

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

**Alice Artzt**, whom *Guitar International Magazine* has called “America’s best player,” has been acclaimed by critics in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas for her performances as a soloist, in concertos with orchestra, and in chamber music groups. She studied guitar with Julian Bream, Ida Presti, and Alexandre Lagoya, and composition with Darius Milhaud at Aspen, Colorado, and at Columbia University, where she received a degree in musicology. Alice has made 13 solo recordings, has written two books on guitar technique as well as numerous articles on music, and has several instructional videos on YouTube.

**Katharyn Benessa** recently completed the requirements for a Doctor of Arts from the University of Northern Colorado with her dissertation “Secular Song of the Spanish Renaissance: Portrayals of Moors and Christians during the Reign of Isabel and Fernando, the Reconquest, and the First Morisco Rebellion.” Her reward was a trip to England to pick up a vihuela and a French baroque guitar built by Alexander Batov. Her article is dedicated to her friend and mentor, Douglas Alton Smith.

In a career spanning 30 years and five countries, Cincinnati-born jazz guitarist and educator **Greg Chako** has led an entrepreneurial life in the music business, much of which occurred while he lived and worked throughout the Far East, most notably in Singapore. He has released 10 CDs, four videos, and been the subject of a documentary, *An American Cat in the Lion City*. His recordings feature syncopated rhythms, soulful melodies, hard-swinging jazz, and exotic percussion.

After 30 years as cofounder and lead developer of law office software for Abacus Data Systems, Inc., **Brian Hays** stays busy playing music, using Sibelius to engrave friends’ arrangements for publication, and supporting dystonia research. He welcomes contact and can be reached at [bhays@abacuslaw.com](mailto:bhays@abacuslaw.com).

**Douglas James** is professor of guitar at Appalachian State University, where he teaches classical guitar and directs the Appalachian GuitarFest and Competition. With a performing career spanning almost four decades, he frequently concertizes as a soloist and in ensemble with the Rucco-James Duo (19th-century guitars) and Corde Cantanti (theorbo). He has served on the board of trustees and chaired the advisory board of the Guitar Foundation of America.

**Elanor O'Brien** left her native Brooklyn, New York, in search of the good life, and found it at Persephone Farm, near Lebanon, Oregon. Elanor and her partner Jeff Falen raise 14 acres of certified organic vegetables, including the grand broccolis to which Pat O'Brien often referred. Persephone Farm hopes to help create a more sustainable agriculture through attention to soil health, renewable energy, and training future farmers ([www.persephonefarmoregon.com](http://www.persephonefarmoregon.com)).

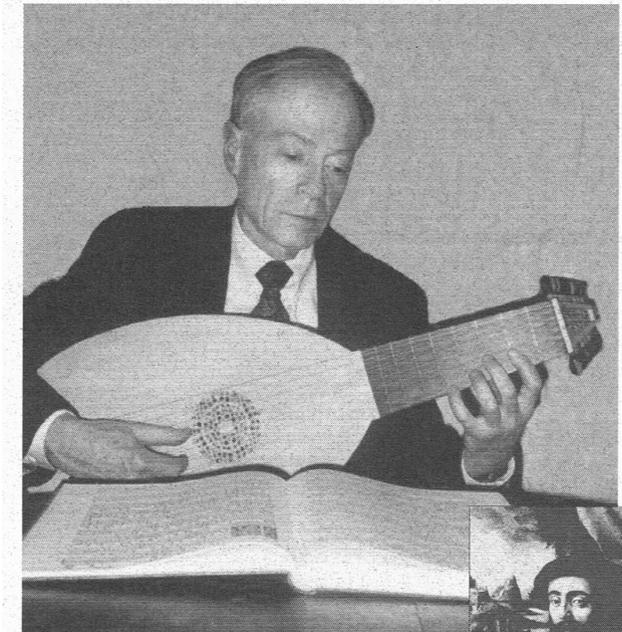
**Jason Priset** holds degrees from the State University of New York at Fredonia (BM) and Stony Brook University (MM, DMA). He is a regular performer on lutes and guitars in the United States and abroad, and is currently on the faculty at Montclair State University and the Amherst Early Music Festival. Jason also is director of the Lute Society of America's Summer Festival.

**Daniel Rindler** is a Guild-certified Feldenkrais practitioner based in Brooklyn, New York, who studied lute, theorbo, and baroque guitar with Pat O'Brien for nearly a decade. Studying with Pat prepared him to go on to complete a degree in early music performance practice at Indiana University, Bloomington. Dan sees musicians and performing artists in his private Feldenkrais practice, and also teaches Feldenkrais method at the Yale University Norfolk Chamber Music Festival.

Holder of a Premier Prix in guitar performance from the Conservatoire National in Nice, France, and a PhD in English literature from York University, **Jack Silver** has written several books and many articles on various musical and literary subjects. He is project leader of the DOREMI record company's "Segovia and His Contemporaries" series, and is currently writing a biography of the Brazilian singer-guitarist Olga Prager Coelho.

IN MEMORIAM:  
DOUGLAS ALTON SMITH (1944-2018)

After a long illness, Douglas Alton Smith died at his home on August 9. Over the decades Doug made numerous contributions to the Lute Society of America in a variety of roles, most recently as a member of the board of directors and as guest editor and senior consulting editor of the *Journal of the LSA*.



Doug received his PhD in music from Stanford University in 1977. His dissertation, “The Late Sonatas of Silvius Leopold Weiss,” could be considered the starting point of modern lute players’ fascination with Weiss and the baroque lute. Doug also was the original editor of *Sylvius Leopold Weiss, 1686-1750, Complete Works for Lute*, an edition sponsored by the Musikgeschichtliche Kommission, with further support in the form of research grants from the Alexander Humboldt Stiftung, the Leverhulme Trust, and King’s College London.

Doug’s contributions to lute scholarship cannot be overstated. He published numerous articles in the *Journal of the Lute Society of America*, the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, *Early Music*, *Le Luth et sa Musique*, the *Galpin Society Journal*, and *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* on topics as varied as Matthäus Weissel’s instructions of how to play the lute to the chitarrone and the 13-course ba-

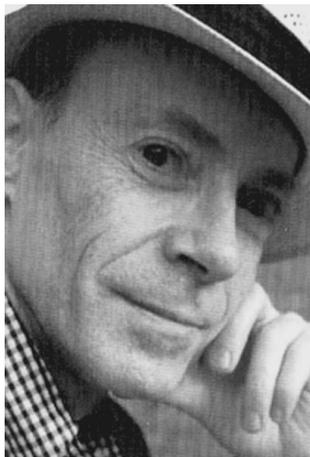
roque lute. In 1976 he published a translation of Ernst Gottlieb Baron's *Study of the Lute (1727)*.

The book that most people will remember Doug for is *The History of the Lute from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (LSA, 2002), which remains the only book of its kind. He was often asked if he was going to write Volume II on the baroque lute, and his answer was always that someone else should take on that project.

Doug's many other projects were not all lute related. Those included writing restaurant reviews for his local newspaper, some of which were later turned into the book *The Midpeninsula Scotch Gourmet: The Frugal Epicure's Guide to Eating and Drinking on the Lower San Francisco Peninsula*. He was interested in playing folk guitar, a project that expanded into the composing of a folk opera, which he only recently finished. Doug also spearheaded the four *JLSA* issues devoted to the life and work of Patrick O'Brien (Volumes 47 through 50). Volume 52 of the *JLSA* will be a festschrift in memory of Doug.

In tribute to Doug, the LSA has created the Douglas A. Smith Scholarship, which will pay for a lute student to attend one of our festivals. You might also consider a donation in Doug's memory to the society's digital lute music library, a project that was dear to Doug's heart. But perhaps the best way to remember Doug is to purchase a copy of *The History of the Lute*, which is available on the society's website. (If you already have one, why not pick up another copy and donate it to your library?)

Doug will be missed, but warmly remembered.



# Biographical Introduction

BY ELANOR O'BRIEN

One of the things I miss most about my father is that I can no longer call him up and ask him a question. I think most people who knew Pat are familiar with this phenomenon: one could call him, anytime, and ask any question, on any subject in the world. And he would answer. At length. Even if his answer was a guess, it was a pretty informed guess. It made sense. So, what to do with all the questions I have for him now?

Douglas Alton Smith, in his tireless efforts to produce several memorial issues of the *Journal* dedicated to Pat's teachings, had a suggestion for me: ask friends and family of Pat who may recall what Pat himself said to them. In particular, Doug's wish was to learn more about Pat's own experience with tendinitis, which inspired Pat to develop ways of teaching guitar technique to players for better hand health. So I began an informal research project.

Everyone with whom I spoke noted that Pat didn't talk much about his own hand issues. Dr. Frank Wilson said of Pat, "He alluded to it, then he moved on." My impression is that Pat was more interested in learning about the way to teach each individual player, now, in the present moment, how to heal, than in revisiting his own past issues. My Dad was a pretty present-moment kind of guy. And who among us is very enthused to revisit a painful experience in our lives?

Many of us know a little something about how Pat came to decide how to treat himself after developing hand problems. I heard him say that part of his reason for taking on the job himself originated in his working-class, Catholic upbringing. "I was taught to say, 'mea culpa,' it's my fault, it's my problem, and it's my responsibility to find a way out of it," Pat said. Pat also quoted his father as saying, "Allergies and divorces are for rich people; we can't afford them." So in his family one would be less likely to consult an outside "expert" to solve one's problems. The idea of outsourcing this important job seemed impractical, expensive, and beside the point. "I'll figure my way through this." Pat knew there was something about a modern classical guitar

technique he had learned that must have been wrong, because it was hurting his hand. He could sense the origin of the problem, and chose to approach it directly rather than to operate through a middleman.

Not to mention the fact that the remedies recommended by middlemen seemed questionable. One of the “solutions” recommended by physicians was steroid injections to reduce inflammation in the hands. Pat recognized that this would reduce his pain, but by removing the symptom of pain, he would no longer be able to discern what motions he was using that were harmful and hurtful. So much for steroids.

Another option recommended was surgery . . . again, expensive, but also, if a player persisted in a harmful technique after the surgery, how would the problem be solved? Yet another recommendation was to rest and not play for a while. But once playing resumed, where was the proper technique he needed to play well and in good health? So much for experts.

The rest of the story is familiar to many. Pat chose to educate himself about the anatomy of the hand and the proper mechanics for play. And, to quote my Mother, “Once he saw that he could help himself out of this problem, he decided he should try to help others do it too.” Those of us who knew Pat know that his capacity for learning was vast. Owen Middleton, a composer and guitarist who met Pat when they were both teachers at the Hoff-Barthelson School of Music in Scarsdale, NY, said, “It wasn’t anything that he had to work at. He had a determination to dig out all that information because it was so important to him.” But when it came to training himself, “He [Pat] was a tireless worker, he practiced all the time, he soaked up all that information, and he never forgot anything he learned.”

So I haven’t enlightened anyone with any new information concerning Pat’s hand problems. What little he said about them, he said openly, so it is pretty common knowledge. But still I am grateful to Doug for encouraging me in this project. I got to talk with old friends and with family about my Dad. What could be better? I may not have learned anything new or surprising about Pat’s tendinitis, but I learned that the Back Alley Boys, a bluegrass band in which Pat played with friends in high school, played to five thousand people at the Flushing Pavilion at the 1965 World’s Fair. I learned that the band had gigs all over New York City almost every weekend. I learned where Pat bought his first lute, used, from Bellmore Music on Long Island. From one of Pat’s lectures that Doug transcribed, a story of my four-year-old self, asking my father a question, greets me today. One

of our friends still wears a scarf Pat wove for him. I treasure all of these living connections to my father.

The poet Jim Wrathall said, “They say that every time someone dies, a library burns down.” I am grateful to everyone who has been working to preserve Pat O’Brien’s library of work for future generations of players. This is exactly what he would have wanted.

With much love and appreciation,  
Elanor O’Brien