featuring composers of the same nationality. The third category, composer portrait programs, indicates programs highlighting a single composer's output. The fourth category, thematic concerts, identifies programs focused on specific concepts (for example, music relating to the sea). Lastly, the fifth category, special programs, accounts for the AGS's annual concerts, such as their Christmas concert.

Since the repertoire performed at each of the two-hundred and sixty programs can feature works and composers that can be classified independently as fitting into another program, these scenarios are specifically discussed throughout this section.

In order to show the frequency with which Olcott Bickford programmed certain themes, I calculated the number of programs in each category as percentages; Figure 3.5 showcases these calculations. Overall, Olcott Bickford favored scheduling historical programs, which is consistent with her more prevalent research interests of learning more about the lives and compositions of eighteenth and nineteenth century guitar "masters," acquiring the works of contemporary composers, and playing early music on the lute.⁶⁰ National identity programs, thematic concerts, and composer portrait programs come as

⁶⁰ In her June 1927 *Crescendo* column, she addressed some of these research interests and encouraged students and teachers "to keep up to date, and ever on the alert for new things for the instrument, and to locate those treasures of the old masters." Vahdah Olcott Bickford, "On the Importance of a Broad Knowledge of Guitar Literature," *Crescendo* 19, no. 12 (June 1927): 22.

close seconds since these were all scheduled with almost the same frequency throughout her tenure as musical director (1923–1980).

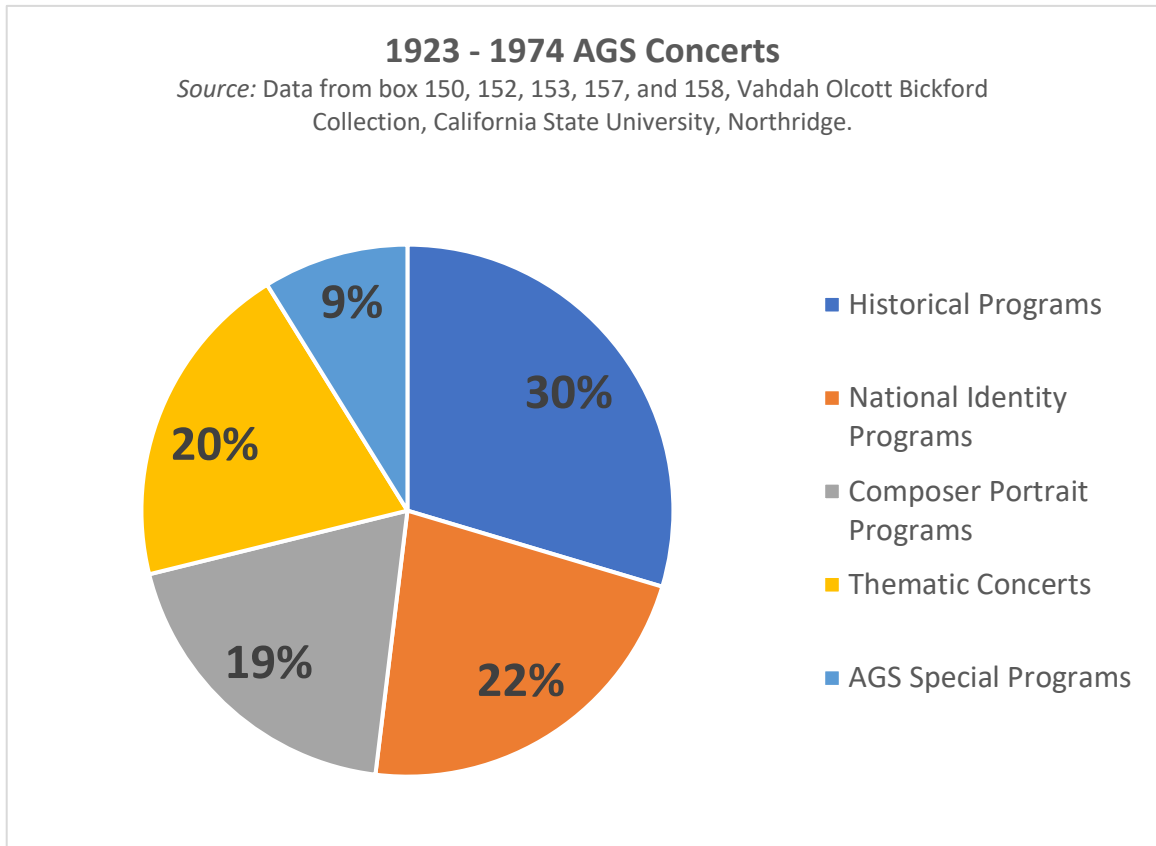


Figure 3.5 Classification of AGS Concerts presented between 1923 and 1974

Historical Programs

Contemporary composers and early music were the most recurring themes among historical programs. Their frequency and interchangeability as the most popular types of concert within this category engages with neoclassical values, which was in part categorized by what Carol J. Oja has called a “tug between tradition with innovation.”⁶¹

⁶¹ Carol Oja, *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920's* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 233.

The duality of the modern reimagination of the past is visible in Olcott Bickford’s desire to feature both early music and contemporary compositions. Table 3.5 provides a breakdown of the types of historical programs featured in AGS concerts that took place between 1923 and 1974.

Table 3.5. 1923–1974 AGS historical programs

Musical Period	Number of concerts
Renaissance and Baroque Composers	30
Nineteenth Century Composers	3
Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth-Century Composers	1
Music of the Classic and Romantic Period	9
Twentieth Century Composers	1
Contemporary Composers	33
TOTAL:	77

During the first ten years of the organization, AGS programs primarily featured works of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century guitarists, such as Carulli, Sor, Aguado, Giuliani, Legnani, Tárrega, and Mertz. This preference began to change in the 1930s. In 1930, the AGS featured its first “American Composers Program,” beginning to focus its programmatic interests on contemporary composers.⁶² The inclusion of early music in the AGS’s programming followed a similar trajectory. In 1932, the AGS featured an “All Bach Program” commemorating the 247th anniversary of the birth of J. S. Bach, but it

⁶² The first “American Composers Program” took place on November 1, 1930. The program of the concert survives in Olcott Bickford’s archive, see “American Composers Program,” series V, box 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

was not until 1944 that the AGS began sponsoring full concerts dedicated to early music. The first one took place on May 7, 1944 and was titled “Ancient Music Concert.”⁶³

The AGS’s new programmatic tendencies in the 1930s and 1940s mirror the general European guitaristic context. In the 1920s, composers who were not guitarists, predominantly Spanish and German composers, began to write solo compositions for the classical guitar.⁶⁴ Encouraged and commissioned by twentieth century high-profile guitarists, Segovia being the most famous among these guitarists, non-guitarist composers ushered a new era for the classical guitar and expanded its repertoire. Around the same time, European guitarists also began to include early music in their concerts as a result of new musicological research unveiling music from the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Inspired by Spanish musicologist Felipe Pedrell, as early as 1917, Spanish guitarist Emilio Pujol led investigations into the repertoire and history of the vihuela, laud, and baroque guitar. His musicological labor contributed to the revalorization of the Spanish early music repertoire and the dissemination of guitar transcriptions of music by

⁶³ “Ancient Music Program,” series V, box 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

⁶⁴ This new era of guitar solo compositions by non-guitarist composers was ushered by Manuel de Falla’s *Hommage pour le tombeau de Debussy*, which was published in *La Revue Musicale* in 1920. Among the non-guitarist composers of the twentieth century are Ferdinand Rebay, Joaquín Rodrigo, Benjamin Britten, Joaquín Turina, among others. There were two compositions by non-guitarist composers previous to the 1920s, *Mozartiana* by Eduardo Fabini and *Variazioni* by Ottorino Respighi. These two works constitute two isolated instances that did not have a significant impact on the repertoire. For more information on these compositions, see Sergio Sorrentino, “I compositori non chitarristi in Italia” in *Romolo Ferrari e la chitarra in Italia nella prima metà del Novecento*, ed. Simona Boni (Modena: Mucchi Editore, 2009), 145–165.

composers such as Luys Milán, Alonso Mudarra, and Luis de Narváez.⁶⁵ Other European guitarists that included early music repertoire in their concert during the first half of the twentieth century were Regino Sainz de la Maza and Andrés Segovia.⁶⁶ These two movements, modern composers writing for the classical guitar and classical guitarists conducting early music research, also exemplify a neoclassical outlook and may have influenced the AGS's programmatic tendencies.

American BMG journals began reporting on the European guitaristic scene and the repertoire being performed in these countries in the 1910s and 1920s, which allowed BMG guitarists, such as Olcott Bickford, to learn about programmatic tendencies in Europe.⁶⁷ Olcott Bickford not only remained informed on the activities of guitarists and

⁶⁵ In 1926, Pujol published an important article on the historiography of the guitar and the early plucked instruments and, in 1928, he began publishing early music transcriptions for the guitar for the publishing house Max Eschig. For more information about the early music revival in Europe and Pujol's labor, see Fabián Edmundo Hernández Ramírez, "La Obra Compositiva de Emilio Pujol (1886–1980): Estudio Comparativo, Catálogo y Edición Crítica," vol. 1, (PhD diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2010), 85–105.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 87. Andrés Segovia included a Bach suite in his January 8, 1928 Town Hall debut and he also played Silvius Leopold Weiss's Partita in A in his January 19, 1931 concert in Town Hall. For reviews of his 1928 Town Hall debut, see Olin Downes, "Music," *New York Times*, January 9, 1928; and George C. Krick, "The Crescendo Readers' Own Column: Andres Segovia in New York," *Crescendo* 20, no. 8 (February 1928): 24.

⁶⁷ In 1924, George C. Krick wrote one of the first articles about the European guitaristic scene. The following year he was hired to be the writer for *Crescendo*'s "Foreign Department" column, which he led from June 1925 until April 1927. For more information about Krick's writings, see "The Mandolin and Guitar in Europe," 6, 27; "Foreign Department," *Crescendo* 17, no. 12 (June 1925): 8; "Foreign Department," *Crescendo* 18, no. 2 (August 1925): 8, 26; "Foreign Department," *Crescendo* 18,6 (December 1925): 8, 21; "Foreign Department," *Crescendo* 18, no. 8 (February 1926): 8; "Foreign Department," *Crescendo* 18, no. 10 (April 1926): 8; "Foreign Department," *Crescendo* 19, no. 5 (November 1926): 8, 25; "Foreign Department," *Crescendo* 19, no. 6 (December 1926): 8; "Foreign Department," *Crescendo* 19, no. 10 (April 1927): 8; and "The Crescendo Readers' Own Column: Andres Segovia in New York," *Crescendo* 20,

guitar societies in Europe but was one of the columnists who occasionally printed news of European classical guitarists' concerts in her monthly columns. In 1913, she reported on Miguel Llobet's concert in Philadelphia, which took place October 29, 1912 at the invitation of Paul Eno.⁶⁸ This short note informing of the success of the concert included the program Llobet played and a concert review published in Philadelphia's *Record*. She also reported on Emilio Pujol's 1912 London recital, which took place on December 14.⁶⁹ This report contained two concert reviews, one from *The Daily Telegram* and another from *Dallas' Musical Monthly*.

Olcott Bickford was widely connected with European guitarists and leaders of European guitar societies. She corresponded with Fritz Buek (president of the *Gitarristische Vereinigung*), Greta Hammerschmid (Ferdinand Rebay's niece), Irene and Philip J. Bone, Heinrich Albert (German guitarist and composer), Boris A. Perrot (president of the London Philharmonic Society for Guitarists), Wilfred M. Appleby (editor of the London Philharmonic Society for Guitarist bulletin), and Miguel Ablòniz (secretary of the *Associazione Chitarristica Italiana*), among others. Her extensive correspondence with these figures allowed her to obtain music by contemporary composers and survey the musical landscape abroad. For instance, correspondence with Greta Hammerschmid showcases that Olcott Bickford was able to purchase some music

no. 8 (February 1928): 24. Krick was a BMG Guild member and served as the organization's President between 1919 and 1920. He studied guitar with American guitarist William Foden. For biographical information about him, see "George C. Krick, of Philadelphia, Pa." *Cadenza* 13, no. 6 (February 1907): 25, 31.

⁶⁸ Ethel Lucretia Olcott, "Miguel Llobet," *Crescendo* 5, no. 7 (January 1913): 21, 24.

⁶⁹ Ethel Lucretia Olcott, "Guitarists Round Table. London Guitar Recital," *Crescendo* 5, no. 10 (April 1913): 21.

by Hammerschmid's uncle, Ferdinand Rebay, through her. Among the pieces purchased, which were handwritten copies made by Emilie Rebay, were the Sonata in E minor for Oboe and Guitar, Quartet in D minor for violin, viola, cello and guitar, Septet in A minor for Woodwind Quintet and Two Guitars, and *Drei Kleine Vortags-Stücke*.⁷⁰

Olcott Bickford's personal musical interests greatly influenced the AGS's programming. Like Pujol, Olcott Bickford was interested in researching early music instruments and their repertoire. She was particularly interested in the lute and began playing it in concerts in the late 1920s. According to reports in *Crescendo*, she was the first exponent of the lute in America:

The picturesque and charming lute, the most popular instrument of another day and age, has, to date, its only American exponent in Vahdah Olcott Bickford, who has been universally recognized as the finest guitarist our country has produced. She has sought to revive it and some of the rare music of the ancient lutenists of various countries and has been making quite a good many appearances with it in the past three or four years. She has quite a fine library of lute music, which she has gathered from all parts of the world and two fine lutes, one of which is very old. She has made a study of the lives of the ancient lute masters of all countries where the lute was popular in the period when this instrument held sway not only as the chief accompaniment of song but as a solo instrument, as well.⁷¹

Olcott Bickford's "study of the lives of the ancient lute masters" was shared with the AGS members at monthly meetings. According to the scrapbooks that survive in her collection, she presented lectures on the life and music of Ernst Gottlieb Baron and Leopold Sylvius Weiß. With organological studies that connected the lute to the guitar as a predecessor, the lute was considered a member of the guitar family during the twentieth

⁷⁰ For more information about the correspondence between Hammerschmid and Olcott Bickford, see Mantovani Junior, "Ferdinand Rebay and the Reinvention of Guitar Chamber Music," 88–90, 144, 354–372.

⁷¹ "Vahdah Olcott Bickford, America's Only Lute Exponent," *Crescendo* 23, no. 4 (December 1930): 4.

century. Perhaps this is one reason its inclusion did not raise concerns over the instrument restrictions implemented by the AGS's founding members in 1923, which excluded other plectral and plucked instruments such as the banjo.

Her lute playing at concerts not related to the AGS included a mixture of solo repertoire and song accompaniment; Appendix E contains a list of her professional concerts outside of the AGS and details the programs she performed at each engagement. The earliest program found in her archives in which she is playing the lute dates to April 13, 1928, when she appeared on stage accompanying soprano Coe Martin at Bovard Auditorium in Los Angeles; she continued to perform with Martin until 1934. Olcott Bickford also performed lute solos. For instance, on May 1, 1930, she gave a short lecture on the history of the lute and performed J. S. Bach's Bourrée from the Lute Suite in E minor, BWV 996, and the Gavotte en Rondeau from the Lute Suite in G minor, BWV 995. This concert featured Zoellner Conservatory faculty and was devoted to J. S. Bach. Like *Crescendo's* article, a newspaper notice announcing the May 1 concert also credits Olcott Bickford as "the first American to take up and revive the lute."⁷²

Additionally, Olcott Bickford was one of the first lutenists hired to play for Hollywood films. She played the lute for a scene in *The Crusades*, which was released in 1935. The scene takes place at around minute 38 of the film, when actor Alan Hale, in the role of King Richard's friend, enters the scene accompanying himself in a brief comedic

⁷² "Zoellner Group to Give Unique Bach Program," newspaper and date of publication unknown, series V. box 157, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

song.⁷³ In addition, Olcott Bickford was also one of the first American lutenists to play this instrument over the radio, playing for KNX station.⁷⁴ Her personal involvement with the lute likely led to her programming of early music concerts in her capacity as the AGS's musical director.

As a frequent performer at AGS concerts, Olcott Bickford was a champion of contemporary composers, playing many American premieres and introducing new works. Table 3.6 lists the works by contemporary composers Olcott Bickford played at AGS concerts.

⁷³ *The Crusades*, directed by Cecil B. DeMille (Paramount Studios, 1935), *YouTube*, accessed July 17, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9-LTXKfd8>. I came across a *Screen Play* clipping containing the portrait of Alan Hale in costume. The image contains an inscription, handwritten by Olcott Bickford, that reads: "Vahdah Olcott Bickford played the lute in the picture when Alan Hale was supposed to be playing."

⁷⁴ "Vahdah Olcott Bickford, America's Only Lute Exponent," 4.

Table 3.6. Works by contemporary composers played by Olcott Bickford at AGS concerts

Date	AGS Program	Piece	Composer	Arranger
11/01/1930	American Composers Program	<i>In Happy Days</i> from <i>The Story of the Strings</i>	Vahdah Olcott Bickford (1885-1980)** and Myron Bickford (1876-1961)*	
03/05/1931	Lecture Recital on the Life and Works of Heinrich Albert	<i>Suite for the Lute in C</i>	Heinrich Albert (1870-190)	
		<i>Capriccioso</i> , Etude no. 61	Heinrich Albert	
		Sonata no. 1	Heinrich Albert	
01/31/1936	British Composers Program	<i>Gypsy Dance</i> , op. 66	Ernest Shand (1868-1924)	
09/26/1943	All-American Program	<i>November, An Autumn Impression</i>	Vahdah Olcott Bickford)*, **	
		<i>Danse Fantastique</i>	Zarh Myron Bickford*	
1/9/1944	Second All-American Program	<i>Elves at Play, Caprice****</i>	Zarh Myron Bickford*	
		<i>I Love You Truly***</i>	Carrie Jacobs Bond (1862-1946)*, **	Vahdah Olcott Bickford
		<i>A Perfect Day***</i>	Carrie Jacobs Bond	Vahdah Olcott Bickford
02/09/1947	Second British Composers' Program	<i>Chanson</i>	Ernest Shand	
		<i>Suite in the Style of the 17th Century</i>	Terence ("Terry") Usher	
		Sonata in A, op. 3	Terence ("Terry") Usher	
08/06/1950	Seventh Spanish Program	<i>Four Estudios Poetios</i> , op. 25	Daniel Fortea (1878-1953)	
01/20/1951	Eleventh Spanish Program	<i>Etude No. 2</i>	Emilio Pujol (1886-19080)	
09/08/1951	Eighteenth Spanish Program	<i>Los Mayos</i> from <i>Pieces Caracteristiques</i> No. 4	Federico Moreno Torroba (1891-1982)	

		<i>Alborada</i>	Isaac Albeniz (1860-1909)	Daniel Fortea
03/17/1951	Twelfth Spanish Program	<i>Canción del Alba</i>	Julio Martinez Oyanguren (1901-1973)	
		<i>Sevilla</i>	Isaac Albeniz	Daniel Fortea
05/21/1951	Thirteenth Spanish Program	<i>Romanza</i>	Emilio Pujol (1886-19080)	
02/17/1952	Nineteenth Spanish Program	<i>Sonatina, op. 20</i>	Daniel Fortea	
		<i>Aragon, Fantasia</i>	Isaac Albeniz	Daniel Fortea
07/26/1952	Second Program of Contemporary Composers	<i>Improvisation, op. 17</i>	Richard Pick (1915-2001)*	
		<i>Malaguena</i>	Miguel Abloniz (1917-2001)	
		<i>Memoria della Foresta</i>	Teresa Feniger De Rogatis (1893-1979)**	
		<i>Chant des Oiseaux (Song of the Birds)</i>	August Zurfluh (1871-1941)	
02/28/1953	Fourth Contemporary Composers' Program	<i>Cancas de Pastor (Pastoralle)***</i>	Jose Duarte Costa (1921-2004)	
		<i>Duo No. 6</i>	Heinrich Albert	
		<i>Eclair</i>	Terence ("Terry") Usher	
		<i>Capricho in D Major</i>	Jose Duarte Costa (1921-2004)	
		<i>Abertura</i>	Jose Duarte Costa	
		<i>Petite Ballade</i>	Fritz Czernuschka (1883-1967)	
		<i>Moderato</i>	Fritz Czernuschka	
05/30/1953	Italian Composers' Program	<i>Aranci in Fiori</i>	Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968)	
09/24/1955	Sixth Program devoted to Original Compositions for and with Guitar	<i>Etude no. 39****</i>	Emilio Pujol	
		<i>Capriccio no. 1 from Sei Capricci</i>	Miguel Abloniz	
		<i>La Venta from Picture The Captain from Castille</i>	Vicente Gomez (1911-2001)	
		<i>Aquella Canción</i>	Eduardo D. Bensadon	

09/28/1957	Twenty-Third Program of Contemporary Composers	Three Duos from Book I (1949): <i>Leise und sehr gleichmassig bewegt</i> , no. 10; <i>Petite Gavotte</i> ; and <i>Traumerie</i> ***	Ferdinand Rebay (1880-1953)	
		<i>Elegia</i> (1935)	Ferdinand Rebay	
		<i>Vento Pioggia Bello</i> , <i>Impressioni Decrittive</i>	Manlio Biagi (1896-1942)	
02/23/1957	Twentieth Program of Contemporary Composers	Four Miniature Duets: <i>Ruchwegs ruhig und leise</i> ; <i>Landsam</i> ; <i>March Movement</i> ; and <i>Little Cradle Song</i> ***	Ferdinand Rebay	
		<i>Cordoba</i> , <i>Tango</i>	Manlio Biagi	

Source: Data from box 150, 152, 153, 157, and 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

*American composer

**Woman composer

***Guitar Duo

****Guitar and Piano

This table showcases that she played works by Heinrich Albert, whom she corresponded with, and that she played music by many Spanish composers, such as Federico Moreno Torroba, Isaac Albeniz, and Daniel Fortea, and British composers, such as Ernest Shand and Terrence “Terry” Usher. Intriguingly, there is only one instance in which she played a work by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, which took place on May 30, 1953. She also performed some of her own compositions and arrangements. On November 1, 1903, she played with her husband one movement from *The Story of the Strings*, a suite for guitar and mando-cello in three-movements co-written by Olcott Bickford and her husband in 1917. And on September 26, 1942 she performed *November, An Autumn Impression*, op. 83, which was a piece she wrote during her time in New York and published in 1921 with

Carl Fischer. During her time in New York, Olcott Bickford also arranged some Tin Pan Alley compositions for solo guitar. In 1917, she published six arrangements of songs by Carrie Jacobs Bond (1862–1946); three were solo guitar arrangements and the other three were arrangements for solo guitar and voice.⁷⁵ On January 9, 1944, she performed two of these arrangements, *I Love You Truly* (op.52) and *A Perfect Day* (op.56). In the late 1940s, Olcott Bickford stopped performing her compositions. It is unclear why she no longer featured her works and arrangements, but this could have been related to her new interest in the musical tendencies emerging in Europe.

The AGS's historical programs also featured concerts dedicated to the music of the classic and romantic periods. Among the two hundred and sixty programs that were cataloged, three were dedicated to the music of the nineteenth century and nine were dedicated to both musical periods.⁷⁶ Olcott Bickford's decision to feature both musical periods under one title might be linked to the larger academic discussion of where to place guitarists composers whose compositional output fits within classical forms, melodies, and harmonies but who composed in the nineteenth century, such as Fernando Sor (1778–1839).

⁷⁵ The Carrie Jacobs Bond songs that Olcott Bickford transcribed for solo guitar and guitar accompaniment and voice are *I Love You Truly*, *A Perfect Day*, and *A Little Bit O'Honey*. Olcott Bickford published all of these arrangements with Carl Fisher, Inc. in 1917. The scores are available in her archives at the International Guitar Research Archive, located on CSUN's campus. Vahdah Olcott Bickford, *Guitar Music Collection of Vahdah Olcott-Bickford*, comp. Ronald Purcell, ed. Darien S. Mann (Northridge: Music Library of California State University, Northridge, 1991): 25–26.

⁷⁶ Table 3.5 displays this breakdown.

National Identity Programs

National identity programs were first introduced by Olcott Bickford as a means to promote American composers within the AGS community, but this initiative fell short and throughout the years she only presented four concerts dedicated to American composers. Although American composers were included in other program categories, particularly among historical programs that featured contemporary composers and selected composer portrait programs, Olcott Bickford disproportionately favored the music of Spanish and Italian composers, devoting complete concerts to the music of each of these two nations.

Olcott Bickford's desire to uplift the American classical guitar repertoire and place it in context with the output of other nations was not a new endeavor for her and can be traced back to her days as a columnist and the type of repertoire she performed in her concerts, which always featured American composers. As a columnist for *Crescendo* between 1912 and 1916, Olcott Bickford advocated for the performance of more American works. Her first article on this matter was published in the December 1914 issue. In it she announced that February 6 had been adopted as "American Music Day" all over the country and petitioned classical guitarists to program more American composers and arrange some of the "better known American compositions" for the guitar.⁷⁷ During World War I, Olcott Bickford encouraged American guitarists to play for the troops and include works such as songs by Edward MacDowell and Tin-Pan Alley composers like

⁷⁷ Ethel Lucretia Olcott, "Guitarists Round Table: American Music Day," *Crescendo* 7, no. 6 (December 1914): 19.

Carrie Jacobs-Bond.⁷⁸ Her promotion of American music in these earlier years transformed into the initial creation of national identity programs in 1930, the year AGS presented its first “American Composers Program.”

Between the 1930s and the United States’s entry into World War II on December 7, 1941, Olcott Bickford programmed three concerts that I have categorized as national identity programs. The first one was a “Bohemian Composers Program” presented on November 1, 1930, which featured compositions by Czech composers such as Antonín Dvořák, and guitarist composers Fritz Czernuschka and Wenzel Matiegka, among others. The second one was a “British Composers Program,” which took place on January 31, 1936; and the last one was a “Austrian Composers program” presented on June 24, 1939. After the United States entered World War II, and for the duration of the war, Olcott Bickford stopped programming national identity programs that highlighted another country’s repertoire. When this type of concert took place, it was dedicated to American composers.

After World War II, Olcott Bickford resumed programming concerts dedicated to composers from abroad. Such programs individually featured the music of European countries such as Spain and Italy but conglomerated the repertoire composed by South American composers and Latin American composers in programs that were titled “Festival Program devoted to Latin and Latin American Composers” or “Program of South American Composers.” Table 3.7 lists the different types of national identity programs presented between 1923–1974.

⁷⁸ Ethel Lucretia Olcott, “The Guitarist: American Soldiers Like Good Music, As Do the American People,” *Cadenza* 25, no. 10 (October 1918): 22–23.

Table 3.7. 1923–1974 AGS national identity programs

Nationality	Number of concerts
Argentine Composers	1
Latin American Composers	6
Brazilian Composers	1
Spanish Composers	16
British Composers	3
French Composers	7
Italian Composers	10
Austrian and Viennese Composers	3
Bohemian Composers	1
American Composers	4
International Program: Music of Many Countries and Peoples	6
TOTAL:	58

This table showcases the only in two occasions Olcott Bickford chose to feature South American composers outside of the conglomerate, once to feature Argentine composers and the other to feature Brazilian composers.

Spanish composer programs featured composers from different musical periods. The majority of these programs was scheduled between 1949 and 1951, although the first one took place on February 17, 1946. Among the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century composers featured were Luys Milan (1500–1561), Francisco Guerau (1646–1722), Miguel de Fuenllana (1500–1579), and Antonio de Cabezon (1510–1566). Table 3.8 shows the instances when these composers' works were performed and by which member.

Table 3.8. Works by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century composers played at AGS concerts that featured Spanish composers

Date	Piece	Composer	Instrument	Performer
2/17/1946	All Amor Quiero Vencer	Luys Milan (1500–1561)	Guitar and voice	Vahdah Olcott Bickford and Cecilia Cipriano
2/17/1946	Two Pavans	Luys Milan	Lute	Vahdah Olcott Bickford
4/10/1949	Pavane VI and Pavane IV	Luys Milan	Vihuela	John E. Curtiss
8/6/1950	<i>Pavanes and Folias</i>	Gaspar Sanz (1640–1710)	guitar	Guy Horn
8/6/1950	Pavane (composed in 1535)	Luys Milan	guitar	Guy Horn
11/18/1950	Pavane I	Luys Milan	guitar	Frederick Ferrera
11/18/1950	Pavane V	Luys Milan	lute	Vahdah Olcott Bickford
11/18/1950	<i>Villano</i>	Francisco Guerau (1646–1722)*	lute	Vahdah Olcott Bickford
03/17/1951	<i>Pavane VI</i>	Luys Milan	guitar	Frederick Ferrera
03/17/1951	<i>Pavane VI</i>	Luys Milan	guitar	Guy Horn
07/08/1951	<i>Covarde Cavallero</i> from <i>Cantos de España</i>	Miguel de Fuenllana (1500–1579)*	Guitar and viola	Vahdah Olcott Bickford and Zarh Myron Bickford
08/04/1951	<i>Pavane I</i>	Luys Milan	guitar	Sydney Allen
08/04/1951	<i>Pavana</i>	Antonio de Cabezon (1510-1566)	guitar	Vahdah Olcott Bickford

Source: Data from box 150, 152, 153, 157, and 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

*Transcription by Emilio Pujol

**Transcription by Vahdah Olcott Bickford

The two works by Guerau and de Fuenllana that are listed in this table were transcriptions made by Emilio Pujol that Olcott Bickford played, furthering earlier comments made about Olcott Bickford's link to Pujol's early music research. Among the composers from the eighteenth and nineteenth century were Fernando Sor (1778–1839), Francisco Tárrega (1852–1909), Dionisio Aguado (1784–1849), and José Broca (1805–1882). And

among the twentieth century composers were Isaac Albeniz (1860–1909) and Daniel Fortea (1878–1953), whose transcriptions were mostly performed rather than his compositions. There are also isolated instances of performances of works by Miguel Llobet (1878–1938), Federico Moreno Torroba (1891–1982) and Enrique Granados (1867–1916) throughout this Spanish composer programs. John E. Curtiss played Llobet’s *Estilo Popular* on April 10, 1949; Guy Horn played *Fandanguillo* from *Suite Castellana* on October 21, 1950; and Olcott Bickford played Granados’s *Villanesca* with her husband, which he transcribed for two guitars. There is also a guitar ensemble performance of Granados’s *Jota* on April 10, 1949, which was arranged for that instrumentation by Odell. Lesser-known Spanish composers were also featured in these programs. Among them were José Ferrer (1835–1916), Antonio Alba (1873–1940), Vicente Gómez (1911–2001), Antonio Cano (1811–1897).

Beginning in 1949, works composed and arranged by Segovia were also included in the Spanish composer programs. Table 3.9 showcases these instances along with the name of the AGS member who played the work.

Table 3.9. Works by Andrés Segovia played at AGS concerts that featured Spanish composers

Date	Piece	Composer	Player
4/10/1949	Leyenda	Isaac Albeniz (1860-1909)*	Vahdah Olcott Bickford
05/19/1951	<i>Lesson No. 6</i>	Andres Segovia (1893-1987)	Paula Silveja
07/08/1951	<i>Andante in B minor</i>	Andres Segovia (1893-1987)	Sydney Allen
07/08/1951	<i>Tanquillo (E major)</i>	Andres Segovia (1893-1987)	Sydney Allen
07/08/1951	<i>Mazurka in A minor</i>	Andres Segovia (1893-1987)	Paula Silveja
08/04/1951	<i>Allegretto grazioso</i>	Andres Segovia (1893-1987)	Sydney Allen
09/08/1951	<i>Easy Lesson No. 1</i>	Andres Segovia (1893-1987)	Howard Henry Watkins
03/17/1951	<i>Mallorca</i>	Isaac Albeniz (1860-1909)*	Guy Horn
08/25/1956	<i>Leyenda</i>	Isaac Albeniz (1860-1909)*	Frank Loya
03/27/1965	Andante and Bourrée	J. S. Bach (1685-1750)*	David Rastell
05/25/1966	Sonata in E Minor	Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)*	Dennis Shuck

Source: Data from box 150, 152, 153, 157, and 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

* Transcription by Andres Segovia

Throughout her life, Olcott Bickford actively promoted Andrés Segovia’s concerts at meetings and encouraged some of her students to play his etudes. As detailed in Table 3.9, in 1949, she played one of his arrangements.

In the 1950s, after World War II was over, the AGS started to program Italian composer programs. Although these programs featured Italian music from different historical periods, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century composers such as Mauro Giuliani, Ferdinand Carulli, Matteo Carcassi, and Luigi Legnani were primarily featured. Furthermore, there were significantly fewer Italian twentieth century composers

appearing in those nationalistic concerts in comparison to the number of contemporary Spanish composers that appeared in concerts dedicated to Spanish music. Italy was ravaged by WWII, and after the war it faced grave economic turmoil and a steep road to reconstruction. This context may have contributed to the diminished number of Italian guitar composers that emerged after the war and perhaps the limited variety of music scores Olcott Bickford may have been able to purchase from Italian catalogues.

Regardless, although some pieces by Luigi Mozzani can be found in her archives, these are not listed in the Italian composer programs that survive. To date, I have only found one twentieth-century composer among the AGS's concerts dedicated to this country's guitar output. This composer was Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, an Italian who fled his native country and emigrated to America in 1939 just before the outbreak of WWII and settled in Los Angeles. The unique instance in which one of his compositions was played at an Italian composers program took place on May 30, 1953, when Olcott Bickford played Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *Aranci in Fiori*. Although the composer resided in Los Angeles, Castelnuovo-Tedesco was not involved with the AGS, but in 1963 he and his wife were invited to attend the AGS's 40th anniversary dinner and concert. Castelnuovo-Tedesco's letter accepting the invitation survives in Olcott Bickford's archive in box 149.⁷⁹ The program for that evening featured Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Prelude and Fugue in A minor from *Les Guitares bien Temperées*, Book 1, Op. 199; Ronald Purcell and Rani Cochran performed the guitar duet.

⁷⁹ Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco to Vahdah Olcott Bickford, September 4, 1963, series V, box 149, folder 3 (Cadman-Hyder), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

Variations on themes from Italian operas were very popular in the Italian composer programs, along with transcriptions of selected operatic arias and fantasies on operatic themes. Among these were Ferrer's transcription of selected themes from Verdi's *La Traviata*, Ferrer's fantasy on themes from Donizetti's *La Fille du Regiment*, Fusani's transcription of "Addio del passato" from Verdi's *La Traviata*, Munier's transcription of "Sad Hour of Parting" from Bellini's *Romeo and Juliette*, and Merz's fantasy on Bellini's *Romeo and Juliette*. Ferrer's operatic arrangements and variations can also be categorized within the American compositional output of nineteenth-century guitarist composers.

Some of the lesser-known Italian composers featured in these programs were Carlo Munier (1858–1911), Francesco Molino (1775–1847), and Zani de Ferranti (1801–1878) and both their solo and duo compositions were included. On January 16, 1963, Douglas I. Hammer played Molino's Preludes No. 10, 9, and 12. That same day Joseph Smith played Molino's Preludes No. 2 and 4, and Olcott Bickford and Douglas I. Hammer played Munier's *Romanza*. On October 23, 1965, Olcott Bickford and Jannette Mathewson performed Munier's *Barcarola*, and on that same concert Marty Trent played Molino's *Preludio*. On September 24, 1966, Jannette Mathewson played Ferranti's *Ma Dernière Fantasia*, Op. 4.

Italian composer concerts also featured arrangements of Italian early music and eighteenth-century compositions. Among the few composers that fall into this category are Giacomo Carissimi (1605–1674), Antonio Caldara (1670–1736), Giovanni Paisiello (1740–1816), Vincenzo Legrenzo Ciampi (1719–1762), and Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583–1643). Table 3.10 lists the Italian early music repertoire that was played.

Table 3.10. Works by sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century composers played at AGS concerts that featured Italian composers

Date	Piece	Composer	Instrument	Performer
01/26/1963	Vittoria mio core	Giacomo Carissimi (1605–1674)	Guitar and voice	Herbert Gray
01/26/1963	Come raggio di Sol	Antonio Caldara (1670–1736)*	Lute and voice	Theo Halladay and Sylvia Holland, lute, and Mary Jesson, soprano
01/26/1963	Nel Cor Piu Non Mi Sento	Giovanni Paisiello (1740–1816)**	Lute and voice	Theo Halladay and Sylvia Holland, lute, and Mary Jesson, soprano
01/26/1963	Nina	Vincenzo Legrenzo Ciampi (1719–1762)***	Lute and voice	Theo Halladay and Sylvia Holland, lute, and Mary Jesson, soprano
09/24/1966	<i>Air con Variazioni detta “La Frescobalda”</i>	Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583–1643)****	guitar	David Corrales

Source: Data from box 150, 152, 153, 157, and 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

*Arrangement by Sylvia Holland

**Arrangement by Olcott Bickford

***Arrangement by Theo Halladay

****Arrangement Andrés Segovia

The AGS’s national identity programs also featured concerts dedicated to non-European composers, although in significantly less numbers than those dedicated to European nationalities. Eight concerts featured the works of South American and Latin American composers in comparison to the forty concerts that featured European nationalities. Even though representation was unequal, the fact that Olcott Bickford followed the development of the classical guitar in countries such as Argentina and Brazil and attempted to highlight the compositions from those nationalities must be noted. Her

dedication to including compositions by these composers aligned with the perspectives she shared in her writings as a BMG columnist. Between 1912 and 1913, she dedicated several columns to talk about the guitarist's responsibility to investigate and program works by lesser-known guitar composers and perform programs that were more interesting and innovative. These writings and her views on new repertoire and their impact within the guitar community are discussed in the conclusion.

The fact that she programmed South American composers who drew inspiration from the folkloric music of their countries, such as Argentinian guitarist composer Juan Alais (1844–1914), shows that she approached repertoire selection with an open-mind. This practice sets her apart from her Spanish contemporary Andrés Segovia. As Peter E. Segal concludes, Segovia had conservative views when it came to repertoire selection, favoring modern composers whose works “adhered to the classical ideals of Haydn, Mozart... in which the sonata-allegro form prevailed.”⁸⁰ He dismissed the output of South American guitarist composers who drew inspiration from national folklore and indigenous music, such as Agustín Barrios Mangoré, and, as Segal reports, letters Segovia exchanged with Manuel María Ponce document instances in which Segovia “ridiculed Villa-Lobos and his music.”⁸¹

On November 18, 1945, the AGS presented its first and only “Argentine Program,” featuring compositions by Juan Alais, who was an Argentine folklorist from

⁸⁰ Peter E. Segal, “The Role of Andrés Segovia in Re-Shaping the Repertoire of the Classical Guitar” (DMA document, Temple University, 1994), 79.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 79.

the Rio de la Plata region.⁸² Olcott Bickford and her husband played two of his guitar duets, *La Nanita* and *La Perezosa*. She also performed four of his solo works for guitar, *Criollos No. 1, 2 and 4* from *Seis Estilos Criollos* and *Milonga*. The concert also featured Olcott Bickford's performance of two transcriptions of Julián Aguirre's piano compositions made by Segovia. The pieces were *Triste No. 4* and *Vidalita*.⁸³ Although Aguirre was a South American composer, he was not a guitarist composer, which may have influenced Segovia's decision-making. Segovia preferred to transcribe non-guitarist composers as a way of validating the possibilities of the instrument and expanding its repertoire. During his trajectory, Segovia made numerous transcriptions "covering a 400-year gamut of music stretching back to the Renaissance with particular attention to Bach," these two Aguirre transcriptions belong to his output.⁸⁴ In addition to being a non-guitarist, Aguirre was a composer and pianist who spend his formative years in Spain, studying in the Madrid Royal Conservatory and returning to Argentina in 1886.⁸⁵ His European education may have also played a role in Segovia's decision to transcribe these two pieces.

⁸² For more information about the development of the guitar in Argentina and figures such as Alais, see Richard T. Pinnell, *The Rioplatense Guitar: The Early Guitar and its Context in Argentina and Uruguay*, vol. 1 (Westport: The Bold Strummer, Ltd., 1991); and Rico D. Stover, "The Guitar in Argentina" in *Latin American Guitar Guide* (Pacific: Mel Bay, 1995), 20–21.

⁸³ Segovia's transcription of Aguirre's *Triste No. 4* was published in 1956 in a collection of his transcriptions. *Transcriptions by Andrés Segovia* (Buenos Aires: Ricordi Americana, 1956). There seems to be an early publication of this piece, but I have been unable to find the year or the publisher.

⁸⁴ Peter E. Segal, "The Role of Andres Segovia in Re-shaping the Repertoire of the Classical Guitar" (D.M.A. document, Temple University, 1994), 41.

⁸⁵ Susana Salgado, "Aguirre, Julián," *Grove Music Online*, accessed November 21, 2020, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

Although Olcott Bickford always tried to adhere to each theme, sometimes members chose pieces that did not correspond to the specific theme of the concert. The 1945 “Argentine Program” was one of these occasions. At this concert Amelia Poehler performed one composition by Italian harp-guitarist Giovan Battista Noceti (1914–1957) titled *El Seduccion*; the work was arranged for solo guitar by Daniel Fortea.

The only other surviving program that features the nationalistic output of a specific South American country is the “Second Program of Brazilian Composers,” which took place on August 10, 1960. Because Olcott Bickford titled this concert as the “second” program that featured Brazilian music, there must have been a “first” program, evidence of which unfortunately does not survive in her archive. There is also the possibility that more Brazilian composers program were scheduled after August 1960, but none survive among the two hundred and sixty concert programs surveyed.

The “Second Program of Brazilian Composers” featured works by Atílio Bernardini (1888–1975), Zequinha Abreu (1880–1917), Oscar Lorenzo Fernandez (1897–1948), Isaías Sávio (1900–1977), and Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959). Bernardini and Sávio were both guitarist composers who established prominent teaching careers in Brazil. At the concert, Louis Cannon played Bernardini’s *Aurora* and Olcott Bickford performed Sávio’s *Sonha laia* from *Cenas Brasileiras*. Abreu, Fernandez and Villa-Lobos were non-guitarist composers who established successful careers. Abreu was born José Gomes de Abreu and is best known for his composition *Tico-Tico no Fubá*. In that concert, Olcott Bickford played Abreu’s *Nao me toques* and *Os pintinhos no Terreiro*, which were arranged by Osaias Sávio and Isaías Sávio respectively. Fernandez and Villa-Lobos are regarded as two of the most important composers of the Brazilian

nationalistic musical modernism, both composed for the guitar although it was not their primary instrument.⁸⁶ At the second Brazilian composers' concert, Olcott Bickford performed Fernandez's *Acalanto* and *Cantiga*, which was arranged by Milton R. Nunes. In addition, Ronald C. Purcel played Fernandez's *Old Song*, and Villa-Lobos's *Prelude No. 4* from *Cinq Preludes*. And Regina Bartosovsky also played some works by Villa-Lobos, his *Prelude No. 1* from *Cinq Preludes* and his *Etude No. 1* from *Douze Études*. Table 3.11 lists the works by Argentinian and Brazilian composers played at the two national identity programs discussed, the 1945 "Argentine Composers" concert and the 1960 "Brazilian Composers" concert.

⁸⁶ Fernandez composed extensively for piano and also wrote symphonies, chamber works, concertos, songs, an opera, and a ballet. For more biographical information about Fernandez, see Gerard Béhague, "Fernandez, Oscar Lorenzo," *Grove Music Online*, accessed November 21, 2020, www.oxfordmusiconline.com. Villa-Lobos composed a significant number of guitar solo works: *Cinq Preludes* (1940), *Chôros No. 1* (1920), *Suite Populaire Brésilienne* (1908–1912), and *Douze Études* (1929). For more biographical information about Villa-Lobos, see Gerard Béhague, "Villa-Lobos, Heitor," *Grove Music Online*, accessed November 21, 2020, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

Table 3.11. Works by South American composers performed at the AGS’s 1945 Argentinian composers concert and the AGS’s 1960 Brazilian composers concert

Composer	Nationality	Compositions
Juan Alais (1844–1914)	Argentinian	<i>La Nanita</i> <i>La Perezosa</i> <i>Criollos No. 1, 2 and 4 from Seis Estilos Criollos</i> <i>Milonga</i>
Julián Aguirre (1868-1924)	Argentinian	<i>Triste No. 4*</i> <i>Vidalita *</i>
Attílio Bernardini (1888–1975)	Brazilian	<i>Aurora</i>
Isaías Sávio (1900-1977)	Uruguayan/Brazilian	<i>Sonha laia from Cenas Brasileiras</i>
Zequinha Abreu (1880–1917)	Brazilian	<i>Nao me toques**</i> <i>Os pintinhos no Terreiro</i>
Oscar Lorenzo Fernandez (1897–1948)	Brazilian	<i>Acalanto</i> <i>Cantiga****</i> <i>Old Song</i>
Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)	Brazilian	<i>Prelude No. 4 from Cinq Preludes</i> <i>Etude No. 1 from Douze Études</i>
<i>Source:</i> Data from box 150, 152, 153, 157, and 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.		
*Transcription by Andrés Segovia **Transcription by Osaias Savio ***Transcription by Isaía Sávio ****Transcription by Milton R. Nunes		

Surviving concert programs indicated that AGS programmed six “Latin American Composers” concerts between 1956 and 1974, which included works composed by some of the previously discussed Argentinian and Brazilian composers and composers of other South American and Central American nationalities. The latter included Venezuelan guitarist composer Antonio Lauro (1917–1986), Uruguayan guitarist composer Julio Martínez Oyanguren (1901–1973), and Mexican guitarist composer Manuel Maria Ponce (1882–1948). In addition, these concerts also featured works by Brazilian guitarist

composer Laurindo Almeida (1917–1995) and Argentinian guitarist composer Pedro Antonio Iparraguirre (b. 1879).

The fact that Olcott Bickford turned to programming concerts dedicated to South American nationalities after the 1950s could have been influenced by growing Pan Americanism. As Carol A. Hess reports, in 1940, the American government established “an agency to encourage educational, scientific and cultural ties with Latin America.”⁸⁷ The name of this agency was the Office of Inter-American Affairs (OIAA). It relied on cultural programming to spread American ideals, values, and culture through Latin America, such as Good Neighbor films. The cultural exchange was not a one-way deal. While Americans were exposed to footage from South America that omitted “images of excessive poverty and indolence” as well as racial diversity, they were also introduced to the music of this regions through this type of cultural programming.⁸⁸ Cultural exchanges also took place through goodwill tours to South America, such as Copland’s visit to Latin America in 1941, and concerts at MoMA in New York featuring Latin American music, such as the concert that took place in October 1940 featuring Brazilian music.⁸⁹ Since Olcott Bickford followed musical news closely, and she and her husband had some ties to Hollywood, it is entirely possible that she would have watched some of the Good Neighbor films and attended Los Angeles Philharmonic concerts featuring the music of

⁸⁷ Carol A. Hess, *Representing the Good Neighbor: Music, Difference, and the Pan American Dream* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 113.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 113–114.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 114–122. This visit was organized by the OIAA Music Committee, of which Copland was a member.

Villa-Lobos or Ginastera's orchestra compositions. Her exposure to Pan Americanism could have contributed to her decision to program these concerts.

Composer Portrait Programs

If analyzed within the American music appreciation movement, composer portrait programs emerge as educational tools that aimed to further the amateur player's, and audience's, knowledge of composers, their lives, and their works. Composer-specific concerts were a feature of AGS programming dating back to the early years of the organization and the majority of these concerts were part of the series of lecture-recitals given by Olcott Bickford at society meetings.⁹⁰ These lecture-recitals featured two parts. The first part consisted of the biographical sketch of the featured composer, and the second part featured performances of the works themselves. Olcott Bickford was the main performer at these concerts, but there were some performances by the AGS's guitar ensemble and other AGS members, such as Zarh Myron Bickford. The surviving programs illustrate varied programming, which paired portraits of lesser-known composers with those of the European guitar figures of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Furthermore, the repertoire performed throughout these concerts highlights the depth of her personal music collection. Table 3.12 lists the different composers that were featured in AGS's composer portrait programs from 1923 to 1974.

⁹⁰ As previously mentioned, in 1924, *Crescendo* reported on the bi-monthly lecture recitals Olcott Bickford presented at society meetings. See Odell, "Editorial," 10.

Table 3.12. 1923–1974 AGS composer portrait programs

Name of Composer	Number of concerts
Franz Abt	1
Juan Alais	1
Antonio Alba	1
Adolphe Adam	2
Dionisio Aguado	12
Frédéric Chopin	2
J. S. Bach	3
Heinrich Albert	6
Francisco Tarrega	2
Mateo Carcassi	3
W. A. Mozart	1
Anton Diabelli	1
G. F. Handel	1
Felix Mendelssohn	1
Robert Schumann	2
Ludwig van Beethoven	1
Ferdinand Carulli	2
J. N. de Bobrowicz	1
Francesco Caligary	1
Leonhard von Call	1
Luigi Castellacci	1
Napoleon Coste	1
Adam Darr	1
Vahdah Olcott Bickford and Zarh	1
Myron Bickford	
Heinrich Bohr	1
TOTAL:	50

Composer Portrait Programs exhibit a new type of programming in the American guitaristic scene, one based on scholarly curiosity and more diversity. Olcott Bickford managed to find a balance between featuring lesser-known guitarists from all over Europe and South America and maintaining a spotlight on European guitars composers from the eighteenth and nineteenth century, such as Aguado, Carulli, and Coste. Since her early years as a columnist for *Crescendo* (1912–1916), Olcott Bickford showed

interest in writing about the life and compositional output of composers.⁹¹ This interest was rekindled during her new role as the AGS's musical director.

The earliest surviving AGS program I have categorized belongs to the composer portrait concert category. It was titled "The Life and Works of J. N. de Bobrowicz: Celebrated Polish Master of the Guitar" and took place on March 17, 1926; its program is reproduced on Figure 3.6. Jan Nepomucen de Bobrowicz (1805–1881) was not very well known among American guitarists and Olcott Bickford contributed to the preservation of his compositions by acquiring his works (which now reside in her archive at CSUN), educating AGS members about his life, and publishing some of his works in AGS albums (which is discussed in the following section).⁹²

⁹¹ For more information about the columns she wrote about specific composers and guitar figures, see Ethel Lucretia Olcott, "Guitarists Round Table: Mr. Christian Frederick Martin," *Crescendo* 5, no. 12 (June 1913): 21, 26; Ethel Lucretia Olcott, "Guitarists Round Table: Giuseppe Verdi," *Crescendo* 6, no. 4 (October 1913): 21; Ethel Lucretia Olcott, "Guitarists Round Table: Great Masters of Music Who Played the Guitar, Franz Schubert," *Crescendo* 6, no. 5 (November 1913): 21; and Ethel Lucretia Olcott, "Guitarists Round Table: Giulio Regondi," *Crescendo* 6, no. 11 (May 1914): 21.

⁹² There is only one mention of Bobrowicz in American BMG journals. In 1903, *Cadenza* published a biographical sketch of Bobrowicz written by Phillip J. Bone. See Philip J. Bone, "Jean Nepomucene de Bobrowicz," *Cadenza* 9, no. 8 (April 1903): 10–11. Bobrowicz was a Polish guitarist composer who lived and composed during the Romantic period. Franz Liszt called him "the Chopin of the guitar." For more information about Bobrowicz and his compositions, see *J. N. de Brobrowicz (1805–1881): Selected Works*, vol. 1, Robert Colwell ed. (DGA Editions, 2005) and Krzysztof Komarnicki, "Biography" in *J. N. de Brobrowicz (1805–1881): Selected Works*, vol. 1, Robert Colwell ed. (DGA Editions, 2005), 4–12.

PROGRAM OF LECTURE-RECITAL ON THE LIFE AND WORKS OF J.N. de Bobrowicz, CELEBRATED
POLISH MASTER OF THE GUITAR. Given for THE AMERICAN GUITAR SOCIETY, LOS ANGELES, CALIF. #
on the evening of March 17, 1926, by VAHDAH OLCOTT-BICKFORD.

Variations sur la Cavatine, "Sorte secondami" from "Zelmira" (Rossini-Bobrowicz)

Mazurka, Op. 6. (Chopin-Bobrowicz)

L'Impromptu Variations sur un Theme Original

Introduction, Variations et Polonoise sur un Theme original des Tiroliens

Air D'Ukraine, varie

Introduction et Variations sur l' Air polonais

Variations brillantes sur un Theme original

In addition to the above musical program, Vahdah Olcott Bickford gave an interesting
lecture on the life of Bobrowicz, who has been called "the Chopin of the guitar".

Figure 3.6. "The Life and Works of J.N. de Bobrowicz: Celebrated Polish Master of the Guitar" concert program, March 17, 1926. *Source:* Series V, box 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection.

Other lesser-known composers that she championed through this type of programming were Argentinian guitarist composer Juan Alais, Spanish composer Antonio Alba (1873–1840), German composer Franz Abt (1819–1885), Austrian guitarist composer Leonhard von Call, German guitarist composer Adam Darr (1811–1866), Italian guitarist composer Luigi Castellacci (1797–1845), and German guitarist composer Heinrich Albert (1870–1950).

Spanish guitarist composer Dionisio Aguado (1784–1849) was especially favored in Olcott Bickford's programming of composer portrait programs. Unlike the other composers featured in this category, who were only championed in one to three concerts, Aguado was featured in twelve of the surviving programs. The last Aguado program that

survives dates to January 23, 1949 and is titled “Thirteenth Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionisio Aguado.” Thus, according to the title of this program, there were thirteen programs devoted to Aguado works throughout this period, but only twelve of those programs survive (the program for the second Aguado concert is missing).

The first concert dedicated to Aguado’s works took place on August 8, 1943, beginning a streak of concerts dedicated to the composer. Unusually, this program did not just feature Olcott Bickford but also featured other AGS members; the program is reproduced on Figure 3.7. After a brief pause, in 1947, Olcott Bickford resumed her interest for Aguado and programmed a consecutive series of monthly lecture-recitals devoted to his works from May until November; there were a total of 5 concerts programmed within this period. Unsurprisingly, these consecutive programs primarily featured Olcott Bickford’s playing and there is only one occasion in which another AGS member performed. This took place on June 22, 1947, when Zarh Myron Bickford performed *Four Valses*. Table 3.13 lists the works Olcott Bickford played at the concerts that took place within May and November of 1947.

PROGRAM OF GUITAR COMPOSITIONS OF DIONYSIO AGUADO(1784-1849)

Given by
THE AMERICAN GUITAR SOCIETY
Sunday afternoon, August 8, 1943. 2:00 P.M.
1410 Bellwood Road, San Marino, Calif.

Biographical Sketch of Aguado

Vahdah Olcott Bickford

Valse

Homer R. Fyke

Allegro

Dorothy Ferrenoud

Contre Danse
Allegro Brillante

Amelia Poehler

Minuet in D Minor, Op. 4, #3
Minuet in G Major, Op. 4, #12
Andante #1
Rondo Brillante, Op. 2, #1

Vahdah Olcott Bickford

Guitar Duet-"Les deux amis"(Composed by Ferdinand Sor for himself and Aguado to play together)

Vahdah and Zarh Bickford

Figure 3.7. "Program of Guitar Compositions of Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849)" concert program, August 8, 1943. *Source:* Series V, box 152, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection.

Table 3.13. List of works by Dionisio Aguado played by Olcott Bickford between May and November 1947

Work	Date	AGS Program
Valse No. 2 and 4, op. 4	05/25/1947	Third Concert devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado
Minuet, No. 5, op. 5		
Allegro (G Major)		
Allegro Vivace		
Contre Danse No. 2 and 3, op. 11		
Andante No. 2		
Rondo Brillante No. 3, op. 2		
Etude	06/22/1947	Fourth Concert devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado
Contre Danse No. 4 and 5, op. 11		
Valse No. 6, op. 4		
Minuet No. 7, op. 4		
Allegro No. 8, op. 4		
Andante and Valse No. 6, op. 13		
<i>Le Minuet Afandangado</i> , op. 15		
Contre Danse No. 6 and 7, op. 11	07/27/1947	Fifth Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado
Minuet		
Valse		
Minuetto		
Four Etudes		
Andante and Valse from <i>Diez Andantes</i>		
Allegro Brillante in E Major		
Etude No. 12 in F Major from <i>Nuevo Método</i> , op. 6	08/24/1947	Sixth Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado
Andante Etude in D Major		
Etude No. 9 in A Major from <i>Nuevo Método</i> , op. 6		
Valse No. 1 and 2, op. 3		
Contre Danse No. 8 and 9, op. 11		
Andante and Valse No. 5 from <i>Diez Andantes</i>		
<i>Fandango Variado</i> , op. 16		
Etude No.1 in G Major from <i>Nuevo Método</i> , op. 6		
Octave Etude in A minor	09/28/1947	Seventh Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado
Etude No. 12 in F Major from <i>Nuevo Método</i> , op. 6		
Andante Etude in C Major		

Valses No. 3 and 4, op. 3		
Contre Danse No. 1, 2, and 3, op. 13		
Contre danse No. 10, op. 11		
Andante and Valse No. 6 from <i>Diez Andantes</i>		
Menuett No. 4, op. 12 from <i>Seis Menuetts</i>		

Source: Data from box 150, 152, 153, 157, and 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

As Table 4.11 shows, most of the works Olcott Bickford performed at these concerts were pedagogical works of different levels of difficulty. Only three pieces were virtuoso works, Rondo Brillante No. 3, op. 2, *Fandango Variado*, op. 16, and *Le Minuet Afandangado*, op. 15. Between 1948 and 1949, Olcott Bickford booked four more recitals devoted to Aguado's music. This programmatic recurrence clearly demonstrates that Olcott Bickford had a certain affinity for Aguado's works and enjoyed learning his oeuvre.

The second most popular composer among the composer portrait programs was German guitarist composer Heinrich Albert. Between 1931 and 1951 Olcott Bickford programmed six concerts dedicated to Albert's music. The first one took place on March 5, 1931 featuring Albert's large ensemble works, duets, guitar solos and suites, and chamber works, such as his *Serenade* for flute viola, and guitar. The program for this concert is reproduced in Figure 3.8.

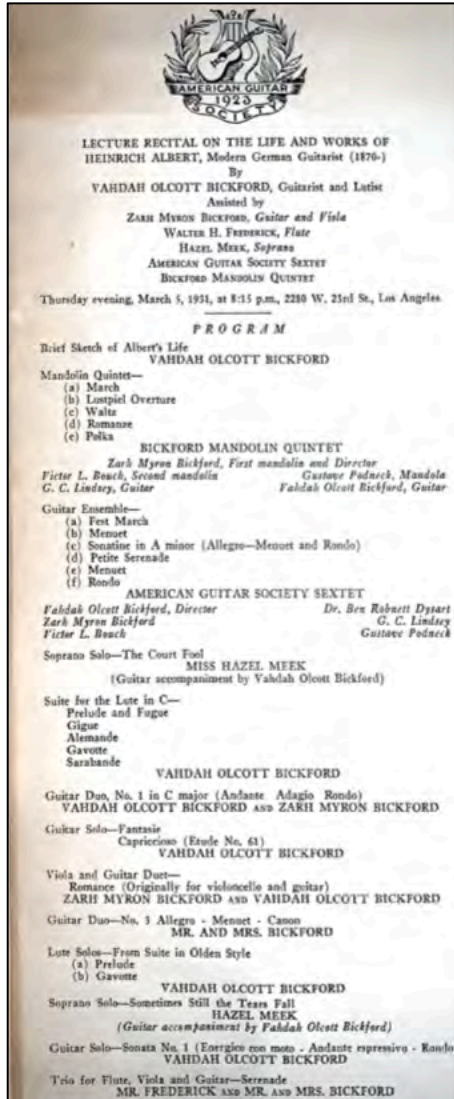


Figure 3.8. “Lecture Recital on The Life and Works of Heinrich Albert: Modern German Guitarist (1870-)” concert program, March 5, 1931. *Source:* Series V, box 157, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection.

In 1936, Olcott Bickford received an acknowledgement from Albert, who was elated by the fact that his compositions were being performed in America. That year, she scheduled two back-to-back concerts featuring Albert’s guitar duets. The performers were her and her husband and across the two concerts they performed Albert’s Duet No. 1 through 8. Albert’s letter is dated October 28, 1936. In his letter, Albert thanks Olcott Bickford for sending him the concert program and a copy of the biographical sketch she

prepared about him and read at the concerts. He also expresses that he is moved by her championing of his works and complains about the lack of similar programming efforts in Germany:

I have received your letter and the Program and I am highly honored and gratified that you think enough of my name and compositions even to choose you birthday for their performance.... If it only were so here, but unfortunately, conditions are very bad for the guitar here in Germany. People in Germany are not willing to devote even a little time to the serious study of the instrument, more specifically the guitar, which is not an easy instrument by any means. Everything must be done quickly and without much effort and that goes for the guitar as well as other things. For this reason, the guitar with is has a great scarcity of good players. This may be laid partly to the terrible war, partly to inflation and certainly partly to the advent of radio.... I am very happy that the American Guitar Society is interested in my works.⁹³

The last concert Olcott Bickford scheduled to highlight Albert's works took place on February 17, 1951 and was a commemoration of the composer's life after his death in March 1950.

Thematic Concerts and AGS Special Programs

The last two categories are thematic programs, which centered on specific concepts, and special programs, which featured recurring annual programs. The former shed light on Olcott Bickford's imagination and creativity as a concert programmer and the latter showcases the AGS's traditions and joyous gatherings. Table 3.14 lists the types of concerts featured in the AGS's thematic programs and Table 3.15 lists the types of concerts featured in the special programs.

⁹³ Heinrich Albert to Vahdah Olcott Bickford, October 28, 1936, CSUN's Library Digital Collections, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://digital-collections.csun.edu/digital/collection/VOBCorr/id/1250/rec/14>. The letter was written in German and Olcott Bickford had it professionally translated. Both the original and the translation can be found in the above link.

Table 3.13. 1923–1974 AGS thematic concerts

Themes	Number of concerts
Music of the Sea and Nature	3
Songs and Folk Songs	13
Children’s Program	1
Dance Music	3
Original Compositions for guitar (chamber music included)	25
Transcriptions	1
Chamber Music	3
Operatic and Ballet Music	1
Fantasies	1
Serenades	1
TOTAL:	52

Table 3.14. 1923–1974 AGS special programs

Program	Number of concerts
Annual Christmas Program	13
Annual Request Program	8
Presenting a guitarist	1
50th Anniversary Concert	1
TOTAL:	23

Beginning in 1952, Olcott Bickford began scheduling concerts dedicated to “original music composed for the guitar or lute and chamber music with guitar.” There was a total of twenty-five concerts of this kind programmed between 1952 and 1974. I have categorized them as thematic concerts. These concerts featured music by many of the composers previously discussed, and primarily excluded transcriptions and arrangements of pieces not originally composed for the guitar.

One of the most peculiar thematic concerts was the “Children’s Program” that took place on August 14, 1949. It featured a plectral orchestra conducted by Zarh Myron Bickford, the AGS’s guitar ensemble conducted by Olcott Bickford, and solos and duets

by several AGS members. Among the selected composers were Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893), French guitarist composer Alfred Cottin (1863–1923), Austrian guitarist composer Heinrich Bohr (1884–1962), and Olcott Bickford. In the United States, family matinees had been a part of orchestra seasons as early as the 1880s and 1890s. Orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic featured this type of programming under conductor Theodore Thomas and Josef Stránsky, who offered “Young People’s Concerts” in 1914. As a resident of New York City and an avid concert goer, it is probable that Olcott Bickford would have known about the New York Philharmonic’s “Young People’s Concerts.” In Los Angeles, there was some history surrounding weekend afternoon concerts that were easily available to the public. In 1913, Olcott Bickford reported on the Southern California Music Teacher’s Association’s organization of the People’s Orchestra and its engagement to play popular orchestral concerts at a reduced cost every Sunday afternoon for six months.⁹⁴ Californian newspapers also report that in 1949 the Symphony Guild of Marin County and the Junior League of San Francisco sponsored children’s concerts in Mill County.⁹⁵ It is unclear how much outreach the AGS’s 1949 concert generated among the younger population in Los Angeles and whether it was considered a successful event. Whatever the case, Olcott Bickford never scheduled a children’s program again.

⁹⁴ Ethel Lucretia Olcott, “Guitarists Round Table: Popular Concert,” *Crescendo* 5, no. 8 (February 1913): 21.

⁹⁵ “Children’s Concert March 20 at Tam,” *Mill Valley Record*, March 12, 1954, California Digital Newspaper Collection, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/>.

Two of the most creative themes in this category are the concert devoted to the “Music of the Sea” and the one devoted to the “Music of Nature.” The former took place on July 15, 1945 and the latter took place on April 28, 1956.

Social events were part of the AGS’s activities calendar. These parties and celebratory concerts facilitated the formation of a tight community of classical guitar lovers, fostering many long-lasting friendships. Since its infancy, AGS members sponsored and hosted annual banquets, Valentine’s Day parties, Halloween parties, and annual Christmas gatherings and concerts. It became a tradition to have an annual Christmas party and concert. The latter have been classified as special programs. Invitations to these social events were colorful, fun and personalized; many of them survive in AGS’s scrapbooks and among AGS programs in box 153 of Olcott Bickford’s collection. Figure 3.9 and 3.10 showcases two of these invitations.



Figure 3.9. 1948 Christmas party invitation. *Source:* Series V, box 153, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection.

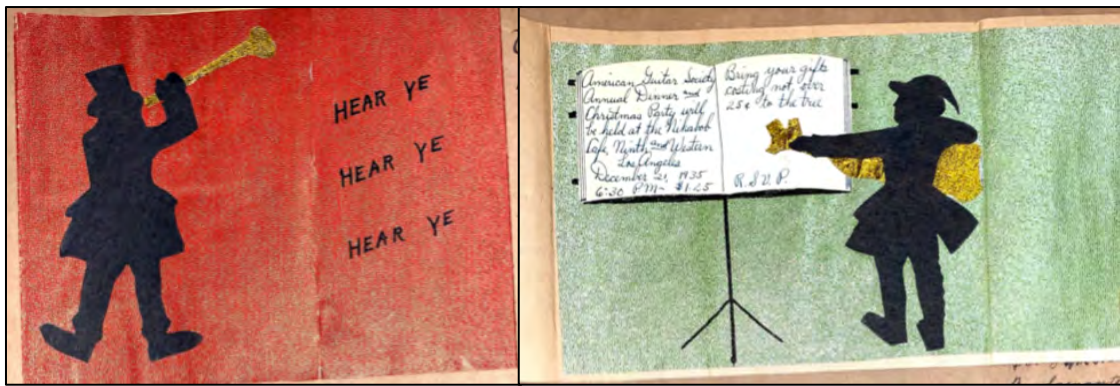


Figure 3.10. 1935 Christmas party invitation. *Source:* Series V, box 153, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection.

Gregory Newton’s family hosted the Christmas gatherings from 1972 until 1976. These programs are not in Olcott Bickford’s archive and have not been included in the compiled data, but Newton’s family saved these and many other concert programs from the 1970s, and I hope to catalog them in the future. Newton was a student of Olcott Bickford from 1972 until 1974 when he graduated from Olcott Bickford’s private studio and became Ron Purcell’s student.⁹⁶

In the 1940s and 1950s, special program concerts featured the plectral ensemble directed by Zarh Myron Bickford, the AGS’s guitar ensemble, and some chamber and solo music. During those years, Christmas programs featured arrangements of Christmas tunes. For instance, the 1949 “Annual Christmas Program,” which took place on December 17 at Leslie and Martha Booher’s home, featured the plectral orchestra playing its director’s arrangement of “Santa Claus is Coming to Town,” and AGS’s Guitar Ensemble performed Olcott Bickford’s arrangement of “Silent Night” and “In a Manger Low” (an old Spanish carol). Non-Christmas works were also performed at these

⁹⁶ Gregory Newton, Zoom interview with author, December 10, 2020.

concerts. In the 1960s and 1970s, the ensembles were no longer featured in “Annual Christmas Programs” and programs primarily feature solos and small chamber settings.

As stated by the AGS’s governing documents, concert programming was an important part of Olcott Bickford’s role as musical director. She oversaw the programming of more than 400 concerts between 1923 and 1980, fostering an innovative style of programming that encouraged research, learning, and diversity. Interviews with Olcott Bickford’s students support the narrative that through the years, she was the only person in charge of setting the AGS’s cultural agenda. Furthermore, although they were children when they were first involved at AGS meetings, Steiner and Newton do not remember instances in which other board members may have provided their artistic input in the area of programming.⁹⁷

Through her programming, Olcott Bickford encouraged and guided the AGS members to stay informed and broaden their knowledge of classical guitar music and the lives of its composers. Many of the younger members who performed at meetings were her private students, such as John F. Steiner and Gregory Miller. They played solos and duos with their teacher, exploring the works of neglected and well-known composers. Chamber music was also featured in these concerts; classical guitar duos, trios, quartets, and small chamber setting with other instruments were featured in programs.

⁹⁷ Gregory Newton, Zoom interview with author, December 10, 2020, and John F. Steiner, Zoom interview with author, December 12, 2020. Newton and Steiner consistently talk about Olcott Bickford’s unique involvement in concert programming, remembering the themes of the concerts they attended. They do not recall other AGS officers providing any input regarding the themes that were selected or organizational help.

AGS's Publication Fund

The Publication Fund was AGS's most ambitious project. The initiative mirrored the IGV's and the FVGG's goal of publishing guitar works that were in manuscript form or out of print, and it intended to facilitate the process of obtaining classical guitar scores of high quality across America. During the BMG period, journals included selected scores in their publications and some guitar works were made easily available through this medium. Nevertheless, the majority of the guitar works included in these journals were short and easy compositions written or arranged by American BMG guitarist composers and multi-instrumentalists. Guitar compositions by European and Latin American guitarist composers were not easily attainable due to their cost and shipping delays. Furthermore, the fact that these works had to be purchased from catalogs, and the lack of audio recordings available, meant that sometimes guitarists had to purchase works without having had the opportunity to assess them first.

The AGS was able to put in motion its plan to publish guitar albums, which contained diverse musical publications in solo and duo settings, by inaugurating a new type of membership in 1925.⁹⁸ This third type of membership was called the Membership at Large and it was designed for those interested in the classical guitar who did not live in Los Angeles. Membership dues were \$5 annually and the primary benefit of becoming a Member at Large was receiving autographed copies of the guitar albums that were published by AGS during the length of your annual membership. Although in principle

⁹⁸ In a letter dated September 30, 1925, Amelia A. Hetrick, AGS's 1924–1925 Secretary mentions to that their "first members in this Membership joined last May." Amelia A. Hetrick to Fred J. Hill, September 30, 1925, box 149, folder 1, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

this business plan seemed to account for publication expenses, it was a fickle system that depended on the number of guitarists who became Members-at-large.

AGS's early correspondence details that, from its inception, AGS charter members hoped to be able to publish music for the classical guitar. In a letter dated May 21, 1925, Amelia A. Hetrick, AGS's 1924–1925 Secretary, mentions this early goal:

We are now trying to accomplish one of the objects for which we organized. To do this we have created a Membership at Large, which anyone may join.... There are so few guitarists, that it is a case of "United we stand; divided we fall."⁹⁹

Hetrick predicted that the first publication "will be of great interest and value to every guitarist."¹⁰⁰ In September 1925, this goal was successfully met, and the AGS published its first guitar album, *Schubert Album for Guitar*; Figure 3.11 shows the cover of this publication.

⁹⁹ Amelia A. Hetrick to J. Harvey Cleaver, May 21, 1925, series V box 149, folder 1, Vahdah Olcott Bickford Collection, California State University, Northridge.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

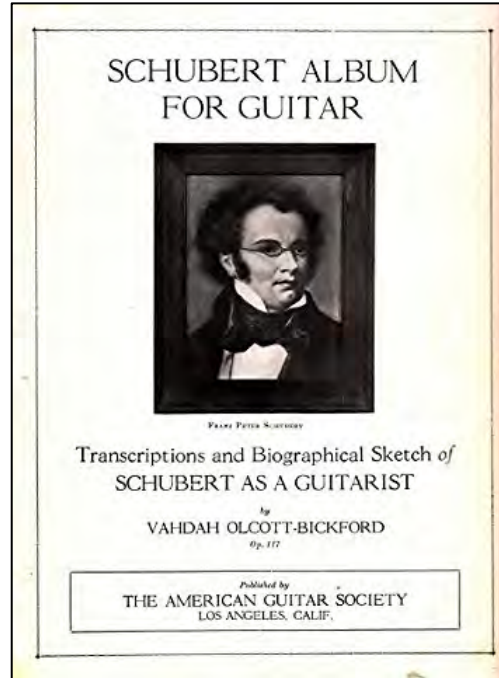


Figure 3.11. Cover of the AGS's *Schubert Album for Guitar* (1925). *Source:* Series 1, box 130, folder 8, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection.

The AGS's Publication Fund was under Olcott Bickford's leadership. This project had been her dream since the 1910s, and she was dedicated to ensuring its success.¹⁰¹ Between 1925 and 1963, she oversaw the publication of twenty albums. She arranged and transcribed many of the pieces that were published; coordinated the copying and delivery of out-of-print European works; wrote letters to receive publishing rights from composers to publish their works in certain albums; coordinated the advertising of each publication in BMG and guitar journals; managed the fund's budgets and kept accounting records; and mailed every copy to each member and buyer, some with personal dedications and

¹⁰¹ As previously mentioned, around 1914 and 1915 Olcott Bickford wrote a call to action to form an American Guitar Society that would venture into publishing works by contemporary composers and manuscript music. This call to action was not published. See Appendix D for a full transcript.

autographs. Table 3.16 lists all of the AGS’s publications, publishing years are also notated.

Table 3.16. List of AGS publications

Name	Year
Schubert Album for Guitar	1925
Elves at Play	1926
Beethoven Album for Guitar	1927
Modern Album for Guitar	1927
Spanish and Mexican Album for Guitar Solo, vol. 1	1928
Classic Album for Guitar, vol. 1	1929
Master Album for Guitar Solo	1931
Russian Album for Guitar, vol. 1	1932
Blue Book of Favorites for Guitar	1933
Spanish and Mexican Album for Guitar Solo, vol. 2	1934
Bach Album for Guitar, vol. 1	1935
Operatic Album for Guitar, vol. 1	1935
Classic Album for Guitar, vol. 2	1937
Mozart Album for Guitar	1938
Album Originale for Guitar	1939
American Album for Guitar	1940
Chopin Album for Guitar	1949
Album of Negro Spirituals for Guitar	1949
Handel Album for Guitar	1959
Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring	1963

Source: Vahdah Olcott Bickford, *Guitar Music Collection of Vahdah Olcott-Bickford*, comp. Ronald Purcell, ed. Darien S. Mann (Northridge: Music Library of California State University, Northridge, 1991): 21–37.

Members-at-large — those who became members to enjoy the benefits of being mailed the AGS’s publications upon their release at no extra cost — were not only living across America but also around the globe. For instance, one of the Members-at-large was D. Kennedy, an importer living in Yokohama, Japan.¹⁰² As Table 4.14 shows, after 1940, the AGS struggled to continue publishing albums because with the start of World War II

¹⁰² Robert Coldwell, “D. Kenney Guitar Articles & Correspondence,” *Digital Guitar Archive*, published February 4, 2021, accessed October 5, 2020, <https://www.digitalguitararchive.com/2012/02/d-kennedy-guitar-articles-correspondence/>.

it lost many of its international subscribers, Kennedy among them, and printing costs increased.¹⁰³

Conclusion

Olcott Bickford's programming practices and research interests left a substantial collection of music scores and a record of well-balanced and innovative concert programs. The concert programs that survive constitute essential sources that exemplify the programmatic development of the classical guitar in America during the twentieth century. AGS's programming moved away from the nineteenth-century classical guitar repertoire that was usually featured in salon concerts, which primarily included theme and variations based on operatic pieces and repertoire from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century guitarist composers. In its programs, the AGS featured compositions by modern composers, early music transcriptions, and compositions of South American guitarist composers.

As her early writings reveal, Olcott Bickford was a fierce advocate for new repertoire and strongly believed that it was the responsibility of teachers and students to be constantly searching for new repertoire and programming works by modern composers. In her October 1912 *Crescendo* column, Olcott Bickford encouraged American classical

¹⁰³ As the AGS' secretary and treasurer, Olcott Bickford always gave annual reports at annual business meetings. In meeting minutes as early as 1938, she reported that printing costs were becoming more expensive because the decreasing number of members-at-large resulted in smaller printing orders. For more information about these reports, see Vahdah Olcott Bickford, "Annual Meeting, Saturday, Oct. 1st, 1938," series V, box 150, folder 1 (AGS Minutes), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA; and Vahdah Olcott Bickford, "Annual Meeting, Oct. 5th, 1940," series V, box 150, folder 1 (AGS Minutes), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

guitarists to elevate the classical guitar and their playing by spending time arranging and composing, learning new pieces, and studying “the works of the old masters.”¹⁰⁴ Her encouraging words to American classical guitarists to arrange and transcribe works from the classical music repertoire for the guitar resembled the views of the Tárrega school, especially the transcribing work of Miguel Llobet and Emilio Pujol, and the work of the emerging Spanish guitarist Andrés Segovia. In July 1913, she addressed the need for more innovative programs that featured new works and some of the “magnificent works” of earlier composers that were seldomly included in concert programs.¹⁰⁵ In one article she expresses her frustration about the lack of opportunities for new guitar composers to have their pieces played and how that contributed to their apathy:

But I think guitarists pay too little attention to the more modern compositions, and arrangements. It is true that we are in need of good original, modern compositions for the guitar; but they see “a prophet is not recognized in his own country” or during his lifetime. And how many fine guitarists are there today who put a composition or even an arrangement by a modern composer on their programs, and we have some **splendid** arrangements by the more modern writers, some so little known as to be practically unheard of by many good guitarists, who always nark back to the ancients for their repertoire. Guitar soloists and teachers of guitar, of all people, ought to be conversant with the compositions of such men as Louis Emma, and Zurfluh, and several others not so well known, among the French School. They should be the first to investigate their works and pass them on to the public through their programs and teaching, if they seem worthy.¹⁰⁶

Surviving AGS concert programs reveal that Olcott Bickford upheld these views when

¹⁰⁴ Ethel Lucretia Olcott, “Guitarists Round Table. Guitarists— Grow and Thus Bring the Guitar Again to Its Own,” *Crescendo* 5, no. 4 (October 1912): 21.

¹⁰⁵ Ethel Lucretia Olcott, “Guitarists Round Table: On Giving Modern Composers and Arrangers a Place on Guitarist’s Programs and in their Repertoire,” *Crescendo* 6, no. 1 (July 1913): 21.

¹⁰⁶ Ethel Lucretia Olcott, “Guitarists Round Table: On Giving Modern Composers and Arrangers a Place on Guitarist’s Programs and in their Repertoire,” *Crescendo* 6, no. 1 (July 1913): 21.

programming concerts on behalf of the organization. These programs also serve as leads for further research because the music of composers such as Juan Alais, Miguel Ablònz, Julio Martinez Oyanguren, and others, are not well-known in modern guitar circles and are rarely programmed.

Throughout the years, Olcott Bickford was also invested in the idea of the “old masters,” a term she used to refer to composers such as Beethoven and guitarist composers such as Sor and Aguado. Her twentieth-century understanding of canonical hierarchies also played a role in her programming and these composers’ compositional output was often included in AGS concerts and publications.

Guitar scholars concur that soloists with international careers, such as Segovia, ushered a new style of classical guitar programming that matched the aesthetics of the twentieth-century instrumental recitals, featuring musical forms such as sonatas and other multi-movement works. After surveying the AGS’s concert programs, I would add that this new style of programming and the inclusion of a more diverse repertoire was nurtured and sustained in the Los Angeles area by the more than four 400 concerts the AGS presented.

The AGS’s innovative concert programming ushered a new era of ethnic diversity in classical guitar programming, but it came up short with regard to gender diversity. Olcott Bickford’s support for her female colleagues did not transform into activism on the behalf of women composers. There were no composer portrait programs featuring women composers and their works constitute a very small percentage of the overall number of compositions played by Olcott Bickford and the AGS members in their concerts. Given that she always advocated for new repertoire and the fact that, in the

1920s, she obtained compositions and arrangements by Sidney Pratten, the lack of gender diversity in her programming remains puzzling.

CONCLUSION

ISOLATIONISM AND ENDURANCE

The American guitar society model was in its essence built to serve the American amateur player. Although organizations such as AGS managed to sponsor certain educational projects like lecture-recitals, guitar societies were not designed to be professional organizations that would establish a standardized system of teaching or provide best pedagogical practices. Nor were they designed to be performing arts organizations like the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Its model celebrated the community music-making tradition established by American BMG clubs in the late nineteenth century and fostered classical guitar playing among Los Angeles classical guitar students and local amateur players. The model's legacy must be analyzed within this context, highlighting the structural strengths of this type of organization and its weaknesses.

The fact that American guitar societies such as AGS were instrument-specific organizations (modeled after the German guitar societies) allowed the classical guitar to thrive in the United States independently from the rest of the plucked and plectral instruments promoted during the BMG movement. When the BMG movement's influence began to decline in the 1930s, AGS was making preparations to print its sixth classical guitar album, beginning to expand its concert programming to feature contemporary composers, and continuing to hold regular meetings and rehearsals for its guitar ensemble. The structural specialization of the American guitar society model enabled not only the survival of the American classical guitar and its playing tradition on a local level but managed to wield some influence among classical guitarists around the

country who were interested in obtaining its music publications.

But the two factors that contributed to AGS's success in its formative years and its longevity — grassroots organizing and instrument specialization — had long-term consequences for the guitar. These two factors, combined with limited financial resources, isolated the classical guitar from the rest of the American classical music scene and made its survival dependent on a culture of voluntarism and service.

The AGS, established in 1923, and the American guitar societies that emerged in the decades to follow, were designed to support their endeavors by collecting membership dues and relying on the service and voluntarism of their members and officers. In the case of the AGS, dues covered venue rental fees for their concerts, supported its publication endeavors, and allowed the organization to pay for advertisement slots in BMG journals. This financial model was limiting because the society's financial well-being was directly linked to its membership count. But under good management and an immense amount of free labor (as described in Chapter Three), the AGS managed to survive the Great Depression and World War II continuing to serve its amateur members but reducing the number of albums it published.

The AGS's financial model remained unchanged during Olcott Bickford's life. In hindsight, the fact that the AGS did not pursue more sustainable financial models by cultivating a culture of financial giving among its members and pursuing fundraising strategies left the organization with an uncertain financial future. Moreover, it limited the type of experiences the AGS could sponsor to promote the classical guitar among Los Angeles concertgoers and left the classical guitar isolated in the care of amateur players and volunteers.

The culture and legacy of American women's philanthropy, especially the voluntarism and civic engagement of Angelenas, directly resulted in the establishment of the first American guitar society. Women had a seat at the table when the first American guitar society was established. In fact, the AGS's sustainability relied on the activism and extensive work of one woman in particular. This complex issue, and Olcott Bickford's own views on voluntarism and philanthropy, are discussed in the first section of this chapter. Because the AGS was a pioneering American organization and the prototype of the American guitar society model, section two of this chapter examines its legacy and that of Olcott Bickford, its most dedicated advocate. Section two considers the impact of the organization at a broader level and examines how the championing of amateur music-making resulted in the isolation of the classical guitar in a developing musical metropolis. The last part of this chapter examines Olcott Bickford's role in the establishment of the first national guitar society in America, the Guitar Foundation of America, which was established in 1973. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the diverse goals that guitar societies have adopted in the twentieth century and the presence of women in guitar society management.

Depending on Philanthropy and Voluntarism

American guitar societies were established as nonprofit organizations that relied on voluntarism and philanthropy. Their success and longevity depend on the dedication and service of guitar advocates, who like Olcott Bickford, build invisible careers leading and volunteering.

The fact that in the United States women were the backbone of the nonprofit and volunteering sector of the economy, which supported the development of culture and art, did not go unnoticed by Olcott Bickford.¹ She was well aware of women's commitment to preserving and promoting the arts and, in 1912, she wrote candidly about this situation, critiquing *Cadenza* in one of its editorials for excluding women's work on behalf of the development of music in America. *Cadenza* claimed that the "average businessman" was well-versed in the art of music and supported the development of such art.² Olcott Bickford took issue with this claim and wrote that, in her opinion, women, not men, were the ones who continued to support this art form through their philanthropic endeavors and voluntarism:

Why is it that a faithful body of musicians and music lovers, (mostly women) have to appeal and implore to get the cities to spend any of the city's or State's money for music?... Mr. Channing Ellery, owner of the famous Royal Italian Band, and the man who first brought Creatore to America to direct his band, told me, and also said it many times before the audiences at his band concerts, that "*If it were not for the women and the little band of faithful musicians, his band would have been a wreck long since on the rock of financial insufficiency.*" It is a well-known fact that the **women** not **men** are the supporters of the Symphony Orchestra of Los Angeles and this obtains in other cities, realizing of course that many business men have not the time to attend symphonies—at the same time women in most cities comprise from two thirds to three fourths of the audience at operas, aside from the men musicians.... We all know many men are dragged to the opera or various concerts by music loving wives, or by wives who deemed it "the thing" to go to, not because they could spend their evening most enjoyably there. Many of the ones [businessmen] who contribute financially to the concerts

¹ In her writings, Linda Whitesitt refers to women as "keepers of culture"; see Linda Whitesitt, "Women as 'Keepers of Culture': Music Clubs, Community Concert Series, and Symphony Orchestras," in *Cultivating Music in America*, eds. Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 65–86. Kathleen D. McCarthy has also written extensively about the role of women in the third economic sector; see Kathleen D. McCarthy, *American Creed: Philanthropy and the Rise of Civil Society, 1700–1865* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 1–49.

² "A 'Closed Book' Opened," *Cadenza*, 19, no. 2 (August 1912): 16–34.

do it because of the “women folk” of their families not because it is their own preference.³

The *Cadenza* editorial’s assertion that businessmen were active in Boston’s musical scene as amateur performers in local opera choruses and contributed financially to the upkeep of musical institutions was not untrue. Nevertheless, it singled out men’s contributions without any acknowledgement of the arduous labor of women living on the East Coast. *Cadenza* was published in Boston, where its editorial offices resided, and it voiced more traditional views than those of the Los Angeles-based Olcott Bickford.

As a Los Angeles resident, Olcott Bickford had witnessed first-hand the activism of Angelenas on behalf of the arts. Musicologists and historians who study the music culture of Los Angeles and its development, such as Catherine Parsons Smith and Kenneth H. Marcus, have documented the extensive contributions made by women. Marcus writes the following regarding the musical landscape in Los Angeles between 1880 and 1940:

Women were active in all levels of cultural endeavor, whether as performers, philanthropists, or audience members. They participated as teachers, as composers, and as organizers of concerts, and were adamant in seeking to improve the artistic offerings available to Angelenos. There was very much a sense of Los Angeles as a kind of new Eden or Zion, in part as a result of the Progressive movement in America, which sought to improve the social, political, and economic structures of the country during a period of almost unprecedented immigration.⁴

In 1923, when Olcott Bickford accepted to become AGS’s Musical Director, she did not know that the position would be unremunerated. Although I cannot speak for Olcott

³ Ethel Lucretia Olcott, “A Reply,” *Crescendo* 5, no. 3 (September 1912): 23. Italics and boldface as in original.

⁴ Kenneth H. Marcus, *Musical Metropolis: Los Angeles and the Creation of a Music Culture, 1880–1940* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 2–3.

Bickford, from her writings and her early involvement with women's clubs, I can extrapolate that she was keenly aware of the need for philanthropy and voluntarism. Furthermore, she might have even considered these activities as quintessential women's endeavors, stepping into the AGS's leadership role out of a sense of duty and status.

In America, women's philanthropic contributions were "a direct reflection of their social, cultural, and economic status."⁵ White, affluent American women of the nineteenth and twentieth century, of which Olcott Bickford was one, gained a reputation for being the "nation's cultural custodians" — as inadequate as the term "cultural custodian" is to describe her wide-ranging work.⁶ Although Olcott Bickford was not from an affluent family, her work as a performer, columnist, arranger, composer, and teacher along with her husband's successful career gave their family of two a comfortable living.

Olcott Bickford's life was guided by philanthropy and voluntarism. She not only served AGS, but she was a member of the Woman's Club of Local 47 of the American Federation of Musicians and served as its president from 1948 to 1949.⁷ In addition, in June 1960, she organized the Woman's Chamber Music Society (WCMS). "As Hollywood's only music chamber society," WCMS presented monthly chamber music concerts with "at least half of them featuring the guitar."⁸ Appendix G contains the concerts she programmed on behalf of this organization.

⁵ "Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement. Context: Women's Rights in Los Angeles," City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning and Office of Historic Resources, published October 2018, 6.

⁶ Kathleen D. McCarthy, *Women's Culture: American Philanthropy and Art, 1830–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), xi.

⁷ "Woman's Club of Local 47, A. F. of M.," *Overture* (June 1948): 34.

⁸ Olcott Bickford, "Vahdah Olcott-Bickford: About Myself."

Olcott Bickford's economic position by the 1920s made it possible for her to volunteer on behalf of the classical guitar. Nonetheless, she played a significant role in the culture of voluntarism and philanthropy that is beginning to lose sustainability in the twenty-first century. As guitar societies aim to survive and thrive in the twenty-first century, they have had to make changes in their structure and look for new forms of revenue and fundraising while grappling with the decline of voluntarism in America. These structural changes are surveyed in the last section of this chapter.

In the case of the AGS, since Olcott Bickford's death, the organization has continued to be supported by a wave of voluntarism and philanthropy steered by two of her students, Ronald Purcell and Gregory Newton. Purcell began studying with Olcott Bickford in 1955 as a student at the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music and Arts; they developed a long friendship and Olcott Bickford became a mentor figure to him. In 1971, he became a full-time faculty member at the Department of Music at California State University, Northridge, where "he developed one of the first guitar majors in a University in the United States."⁹ Around 1974, Purcell accepted an offer to serve as the AGS's president ushering a new era for the organizations. During his tenure as president (~1974–2000), the AGS partnered with CSUN to present an international concert series and the university's facilities were also used for the AGS ensemble rehearsals and meetings. After Purcell's years of service, one of Olcott Bickford's last students, Gregory Newton, took over the AGS's presidency. Newton began studying the classical guitar with Olcott Bickford in 1972 and later attended the University of Southern California. He

⁹ "Dr. Ronald C. Purcell, October 5, 1932 – September 7, 2011," *Los Angeles Times*, September 28 to October 5, 2011.

became a lecturer at Glendale Community College in 2002 and an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Los Angeles Valley College in 2007, where he worked closely with Kate Lewis, who was the Director of Guitar Studies at the time. In 2015, Lewis returned to England and Newton was promoted to Director of Guitar Studies, a position he held until January of 2020. Newton has been serving as the AGS's president and the director of the AGS's international concert series since 2000.¹⁰ Purcell and Newton continued Olcott Bickford's legacy, remembering her as "the grand lady of the guitar."¹¹ Figure 4.1 shows a portrait of Olcott Bickford and her Chow Chow Sun Tau, which is also well remembered by Olcott Bickford's students, taken by John E. Reid around the 1950s.

¹⁰ "Gregory Newton," *American Guitar Society*, accessed December 1, 2020, <https://www.americanguitarsociety.org/bio-greg.html.php>; and "Dr. Gregory Newton," Glendale Community College, accessed December 1, 2020, <https://www.glendale.edu/academics/academic-divisions/visual-performing-arts-division/music/music-faculty/gregory-newton>.

¹¹ Ronald Purcell, "Vahdah Oclott-Bickford: The International Guitar Research Archives," *Guitar Review*, no. 111 (Winter 1998): 8; Steve Appleford, "5 Women and the Classical Guitar: Plans for an all-female series have jelled in concerts that start Saturday at CSUN, which has held them on an annual basis since 1983," *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1993, accessed December 30, 2020, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-10-01-va-40868-story.html>; and Gregory Newton, Zoom interview with author, December 10, 2020.



Figure 4.1 Portrait of Olcott Bickford and her Chow Chow Sun Tau taken by photographer John E. Reed. Courtesy of John F. Steiner.

Cultivating Isolationism

The boom of the 1880s in Southern California, resulted in waves of philanthropic giving, patronage, and voluntarism on behalf of the arts in that region, and the establishment of musical institutions of higher learning. In Los Angeles, local symphony orchestras were established, such as the Los Angeles Women's Orchestra (established in 1893) and the Los Angeles Philharmonic (established in 1919), and new venues were created to house larger ensembles and more elaborate productions.¹² Furthermore, that

¹² For more information about the orchestras that were established in Los Angeles, see Catherine Parsons Smith, *Making Music in Los Angeles: Transforming the Popular* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 56–72. For more information regarding the theatres that were built in Los Angeles as a result of the 1880s boom, see Marcus, *Musical Metropolis*, 15–19 and 65–77.

city became “an important center for education in the West” thanks to the many number of universities and conservatories that were established.¹³ Los Angeles became an emerging musical metropolis, featuring a musical culture characterized by Kenneth H. Marcus as “diverse and decentralized.”¹⁴ But how did the classical guitar fit within this musical expansion?

The AGS’s early activism on behalf of the classical guitar brought a certain visibility to this instrument in the Los Angeles area between the 1920s and 1930s and limited outreach nationally and internationally with its publications. After the 1940s, though, the AGS was unable to transcend the local amateur environment, limiting its legacy to the preservation of the classical guitar tradition rather than the promotion of this instrument in the Los Angeles musical scene. The AGS only published four albums between 1949 and 1963, losing visibility nationally and internationally. In comparison to the AGS’s evolution, one of the classical guitar societies established in the East Coast managed to thrive after World War II. The New York Society of the Classic Guitar (NYSCG), which was established in 1936 by six immigrants residing in New York (illustrator Vladimir Bobri among them), took a hiatus and stopped meeting regularly in 1939 due to the war, but resumed its operations in 1946 and ventured to revive the BMG journal culture by publishing its journal, *Guitar Review*.¹⁵ Like the AGS, the NYSCG had

¹³ For more information regarding the conservatories that were established in Los Angeles after 1880, see Marcus, *Musical Metropolis*, 44–50.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1–10.

¹⁵ Lester S. Long, “A Short History of the Classical Guitar in New York, Part I,” *New York City Classical Guitar Society*, published October 2003, accessed December 20, 2020, <https://nyccgs.com/a-short-history-of-the-classical-guitar-in-new-york-part-i/>; and Lester S. Long, “A Short History of the Classical Guitar in New York, Part II,” *New*

sponsored multiple projects. It published its journal, held monthly meetings at local restaurants, “organized ensembles and concerts, assembled classes, and prepared competitions.”¹⁶ *Guitar Review* was published by the NYSCG until 1983, but its publication was irregular, while some years featured three publications others, like 1950, only featured one.¹⁷ Gregory d’Alessio was the journal’s illustrator and Bobri its editor for thirty-nine years.¹⁸ In its pages, *Guitar Review* devoted each article and musical supplement to the classical guitar, its repertoire, history, and players, promoting the classical guitar in America and abroad. While the activities and projects of the NYSCG fall outside the scope of this dissertation, it is important to highlight that this guitar society also relied on voluntarism and men, such as Bobri and d’Alessio, and women, such as Eithne Golden and Hilda d’Alessio, who were also involved as officers and members.¹⁹

In the 1920s and 1930s, AGS mobilized to promote the classical guitar by partnering with the Southern California Music Company during “Guitar Week” and playing in local broadcasting stations. In 1924, *Crescendo* reported that “the radio

York City Classical Guitar Society, published January 2004, accessed December 20, 2020, <https://nyccgs.com/a-short-history-of-the-classical-guitar-in-new-york-part-ii/>.

¹⁶ Long, “A Short History of the Classical Guitar in New York, Part II,” accessed December 20, 2020.

¹⁷ Robert Coldwell, “Guitar Review,” *Digital Guitar Archive*, published December 20, 2019, updated February 9, 2020, accessed December 20, 2020, <https://www.digitalguitararchive.com/2019/12/guitar-review/>. Colwell has indexed the one-hundred and thirty-six issues of *Guitar Review* and their contents.

¹⁸ Long, “A Short History of the Classical Guitar in New York, Part II,” accessed December 20, 2020.

¹⁹ Ibid.

appearance of the American Guitar Society in April [1924] was enthusiastically received by guitar fans and other in various states of the Union and Canada.”²⁰ Other radio performances took place throughout those decades, but they mostly featured Zarh Myron Bickford and Vahdah Olcott Bickford playing some solos and duets instead of featuring the whole ensemble.²¹ The AGS’s partnership with the Southern California Music Company in 1925 was a remarkable achievement for the young organization and provided the type of outreach that the organization was hoping to accomplish with its “Guitar Week.” Nevertheless, it seems to only have happened once. Located at 806-808 South Broadway and in an eight-story building, the Southern California Music Company was one of the Los Angeles largest and most important music stores.²² It is unclear whether the Southern California Music Company continued to partner with the AGS after 1925; there is no mention of a recurring partnership in the notices published about AGS’s activities in BMG journals. AGS’s guitar ensemble also performed at benefit concerts to increase the visibility of the organization and promote its cause. One of these concerts took place on March 11, 1925, when members of AGS’s guitar ensemble and the Bickford Mandolin Orchestra played for the soldiers at the National Soldiers’ Home at Sawtelle.²³

With the decline of the BMG movement and the disappearance of the two BMG journals that usually reported on the AGS’s activities, *Crescendo* and *The Serenader*, I

²⁰ Odell, “Editorial,” *Crescendo* 7, no. 6 (December 1924): 10.

²¹ One of these instances was reported in *Crescendo* in 1925, see “News,” *Crescendo* 7, no. 11 (May 1925): 21.

²² Marcus, *Musical Metropolis*, 210.

²³ “News,” *Crescendo* 7, no. 11 (May 1925): 21.

have had to rely on concert programs and meeting minutes in order to piece together the AGS' history between 1935 and 1980. In 1946, *Guitar Review* entered the market, publishing selected articles by Olcott Bickford and some news of the AGS's activities. Unlike the American BMG journals, *Guitar Review* was not published on a monthly basis, which meant that news of the AGS's activities was not publicized frequently. Because the AGS relied on the BMG journals to update the community on its activities and advertise its publications, the decline of the BMG movement and its publication industry created long-term issues for the AGS that hindered the organization's legacy.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the AGS began losing Members-at-large.²⁴ In her annual reports as Secretary and Treasurer, Olcott Bickford informed members about the decrease in membership and warned them about the damage this influx would cause to AGS's publication efforts.²⁵ Furthermore, as WWII erupted, Japanese members faced tariff restrictions and export quotas affecting their Member at Large from that country and resulting in the loss of members such as D. Kennedy.²⁶ During WWII, AGS continued with its activities but bolstered its "American Composers Program" with nationalistic fervor. Throughout the war the AGS continued to lose members-at-large, which delayed the organization's publications efforts and eventually

²⁴ Sophocles Papas was one of the Members at Large who discontinued his membership around this time citing financial problems; this is covered in Chapter Three.

²⁵ Vahdah Olcott Bickford, "Annual Meeting, Saturday, Oct. 1st, 1938," series V, box 150, folder 1 (AGS Minutes), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

²⁶ Vahdah Olcott Bickford, "Annual Business Meeting. Regular Meeting of Oct. 7, 1939," series V, box 150, folder 1 (AGS Minutes), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

uprooted the initiative due to the lack of funds. The AGS's last publication appeared in 1963, four years after its penultimate album, *Handel Album for Guitar*, was published.

The AGS's outreach to non-members was minimal because it was not designed to be a presenting arts organization. The fact that their concerts primarily featured its amateur members and not renowned professional guitarists, such as Segovia, did not warrant interest from the Los Angeles musical community and its vast concert-going audience. These concerts were not reviewed by the local press or announced in local newspapers. Minutes from their July 1, 1939 meeting provide an estimation of the type of local outreach AGS had.²⁷ According to these notes, for their "Austrian Composers Concert," which took place on June 24, 1939 at the Olga Steeb Piano School Hall, members and ticket sales amounted to a total of forty-eight. This number included the family members and friends of the local amateurs playing in AGS's guitar ensemble and in the Bickford Mandolin Orchestra who had purchased tickets. The concert was not a financial success; it did not even break even. After the hall rental fee was paid, the accounts were balanced, and some money was taken from membership dues to partially cover the program printing costs, the AGS ended up losing \$2.03 (which would amount to \$38 today). This concert is an indication of how the classical guitar was isolated in Los Angeles musical metropolis. Even though the AGS's intentions were in the right place, its amateur ensemble only attracted a small number of concertgoers, most of whom were related to or knew someone playing in the concert. Between the 1880s and 1910s, this

²⁷ Vahdah Olcott Bickford, "Regular Meeting, July 1st, Saturday Evening, 1939," series V, box 150, folder 1 (AGS Minutes), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

type of ensemble thrived in the Los Angeles scene — the C. S. de Lano Club concerts are a good example of this. But, as Los Angeles developed a more sophisticated and formalized musical scene, amateur ensembles were left in the periphery.

Although Olcott Bickford attempted to cement the inclusion of the classical guitar in chamber settings, which would have raised the profile of the instrument in the Los Angeles musical scene, the AGS did not partner with other arts organizations to present guitarists nor did it lobby for such inclusion. Olcott Bickford and her husband were well connected in the Hollywood musical circles, but this never led to any meaningful partnerships with other arts organizations. Perhaps partnerships such as this are more common in the twenty-first century than they were during their lifetime, but the possibilities that promoting that such an idea could have generated are unknown.

There were many twentieth-century composers and active performers living in Los Angeles during Olcott Bickford's life and her tenure as the AGS's musical director. The diversity of the Los Angeles musical scene meant that this city was not only the home of classical composers (such as William Grant Still and Charles Wakefield Cadman), but film composers (such as Max Steiner and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco), and women composers (such as Gertrude Ross, Carrie Jacobs-Bond, and Mary Carr Moore). This city was also home to monthly chamber music series such as Peter Yates's *Evenings on the Roof* (1939–1954) and Lawrence Morton's *Monday Evening Concerts* (1954–1971).²⁸ Nevertheless, the AGS meeting minutes, reports of its activities in BMG journals, and concert programs show that there was little to no connection with any of

²⁸ For more information about these concert series, see Dorothy Lamb Crawford, *Evenings on and off the Roof: Pioneering Concerts in Los Angeles, 1939-1971* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

these composers or performers. In the more than fifty years that Olcott Bickford served as the AGS's musical director, I have only found a few instances depicting some type of contact or connection between the AGS's activities and the wide range of well-regarded composers and performers that lived in Los Angeles at the time. One example of a potential missed connection is the inclusion of Jacobs-Bond's music in AGS programs, but not a direct communication with her. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the music of Carrie Jacobs-Bond was performed at AGS concerts. Jacobs-Bond resided in Hollywood between 1910 and 1946, where she was part of the group of "progressive women...with social consciousness" who strongly supported the Hollywood's Bowl mission of democratizing music in Los Angeles.²⁹ Her involvement with the Hollywood music scene leads me to question why Olcott Bickford never reached out to her, especially considering her arranging of Jacobs Bond's songs in 1917.

Guiding the Next Generation

In 1973, Olcott Bickford contributed to the formation of the Guitar Foundation of America (GFA). Her role in this venture was different from the one she played in the formation of the AGS. This time, she counseled and advised the younger generation of guitarists who were behind the initial concept of forming a national organization on behalf of the classical guitar.

The GFA was the brainchild of guitarist Thomas Heck. A letter found in Olcott Bickford's archives sent by Ronald Purcell to Heck with a copy to Olcott Bickford, details that in 1971 Heck came to Olcott Bickford with the idea of establishing a

²⁹ Marcus, *Musical Metropolis*, 70.

“foundation for the guitar.”³⁰ The letter stated that upon Purcell’s return from his studies in Europe he called Olcott Bickford who related “with tremendous enthusiasm” the news of Heck’s proposal to Purcell. In addition, the letter indicated that he had also heard from Michael Lorimer about Heck’s idea of establishing a guitar foundation.

Heck’s idea was presented and approved after a vote at the National Guitar Convention sponsored by the American String Teachers Association, which took place in the summer of 1973.³¹ In attendance were “sixty to seventy-five dedicated guitarists” who voted in favor of establishing a benevolent society “directed toward educational and cultural ends” rather than a professional society.³² From this report, it can be gathered that the GFA was founded to become a national guitar archive and “disseminate information on current projects...[and] guitar curriculum work.” In addition, the report indicates that the “original intention of the founders” was to call it “The Guitar Societies of America” or “The Guitar Society of America.” Nevertheless, at the pre-incorporation Board meeting, which took place in Santa Barbara on August 2, 1973, Olcott Bickford suggested that this name be rethought since it bore much resemblance to the AGS’s name.

³⁰ Ronald Purcell to Thomas Heck, December 7, 1971, box 164, folder 1 (Matesky–Purcell), Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

³¹ Thomas F. Heck, “The GFA’s Legal Status: An Interim Report,” *Soundboard* 1, no. 1 (February 1974): 2.

³² Under American law, a benevolent society is established as a 501 (c)(3) organization and a professional society is established as a 501 (c)(6) organization. The reasons why attended voted to establish a benevolent society rather than a professional society was rooted in the consensus that the American String Teachers Association was already a professional organization that represented the classical guitar. Ibid.

Olcott Bickford also served in the GFA's inaugural board of directors alongside Frederick Noad (California), Thomas F. Heck (Ohio), Ronald Purcell (California), Abel Nagytóthy-Toth (Canada), Rey de la Torre (California), John C. Tanno (Arizona). The organization's inaugural executive committee was led by Ronald Purcell as President, Marteen Lee Poort as Vice-President, and J. George Gregory as Secretary/Treasurer.

The GFA's primary purpose as stated by its adopted bylaws did not limit the outreach of the organization to only the classical guitar but was inclusive of "similar string instruments:"

To cultivate, promote, foster, sponsor, and develop understanding, taste, and love of the musical arts and especially to promote interest in the classical guitar and similar string instruments; to foster the study of classic guitar in private studios and at the elementary, secondary and college levels, and to encourage the development of innovative curricula in support of these ends; to promote the guitar as an ensemble instrument particularly with other string instruments; to encourage composition, arrangements, and publications of ensemble music involving the guitar; and to support scholarly research into the guitar's history and literature; all of the foregoing purposes being limited to non-profit educational, cultural, scientific and charitable ends.³³

Unlike the AGS, the GFA was founded to be a nonprofit designed to deal with large issues rather than local promotion. In 1974, it began publishing its journal, *Soundboard*, which contained news of the organization and notices regarding American guitarists' activities, their publications, and dissertations. It also included articles about diverse topics related to the classical guitar and published selected musical scores and musical examples.

Olcott Bickford's role in the formation of the GFA and the support she provided to the younger generation of activist guitarists was recognized by Purcell in 1998:

³³ Ibid., 8.

In 1973, at the age of 88, she again made available her expertise in the formation of the Guitar Foundation of America. Vahdah was one of the first chartered board members, advised and counseled this group (now celebrating 25 years), until her death in 1980.³⁴

Olcott Bickford was officially a member of the GFA board of directors until 1974, but, according to Purcell's first-hand account, she continued to counsel its board members until her death. In 1976, she was honored by the GFA with a lifetime honorary membership and was acknowledged as the "first lady of the guitar in the United States."³⁵

Conclusion

Vahdah Olcott Bickford is one the most significant figures of the American classical guitar in the twentieth century. Throughout her life she shattered many glass ceilings and persevered in establishing a prominent career as a performer, teacher, columnist, conductor, and philanthropist. Her trailblazing career was possible thanks to the activism of American women guitarists who emerged in the last decades of the nineteenth century, such as Dominga I. Lynch and Meta Bischoff, and of those who were her contemporaries, such as Elsie Tooker, Jennie M. Durkee, and Gertrude Miller. When Olcott Bickford was elected to serve as the AGS's president in 1966, she broke one of the last glass ceilings for women guitarists: officially serving as leader of a guitar organization. Until 1966, the AGS's office of the president was mostly an honorary role since most of the work was conducted by the musical director, who also served as the

³⁴ Ronald Purcell, "Vahdah Olcott-Bickford and the 75th Anniversary of the AGS," 20.

³⁵ Thomas F. Heck, "Vahdah Olcott Bickford Honored by GFA Board of Directors," *Soundboard* 3, no. 3 (August 1976): 45.

secretary and treasurer of the organization. But her election to this role suggests the high esteem in which she was held.

Nowadays, a few women follow in the steps of Olcott Bickford and lead American guitar societies. Martha Masters is the president of the GFA, Asgerdur Sigurdardottir is the president of the Baltimore Classical Guitar Society, and Julia Pernet was the president of the Tucson Guitar Society for much of the twenty-first century. Furthermore, the present author served the Tucson guitar community as the Tucson Guitar Society's operations director from 2013 until 2019 and as its president during the 2019–2020 season. Although we represent the minority of classical guitar society leaders, it is important to highlight that women have always been involved in guitar society boards and held officer roles. Gender equity in modern guitar society boards and leadership roles is outside of the scope of this study, but the question of why women's presence in these roles has not increased since Olcott Bickford's time certainly raises an important research question that I hope will be addressed in future scholarship.

Olcott Bickford's work on behalf of the AGS fundamentally changed the American classical guitar landscape. The AGS's formation inspired the establishment of other local guitar societies across America, such as the New York Society of the Classical Guitar. Her philanthropic endeavors preserved the classical guitar society tradition in Los Angeles through concert programming, lecture-recitals, and publications. And, in the last decade of her life, she counseled and helped younger classical guitarists who were leading the establishment of guitar programs in Los Angeles universities, such as Ronald Purcell, and those who were intending to form a new type of national guitar organization, such as Thomas Heck. From her years as AGS's Musical Director, Olcott Bickford left a

legacy of innovative and ethnically diverse programming, becoming the keeper and creator of classical guitar culture in Los Angeles. Moreover, she built an invisible career as the pioneer of the American guitar society model and its culture of voluntarism and philanthropy.

The acknowledgement of the classical guitar's isolation as an unintentional byproduct of the instrument-specific model adopted by American guitar societies and its dependability in voluntarism is not rooted in a direct critique to Olcott Bickford's legacy. Rather it is an acknowledgment of the flaws of the model adopted and the reforms that must be made by local guitar societies across the country. Olcott Bickford and the Los Angeles amateur and professional guitarists who met on September 27, 1923, envisioned a community music-making organization that promoted the classical guitar and both safeguarded and expanded its tradition. They achieved just that, but they did not design the AGS to be an arts-presenting organization or an educational foundation. Utilizing a hundred-year-old model, which in itself was designed after the German guitar societies that appeared toward the end of the nineteenth century and earlier European guitar societies, in modern days may continue to foster the classical guitar's isolationism in musical circles.

American guitar society leaders who hope to create a different legacy must rethink this model and adapt it to fit these groups' modern needs and goals. There are several guitar societies who are leading the way in this search for reform. The Austin Classical Guitar Society (ACGS) and the Cleveland Guitar Society (CGS) are among the organizations that have adopted extensive growth strategies, reshaped their mission

statements, and moved towards hiring operational teams.³⁶ Both organizations have implemented educational initiatives and partnered with local schools. The ACGS has also implemented educational programs at the Gardner Betts Juvenile Justice Center and has partnered with Carnegie Hall since 2014 to work “with young mothers in challenging circumstances to help them write personal songs for their children.”³⁷ Initiatives rooted in cooperation with other presenting arts organizations and nonprofits contribute to breaking the culture of isolationism that has permeated the American guitar society model since its inception. Moreover, such initiatives allow organizations to pull together their resources for the better service of the community. Needed reforms in modern guitar societies across the country fall outside the purview of this study, but an understanding of the history of the institutionalization of the classical guitar in America is crucial as these organizations move well into the twenty-first century.

³⁶ “About AGS,” *Austin Classical Guitar*, accessed August 21, 2020, <https://www.austinclassicalguitar.org/about/> and “About the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society,” *Cleveland Guitar*, accessed August 21, 2020, <https://cleguitar.org/about-ccgs/>.

³⁷ “The Lullaby Project,” *Austin Classical Guitar*, accessed August 21, 2020, <https://www.austinclassicalguitar.org/the-lullaby-project/>.

Appendix A: List of Vahdah Olcott Bickford's Compositions

Throughout her career Olcott Bickford published her arrangements and compositions and numbered each of them with opus numbers. The following table lists each piece with the opus number she assigned to each of these works. In some instances, she assigned the same opus number to two works. Furthermore, there are a few works without an opus number. Olcott Bickford dedicated many of these works to students, friends, and family. These dedications are listed in the “details” column. The list has been compiled from Purcell’s catalog and scores found in series I of her collection held at CSUN.

Opus	Title	Year	Publisher	Details
1	Nel Cor Piu	1905	R. W. Heffelfinger, Sheet Music Dept. Geo. J. Birkel Co. Los Angeles, CA	Arrangement of “Nel cor più non mi sento,” which at the time had been attributed to Beethoven. This duet was originally composed by Giovanni Paisiello. Dedication: “Dedicated to my friend Mr. G. C. Lindsey.”
2	Caprice Characteristique	1905	Carl Fischer, Inc.	This was republished in 1915 under the same publisher.
2	Cupid’s Wireless Telegram	1905	R. W. Heffelfinger, Sheet Music Dept. Geo. J. Birkel Co. Los Angeles, CA	Dedication: “Lovingly dedicated to ‘Little Sister.’”
3	Prelude (Original in C# Minor)	1932	Zarvah Publishing Company	Dedication: “To Mr. Lee B. Milbank.”
5	Sextette from Lucia	1905	R. W. Heffelfinger, Sheet Music Dept. Geo. J. Birkel Co. Los Angeles, CA	Arrangement of the sextette from Gaetano Donizetti’s <i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> . Dedication: “To my brother and sister Mr. and Mrs. Harley Myron Olcott.”
5, no.1	Bridal Chorus From “Lucia de Lammermoor”	1905	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of the bridal chorus from Gaetano Donizetti’s <i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> .
5, no. 2	Sextet from “Lucia de Lammermoor”	1905	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of the sextette from Gaetano Donizetti’s <i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> .

6	Madrigale	1905	R. W. Heffelfinger, Sheet Music Dept. Geo. J. Birkel Co. Los Angeles, CA	Arrangement of Achille Simonetti's <i>Madrigale</i> . Dedication: "Dedicated to Mrs. W. Neal Fry, Los Angeles, Calif."
8	Pomponette (Air a danse Style Louis XV)	1908	George Stannard, Trenton, N.J.	Arrangement of Auguste Fryderyk's <i>Pomponette</i> . Dedication: "Dedicated to my pupil Miss Regina Bischoff. Los Angeles, California."
9	La Golondrina (The Swallow)	1909	George Stannard, Trenton, N.J.	Arrangement of Narciso Serradell's <i>La Golondrina</i> . Dedication: "To Miss Leona V. Blum, Los Angeles, Cal."
10	Beauty's Dream	1909	George Stannard, Trenton, N.J.	Dedication: "To Miss Laura L. Baker, Holton, Kansas."
11	Reverie	1912	George Stannard, Trenton, N.J.	
12	Serenade d'amour	1912	George Stannard, Trenton, N.J.	Arrangement of Franz von Blon's <i>Serenade d'amour</i> .
15	The Death of Aase (Aseo Tod)	1913	George Stannard, Trenton, N.J.	Arrangement of Edward Grieg's <i>Aseo Tod</i> . Dedication: "Dedicated to Mrs. W. Toler, Los Angeles, Calif."
20	Elegy, Songs without words	1918	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Composer listed as Vahdah Ethel Olcott-Bickford. It was republished in 1918. Dedication: "To Enid."
21	Francesca Valse	1911	Walter A. Norwood, NY	Composer listed as Ethel Lucretia Olcott. Dedication: "To Miss Frances Leedom Hess, Harrisburg, Pa."
24	Gladness, Songs Without Words	1913	H. F. Odell & Co. (Boston, MA)	Composer listed as Ethel Lucretia Olcott. Dedication: "To Graziela."
25	Minuet in G	1915	George Stannard, Trenton, N.J.	Arrangement of Ludwig van Beethoven's <i>Minuet in G</i> .

				Dedication: "To little Maria Kerr, with much love."
29	Serenade	1915	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Franz Schubert's <i>Serenade</i> .
30	Over the Waves (Sobre las olas)	1915	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Juventino Rosas's <i>Sobre las olas</i> .
31	Miserere from "Il Trovatore"	1915	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of the "Miserere" from G. Verdi's <i>Il trovatore</i> . Dedication: "To Mrs. Maud Yerkes."
32	Drink to me only with thine eyes (old English air)	1915	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement.
34	Gavotte	1915	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of François-Joseph Gossec's <i>Gavotte</i> . Dedication: "To my dear friend Mr. G. C. Lindsey, Los Angeles, Calif."
35	Toreador March from "Carmen"	1916	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Georges Bizet's "Toreador March" from <i>Carmen</i> .
36	Believe me if all those endearing young charms	1916	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Thomas Moore's song. Dedication: "To Nancy of the 'endearing charms.'"
37	Walther's Prize Song from "The Master Singers"	1916	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Richard Wagner's "Walther's Prize Song" from <i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i> . Dedication: "To my pupil and friend, Dora Helsom, White Bluffs, Wash."
38	Danube Waves	1916	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Ion Ivanovici's <i>Danube Waves</i> . Dedication: "To my friend Dr. J. H. Cleaver. Los Angeles, Cal."
39	Serenade from Ballet Les Millions D'Arlequin	1916	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Riccardo Drigo's Serenada from <i>Les Millions D'Arlequin</i> .

				Dedication: "To my pupil Mrs. Dorothy Phelps, Hackensack, New Jersey."
40	O Sole Mio (My sun)	1916	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Eduardo di Capua's song.
41	Mélodie "Elegy from the Erynnies"	1916	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Jules Massenet's piece. Dedication: "Lovingly dedicated to my husband."
42	Fifth nocturne	1916	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Ignace Leybach's fifth nocturne. Dedication: "To Walter Francis Vreeland, Guitarist, Boston, Mass."
43	Träumerei (Dreaming)	1916	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Robert Schumann's <i>Träumerei</i> .
44	Serenade	1916	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Gabriel Pierne's <i>Serenade</i> . Dedication: "To Zarh."
45	Scenes That Are Brightest from "Maritana"	1916	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement by Vahdah E. L. Olcott-Bickford of W. Vincent Wallace's piece from <i>Maritana</i> . Dedication: "To my friend and colleague Mr. Philip J. Bone, F.R.S.A. Luton, England."
46	Songs of the Volta Boatmen	1917	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Russian Song arrangement.
47	Swan Song from "Lohengrin"	1917	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Richard Wagner's "Swan Song" from <i>Lohengrin</i> . Dedication: "Affectionately dedicated to 'Lonie.'"
48	Con Amore, mélodie	1917	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Paul Beaumont's <i>Con amore</i> . Dedication: "To my dearest Mother, con amore."
49	Saeterjenten's Sondag, melodie (Solitude on the Mountain)	1917	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement by Vahdah Olcott Bickford of Ole Bull's piece. Dedication: "To my cousin Leonore."

50	La Cinquantaine (The Golden Wedding), Air dans le style ancien	1917	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Gabriel Marie's piece. Dedication: "To my pupil Miss Gloria Hollister."
51	Sérénade	1917	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Charles Marie Widor's <i>Sérénade</i> . Dedication: "To my friend and pupil Mr. Samuel T. Shaw."
52	I Love You Truly	1917	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Carrie Jacobs-Bond's <i>I Love You Truly</i> for guitar solo.
53	I Love You Truly	1917	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Carrie Jacobs-Bond's <i>I Love You Truly</i> for voice and guitar.
54	A Little Bit o' Honey	1917	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Carrie Jacobs-Bond's <i>A Little Bit o' Honey</i> for guitar solo.
55	A Little Bit o' Honey	1917	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Carrie Jacobs-Bond's <i>A Little Bit o' Honey</i> for voice and guitar.
56	A Perfect Day	1917	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Carrie Jacobs-Bond's <i>A Perfect Song</i> for solo guitar.
57	A Perfect Day	1917	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Carrie Jacobs-Bond's <i>A Perfect Song</i> for voice and guitar.
58	On the Beautiful Blue Danube	1918	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Johann Strauss's piece. Dedication: "To my friend and pupil, Miss Dora Helson."
59	Red Sarafan, Russian folk song	1918	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Russian Folk Song arrangement. Dedication: "To my friend, Mrs. R. W. Kemp."
60	Drinking Song from "Cavalleria Rusticana"	1918	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Pietro Mascagni's "Drinking Song" from <i>Cavalleria Rusticana</i> . Dedication: "To my pupil Mr. Alexander Cardone."

61	Song to the Evening Star from "Tannhäuser"	1918	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Richard Wagner's "Songs from the Evening Star" from <i>Tannhäuser</i> .
62	Pas des écharpes (Scarf Dance), Air de Ballet	1918	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Cecile Chaminade's <i>Pas des écharpes</i> . Dedication: "To my friend Mr. J. Milton Sheppard."
63	Menuet à l'Antique	1918	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Ignaz J. Paderewski's <i>Menuet à l'Antique</i> , op. 14, no. 1. Dedication: "With love to my husband."
64	Moment Musical (All' Ongarese)	1918	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Franz Schubert's <i>Moment musical</i> . Dedication: "With my love to my Mother."
65	Jeannette, Capricietto	1918	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Dedication: "To my pupil and friend, Miss Jeannette Crysler."
67	Love's Old Sweet Song	1918	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Janes Lyman Molloy's song. Dedication: "With love to Leona."
67	My Heart At Thy Sweet Voice (Mon coeur s'ouvre a ta voix), Cantabile from Samson et Delila	1919	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Camille Saint-Saëns's "Mon coeur s'ouvre a ta voix" from <i>Samson et Delila</i> . Dedication: "To my husband."
68	Chopinesque, fantasie on themes from Chopin	1919	Carl Fischer, Inc.	
69	Twelve songs for guitar arranged by Vahdah Olcott-Bickford	1919	Wm. J. Smith & Co., New York	
70	Carry Me Back To Old Virginny, Fantasie for guitar	1919	Oliver Ditson Company	Arrangement based on James Bland's "Carry Me Back To Old Virginny." Dedication: "To my pupil Renee Baruch."

71	Knight and Lady Fair, Danse Ancienne	1919	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Dedication: "To Mr. W. J. Kitchener."
72	Playera (Spanish Dance)	1919	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Enrique Granados's <i>Playera</i> , op. 5, no 5. Dedication: "To my friend Mr. W. P. Chambers, Los Angeles, California."
72	Lullaby, Cradle Song	1919	Joe Nicomede	Dedication: "To Lillian."
73	Manikin Dance (Danse du Mannequin)	1919	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Dedication: "To Ethel Madalene Bethel."
74	Chaconne	1919	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Auguste Duránd's <i>Chaconne</i> , op. 62. Dedication: "To my pupil, Mrs. Robert Crompton."
75	Spanish Dance (Danse Espagnole)	1919	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Moritz Moszkowski's <i>Danse Espagnole</i> , op. 12, no. 1. Dedication: "To Mr. J.J. Derwin."
76	Russian Romance	1919	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Friedrich Damm's <i>Russian Romance</i> , op. 56, no. 3. Dedication: "To Nina Varesa Russell."
78	Solvejg's Song (Sunshine Song) from Peer Gynt Suite II	1919	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Edvard Grieg's "Solvejg's Song" from <i>Peer Gynt Suite no. 2</i> . Dedication: "To Professor George A. Wilson of Syracuse University."
79	Prelude in F Major	1922	Zarvah Publishing Company	Arrangement of Alexander Scriabin's <i>Prelude in F Major</i> .
81	Maiden's Wish, A Polish Song	1920	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Frederic Chopin's <i>The Maiden's Wish</i> , op. 74, no. 1. Dedication: "To Mr. G. Muder."
82	A Song of India (Chanson Indoue)	1920	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakoff's

	from the opera "Sadko"			"Chanson Indoue" from <i>Sadko</i> . Dedication: "To Mr. J. G. Schroeder."
83	November, An Autumn Impression	1921	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Dedication: "To Nancy."
84	Prelude	1921	Carl Fischer, Inc.	Arrangement of Frédéric Chopin's <i>Prelude</i> , op. 23, no. 4.
85	The Olcott-Bickford Guitar Method	1921	Oliver Ditson Company (Theodore Presser Co. Distributions, Philadelphia)	
86	Mazurka (in C Major)	1922	Zarvah Publishing Company	Arrangement of Frédéric Chopin's <i>Mazurka in C Major</i> , op. 67, no. 3.
92	Lullaby	1922	Zarvah Publishing Company	Arrangement of Theodore Ward's <i>Lullaby</i> .
94	Tyrolean Melody (for 2 guitars)	1932	Zarvah Publishing Company	Arrangement of Piotr I. Tchaikovsky's melody.
95	Silent Night (Christmas Carol)	1922	Zarvah Publishing Company	Arrangement of Franz Gruber's <i>Silent Night</i> .
103	Sweet Genevieve	1922	Zarvah Publishing Company	Arrangement of Henry Tucker's <i>Sweet Genevieve</i> .
104	Old Black Joe	1922	Zarvah Publishing Company	Arrangement of Stephen Foster's <i>Old Black Joe</i> .
105	Aloha Oe Farewell To Thee	1922	Zarvah Publishing Company	Arrangement of Lydia Kama' eha Paki Liliuokalani's song.
106	Santa Lucia, Neapolitan Barcarolle	1922	Zarvah Publishing Company	Arrangement of Gaetano Braga's <i>Santa Lucia</i> .
110	Her Bright Smile Haunts Me Still (for 2 guitars)	1922	Zarvah Publishing Company	Arrangement of W. T. Wrighton's song for guitar duet.
116	Advanced Course for the Guitar	1924	Oliver Ditson Company	This method was reprinted in 1967 by Peer International Corporation.
117	Ben Bolt	1923	Zarvah Publishing Company	Arrangement of Nelson Kneass's song, "Ben Bolt: Oh! Don't You Remember!."

117	Schubert Album for Guitar	1925	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions and biographical sketch by Olcott Bickford.
118	Larghetto from the "Coronation Concerto"	1923	Zarvah Publishing Company	Arrangement of Wolfgang A. Mozart's Larghetto from Piano Concerto no. 26 in D Major, op. 46, K. 537.
121	Modern Album for Guitar	1927	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions by Olcott Bickford.
122	Beethoven Album for Guitar	1927	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions by Olcott Bickford.
123, no. 1	Spanish and Mexican Album for Guitar Solo, vol. 1	1928	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions by Olcott Bickford.
123, no. 2	Spanish and Mexican Album for Guitar Solo, vol. 2	1934	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions by Olcott Bickford.
124, no. 1	Classic Album for Guitar, vol. 1	1929	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions by Olcott Bickford.
124, no. 2	Classic Album for Guitar, vol. 2	1937	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions by Olcott Bickford.
-	Speak to me of Love	1930	Southern Music Publishing Company, Inc.	Arrangement of Jean Lenoir's <i>Parlez-moi d'amour</i> .
-	Master Album for Guitar, Rare Original works of the Masters with Biographical Sketches	1931	American Guitar Society	Edited and Fingered by Olcott Bickford. She did not assign an opus number to this work. This publication contained works by Aguado, Blum, Bobrowicz, Coste, Giuliani, Matiegka, and Sor.
-	Granada	1932	Southern Music Publishing Company, Inc.	Arrangement of Agustin Lara's <i>Granada</i> . It was republished in 1959 by Peer International Cooperation.
125	Russian Album for Guitar	1932	American Guitar Society	Edited by Olcott Bickford.
126	Songs for Guitar: Accompaniments by Vahdah Olcott Bickford	1932	Zarvah Publishing Company	Accompaniments by Olcott Bickford.

127	Blue Book of Favorites for Guitar	1933	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions by Olcott Bickford.
129	Operatic Album for Guitar	1935	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions by Olcott Bickford.
130	Bach Album for Guitar	1935	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions by Olcott Bickford.
132	Mozart Album for Guitar	1938	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions by Olcott Bickford.
133	Album Originale for Guitar	1939	American Guitar Society	Collected and Edited by Olcott Bickford.
134	American Album for Guitar	1940	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions by Olcott Bickford.
136	Album of Negro Spirituals	1949	American Guitar Society	Transcriptions by Olcott Bickford.
138	Chopin Album for Guitar	1949	American Guitar Society	Transcribed and edited by Olcott Bickford.
139	Handel Album for Guitar	1959	American Guitar Society	Transcribed, compiled, and edited by Olcott Bickford.
<p><i>Source:</i> Data from Vahdah Olcott Bickford, <i>Guitar Music Collection of Vahdah Olcott-Bickford</i>, comp. Ronald Purcell, ed. Darien S. Mann (Northridge: Music Library of California State University, Northridge, 1991): 21–37; and series I, box 1–162, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.</p>				

Appendix B: List of Vahdah Olcott Bickford's Performances

Date	Venue	Program	Details
4/25/1902	Akey's Hall	Schaffer: Intermezzo-Cavalleria Rusticana	Record of first solo performance in G. C. Lindsey Mandolin and Guitar Club concert.
5/23/1902	Mignonette Circle, Number 236	Henlein: <i>Overture</i> (Lindsey Guitar Club) Flint: <i>German Shepherd's Song</i> (Miss H. Surbeck, Miss Ethel Olcott, and G. C. Lindsay) Lindsey: <i>San Juan Waltz</i> (Lindsey Guitar Club) Whelen Mitchell arr.: <i>Au Revoir</i> (Mrs. E. N. Mitchell, Mrs. J. E. Mitchell, Mr. J. E. Mitchell, Miss Mabel Whelen, Mrs. E. W England) Bostwick: <i>Beautiful Day</i> (Lindsey Guitar Club) Schaeffer arr.: Mascagni's <i>Cavalleria Rusticana</i> (Miss Ethel Olcott) Lindsey: <i>Rain Drops</i> (Mrs. J. E. Mitchell and G. C. Lindsey) Schaeffer: <i>Meditations</i> (Miss Mabel Whelen) De Lano: <i>Moonlight Reverie</i> (Lindsey Guitar Club)	Concert by G. C. Lindsey Guitar Club of Los Angeles.
1/23/1903	Blanchard Hall	M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Donizetti's <i>Lucretia Borgia</i> M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Donizetti's <i>La fille du régiment</i> G. C. Lindsey arr: Schumann's <i>Traumerie</i>	Concert by G. C. Lindsey Guitar Club of Los Angeles.
7/22/1903	Long Beach Chautauqua	M. Y. Ferrer: <i>Mocking Bird with variations</i> (based on theme from Balfe's <i>The Bohemian Girl</i>)	Olcott plays in the afternoon program.
12/9/1903	Chickering Hall, 334 S Broadway, Los Angeles	M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Donizetti's <i>Lucretia Borgia</i> DeJanon arr.: Crouch's <i>Kathleen</i>	Olcott Bickford's first solo concert.

		<p>J. K. Mertz: <i>Die lustigen Weiber van Windsor</i>, Op. 85</p> <p>M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Chopin's Mazurka, Op. 68, no. 3</p> <p>M. Y. Ferrer arr.: De Koven's "Banjo Serenade" from <i>The Little Duchess</i></p> <p>M. Y. Ferrer: <i>Mocking Bird with variations</i> (based on theme from Balfe's <i>The Bohemian Girl</i>)</p> <p>E. L. Olcott arr.: Paisiello's "Nel cor più non mi sento" from <i>L'amor contrastato</i></p> <p>M. Y. Ferrer: <i>In the Sweet Bye and Bye</i></p>	
3/26/1904	Blanchard Hall, Los Angeles, CA	<p>M. Y. Ferrer arr.: De Koven's "Banjo Serenade" from <i>The Little Duchess</i></p> <p>DeJanon arr.: Crouch's <i>Kathleen</i></p>	Grand concert presented by the New York State Society.
5/20/1904	Blanchard Hall, Los Angeles, CA	<p>J. K. Mertz arr.: Selections from von Flotow's <i>Martha</i></p> <p>M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Schubert's <i>Le Desir</i> (published as Beethoven's)</p> <p>J. K. Mertz: <i>Die lustigen Weiber van Windsor</i>, Op. 85</p> <p>G. C. Lindsey arr: Schumann's <i>Traumerie</i></p> <p>Ethel Lucretia Olcott arr.: Paisiello's "Nel cor più non mi sento" from <i>L'amor contrastato</i></p> <p>J. K. Mertz: <i>Ernani, Opere-Reveu</i>, Op. 8, No. 14</p> <p>E. L. Olcott: <i>Cupid's Wireless Telegram</i></p> <p>Luis T. Romero: <i>Souvenir D'Amerique</i></p> <p>Carrie V. Hayden: <i>Reverie</i></p>	Solo concert.

6/7/1904	Mason Opera House	G. C. Lindsey arr: Schumann's <i>Traumerie</i> M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Donizetti's <i>Lucretia Borgia</i> M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Donizetti's <i>La fille du régiment</i> (Miss Harriet Surbeck and Ethel Olcott)	Chamber music and ballad benefit concert.
7/11/1904	Long Beach Chautauqua	J. K. Mertz: <i>Ernani, Opern-Reveu, Op. 8, No. 14</i>	
10/21/1904	Unity Hall, San Diego, CA	M. Y. Ferrer arr.: De Koven's "Banjo Serenade" from <i>The Little Duchess</i> M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Aviles's <i>La Media Noche</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Luders's "Message of the Violet" from <i>The Prince of Pilsen</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Paisiello's "Nel cor più non mi sento" from <i>L'amor conrastato</i> Luis T. Romero: <i>Souvenir D'Amérique</i> J. K. Mertz: <i>Ernani, Opern-Reveu, Op. 8, No. 14</i>	Concert featured Ethel Lucretia Olcott, mandolinist Mrs. Fanny Fern Burford, and banjoist Mr. Leonard D. Burford
5/5/1905	Dobinson Auditorium, Los Angeles, CA	J. K. Mertz: <i>Gondoliera</i> M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Donizetti's <i>Lucretia Borgia</i> Fernando Sor: <i>Introduction et Variations sur un Theme de Mozart, Op. 9</i> J. K. Mertz arr.: Schubert's <i>Lob der Tränen</i> J. K. Mertz: <i>Ernani, Opern-Reveu, Op. 8, No. 14</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Adams's <i>The Holy City</i>	Solo concert.
7/10/1905	Long Beach Chautauqua	De Janon arr.: Crouch's <i>Kathleen</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Donizetti's Sextette and Chorus from <i>Lucretia Borgia</i>	She played both in the afternoon and evening program.
8/28/1905	Blanchard Hall	M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Donizetti's <i>La fille du régiment</i> (Ethel L. Olcott, guitar, and H. E. Earle, piano) Schubert: <i>Serenade</i> (Ethel L. Olcott, guitar, and Mrs. E. M. Smitheram, violin)	Testimonial Concert given to Miss Dorothy Wasworth.

10/10/1905	First Congregational Church	J. K. Mertz arr.: Selections from von Flotow's <i>Martha</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Simonetti's <i>Madrigale</i>	Concert presented by Woman's Parliament of Southern California.
11/10/1905	Seaside Theatre, Ocean Park, CA	E. L. Olcott arr.: Paisiello's "Nel cor più non mi sento" from <i>L'amor contrastato</i> J. K. Mertz arr.: Schubert's <i>Lob der Tränen</i>	Ocean Park School of Music's Faculty Recital.
4/24/1906	Simpson Auditorium	Carrie V. Hayden: <i>Reverie</i>	Concert presented by The Welsh-American Society.
4/26/1906	Hotchkiss Theatre	DeJanon arr.: Crouch's <i>Kathleen</i>	Benefit concert for the San Francisco sufferers.
6/8/1906	Business College Hall	Selections from Balfe's <i>The Bohemian Girl</i> (Angelus Guitar Quartet) Arrangement of Armstrong's <i>Tuxedo Club March</i> (Angelus Guitar Quartet)	Program by pupils of Mrs. Elizabeth Dewitt Trowbridge and Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott at the Ocean Park School of Music.
7/28/1906	Redondo Hotel	Program does not survive. Olcott played her composition <i>Cupid's Wireless Telegram</i> and the Angelus Guitar Quartet also performed.	Musical announced in <i>Los Angeles Express</i> .
11/8/1906	Symphony Hall	M. Y. Ferrer arr.: De Koven's "Banjo Serenade" from <i>The Little Duchess</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Donizetti's Sextette and Chorus from <i>Lucretia Borgia</i>	Badger Club musicale.
11/22/1906	Home of Mrs. Valentine Peyton, No. 857 Westlake Ave.	Program does not survive.	Benefit concert for McKinley Home. Event was announced in <i>Los Angeles Daily Times</i> .
12/7/1906	Gamut Club auditorium	E. L. Olcott arr.: Simonetti's <i>Madrigale</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Donizetti's Sextette and Chorus from <i>Lucretia Borgia</i> E. L. Olcott: <i>Cupid's Wireless Telegram</i>	Solo concert assisted by Regina Bischoff, Leona Blum, and Elizabeth DeWitt Trowbridge, reader.

		Guitar solo arr.: "O' Amor Sul Ali Rosee" from <i>Il Trovatore</i>	
1/24/1907	Unlisted	Program does not survive.	Benefit for the firemen's relief fund. Event was announced in <i>Los Angeles Herald</i> on January 24, 1907. The Angelus Guitar Quartet played at this event.
5/5/1907	Mrs. O. H. Burbridge's house on West Adam St.	Program does not survive.	Concert presented by the California Business Woman's Association.
6/1/1907	The grounds of the Friday Morning Club at Adams and Hoove Treets	Program does not survive.	Benefit concert toward the building fund of the animal rescue home organized by the Friday Morning Club. Event was announced in <i>Los Angeles Herald</i> on May 26, 1907.
9/16/1907	Turner Hall	La Bandurria Trio performed "Espanita." Composer and arranger unknown.	Concert presented by the Club Porfirio Diaz.
10/24/1907	Temple Auditorium	E. L. Olcott arr.: Donizetti's Sextette and Chorus from <i>Lucretia Borgia</i> Solo guitar arr.: Verdi's "Caro Nome" from <i>Rigoletto</i>	Concert presented by Los Angeles Association of Mandolin, Guitar and Banjo Teachers. In addition to the pieces listed, she also conducted the guitar orchestra.
1/21/1908	Unlisted	Program does not survive. Newspaper clipping reports La Bandurria Trio performed: "'Espanita,' a Spanish love song; 'Arab Song,' Godard-Ronaro; 'La Paloma' and 'La Golondina,' arranged by Miss Olcott." It also reported Olcott performed three solos: "Beauty's Dream," "El Ole," and "A la Orilla del Ebra."	Private concert organized by Mrs. Dobinson.

3/13/1908	Blanchard Hall, Los Angeles, Cal.	J. K. Mertz: <i>Ernani, Opern-Reveu</i> , Op. 8, No. 14 Luis T. Romero arr.: Foster's <i>Southern Air with Variations</i>	Concert featured Mr. A. A. Farland, banjoist, Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott, guitariste, and the C. S. de Lano Mandolin and Guitar Glub.
3/26/1908	Los Angeles Lodge	Adam Darr: <i>Allegro</i> Buckley arr.: Pensee's <i>Nocturnes and Valse Sentimentale</i> (Mr. Frank Williams and Miss Olcott) "Annie Laurie" (La Bandurria Trio) E. L. Olcott arr.: Verdi's "A nostril monti" from <i>Il Trovatore</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Donizetti's Sextette and Chorus from <i>Lucretia Borgia</i> Lopes arr.: Yradier's <i>La Paloma</i> (guitar club) Lopes arr.: Bellini's "Sad Hour of Parting" (guitar club) Jacobs arr.: Braga's <i>Santa Lucia, Barcarole</i> (La Bandurria trio) Ferrer arr.: Suppe's <i>Boccaccio March</i> (La Bandurria Trio)	Concert by Olcott, La Bandurria Trio, and a guitar club directed by Olcott.
4/3/1908	Symphony Hall, 232 South Hill St, Los Angeles, CA	De Janon arr.: Selections from Bellini's <i>La Sonambula</i> M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Foster's <i>Southern Air with Variations</i>	Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott presents her pupil Miss Hazel Henderson in a guitar recital, assisted by La Bandurria Trio.
7/8/1908	Grand Auditorium at Venice Chatauqua, California	W. Foden: <i>La Ballerina, Concert Waltz</i> (La Bandurria Trio) M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Peplow's <i>Concert Polka</i> (La Bandurria Trio) W. Foden: <i>Variations on Alice Where Art Thou?</i>	

		Lopes arr.: Yradier's <i>La Paloma</i> (La Bandurria Trio)	
11/5/1908	Birdsall School of Music, 837 South Albarado Street	E. L. Olcott: <i>Cupid's Wireless Telegram</i> (La Bandurria Trio) M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Donizetti's <i>La fille du regiment</i> (La Bandurria Trio)	
12/7/1908	First Methodist Episcopal Church in Pomona, CA	M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Verdi's "Addio de Passato" from <i>La Traviata</i> W. Foden: <i>Variations on Alice Where Art Thou?</i>	Concert by the Orchestra of twenty-two pieces under the leadership of Miss Jessie Ray Thompson.
3/11/1909	San Diego Club House	M. Y. Ferrer arr.: "Air" from Balfe's <i>The Bohemian Girl</i> M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Castanbide's <i>A la Orilla del Ebra</i> M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Aviles's <i>La Media Noche</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Verdi's "A nostril monti" from <i>Il Trovatore</i> E. L. Olcott: <i>Addio, Impromptu</i> M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Verdi's "Di Provenza Il Mar" and "Adieu Fond Dreams" from <i>La Traviata</i> De Janon arr.: Selections from Bellini's <i>La Sonambula</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Grieg's "Ases Tod" from <i>Peter Gynt</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Durand's <i>Air a Danser</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: De Prosse's <i>A Mother's Lullaby</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Donizetti's Sextette and Chorus from <i>Lucretia Borgia</i>	Guitar recital.
3/21/1909	Gamut Club auditorium	E. L. Olcott arr.: Grieg's <i>Ases Tod</i> M. Y. Ferrer: Áviles's <i>At Midnight</i> (Mexican Dance)	Gamut Club presenting Edwin House, basso cantante, assisted by Ethel Lucretia Olcott,

		De Janon arr.: Braga's <i>Angels Serenade</i> . E. L. Olcott Bickford arr.: Verdi's "Air" from <i>La Traviata</i>	guitarist, and May Burnham Ogutt at the piano.
10/22/1909	Page Seminary	E.L. Olcott: <i>Beauty's Dream</i> , Bolero	Page Seminary Faculty Recital
4/15/1910	Blanchard Hall, Los Angeles	Program does not survive.	Ethel Lucretia Olcott guitarist in recital assisted by La Bandurria Guitar Trio. Miss Charlotte Powers, reader and Miss Myrtle McCabe, pianist. Concert reported in the <i>Los Angeles Times</i> .
10/15/1910	Federal Building	Program does not survive.	Opening Celebration for the Federal Building in Los Angeles. Under the auspices of the Citizens' Committee.
11/10/1911	Starr Recital Hall, 1815 S Flower St	M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Boccherini's "Celebrated Minuet" J. K. Mertz: "Cavatina" from <i>Ernani, Opern-Reveu</i> , Op. 8, No. 14 E. L. Olcott arr.: Donizetti's Sextette and Chorus from <i>Lucretia Borgia</i>	Complimentary Recital given by the members of the faculty of the California College of Music and Arts.
11/32/1911	3115 South Main St	J. K. Mertz: "Cavatina" from <i>Ernani, Opern-Reveu</i> , Op. 8, No. 14	Musical Entertainment at the Studio and Art Rooms of W. Grant Hess.
5/31/1912	Ebell Club, 1719 South Figueroa St	Program does not survive.	"Local Composers Evening" concert. Presented by the Matinee Musical Club and the Southern California and Music Teachers Association.

12/1/1912	Beverly Hills Hotel	Legnani: Caprice 2 & 9 from op. 20 Zurfluh: <i>Le Chant D'Oiseau</i> E. L. Olcott arr.: Donizetti's Sextette from <i>Lucretia Borgia</i>	The Hotel at Beverly Hills Musicale. Ethel Lucretia Olcott, guitar soloist assisted by Beverly Trio (Lacy Coe, violin, E. E. McCargar, cello, T. Fred Freeman, piano).
3/11/1913	Auditorium of Lincoln Park School, El Centro Street and Pasadena Ave., South Pasadena	F. Schubert: "Letzter Gruss" for cello and guitar Lachner: Serenata for cello and guitar E. L. Olcott arr.: Bellini's "Tutto e' gioja, tutto e' festa" from <i>La sonambula</i> .	Concert by members of faculty of California College of Music and Arts. The cello player was Mr. Raunser.
?/??/?		Klengel: <i>Berceuse</i> for cello and guitar. Lachner: Serenata for cello and guitar Legnani: Caprice 2 & 9 from op. 20. F. Tárrega: <i>Capricho árabe</i> E. Borgum arr.: Denza's <i>Funiculi Funicula</i> for banjo, guitar and cello.	An evening of Music, vocal and instrumental. The program for this concert does not have a date, but it must have taken place around 1913 because Mr. Raunser was Olcott Bickford's colleague from her days teaching at California College of Music and Arts. The banjo player was Edward Borgum.
5/27/1913	Central YMCA Auditorium in Cleveland, OH, located between Prospect Ave and 22nd St	Legnani: Caprice 2 & 9 from op. 20 F. Tárrega: <i>Capricho árabe</i> Z. de Ferranti: <i>Divertissement sur Romance Anglais</i> , Op. 8 (Last Rose of Summer) La Scala: "Andante" from Concerto in A minor for mandolin and guitar. Alexander: <i>Serenata</i>	The Cleveland Mandolin Orchestra and YMCA Mandolin Club in concert. Myron A. Bickford, director, assisted by guitarist Ethel Lucretia Olcott of Los Angeles and mandolinist William Place, Jr., of Providence, RI.

5/28/1913	Grace Reformed church in Akron, Ohio	Legnani: Caprice 2 & 9 from op. 20. F. Tárrega: <i>Capricho árabe</i> M. Y. Ferrer: <i>El Jasmin</i> , concert waltz	Fundraising concert organized by the Ladies Aid Society of Grace Reform Church.
12/13/1913	High School Hall, Marshallville, OH	M. Y. Ferrer: <i>El Jasmin</i> , concert waltz Sacchi arr.: Yradier's <i>La Paloma</i> Hall: <i>Blue Ribbon March</i> for banjo and guitar Arrangement of Beethoven's "Sonatine" for mandolin and piano M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Donizetti's <i>La fille du regiment</i>	The Bickford-Olcott Duettists Concert
04/04/1914	Town Hall, Doylestown, OH	Zurfluh: <i>Le Chant D'Oiseau</i> Santisteban arr.: Bizet's "Habanera" from <i>Carmen</i> M. Giuliani: Rondo Grimshaw: <i>Dream Song</i> for banjo and guitar Ponchielli: <i>La Gioconda</i> , Dance of the Hour for guitar and harp-guitar	The Bickford-Olcott Duettists Doylestown Concert.
04/19/1914 - 04/22/1914	Hotel Statler, Cleveland	Z. de Ferranti: "Loin de Toi," caprice, op. 6 J. K. Mertz: "Cavatina" from <i>Ernani, Opern-Reveu</i> , Op. 8, No. 14 F. Tarrega arr.: Chopin's Prelude no. 7 Nevin: <i>The Rosary</i> for plucked and plectral quintet Gillet: <i>In the Mill</i> for plucked and plectral quintet Powers arr.: Wagner's "Song to the Evening Star" from <i>Tannhäuser</i> E. A. Jarnefelt: <i>Praeludium</i>	American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists 13th Annual Festival and Convention. Tuesday evening program. The quintet players were Mr. Myron A. Bickford, Miss Ethel Lucreita Olcott, Mr. Sidney N. Ladatree, Mr. and Mrs. Claud C. Rowden.
4/29/1914	Republic theatre	Arrangement of Ascher's "Alice Where Art Thou" for mandocello and guitar. Arrangement of Verdi's "La donna e mobile" from <i>Rigoletto</i> for mandocello and guitar. Z. de Ferranti: "Loin de Toi," caprice, op. 6	Cleveland Mandolin Orchestra concert. Concert, Myron A. Bickford, conductor, assisted by Ethel Lucretia Olcott, guitarist and impersonator. The program

		F. Tarrega arr.: Chopin's Prelude no. 7 Impersonation: Views of Life in a Hotel (by a Naughty Little Girl) Arrangement of Verdi's <i>Celeste Aida</i> for guitar and harp-guitar. Ponchielli: <i>La Gioconda</i> , Dance of the Hour for guitar and harp-guitar	ended with the orchestra playing the Myron Bickford's <i>American Guild March</i> .
12/2/1914	YMCA Auditorium, Scranton, PA	F. Tarrega: <i>Variations on the Carnival of Venice</i> Solo guitar arr.: Verdi's "Caro Nome" from <i>Rigoletto</i> "Flower Rain," song with guitar Lachner: Serenata for cello and guitar Arrangement of Ascher's "Alice Where Art Thou" for mandocello and guitar.	Concert by Mr. Myron A. Bickford and Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott (solos and duet artists of New York City) assisted by Miss Marguerite Kelley, vocalist and Gibson Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra.
5/3/1915	Wanamaker Auditorium	N. Paganini: Quartet, Op. 4 for violin, viola, cello, and guitar	Concert program does not survive. This concert was reported in <i>Musical America</i> (May 22, 1915). The program featured compositions written for the mandolin and guitar.
5/23/1915	Narragansett Hotel, Providence, Rhode Island	Unlisted	American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists 14th Annual Festival and Convention. This convention concert was under the management of Giuseppe Pettine and William Place Jr.
2/17/1917	853 Marcy Ave, Bedford, Brooklyn	Arrangement of Popper's <i>Gavotte</i> , no. 2 for banjo and guitar. Arrangement of Beethoven's "Sonatine" for mandolin and piano.	Hassell Conservatory of Music presented "An Hour of Music with the Stringed Instruments."

		Sacchi arr.: Yradier's <i>La Paloma</i>	
2/17/1917	853 Marcy Avenue. Bedford, Brooklyn	Arrangement of L. Liliuokalani's <i>Aloha Oe</i> for steel guitar and ukulele. Arrangement of E. MacDowell's <i>To a Wild Rose</i> for mandocello and guitar. Arrangement of Nevin's <i>A night in Venice</i> for mandocello and guitar. V. Olcott Bickford arr.: Bizet's "Toreador March" from <i>Carmen</i> Legnani: Caprice 2 & 9 from op. 20. Z. M. Bickford: <i>Concerto Romantico</i>	Hassell Conservatory of Music (Irwin E. Hassell, director)
4/29/1917	Copley-Plaza, Boston, MA	C. Munier: Quartet in D in 4 Tempi, op. 128 (Allegro Deciso, Canzonetta, Andante, Rondo)	American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists 16th Annual Convention. The Lutina Quartet, which was formed by Julia Greiner, W. J. Kitchener, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford, and Zarh Myron Bickford, played at the opening reception and artists' recital.
4/30/1917	Jordan Hall, Boston, MA	Z. M. Bickford and V. Olcott Bickford: <i>The Story of the Strings</i> , suite for mandocello and guitar (In Happy Days, Lament of the Strings, Song of Triumph)	American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists 16th Annual Festival Concert. Zarh Myron Bickford and Vahdah Olcott Bickford played at the festival concert.
4/13/1918	Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, Fifth Avenue at 34th St., NYC/	Program does not survive.	The Lutina Trio concert. This ensemble was formed by W. J. Kitchener, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford, and Zarh Myron Bickford.

6/5/1919	City Hall, City of St. Albans, Vermont	V. Olcott Bickford arr.: <i>Carry me Back to old Viginny</i> Arrangement of Nevin's <i>A night in Venice</i> for mandocello and guitar. Arrangement of E. MacDowell's <i>To a Wild Rose</i> for mandocello and guitar.	Bickford's concert.
6/6/1919	Unlisted	Program does not survive.	Annual Concert of the Winthrop Mandolin Club assisted by Zarh Myron Bickford and Vahdah Olcott Bickford. Concert was reported in <i>The Courier</i> (Potsdam, NY)
11/24/1923	Recital Hall, Southern California Music Company Building, 808 South Broadway, LA)	Z. M. Bickford and V. Olcott Bickford: <i>The Story of the Strings</i> , suite for mandocello and guitar (In Happy Days, Lament of the Strings, Song of Triumph) M. Y. Ferrer arr.: Hernandez's <i>El Vito</i> E. Shand: <i>Esperance</i> M. Y. Ferrer arr.: <i>El Olé</i> , jota Z. M. Bickford: <i>Concerto Romantico</i> Arrangement of Nevin's <i>A night in Venice</i> for mandocello and guitar. Arrangement of E. MacDowell's <i>To a Wild Rose</i> for mandocello and guitar. Arrangement of C. W. Cadman's <i>From the Land of the Sky-Blue Water</i> for mandocello and Terz guitar. F. Tarrega: <i>Estudio en forma de Minuetto</i> E. Bayer: <i>Errinnerung</i> , concert fantasie M. Giuliani: Elaboration on "Partant pour la Syrie" for guitar and piano	Recital of Vahdah Olcott-Bickford and Zarh Myron Bickford.

		Z. M. Bickford: <i>Elves at Play</i> for guitar and piano	
1/14/1924	Biltmore Hotel music room	L. Boccherini: Quintet no. 4 in D N. Paganini: Quartet, Op. 4 for violin, viola, cello, and guitar	Zoellner Quartet recital, third concert of series. Quartet was formed by Antoinette Zoellner, violin; Amandus Zoellner, violin; Joseph Zoellner, Sr., viola; and Joseph Zoellner, Jr., violoncello.
6/6/1924	Ebell Club Auditorium	Program does not survive.	Recital advertised as: "An evening with the instruments of romance."
12/14/1925	Biltmore Hotel music room	F. de Fossa: Quintet for String Quartet and Guitar, Op. 19, No. 1 (Allegro moderato; Larghetto; Minuetto allegro; Rondo allegretto)	Zoellner Quartet concert. Quartet was formed by Antoinette Zoellner, violin; Amandus Zoellner, violin; Joseph Zoellner, Sr., viola; and Joseph Zoellner, Jr., violoncello.
3/1/1926	Mabel Shaw Bridges Hall of Music	F. de Fossa: Quintet for String Quartet and Guitar, Op. 19, No. 1 (Allegro moderato; Larghetto; Minuetto allegro; Rondo allegretto)	Concert presented by The Claremont Chamber Music Society. The Zoellner Quartet with assisting artist Vahdah Olcott-Bickford, Guitar in recital,
6/11/1926	Methodist Episcopal Church, Burbank, CA	Z. M. Bickford and V. Olcott Bickford: "In Happy Days" from <i>The Story of the Strings</i> Arrangement of Nevin's <i>A night in Venice</i> for mandocello and guitar.	Lovejoy Conservatory of Music concert. Third annual graduation exercises. The Bickford Mandolin Orchestra played in this concert. Quintet

		Z. M. Bickford arr.: Nolck's <i>The Butterfly</i> for mandocello and guitar Z. M. Bickford arr.: <i>Badinage</i> for mandocello and guitar Arrangement of Tchaikovsky's "Andante Cantabile" for plectral and plucked instruments. Odell arr.: Sullivan's <i>The Lost Chord</i>	was formed by Zarh Myron Bickford, Vahdah Olcott Bickford, Morris G. van Auken, Leslie N. Booher, and Martha F. Booher.
9/28/1926	Edison Auditorium	Z. M. Bickford: <i>Concerto Romantico</i> Arrangement of Ole Bull's <i>Solitude on the Mountain</i> for string quartet and guitar. Arrangement of E. MacDowell's <i>To a Wild Rose</i> for string quartet and guitar.	Burbank Symphony Orchestra concert.
12/4/1926	Ebell Club Auditorium	Program does not survive.	An evening with the Instrument of Romance presenting Zarh Myron Bickford and Vahdah Olcott-Bickford. Concert also featured The Bickford Mandolin Orchestra, The American Guitar Ensemble, and the Bickford String Quartet.
3/26/1927	Ebell Club Auditorium, 1719 S Figueroa St, Los Angeles	L. van Beethoven: Serenade, op. 8.	Centenary anniversary concert in honor of Ludwig van Beethoven. Piece listed was played by Frederic Clint, violin; Zarh Myron Bickford, viola; and Vahdah Olcott-Bickford, guitar.
6/4/1927	Edison School Auditorium, Burbank, CA	J. I. Schnabel: Quintette (Larghetto-Allegro, Larghetto, Menuett, Rondo)	Zoellner Conservatory of Music, Burbank Branch. Fourth annual graduation exercises.

7/9/1927	Unlisted	L. Boccherini: Quintet no. 4 in D	Burbank Symphony Orchestra concert. Program assisted by Frederic Clint, violinist (and Concertmaster); Marjorie Potts, contralto; Mildred Clint and Grace Lovejoy, pianists; Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitar; and The Bickfords String Quartet.
9/30/1927	Zoellner Conservatory Auditorium	J. I. Schnabel: Quintette (Larghetto-Allegro, Larghetto, Menuett, Rondo)	Zoellner Conservatory of Music faculty recital.
11/19/1927	West Hall, Beaux Arts Building, 1709 West Eight St, corner of Beacon	All of the following pieces were written by Leonard de Call. Trio, op. 26 (Andante, Menuett, Adagio, Rondo) Sonata, op. 74, for guitar and piano Serenade, op. 75 (Andante, Menuetto, Adagio, Rondo) trio for violin, viola and guitar Sonata, op. 44, No. 1 (Allegro, Adagio, Rondo), guitar duet Variations, op. 62, guitar duet Serenade, op. 3 (Adagio, Allegro, Andante, Menuetto, Allegro, Rondo) for string quartet and guitar	Chamber Music recital with guitar presenting the works of Leonard de Call. The American Guitar Society Ensemble played in this concert. It was formed by eleven guitars and a mando-bass player: Zarh Myron Bickford, Vahdah Olcott Bickford (Director), Leslie N. Booher, Victor K. Bouch, Virginia De Santos, J. A. Larralde, Lee B. Milbank, Gustave Podneck, Amelia A. Poehler, Nancy Yerkes, Martha F. Booher (mando-bass).
12/3/1927	Woman's Club Auditorium, 705 North Olive Ave	L. Boccherini: Quintet no. 4 in D	The Bickford String Quartet in concert. Quartet was formed by Frederic Clint, violin; Zarh Myron Bickford, viola; Marjorie

			Potts, cello; and Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitar.
4/13/1928	Bovard Auditorium, Los Angeles	Program does not survive.	Coe Martin in her second concert season 1927-28 augmented by Raymond McFeeters, pianist, Vahdah Olcott Bickford, lutenist.
3/16/1929	Home of Mrs. W. J. Williams, 400 East California St	Zurfluh: <i>Le Chant D'Oiseau</i> L. T. Romero: <i>Peruvian Air</i> Arrangement of Chopin's <i>Mazurka</i> Z. M. Bickford: <i>Elves at Play</i> "Caprice," unknown author V. Olcott Bickford: <i>Manikin Dance</i> Z. M. Bickford arr.: <i>El Olé</i> , jota	The Authorcraft Club of Pasadena musicale.
3/24/1929	7519 South Hoover Street	V. Olcott Bickford arr.: N. Coste's <i>Barcarole</i> for guitar ensemble V. Olcott Bickford: <i>Manikin Dance</i> for guitar ensemble Madame Sidney Pratten: <i>Zapateado</i>	The Lettish Friendship Club of Los Angeles presents its annual concert. The American Guitar Society's guitar ensemble played in this concert.
5/31/1929	Unlisted	F. de Call: Notturmo, Op. 93 (First movement) Arrangement of Rimsky-Korsakoff's <i>Chant Indoue</i> Arrangement of Molino's <i>Romanza</i> from Trio, op. 45 Arrangement of C. W. Cadman's <i>From the Land of the Sky-Blue Water</i> for mandocello and Terz guitar.	Musical Program presented under the supervision and direction of Mrs. Glen Ellison of Hollywood. The performers in this program included Zarh Myron Bickford, viola, and Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitar.
9/29/1929	Edson Auditorium	Program does not survive.	Burbank Symphony Orchestra concert. It was announced by <i>The Burbank Daily Review</i> .

9/30/1929	Auditorium, Zoellner Conservatory, 3839 Wilshire Boulevard	J. I. Schnabel: Quintette (Larghetto-Allegro, Larghetto, Menuett, Rondo)	Zoellner Conservatory of Music faculty recital.
5/1/1930	Zoellner Conservatory Auditorium	J. E. Bach: Sarabande for Two Violins, Two Lutes and Klavier J. S. Bach: Bouree from Lute Suite in E minor, BWV 996 J. S. Bach: Gavotte et Rondeau from the Lute Suite in G Minor, BWV 995	Zoellner Conservatory of Music Bach program.
5/6/1930	Unlisted	Program does not survive.	Rotary Club noon luncheon, Sunset Canyon Country Club (Earl Dufur, President). The club sponsored a special musical program.
4/13/1931	John Muir Junior High School Auditorium	Program does not survive.	Burbank Symphony Orchestra concert featuring Bohemian composers.
2/17/1932	Woman's Club Auditorium, Burbank, CA	F. Schubert arr.: Matiegka's Quartet for flute, guitar, viola, and cello.	Burbank Symphony Orchestra concert dedicated to Austrian composers. Assisted by Vahdah Olcott Bickford.
11/9/1933	Los Angeles Symphony Hall, 232 South Hill Street	Welsh's "Drink to me Only with Thine Eyes" Z. M. Bickford and V. Olcott Bickford: "In Happy Days" from <i>The Story of the Strings</i> Arrangement of E. MacDowell's <i>Mighty like a Rose</i> Arrangement of Gosse's Gavotte Z. M. Bickford: <i>Elves at Play</i>	Evening concert at the annual convention of The Church of Light.
4/18/1934	Zoellner Conservatory, 3938 Wilshire Blvd.	Program does not survive.	The Madrigal Singers in concert accompanied on the lute by

			Vahdah Olcott Bickford. Announced in <i>The Hollywood Citizen-News</i> .
11/16/1938	6809 Iris Circle, Whitley Heights, Hollywood, CA	Program does not survive.	Concert by Vahdah Olcott Bickford and Zarh Myron Bickford for the benefit of Whitley Heights Garden Club
12/16/1949	Los Angeles County Museum	Arrangement of Mark Wasselius's <i>Dance</i> Arrangement of Leopold Fuhrman's <i>Ballet</i> Arrangement of du Caurroy's <i>Charmante Gabrielle</i> Arrangement of H. Purcell's "Five Pieces"	Chamber music concert at Los Angeles County Museum.
1/19/1950	George Pepperdine College Auditorium, 1121 West 79th St, Los Angeles	C. de Coucy: <i>Chanson</i> G. de Machaut: <i>Douce Dame Jolie</i> John Dowland: <i>Awake Sweet Love</i> <i>Have you seen but white lilies grow</i> , anonymous <i>Ah! Mon Berger!</i> , anonymous <i>Maman dites moi</i> , anonymous O. von Wolkenstein: <i>Im Mai</i> F. Schubert: " <i>Mignon's Song</i> " F. Schubert: <i>Heiden Roslein</i> , op. 3, no. 3 F. Schubert: <i>The Organ-grinder</i> C. M. von Weber: <i>Sanftes Licht</i> , op. 13 C. M. von Weber: <i>Bettlerlied</i> (Beggar's Song), op. 25 J. Sibelius: <i>Come Away, Death</i> W. Huttel: <i>Ermahnung</i> (Admiration) L. T. Romero: <i>Peruvian Air</i> J. S. Bach: Bouree from Lute Suite in E minor, BWV 996	Cecilia Dvorak, soprano with original accompaniments on lute and guitar by Vahdah Olcott Bickford. Concert title: "Through Seven Centuries of Song."

		<p>F. Sor: <i>Introduction and Variations on a Theme by Mozart</i> A. Nemerowski: <i>Hopak</i> (Russian Dance) <i>Coconita</i> and <i>La Borrachita</i>, Mexican folk songs <i>La Perla</i>, Latin American folk song <i>Polo Gitano o'Flamenco</i>, Spanish Gypsy folk song <i>Seguidilla</i> and <i>El Contrabandista</i>, Spanish folk songs</p>	
6/16/1950	Los Angeles County Museum	<p>F. Czernuschka: <i>Evening Song</i> W. Hutt: <i>Nocturne</i> and <i>Melodie</i> A. Tomaschek: <i>Larghetto</i> from <i>Sonata in E Major</i> F. Schubert: <i>Lied der Nignon</i> F. Schubert: <i>Heiden Roslein</i>, op. 3, no. 3 C. M. von Weber: <i>Sanftes Licht</i>, op. 13 C. M. von Weber: <i>Bettlerlied</i> (Beggar's Song), op. 25 Z. M. Bickford: <i>Concerto Romantico</i> <i>Polo Gitano o'Flamenco</i>, Spanish Gypsy folk song <i>Seguidilla</i> and <i>El Contrabandista</i>, Spanish folk songs H. Albert: <i>Serenade</i> for flute, violin and guitar J. Kuffner: <i>Serenade</i>, op. 2 for flute, violin and guitar</p>	<p>Chamber music concert at Los Angeles County Museum. Performers included Cecilia Dvorak, flute and soprano; Zarh Myron Bickford, piano; Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitar; and Toscha Seidel, violin.</p>
7/16/1950	Monterey Park, CA	<p>Arrangement of E. MacDowell's <i>To a Wild Rose</i> for string quartet and guitar. V. Olcott Bickford arr.: Albeniz's <i>Cadiz</i> <i>Polo Gitano o'Flamenco</i>, Spanish Gypsy folk song</p>	<p>Chamber music concert at Monterey Park Bowl. Performers included Cecilia Dvorak, flute and soprano; Zarh Myron Bickford, piano; Vahdah</p>

		<p><i>Seguidilla</i> and <i>El Contrabandista</i>, Spanish folk songs H. Albert: <i>Serenade</i> for flute, violin and guitar J. Kuffner: <i>Serenade</i>, op. 2 for flute, violin and guitar L. Boccherini: Quintet no. 4 in D</p>	<p>Olcott Bickford, guitar; Toscha Seidel, violin; and the Seidel String Quartet.</p>
2/24/1951	YWCA Auditorium	<p>Arrangement of E. MacDowell's <i>To a Wild Rose</i> for string quartet and guitar. Arrangement of C. W. Cadman's <i>From the Land of the Sky-Blue Water</i> for mandocello and Terz guitar. Arrangement of Nevin's <i>Mighty like a Rose</i> Z. M. Bickford and V. Olcott Bickford: "In Happy Days" from <i>The Story of the Strings</i> V. Olcott Bickford arr.: Nolck's <i>The Butterfly</i> Wasselius's <i>Dance</i> (lute) Arrangement of Leopold Fuhrman's <i>Ballet</i> (lute) Arrangement of du Caurroy's <i>Charmante Gabrielle</i> (lute) J. S. Bach: Bouree from Lute Suite in E minor, BWV 996 Z. M. Bickford: <i>Concerto Romantico</i> Arrangement of Martini's <i>Plaisir d'Amour</i> for voice and guitar V. Olcott Bickford: <i>Flower Rain</i> for voice and guitar F. Tarrega arr.: Chopin's Prelude, op. 28, no. 7 V. Olcott Bickford arr.: Chopin's Prelude, op. 28, no. 20 A. Nemerowski: <i>Hopak</i> (Russian Dance)</p>	<p>Vahdah Olcott Bickford with Zarh M. Bickford in concert. Presented by Prosper Studios Music and Allied Arts. Olcott Bickford played lute and guitar in this program. Barbar Prosper was the singer and Thomas Sportelly played the flute.</p>

		F. Sor: <i>Introduction and Variations on a Theme by Mozart</i> H. Albert: <i>Serenade</i> for flute, violin and guitar	
11/7/1952	Unlisted	Wasselius's <i>Dance</i> (lute) Arrangement of Leopold Fuhrman's <i>Ballet</i> (lute) Arrangement of du Caurroy's <i>Charmante Gabrielle</i> (lute) J. S. Bach: Bouree from Lute Suite in E minor, BWV 996	The Renaissance Music Society in concert
11/18/1957	Home of Ralph Lane, 941 North Kings Road	F. Schubert arr.: Matiegka's Quartet for flute, guitar, viola, and cello.	Music Teachers Association of California Hollywood Branch Schubert recital.

Appendix C: Minutes of AGS's Inaugural Meeting

Source: Series V, Box 152, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

Minutes of Meeting of Sept 27, 1923.

Meeting held at 8 P.M. at office of J.A. Larralde, Stock Exchange Bldg., the following were present. (18)

Mesdames,- Adele Ferrer Wightman, Vahdah Olcott Bickford, Jennie M. Durkee, N.K. Russill, R. W. Manahan, Lillian Kemp, Dorthy A. Freeman and Ruth Elledge.

Messrs.- Geo. C. Lindsey, Zarh Myron Bickford, H. C. Allen, Dr. J. H. Cleaver, Edward Philbrook, Roy E. Poehler, E. A. Johnson, Frank M. Vogt, Hugo A. Possner and J. A. Larralde.

Mr. Larralde was chairman pro tem. Mr. Philbrook was secretary pro tem. Mr. Larralde read an outline of a Society Constitution. The floor adopted it with reservations for a committee to re-write.

Geo. C. Lindsay was elected president.

Zarh Myron Bickford Vice President.

J. A. Larralde Secretary & Treasurer.

Mrs. Bickford)

Mrs. Russill)Directors.

Mr. Allen)

Mrs. Bickford was elected Musical Director.

A committee of Mrs. Russill, Mrs. Bickford, Mr. Lindsey, Mr. Bickford, Mr. Allen and Mr. Larralde (these composing the Executive Board) to meet and rewrite the Society Constitution and By-Laws. Next meeting to be held at the same place at 8 P.M. Oct. 11th, 1923.

Mr. & Mrs. Bickford and Mr. Larralde appointed as committee to arrange program for next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 P.M.

J.A. Larralde
Secretary.
approved. Oct 11 1923

**Appendix D: Transcript of Olcott Bickford's Unpublished Article "Guitarists'
Society of America"**

Source: Box 166, folder 9, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

Guitarists' Society of America

Objects of society:

- I. To publish manuscript music, of the old and modern composers, for the benefit of the members of the Society. To publish those solos both original and transcriptions of the modern composers who find no ready market for their works with the publishers of today—because their merit is too great rather than too little to meet the demands of the average guitar player (so-called of today) who wants the easiest and lightest music possible. In this may to encourage modern composers to write guitar solos, duets and trios—also duets of merit for guitar and other instruments.
- II. To meet in annual conventions and give concerts, thus bringing the possibilities of the guitar before the general public, and giving guitarists an opportunity of becoming acquainted with each other. [fragment unreadable]
- III. To extend tokens of appreciation to the veteran guitarists both here and abroad, in any way that might be deemed suitable.
- IV. To have the doings of the society chronicled in a magazine which shall be the Official Organ of the Society. The dues to include subscription to this magazine.

Dues \$2.50 a year will be used for publishing music, etc. At least four pieces a year free to members.

Guitarists should all be curious to join this society, as it can not help but do much to advance and popularize the instrument being a benefit to all its teachers and players in many ways.

Those who are interested are requested to send their name and address with a two-cent stamp to Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott 410 Hippodrome Annex, who will act as Secretary of the society,

Those who send in their names before Jan. 1st, 1915 will be the charter members of the society. When there are the desired number of members each one will be notified to send in their fee.

It is to be hoped that all those who are really interested in the guitar will send in their names at once, so the society can begin to do the active work for which it was organized and thus become an immediate source of pleasure and benefit to its members, see

members are privileged to send in their manuscript solos or duets, to the secretary and a committee of the secretary and two others will judge the merits of the composition. If found of sufficient merit for publication, each manuscript will be numbered in the order received and published in this order.

Appendix E: AGS Constitution and By-Laws

Source: "Constitution and By-Laws," box 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.

Constitution

Article I

NAME

This Society shall be called the AMERICAN GUITAR SOCIETY.

Article II

OBJECT

The objects of the Society shall be:

Section 1. To promote an interest in the Classic Guitar, (E minor tuning), by demonstrating its possibilities, and by bringing it before the public in every possible manner.

Section 2. To encourage the publication of high grade works for the instrument.

Section 3. To promote a higher standard of efficiency among teachers and players, and to discourage the use of finger picks, and other unnecessary equipment, or inartistic methods and styles of playing which mitigate against the popularity of our beloved instrument and the efficiency of the player.

Section 4. To organize among its members an ensemble of guitars.

Section 5. To meet in weekly rehearsals under a director elected by the Society.

Article III

MEMBERSHIP

All who are in sympathy with the aims of this Society shall be eligible for some class of membership, as described in the By-Laws.

Article IV

OFFICERS

Section 1. The Officers of this Society shall be: President, Vice-President (Publicity Director), Secretary-Treasurer, Musical Director and two Executive Directors, who shall serve for one year, or until their successors are elected and qualified.

Section 2. These Officers shall constitute an Executive Board for the transaction of business. Four members of said Board shall constitute a quorum.

Article V

BUSINESS MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY

The Annual Meeting of the Society shall be for the election of Officers, the reading of annual reports, and for the transaction of any other business. This shall be the first meeting of the fiscal year which shall be held the first week in October. Other meetings for the transaction of business may be called by the President at any time, or may be held at regular meetings of the ensemble without previous notice.

Article VI

AMENDMENTS

This Constitutions may be amended by a two-thirds vote at the Annual Meeting, providing at least two weeks notice shall have been given the members previous to the meeting; and amendments permitting a wider scope or field of activity along any of the lines coming within the "Objects of the Society" as outlined in ARTICLE II of this Constitution, may be added at any meeting providing due notice is given all members, and that three quarters of the Active Membership is present at the meeting at which [*sic*] such Amendments are passed, and which shall be passed by a two-thirds vote of those present.

Article VII

RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING BRANCH SOCIETIES

Section 1. Only one Branch of the American Guitar Society can be established in any one city.

Section 2. The Constitution and By-Laws of Parent Society is to be adopted by each Branch, and each Branch shall elect from its membership a President, Vice-President (who shall also act as Publicity Director), Secretary-Treasurer and Musical Director with the option of Two Executive Directors, according to the size of the Membership.

Section 3. Each member of a Branch Society must be a Member at Large, in good standing, of the American Guitar Society, Headquarters of which is in Los Angeles, California, and the dues for which are Five (\$5.00) Dollars per year.

Section 4. A Branch Society may be formed with a minimum of six playing members, upon proper application to, and recognition by, the Parent Society, in Los Angeles, California.

Section 5. Each Branch Society shall pledge itself to help carry out the aims and ambitions of the Parent Society in every way possible, and promote National Publicity and Propaganda, such as "GUITAR WEEK," etc.

Section 6. Every Branch Society will be given a Branch Number by the Parent Society, according to the date of organization, said number always to be used as part of its name.

Section 7. Each Branch Society shall procure from the Parent Society, at the prevailing cost price, a cut of the Insignis of the Society, with the Branch Number and City. This is to protect both the Parent and Branch Society. (The cut is the size used on stationery.)

Section 8. Since the prime object of the American Guitar Society is to further the interests of the Classic Guitar, played with the fingers, the so-called Hawaiian style of playing, or "Steel" Guitar, shall never be used in connection with the name "American Guitar Society," nor in any of its ensembles, or on any of its programs.

Section 9. The ensemble rehearsals of the Branch Societies shall be held not less often than every two weeks, but preferably weekly, as does the Parent Society.

Section 10. All publications issued under, or bearing the name of the "American Guitar Society," shall be issued solely by the Parent Society in Los Angeles, California.

Section 11. The Parent Society, will not in any way be responsible for any debts incurred by a Branch Society, nor shall there be any assessments levied on the Members at Large or upon the Branch Societies, to pay any debts incurred the Branch Societies, to pay any

debts incurred by the Parent Society; but should there be proposed an undertaking of national scope, and should it be agreed upon by a three-quarters vote of all Members at Large, and by a two-thirds vote at all Branch Societies, then an assessment agreed upon by said vote, may be levied by the Parent Society.

Article VIII

USE OF NAME AND INSIGNA [*sic*] OF THE SOCIETY

The name "American Guitar Society," or its Insignia, shall only be used for official business of the Society, or Branch, and only when sponsored by the American Guitar Society, or Branch, and shall not be used for personal gain. Members found guilty by the Executive Board of violating this rule, may be dropped from the Membership at the discretion of said Board.

Article IX

"GUITAR WEEK"

There shall be one week, near the beginning of each fiscal year which shall be devoted to the effort of creating a public interest in the Guitar by having window displays, various kinds of programs, advertising, and by the use of any other effective means of accomplishing this object.

By-Laws

Article I

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Society and of the Executive Board, and shall present at the Annual Meeting a report of the work of the Society during the preceding year. He shall appoint all special committees, fill all vacancies in standing committees not otherwise provided for in the By-Laws, and shall be a member ex-officio of all committees.

Section 2. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall perform the duties of that Officer. He shall also be a member ex-officio of all committees.

Section 3. The Secretary-Treasurer shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Society and all of the meetings of the Executive Board, and shall perform such duties as the Society may direct, and shall be the custodian of the funds of the Society which shall be deposited in a bank designated by the Executive Board, and paid out only on order of the Executive Board, and paid out only on order of the Executive Board, or upon the signature of the President and Secretary. He shall keep an itemized account of receipts and expenditures, file vouchers of all payments, and present a full report of each meeting of the Society and of the Executive Board.

Section 4. The Musical Director shall direct all rehearsals, arrange all programs, select music to be played by the ensemble, and the Musical Director of the Parent Society shall decide upon all music to be published by the American Guitar Society.

Section 5. The Officers of the Parent Society shall have charge of all National work, sponsored by the Society, in their respective departments, presiding at any National meetings or conventions which may be decided upon.

Section 6. The Executive board shall appoint the Chairmen of all standing committees, and shall fill all vacancies which may occur in the Officers of the Society and its own Board, the appointees to serve until the next election.

Article II

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The name of an applicant for membership shall be presented to the Executive Board for approval, by a member of the Society, endorsed by one other member.

Section 2. Active Members shall be those who play in the ensemble.

Section 3. Associate Members shall be exempt from the duties of Active Membership, and shall enjoy all of the privileges of the Society, except that of ensemble practice, voting, and of holding office.

Section 4. Honorary Membership in the Parent Society may be conferred by the majority vote at any regular meeting upon the approval of the Executive Board of the Parent Society only.

Section 5. Member at Large. Membership at Large shall be a membership of the Parent Society only, and shall be composed of non-residents of the City of Los Angeles, California, in which the Headquarters of the Society is located. These members are to receive one complimentary, autographed copy of each work published during the year of their membership. Members joining the last quarter of a year will receive autographed copies of publications for the current year, (in which case dues would again be due and payable at the beginning of the fiscal year), *unless* they state at the time of application that the dues are for the ensuing year. In case dues are not paid for the current year, publications of said year may be purchased at retail value. These copies will *not* be autographed.

Section 6. Patron, or Contributing Members of the Parent Society shall enjoy the privileges of all classes of membership, with the exception of voting and of holding office, and of ensemble practice and shall receive autographed copies of all music published.

Article III

DUES

Section 1. There shall be an Initiation Fee of Five (\$5.00) Dollars, for Active Members only.

Section 2. The dues shall be regulated at the Annual Meeting for the ensuing year. The dues of Active and Associate Members shall be payable quarterly; dues for Members at Large, yearly.

Section 3. The dues of Members at Large shall be Five (\$5.00) Dollars per year and shall be used exclusively for the Publication Fund, which shall be a fund only for the publication of high class literature of, and pertaining to the Guitar.

Section 4. Members whose dues remain unpaid for three months, may be dropped from the Membership at the discretion of the Executive Board, but may be reinstated upon the payment of back dues.

Section 5. The fiscal year for all classes of Membership shall begin October first.

Article IV

MEETINGS

Section 1. The rehearsals of the ensemble of the Parent Society shall be held weekly.

Section 2. Special meetings of the Society or rehearsals may be called by the Executive Board.

Section 3. The Executive Board shall hold meetings for the transaction of business when called by the President.

Article V

ELECTIONS

The election of Officers shall be by ballot; a majority of the votes by those present being necessary to elect.

Article VI

AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any regular meeting providing at least two weeks notice has been given previous to the meeting.

Article VII

RULES OF ORDER

The Deliberations of all meetings shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order revised.

FORM OF RULES OF ORDER FOR ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Meeting called to order by the President.

Reading and approval of minutes of the last meeting.

Appointment of Tellers.

Nomination and election of Officers.

Report of Officers.

Report of Chairman of Standing Committee.

Report of Chairman of Special Committee.

Report of Tellers.

Miscellaneous Business.

Adjournment.

REGULAR MEETINGS

Meetings called to order by the President.

Reading and approval of minutes of the last meeting.

Communications by Secretary.

Report of Treasurer.

Announcements.

Reports of Standing Committees.

Reports of Special Committees.

Unfinished Business–New Business.

Program.

Adjournment.

Appendix F: List of Surviving AGS Concert Programs from 1923 to 1974

Date	Category	Program Title	Venue	VOB Box
3/17/1926	Composer Portrait Program	The Life and Works of J.N. de Bobrowicz, celebrated Polish master of the guitar.	Unlisted	158
5/27/1927	Composer Portrait Program	The Life and Works of Francesco Caligary: An Eighteenth Century Florentine Guitarist	1223 W Adams St, Los Angeles	152
10/21/1927	Composer Portrait Program	The Life and Works of Leonard de Call	1223 W Adams St, Los Angeles	152
3/16/1928	Composer Portrait Program	The Life and Works of Matteo Carcassi	1223 W Adams St, Los Angeles	158
6/30/1928	Composer Portrait Program	The Life and Works of Ferdinand Carulli (1770-1841)	2280 W 23rd St, Los Angeles	158
11/16/1928	Composer Portrait Program	The Life and Works of Luigi Castellacci: Old Italian Guitar Master (1797-1845)	1223 W Adams St, Los Angeles	157
3/22/1929	Composer Portrait Program	The Life and Works of Napoleon Coste: French Guitar Master (1806-1883)	1223 W Adams St, Los Angeles	157
12/6/1929	Composer Portrait Program	The Life and Works of Adam Darr: German Guitar Master (1811-1866)	1223 W Adams St, Los Angeles	152
11/1/1930	National Identity Program	American Composer Program	2280 W 23rd St, Los Angeles	157
3/5/1931	Composer Portrait Program	The Life and Works of Heinrich Albert: Modern German Guitarist (1870-)	2280 W 23rd St, Los Angeles	157
3/21/1932	Composer Portrait Program	All Bach Program: Commemorating the 247th Anniversary of the Birth of Johann Sebastian Bach	2280 W 23rd St, Los Angeles	152
2/4/1933	Composer Portrait Program	An evening presenting Vahdah Olcott Bickford and Zarh Myron Bickford in a program of their own compositions	2280 W 23rd St, Los Angeles	152

6/16/1934	National Identity Program	Bohemian Composers Program	Zoellner Auditorium, 3839 Wilshire Blvd	157
10/13/1934	Composer Portrait Program	Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitarist in recital presenting the works of Heinrich Bohr, Viennese guitarist and composer (1884-)	2280 W 23rd St, Los Angeles	157
1/26/1936	AGS Special Programs	Short program for the Vespers service	First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood	150
1/31/1936	National Identity Program	British Composers Program	Southland Masonic Temple, 5970 Santa Monica Blvd	157
10/17/1936	Composer Portrait Program	Duets of Heinrich Albert [b. 1870] with Brief Sketch of his Life (part 1)	Bickford Residence-Studio, 2031 Holly Hill Terrace	152
11/14/1936	Composer Portrait Program	Duets of Heinrich Albert [b. 1870] with Brief Sketch of his Life (part 2)	Bickford Residence-Studio, 2031 Holly Hill Terrace	152
10/24/1937	AGS Special Programs	short program preceding the church service.	Baptist Church at 94th and Budlong Ave	150
6/24/1939	Composer Portrait Program	Austrian Composers Program	Olga Steeb Piano School Hall, 3839 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles	157
6/6/1943	Composer Portrait Program	Concert of Compositions of Heinrich Albert (part 1)	13506 Wentworth St, Pacoima	158
7/11/1943	Composer Portrait Program	Concert of Compositions of Heinrich Albert (part 2)	3418 Lowell Ave, Emery Park	158
8/8/1943	Composer Portrait Program	Program of Compositions of Dionysio Aguado	1410 Bellwood Road, San Marino	152
9/26/1943	National Identity Program	All-American Program	832 Malcolm Ave, Westwood Village	152

10/10/1943	Composer Portrait Program	Program devoted to Compositions of Juan Alais, Argentine Guitar Composer (Recital by Vahdah Olcott Bickford assisted by Zarh M. Bickford in Guitar Duets)	Bickford Residence-Studio, 2031 Holly Hill Terrace	153
11/14/1943	Composer Portrait Program	Program presenting Guitar Solos of Antonio Alba, Spanish Composer	1832 Edgecliffe Dr, Los Angeles	153
1/9/1944	National Identity Program	Second All-American Program	1410 Bellwood Rd, San Marino	152
5/7/1944	Historical Program	Ancient Music Concert	13506 Wentworth St, Pacoima	158
7/2/1944	Historical Program	Second Ancient Music Concert	Bickford Residence-Studio, 2031 Holly Hill Terrace	152
1/21/1945	Composer Portrait Program	Compositions of Franz Abt (1819-1886)	1410 Bellwood Rd, San Marino	152
3/18/1945	Historical Program	Third Ancient Music Concert Festival	411 W 97th St, Los Angeles	158
7/15/1945	Thematic Concert	Concert devoted to the Music of the Sea	612 San Gabriel River Parkway, El Monte	153
11/18/1945	National Identity Program	Argentine Program	806 N Santa Fe Ave, Compton	152
2/17/1946	National Identity Program	Spanish Program	1216 Browning Blvd, Los Angeles	153
6/16/1946	Composer Portrait Program	The Works of Charles Adolphe Adam: French Operatic and Ballet Composer (1803-1956) - Part 1*	Bickford Residence-Studio, 2031 Holly Hill Terrace	152
7/27/1946	Composer Portrait Program	The Works of Adolphe Charles Adam: French Operatic and Ballet Composer (1803-1956) - Part 2*	1410 Bellwood Rd, San Marino	158
9/15/1946	Thematic Concert	Second Concert devoted to Music of the Sea	Bickford Residence-Studio, 2031 Holly Hill Terrace	152

2/9/1947	National Identity Program	Second British Composer's Program	1216 Browning Blvd	152
4/27/1947	Historical Program	Fourth Ancient Music Concert	Bickford Residence-Studio, 2031 Holly Hill Terrace	152
5/25/1947	Composer Portrait Program	AGS presents Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitarist in her Third Concert devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849)	13506 Wentworth St, Pacoima	152
6/22/1947	Composer Portrait Program	Fourth Concert devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849)	860 N Santa Fe Ave, Compton	152
7/27/1947	Composer Portrait Program	AGS presents Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitarist in her Fifth Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849)	4509 6th Ave, Los Angeles	152
8/24/1947	Composer Portrait Program	AGS presents Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitarist in her Sixth Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849)	1410 Bellwood Rd, San Marino	152
9/28/1947	Composer Portrait Program	AGS presents Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitarist in her Seventh Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849)	9040 Lake Wood Drive, La Mesa Knolls	152
10/26/1947	Composer Portrait Program	AGS presents Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitarist in her Eight Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849)	726 Parkman Ave, Los Angeles	152
11/23/1947	Composer Portrait Program	AGS presents Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitarist in her Ninth Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849)	1032 Walnut St, San Gabriel	152
2/22/1948	National Identity Program	First French Concert	1216 Browning Blvd, Los Angeles	153

3/21/1948	AGS Special Program	AGS presents Frederic Mulders, concert guitarist (followed by an informal talk on Llobet, The Guitar in Spain, France, England and Holland)	Bickford Residence-Studio, 2031 Holly Hill Terrace	152
4/25/1948	Composer Portrait Program	AGS presents Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitarist in her Tenth Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849)	14741 Kittridge Ave, Van Nuys	153
5/23/1948	Historical Program	Fifth Ancient Music Concert	806 N Santa Fe Ave, Compton	152
6/27/1948	Composer Portrait Program	AGS presents Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitarist in her Eleventh Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849)*	726 Parkman Ave, Los Angeles	152
7/25/1948	Thematic Concert	Program in the Spirit of Song	1410 Bellwood Road, San Marino	152
9/26/1948	Thematic Concert	Festival of Dance Music of all Countries and Periods	Bickford Residence-Studio, 2031 Holly Hill Terrace	152
11/21/1948	Composer Portrait Program	AGS presents Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitarist in her Twelfth Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849)	806 N Santa Fe Ave, Compton	152
1/23/1949	Composer Portrait Program	AGS presents Vahdah Olcott Bickford, guitarist in her Thirteenth Recital devoted to the Guitar Solos of Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849)	3418 Lowell Ave, Emery Park	152
2/13/1949	National Identity Program	Second French Program	1216 Browning Blvd, Los Angeles	152
4/10/1949	National Identity Program	Second Spanish Program	726 Parkman Ave, Los Angeles	152
8/14/1949	Thematic Concert	Children's Program	1347 Club View Drive, Los Angeles	152
9/11/1949	National Identity Program	Fourth Spanish Program	1410 Bellwood Road, San Marino	152

11/13/1949	Composer Portrait Program	Program devoted to the Works of Frederic Francois Chopin (1809-1849): Honoring him in the 100th anniversary of his death	1552 1/2 Amherst Ave, Westwood	152
12/17/1949	AGS Special Program	Annual Christmas Program	Home of Leslie and Martha Booher, 4145 E 14th St, Long Beach	152
6/4/1950	Composer Portrait Program	A Bach Anniversary Program honoring Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)	806 N Santa Fe Ave, Compton	152
8/6/1950	National Identity Program	Seventh Spanish Program: Program of Guitar Solos	9040 Lake Wood Dr, La Mesa Knolls	152
10/21/1950	National Identity Program	Ninth Spanish Program	806 N Santa Fe Ave, Compton	152
11/18/1950	National Identity Program	Tenth Spanish Program	1832 Edgecliffe Dr	152
12/9/1950	AGS Special Program	Christmas Program	5635 Stansbury Ave, Van Nuys	152
1/20/1951	National Identity Program	Eleventh Spanish Program	1235 Hyperion Ave	152
2/17/1951	Composer Portrait Program	Program in Memory of Heinrich Albert (July 1870 - March 1950)	8260 Gould Ave, Laurel Canyon	152
3/17/1951	National Identity Program	Twelfth Spanish Program	Bickford Residence-Studio, 2031 Holly Hill Terrace	152
5/21/1951	National Identity Program	Thirteenth Spanish Program	806 N Santa Fe Ave, Compton	152
5/19/1951	National Identity Program	Fourteenth Spanish Program	1423 Sanborn Ave, Los Angeles	152
6/10/1951	National Identity Program	Fifteenth Spanish Program	1423 Sanborn Ave, Los Angeles	152

7/8/1951	National Identity Program	Sixteenth Spanish Program	9040 Lake Wood Dr, La Mesa Knolls	152
8/4/1951	National Identity Program	Seventeenth Spanish Program	1427 Sanborn Ave	152
9/8/1951	National Identity Program	Eighteenth Spanish Program	1427 Sanborn Ave	152
10/14/1951	Historical Program	Sixth Ancient Music Concert	1427 Sanborn Ave	152
11/10/1951	National Identity Program	Third British Composer's Program: Honoring the 1951 Festival of Britain	8260 Gould Ave, Laurel Canyon	152
12/8/1951	AGS Special Program	Christmas Program	1410 Bellwood Road, San Marino	152
1/13/1952	National Identity Program	First International Program: Music of Many Countries and Peoples	8260 Gould Ave, Laurel Canyon	152
2/17/1952	National Identity Program	Nineteenth Spanish Program	1423 Sanborn Ave, Los Angeles	152
5/31/1952	National Identity Program	Twentieth Spanish Programs	2032 Pine St, South Pasadena	152
6/28/1952	Thematic Concert	Second Dance Music Program - Glorified and "Unglorified" - or Nationalistic	1423 Sanborn Ave, Los Angeles	152
7/26/1952	Historical Programs	Second Program of Contemporary Composers	1423 Sanborn Ave, Los Angeles	152
8/10/1952	Thematic Concert	The Woman's Club of Local 47 and The American Guitar Society present Victoria Kingsley, singer-guitarist in her only Hollywood appearance	The Woman's Club Room (200), American Federation of Musicians Building, 817 N Vine St, Hollywood	152
8/30/1952	Thematic Program	Program devoted to Original Music composed for the Guitar or Lute and Chamber Music with Guitar	8260 Gould Ave, Laurel Canyon	152

9/27/1952	National Identity Program	Second International Program: Music of Many Countries and Peoples	952 N Orange Groove Ave, Hollywood	152
10/25/1952	Historical Programs	Third Contemporary Composer's Program	1423 Sanborn Ave, Los Angeles	152
11/30/1952	Composer Portrait Program	Program in Honor of Francisco Tárrega as a Tribute on the 100th Anniversary of his Birth	Bickford Residence-Studio, 2031 Holly Hill Terrace	152
1/24/1953	Composer Portrait Program	Carcassi Program honoring Mateo Carcassi (1792 - Jan. 16, 1853) in the 100th Anniversary Year of his Death	3255 Altura Ave, La Crescenta	152
2/28/1953	Historical Programs	Fourth Contemporary Composers' Program	8260 Gould Ave, Laurel Canyon	152
3/28/1953	Historical Programs	Seventh Program of Ancient Music	2023 Pine St, South Pasadena	152
5/25/1953	Thematic Concert	Second Program devoted to Original Music composed for the Guitar or Lute and Chamber Music with Guitar	1740 Malcolm Ave	152
5/30/1953	National Portrait Program	Italian Composers' Program	1423 Sanborn Ave, Los Angeles	152
6/27/1953	National Portrait Program	Second Italian Composers' Program	1423 Sanborn Ave, Los Angeles	152
7/18/1953	National Portrait Program	Program of Music of South America and Mexico	1423 Sanborn Ave, Los Angeles	152
8/29/53	Thematic Concert	Second Program in the Spirit of Song	4901 Palo Dr, Tarzana	152
9/26/53	National Portrait Program	Third International Program	6124 1/2 Santa Monica Blvd, Hollywood	152
10/24/1953	Historical Programs	Eight Program of Ancient Music	8260 Gould Ave, Laurel Canyon	152
11/15/1953	Thematic Concert	Victoria Kingsley in Songs with Guitar	Dabney Lounge, California Institute of Technology	152
11/28/1953	National Portrait Program	Fourth International Program	932 N Orange Grove Avenue, Hollywood	152

2/27/1954	Historical Programs	Fifth Program of Contemporary Composers	3255 Altura Ave, La Crescenta	152
3/27/1954	Historical Programs	Ninth Program of Ancient Music	2501 28th St, Santa Monica	152
4/24/1954	Thematic Concert	Third Program devoted to Original music composed for Guitar and Chamber Music with Guitar	Woman's Club Room (200), American Federation of Musicians Building, 817 N Vine St, Hollywood	152
5/22/1954	Historical Programs	Sixth Program of Contemporary Composers	2023 Pine St, South Pasadena	152
6/26/1954	Historical Programs	Seventh Program of Contemporary Composers	6261 Babcock Ave, North Hollywood	152
7/24/1954	Thematic Concert	Fourth Program devoted to Original Music composed for Guitar and Chamber Music with Guitar	1423 Sanborn Ave, Los Angeles	152
3/28/1955	Historical Programs	Thirteenth Program of Contemporary Composers	1970 Cheremoya Ave, Hollywood	152
12/17/1955	AGS Special Program	Annual Christmas Program	4907 Palo Dr, Tarzana	152
5/26/1956	Thematic Concert	Seventh Program of Original Compositions for and with Guitar	6611 Sunset Blvd, Hollywood	152
9/24/1955	Thematic Concert	Festival Birthday Concert: Sixth Program devoted to Original Compositions for and with Guitar	6122 1/2 Santa Monica Blvd, Hollywood	152
2/18/1956	Composer Portrait Programs	Second All-Mozart Program honoring the Great Master's 200th Birth Anniversary Year (January 27, 1756)	Trinity Episcopal Church, 650 N Berendo St, Los Angeles	152
4/28/1956	Thematic Concert	Second Program of Music of Nature	The Music Corner, 6611 Sunset Blvd, Hollywood	152
8/25/1956	National Identity Program	Festival Program devoted to Latin and Latin American Composers	Woman's Club Room (200), American Federation of	152

			Musicians Building, 817 N Vine St, Hollywood	
9/29/1956	National Identity Program	Second Program of Latin and Latin American Composers in Celebration of the Society's Birthday Anniversary	Home of Helene Hammond, 10528 Lynbrook Dr, Los Angeles	152
2/23/1957	Historical Programs	Twentieth Program of Contemporary Composers	1605 San Vicente Blvd, Santa Monica	152
4/27/1957	Historical Programs	Tenth Program of Ancient Music	Home of Helene Hammond, 10528 Lynbrook Dr, Los Angeles	152
8/24/1957	Historical Programs	Twenty-Second Program of Contemporary Composers	Trinity Episcopal Church, 650 N Berendo St, Los Angeles	152
9/28/1957	Historical Programs	Twenty-Third Program of Contemporary Composers in Celebration of its Thirty-four Birthday	2032 Pine St, South Pasadena	152
10/26/1957	Historical Programs	Twenty-Fourth Program of Contemporary Composers	4907 Palo Dr, Tarzana	152
1/25/1958	Historical Programs	Twenty-Fifth Program of Contemporary Composers	1760 N Argyle Ave, Hollywood	152
2/22/1958	Historical Programs	Program of Nineteenth Century Composers	900 San Vicente Blvd, Santa Monica	152
3/22/1958	Historical Programs	Second Program devoted to Nineteenth Century Composers	Home of Helene Hammond, 10528 Lynbrook Dr, Los Angeles	152
4/26/1958	Composer Portrait Program	All-Diabelli Program in Tribute to Anton Diabelli (1782-1858): 100th Anniversary of his death	901 Columbia St, South Pasadena	152
5/24/1958	Thematic Concert	Eight Program of Original Music composed for Guitar or Lute	6261 Babcock Ave, Hollywood	152
6/28/1958	Thematic Concert	Third Program of Folk Songs and Dances from Many Lands	Los Angeles Conservatory of Music Hall, 8901	152

			Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles	
7/26/1958	Thematic Concert	Ninth Program of Music Originally composed for the Guitar	Trinity Episcopal Church, 650 N Berendo St, Los Angeles	152
8/30/1958	Historical Program	Twenty-Sixth Program of Contemporary Composers	5538 Green Oak Dr, Hollywood	152
9/27/1958	Historical Program	Twenty-Seventh Program of Contemporary Composers: Anniversary concert	California Teachers Association Banquet Room, 1125 W 6th St, Los Angeles	152
10/25/1958	Thematic Concert	Fourth Program of Folk Songs and Dances of Many Lands	California Teachers Association Banquet Room, 1125 W 6th St, Los Angeles	152
12/27/1958	AGS Special Programs	Annual Christmas Program	California Teachers Association Banquet Room, 1125 W 6th St, Los Angeles	152
1/24/1959	Historical Program	Twenty-Eight Program of Contemporary Composers	California Teachers Association Banquet Room, 1125 W 6th St, Los Angeles	152
2/28/1959	Historical Program	Twenty-Nine Program of Contemporary Composers	California Teachers Association Banquet Room, 1125 W 6th St, Los Angeles	152
3/28/1959	AGS Special Program	Annual Request Program	California Teachers Association Banquet Room, 1125 W 6th St, Los Angeles	152

4/25/1959	Composer Portrait Program	All Handel Program honoring George Frideric Handel in the 200th Anniversary Year of his Death	California Teachers Association Banquet Room, 1125 W 6th St, Los Angeles	152
6/27/1959	Composer Portrait Program	All Mendelssohn Program commemorating the 150th anniversary year of the birth of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)	13733 Magnolia Blvd, Van Nuys	152
7/25/1959	Historical Program	Thirteenth Program of Contemporary Composers	901 Columbia St, South Pasadena	152
8/29/1959	Thematic Concert	Tenth Program of Music composed for the Guitar or Lute	650 North Berendo St, Los Angeles	152
9/26/1959	Thematic Concert	Eleventh Program of Music composed for Guitar or Lute	California Teachers Association Banquet Room, 1125 W 6th St, Los Angeles	152
10/24/1959	Thematic Concert	Folk Songs and Dances from Many Lands	California Teachers Association Banquet Room, 1125 W 6th St, Los Angeles	152
11/28/1959	Composer Portrait Program	Commemorative Tribute concert in Honor of Francisco Tarrega and Isaac Albeniz in this 59th Anniversary Year since their Deaths in 1909	California Teachers Association Banquet Room, 1125 W 6th St, Los Angeles	152
12/26/1959	AGS Special Program	Annual Christmas Program	California Teachers Association Banquet Room, 1125 W 6th St, Los Angeles	152
1/23/1960	Historical Program	Thirty-first Program of Music by Contemporary Composers	2450 North Gower St, Hollywood	152
2/27/1960	Historical Program	Thirty-Second Program of Music by Contemporary Composers	900 San Vicente Blvd, Santa Monica	152

7/25/1960	Thematic Concert	Sixth Program of Folk Music from Many Lands	443 Camden Drive, Beverly Hills	152
3/26/1960	Composer Portrait Program	All-Chopin Program honoring Frederic Francois Chopin in this 150th Year since his Birth	Home of Helene Hammond, 10528 Lynbrook Dr, Los Angeles	152
4/23/1960	Historical Program	Thirty-Third Program of Contemporary Composers	901 Columbia St, South Pasadena	152
5/28/1960	Historical Program	Thirty-Fourth Program of Contemporary Composers	13733 Magnolia Blvd, Van Nuys	152
6/25/1960	Composer Portrait Program	All-Robert Schumann Program in honor of 150th Anniversary Year of his Birth	1921 West Mountain St, Glendale	152
8/20/1960	National Identity Program	Second Program of Brazilian Composers	13733 Magnolia Blvd, Van Nuys	152
9/24/1960	Composer Portrait Program	Second All-Robert Schumann Program in this, his 100th Anniversary Year of his Birth	6261 Babcock Ave, Hollywood	152
10/22/1960	Thematic Concert	Seventh Program of Folk Music from Many Lands	1605 San Vicente Blvd, Santa Monica	152
11/26/1960	Thematic Concert	Twelfth Program of Music originally composed for Guitar and Lute	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
5/22/1961	Historical Program	Eleventh Program of Ancient Music	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
5/27/1961	Historical Program	Twelfth Program of Ancient Music	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
6/24/1961	Historical Program	Thirty-Fifth Program of Contemporary Composers	1621 N Verdugo Road, Glendale	152
7/29/1961	Thematic Concert	Fifteenth Program of Music originally composed for or with Guitar or Lute	13733 Magnolia Blvd, Van Nuys	152
9/30/1961	Thematic Concert	Sixteenth Program of Music composed for and with the Guitar	Home of Helene Hammond, 10528 Lynbrook Dr, Los Angeles	152

10/28/1961	Historical Program	Thirty-Sixth Program of Contemporary Composers	443 S Camdem Dr, Beverly Hills	152
11/25/1961	Thematic Concert	Seventeenth Program of Music composed for the Guitar or Lute	6162 Babcock Ave, Hollywood	152
1/27/1962	Thematic Concert	Eighteenth Program of Music composed for Guitar	901 Columbia St, South Pasadena	152
4/28/1962	Historical Program	Thirty-Eight Program of Music by Contemporary Composers	13943 Cumpston, Van Nuys	152
5/26/1962	Thematic Concert	Twentieth Program of Music composed originally for Guitar	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
7/28/1962	Historical Program	Fortieth Program of Music by Contemporary Composers	2450 N Gower St, Hollywood	152
8/25/1962	National Identity Program	Fourth French Program devoted to Music by French Composers	443 South Camdem Dr, Beverly Hills	152
11/24/1962	Historical Program	Thirteenth Program of Ancient Music	Home of Martha and Leslie Booher, 4145 E 14th St, Long Beach	152
12/22/1962	AGS Special Program	Annual Christmas Program	1921 W Mountain St, Glendale	152
1/26/1963	National Identity Program	Third Italian Program	15435 Varden St, Sherman Oaks	152
2/23/1963	Historical Program	Forty-Second Program of Music by Contemporary Composers	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
3/23/1963	Historical Program	Forty-Third Program of Music by Contemporary Composers	6261 Babcock Ave, Hollywood	152
4/27/1963	Thematic Concert	Eight Program of Folk Music and Ballads from many Lands	14224 Cohasset St, Van Nuys	152
6/22/1963	Historical Program	Fourteenth Program of Ancient Music	15435 Varden St, Sherman Oaks	152
7/27/1963	Historical Program	Forty-Fourth Programs of Contemporary Composers	2450 N Gower St, Hollywood	152
9/25/1963	Historical Program	Twentieth Program of Music by Renaissance and Baroque Composers	Home of Stuart and Elaine Hauser, 437 N	152

			Alta Vista, Monrovia	
9/28/1963	Thematic Concert	Celebrating our 40th Anniversary: Dinner and Concert of Music originally composed for Guitar and Lute	Gazebo Room, Corsican Restaurant, 1312 N La Brea Av, Hollywood	152
12/8/1963	AGS Special Program	Annual Christmas Program	1921 W Mountain St, Glendale	152
1/25/1964	Historical Program	Program of Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Composers	Home of Martha and Leslie Booher, 4145 East 14th St, Long Beach	152
2/22/1964	National Identity Program	International Program	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
3/21/1964	Historical Program	Forty-Fifth Program of Contemporary Composers	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
4/25/1964	Historical Program	Fifteenth Program devoted to Renaissance and Baroque Period Composers	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
5/23/1964	Historical Program	Program devoted to Classic and Romantic Periods	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
6/20/1964	Historical Program	Forty-Sixth Program of Contemporary Composers	2023 Pine St, South Pasadena	152
7/25/1964	Historical Program	17th Program of Ancient Music Renaissance and Baroque	Home of Martha and Leslie Booher, 4145 East 14th St, Long Beach	152
8/22/1964	Historical Program	Music of the Classic and Romantic Periods	Trinity Episcopal Church, 650 N Berendo St, Los Angeles	152
9/26/1964	Thematic Concert	Twenty-second Program of Music originally composed for or with Guitar	Home of the Dundas family, 6519 Glorywhite, Lakewood	152

10/24/1964	Thematic Concert	Twenty-Third Program of Music composed for Guitar	1120 N La Brea, Inglewood	152
1/?/1965	AGS Special Program	Annual January Request Program	Unlisted	152
2/27/1965	National Identity Program	Seventh Italian Composers Program	Valley Conservatory of Music, 4303 Colfax, Hollywood	152
3/27/1965	Historical Program	Eighteenth Program of Renaissance and Baroque Music	Valley Conservatory of Music, 4303 Colfax, North Hollywood	152
4/24/1965	Historical Program	Program devoted to Romantic and Classic Composers	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
5/22/1965	Historical Program	Forty-Ninth Program of Contemporary Composers	Home of Joey Glaser and his parents, 5648 Fallsgrove St, Los Angeles	152
6/26/1965	Historical Program	Nineteenth Program of Music by Renaissance and Baroque Composers	Home of the Dundas family, 6519 Glorywhite, Lakewood	152
7/24/1965	Historical Program	Program of Music by Classic Composers	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
8/28/1965	Historical Program	Program devoted to Composers of the Romantic Period	Home of Martha and Leslie Booher, 4145 E 14th St, Long Beach	152
9/25/1965	Historical Program	Twentieth Program of Renaissance and Baroque	Home of Stuart and Elaine Hauser, 437 N Alta Vista, Monrovia	152
10/23/1965	National Identity Program	Eighth Program of Italian Composers	Home of Marty and Ruth Trent, 3204 Barkentine	152

			Rd, Verdes Peninsula	
11/27/1965	Historical Program	Forty-Eight Program of Contemporary Composers	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
12/18/1965	AGS Special Program	Annual Christmas Program	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
1/22/1966	AGS Special Program	Annual January Request Program	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
2/26/1966	Historical Program	Twenty-First Program of Renaissance and Baroque Composers	Home of Helene Hammond, 10528 Lindbrook Dr, Los Angeles	152
3/26/1966	Thematic Concert	Ninth Program of Folk Songs, Ballads and Dances from Many Lands	Pedrini Music Hall, 230 W Main St, Alhambra	152
4/23/1966	Historical Program	Third Program devoted to Composers of the Romantic Period	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
5/28/1966	Thematic Concert	Twenty-Fourth Program of Music originally composed for the Guitar or Lute	Pedrini Music Hall, 230 W Main St, Alhambra	152
6/25/1966	Historical Program	Twenty-Second Program of Renaissance and Baroque Composers	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
7/23/1966	National Identity Programs	Program of American Composers Program	Home of Martha and Leslie Booher, 4145 E 14th St, Long Beach	152
8/27/1966	National Identity Programs	Fifth Program of French Composers	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
9/24/1966	National Identity Programs	Ninth Program of Italian Composers	Home of the Dundas family, 6519 Glorywhite, Lakewood	152

10/22/1966	Historical Program	Twenty-Third Program of Renaissance and Baroque	Home of Marty and Ruth Trent, 3204 Barkentine Rd, Verdes Peninsula	152
11/26/1966	Composer Portrait Program	Program devoted to the Works of Beethoven	Unlisted	152
12/3/1966	AGS Special Program	Annual Christmas Program	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
1/7/1967	AGS Special Program	Annual Request Program	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
2/4/1967	Thematic Concert	Twenty-Fifth Program of Music Composed originally for or with Guitar	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
3/4/1967	National Identity Programs	Third Program devoted to Latin-American Composers	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
4/1/1967	Historical Program	Twenty-Fourth Program of Renaissance and Baroque	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
4/29/1967	National Identity Programs	Tenth Program devoted to Italian Composers	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
6/3/1967	National Identity Programs	Second Austrian and Viennese Composers' Program	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
7/1/1967	Historical Program	Classic Composers' Program	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
8/5/1967	Historical Program	Forty-Nine Program of Music by Contemporary Composers	Home of Leslie and Martha Booher, 4145 E 14th St, Long Beach	152

9/8/1967	National Identity Programs	Sixth Program of French Composers	Home of Marty and Ruth Trent, 3204 Barkentine Rd, Verdes Peninsula	152
10/7/1967	National Identity Program	Tenth Program of International and Traditional Music	Home of the Dundas family, 6519 Glorywhite, Lakewood	152
11/?/1967	Historical Program	Program of Romantic Period Composers	Unlisted	152
12/?/1967	AGS Special Program	Annual Christmas Program	Unlisted	152
3/2/1968	Thematic Concert	Original Compositions for Guitar Program	5648 Fallgrove St, Los Angeles	152
10/5/1968	Thematic Concert	45th Anniversary Dinner and Program of Music for the Classical Guitar	North American Rockwell Recreation Park Auditorium, 5353 West Imperial Highway, Los Angeles	152
02/?/1969	Historical Program	Program of Twentieth Century Composers	Unlisted	152
03/?/1969	Composer Portrait Concert	Program honoring J. S. Bach on his Birthday Month	Unlisted	152
04/?/1969	Historical Program	Program of Classic Composers	Unlisted	152
05/?/1969	Thematic Concert	Program of Transcriptions	Unlisted	152
06/?/1969	Thematic Concert	Program of Chamber Music for Two or More Guitars or Guitar with other Instrument	Unlisted	152
07/?/1969	National Identity Programs	Program of French Composers	Unlisted	152
08/?/1969	Historical Program	Twenty-Seventh Program of Renaissance and Baroque Composers	Unlisted	152
09/?/1969	National Identity Programs	Program of South American Composers	Unlisted	152

10/4/1969	Thematic Concert	Program for Guitar Duets	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
11/1/1969	National Identity Programs	Program of Italian Composers	Unlisted	152
12/?/1969	AGS Special Program	Christmas Program	Unlisted	152
2/7/1970	Composer portrait Program	All Carulli Program: 200th Anniversary of his Birth, February, 1770	3685 Amesbury Road, Hollywood	152
3/7/1970	National Identity Programs	Program of Italian Composers	Unlisted	152
4/?/1970	National Identity Programs	Program of Italian Composers	Unlisted	152
5/2/1970	Thematic Concert	Program of Original Music for Guitar	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
6/?/1970	Historical Program	Program of Renaissance and Baroque Music	Unlisted	152
7/?/1970	Historical Program	Program of Classic Period Composers	Unlisted	152
8/?/1970	Thematic Concert	Program of Original Guitar or Lute Pieces or Music of Guitar with Other Instruments	Unlisted	152
9/?/1970	Historical Program	Program of Renaissance and Baroque Music	Unlisted	152
10/?/1970	National Identity Programs	Program of Viennese and Austrian Composers	Unlisted	152
11/?/1970	Thematic Concert	Program of Guitar Duets, Trios, Quartets etc.	Unlisted	152
1/16/1971	AGS Special Program	Annual Request Program	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
2/?/1971	Historical Program	Baroque Program	Unlisted	

3/6/1971	Historical Program	Program of Guitar Solo Music by Nineteenth Century Composers	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
4/3/1971	National Identity Programs	Program of French Composers	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
5/15/1971	Thematic Concert	Program of Dances from Various Periods	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
6/5/1971	Thematic Concert	Program of Operatic and Ballet Music	Valley Conservatory of Music, 4303 Colfax, Hollywood	152
7/10/1971	Thematic Concert	Program of Fantasies	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
8/7/1971	Thematic Concert	Program of Serenades	Home of Leslie and Martha Booher, 4145 E 14th St, Long Beach	152
9/11/1971	Thematic Concert	Program of Duets, Trios and Song	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
10/2/1971	Thematic Concert	Program of Folk and Traditional Songs of Many Lands	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
11/6/1971	National Identity Programs	Latin-American Program	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
12/4/1971	AGS Special Program	Annual Christmas Program	Besant Lodge, 2560 N Beachwood Dr, Hollywood	152
1/8/1972	AGS Special Program	Annual Request Program	Choir Room, Compton College, 1111 East Artesia	152

			Boulevard, Compton	
10/7/1973	AGS Special Program	Golden Anniversary Program	Bel-Air Hotel, 701 Stone Canyon Rd, Bel- Air, Los Angeles	152
5/4/1974	National Identity Programs	Program of Latin American Composers	Putnam Student Center, Rio Hondo College, 3600 Workman Mill Rd, Whittier	152
Source: Data from box 150, 152, 153, 157, and 158, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.				

**Appendix G: List of Concerts presented by the Woman's Chamber Music Society of
Local 47, American Federation of Musicians**

Date	Program Title	Performers	VOB Box
5/30/61	Eleventh Program: A Memorial Concert for Zarh M. Bickford	Parnassus String Quartet, Woodwind Quintet, Tamara Masloff (pianist), Marie Melore (soprano), Frederic Clint (violinist), Hazel Zamora (piano accompanist)	152
12/16/62	Thirtieth Concert	Parnassus String Quartet with Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar)	153
2/17/63	Thirty-Second concert	Dorye Roettger (oboe), Margaret Aue (cello), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar)	153
6/9/63	Thirty-Six Concert	Dawn Adams Phelps (violin), Rose Beckstead (viola), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar), Raymond McFeeters (piano)	153
10/20/63	Fortieth Concert	John Coppin (violin), Ross Beckstead (viola), Margaret Coppin (cello), Marie Coppin Emerson (piano), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar)	153
12/15/63	Christmas Program	Dawn Adam Phelps (violin), Emma Hardy Hill (viola and violin), Helen Ward Humphrey (cello), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar), Marilyn Mayland (bass), Hazel Zamora (piano)	153
1/19/64	Forty-Third Program of American Composers	Velia Moore (soprano), Dr. Elliot Griffis (piano accompanist), Dr. Matt Doran (flute), Dolores Stevens (piano), David Sherr (flute), Selene Hurford (cello), John	153

		Jones (clarinet), Victor Steinhardt (piano)	
2/23/64	Forty-Fourth Program	John Coppin (violin), Ross Beckstead (viola), Margaret Coppin (cello), Marie Coppin Emerson (piano), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar)	153
3/15/64	Forty-Fifth Program	Dawn Adams Phelps (violin), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar), Raymond McFeeters (piano)	153
8/16/64	Fiftieth Program	John Coppin (violin), Ross Beckstead (viola), Margaret Coppin (cello), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar)	153
9/20/64	Fifty-First Program	William Eldridge (baritone), Manuel Mata (tenor), Elizabeth Walberg (piano)	153
10/16/64	Fifty-Second Program	Dawn Adams Phelps (violin), Rose Neckstead (viola), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (terz guitar), Raymond McFeeters (piano)	153
1/10/65	--	Dawn Adams Phelps (violin), Gay Ross-Clunis (pianist)	153
8/22/65	Sixty-Second Concert	John Coppin (violin), Ross Beckstead (viola), Margaret Coppin (cello), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar)	153
9/19/65	Sixty-Third Concert	The Musart Singers, Judith M. Berman (director)	153
11/22/65	Sixty-Fifth Concert	Sergio Da Silva (piano)	153
2/20/66	Sixty-Eighth Program	Dawn Adams Phelps (violin), Emma Hardy Hill (viola), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar), Lona Van dan Heuval (piano)	153

2/16/69	One Hundred and fourth Concert	Katheryn Clauset (mezzo-soprano), Helen Patterson (violin), Charleen Munro (cello), and Louise Hohanson (piano)	152
2/15/70	One Hundred and Sixteenth Concert	Dan Sandlin (piano), Jacqueline Craigo(soprano)	152
5/17/70	One Hundred and Nineteenth Concert	Judith Martin (oboe), JoAnn Caldwell (basoon), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar), Raymond McFeeters (piano)	153
10/18/70	One Hundred and Twenty-Fourth Concert	Florence Riggs (soprano), Ella Good (clarinet), John Jensen (piano)	153
1/17/71	One Hundred and Twenty-Seventh Concert	Doris Berg (harpsichord), Leola Wagner (violin), Judith Martin (oboe), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar)	153
2/21/71	One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Concert	Nancy Roth (piano), Sir John Picorri (basso-cantante), Lessya Kurylenko (accompanist)	153
3/21/71	One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Concert	Dawn Adams Phelps (violin), Alberta Hurst (cello), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar), Raymond McFeeters (piano)	153
4/18/71	One Hundred and Thirtieth Concert	The Phelps Trio, Dawn Adams Phelps (violin), Gay Ross-Clunis (piano)	153
5/16/71	One Hundred and Thirty-First Concert	Dawn Adams Phelps (violin), Alberta Hurst (cello), Hsu Wen-ying (composer-piano), Raymond McFeeters (piano)	153
6/20/71	One Hundred and Thirty-Second Concert	Marc Sazer (violin), Nancy Stein (cello), Wensy Oshita (piano)	153

7/18/71	One Hundred and Thirty-Third Concert	Georgia Mohammar (flute), Judith Martin (oboe), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar), Raymond McFeeters (piano)	153
8/15/71	One Hundred and Thirty-Fourth Concert	The LaMarchina Cello Trio and Molly LaMarchina (piano)	153
9/19/71	One Hundred and Thirty-Fifth Concert	Dorye Roettger (oboe), Roy d'Antonio (clarinet), Lloyd Hildebrand (bassoon), Vahdah Olcott Bickford (guitar)	153
10/17/71	One Hundred and Thirty-Sixth Concert	Doris Berg (harpsichord), Jon Berg (cello and violin), Christa Wilk (alto recorder), William Wilk (harpsichord and alto recorder)	153
11/20/71	One Hundred and Thirty-Seventh Concert	Margaret Krimmel Anderson (piano), Josephine Navares Dapar (viola), Marilyn Jean Mayland (string bass), Marilyn Smith Michalsky (flute)	153
12/19/71	One Hundred and Thirty-Eight Concert	The Phelps Trio and Dawn Adams Phelps (violin)	153
<p>Source: Data from box 152 and 153, Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection, International Guitar Research Archives, Special Collections, CSUN University Library, Northridge, CA.</p> <p>Note: All of these concerts began at 8 p.m. and took place at the Besant Lodge, 2560 North Beachwood Drive., Hollywood, CA. There is only one exception in this list, the concert that took place on September 19, 1965, which began at 2:30 p.m. and took place at the Cultural Arts Center, 3224 Riverside Drive, Hollywood, CA.</p>			

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