CONCERT REVIEWS
French guitarist's mastery and power light up festival

By Mike Greenberg
Express-News Senior Critic

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Not for the faint of heart was guitarist Judicael Perroy's incandescent recital Saturday night for the Southwest Guitar Festival in Travis Park United Methodist Church.

This young Frenchman may be the most intense, driven and jaw-droppingly brilliant performer around, on any instrument. Some of the music on his program had been essayed ably by others during this festival -- Astor Piazzolla's wistful "Invierno Porteño," an Agustin Barrios waltz, Johann-Kaspar Metz's "Hungarian Fantasy" - but Perroy took each to a new level.

His sheer facility was astonishing, but more remarkable still was his mastery of instrumental color - including some timbres that he seems to have invented.

He was impetuous, probing, willful. He played every note as though it might be his last; every phrase contained wheels within wheels. Even Enrique Granados' innocent "Valses Poéticos" became epics. His second encore, Nikita Koshkin's frantic "Usher Waltz," was like a galaxy exploding.

Transcendent artistry? Perhaps not of the cerebral type.

Compelling? Unforgettable?

Absolutely.
A miraculous concert

Facing a crowd captivated by his interpretation, Judicaël Perroy received the greatest ovation to this date at the 10th Hispano-American festival that started November 6th in the concert hall of Tijuana Cultural Center. This concert confirmed the power of expression this popular instrument has in a concert hall.

A miraculous concert
I have never been interested by musical therapy and do not care about healing properties music has on men, animal or plants. And I do not like the idea that music could be associated with aspirin. However, on Wednesday the 12th of November, I felt the healing properties of the music played by Judicaël Perroy.

I have arrived in the concert room with a cough which in other circumstances would have prevented me from attending the concert (in the audience of course) but Judicaël Perroy’s guitar, rather than healing my cough (on that matter, I still have doubts) has managed to keep me silent during the whole concert. How is it possible to interrupt the masterly interpretation he has offered? How can one disturb the attention of an audience captivated by this rare combination of virtuosity and good taste?

Of course, there is always an absent-minded person to think that listening to a concert comes down to listening to the radio sitting in an armchair, but hopefully, neither these absent-minded persons nor my cough have succeeded to disturb the great musical experience this happy audience went through.

At the end if the first piece (Grand Sonata op39 of Niccolo Paganini), Judicaël tried (as much as he could in Spanish) to tell the legend surrounding this piece. [...] The other pieces of the first part were very homogenous, stylistically wise.

He played the Fantasy Op 19 of Luigi Legnani, the introduction and the Caprice Op.23 of Giulio Regondi and the Fantasy on Traviata themes (Verdi) by Francisco Tarrega, in which Judicaël showed his stunning virtuosity that always goes along with good taste.

Then the Valses poeticos of Granados were played with the same clearness, precision, velocity, meaningful strength, and followed by expected and deserved showers of praises. All he lacks is fame. He has got the rest, and much more than necessary.

Then there was a slight modification in the program: instead of the Variations on "Folia de España" and Fugue by Ponce, he played the second Suite for lute by Bach. What he achieved with Bach (which even if it does not seem to be so, is very difficult to play) verged on the boundaries of magic. The interpretation from the Suite of the Prelude to the Double of the Gigue was simply magical.

To finish, he played as a first encore the Waltz Op 18 n°4 of Agustín Barrios and then the Catedral (the whole piece) also of Barrios.

I have no other word or praise to add, so I’d simply say that these encores were played with as much mastery that the rest of the concert.
The first prize winner of the 1997 GFA Competition, Parisian Judicaël Perroy, returned to play a demanding program; because of confusion at the airport, he barely made it to his concert, but there was no indication of either fatigue or distraction in his performance. Paganini's Grand Sonata in A, op.39, his becoming a sort of signature piece for him; its technical demands match his abilities very well. His concert also included Bach's Lute Suite BWV 997, selections from Piazzolla's Cinco Piezas, Albeniz's Sevilla and Cataluña, and a very good arrangement (his own) of Granados' Valses Poéticos. Perroy is capable of some outstanding virtuosity, as in the Paganini Variations, the scale at the end of Cataluña, or some of Granados' luscious waltzes, but the Bach Sarabande and Paganini's Romance also revealed a musician capable of great subtlety and sensitivity. He has a silvery tone, power, taste, and breathtaking scales. The GFA competition has another worthy representative in this young artist. Formidable!
... This guy is good! Someone to watch out for. He opened with two large scale works by Bach in his own transcription, the Concerto after Vivaldi BWV 972, and the A minor suite BWV 997. Expertly played with a good understanding of the style, perfect control over the phrasing, just about as satisfying Bach as one could wish for. He followed that with the Fantaisie Hongroise by Mertz, one of those magnificent displays of Hungarian gypsy passion which most non-Hungarian botch up mercilessly as an empty display of digital pyrotechnics. Perroy got the hang of this right and proper. He would dispatch himself with honor and respect in any gypsy gathering in the Hungarian Putza. I still think it is better to play this work on the instrument for which it was written: the 10-string/24-fret Scherzer double-back guitar, than on a bare bones six-stranger. A different animal altogether. But given the correct stylistic peculiarities of the typical Verbunkos, one can get away it. Perroy did, and magnificently so. I enjoyed his Mertz very much. He was scheduled to play two pieces by Albeniz after the intermission, Cordoba and Asturias. Mercifully, perhaps in deference to a statement I made to him privately before the concert regarding this music, he dropped these pieces from his program. The gesture touched me deeply. His performance of the Cinco piezas by Astor Piazzolla carried all the trademarks of his teacher, Roberto Ausseu. Well played, but, and this is my measure on how anybody can play Piazzolla, I would not last on the tango dance floor for two measures with this music. The program ended with Koshkin’s Usher waltz in a rendition which makes that John Williams pale by comparison. Mind you, even though I am the first person to ever publish this music, and its popularity owes much to my promotion of it, I think it is over-played and it’s time it was given a well-deserved rest. Judicaël, however, had given this lollipop such a blazing interpretation it almost sounded like real classical music. The audience loved it and would not let him go without putting out three encores which included some of the usual Lauro waltzes, a token Albeniz (Sevilla) and the Barrios La Catedral.

CUERNAVACA GUITAR FESTIVAL 2000
Matanya Ophée

The performance, however, was anything but pedantic. Fire and brimstone and a « Romanza » played truly amorosamente. Two transcriptions of Paganini Caprices followed, no.16 and the inevitable no.24 from Paganini’s op.1 one of the few works by him in which he used an Opus number. It was difficult not to compare this with Fisk’s performance at the beginning of the week, but as I said, there is more than one way to skin a Paganini Caprice and Judicaël dispatched himself here with distinction. The second half of the program was dedicated to music by Nikita Koshkin, the Prelude and Valse, the Usher Waltz and the sonata. Well done. Nikita recently informed me that he was invited to this year’s Cuernavaca Festival. It will be interesting to hear these two getting together. But the best was yet to come. The first encore was the Mertz Hungarian Fantasy, which Judicaël performed with distinction in a true Hungarian gipsy style, in last year’s festival. I do not recall if Karin Schaupp was there, but I would strongly advise her to listen to this young man’s interpretation.
The Piazzolla Man Delivers

In his Rialto Theater concert, Oct 24, 1998, Judicaël Perroy stunned the capacity audience with a totally masterful performance from the first note to the last. Comments heard at intermission and orations after the concert left no doubt the audience was enthralled by the virtuosity and artistry they heard.

Judicaël opened the recital with Campero, Romantico, and Compadre by Astor Piazzolla. These were played with affection and created a charming effect for an opening set. The Grande Sonata, Op. 39, by Niccolo Paganini received an enthusiastic performance. This Sonata is performed infrequently, perhaps due to the difficulty in making the first movement sound musically coherent and natural. JP did a convincing job, but clearly looked forward to the gorgeous second movement (lovingly played). He had fun with the pyrotechnic third movement dazzling everyone present with wonderful finger gymnastics and dramatic effects. The first half concluded with the Tango of Enrique Nunez. This piece has a quiet ending which he handled admirably, but seemed a bit odd to end the half with an introspective type of work.

The second half began with one of the finest performances of La Catedral (by Agustin Barrios) the reviewer has ever heard... and I have heard a few hundred! The lyrical movements sang and the final Allegro was at a breathtaking pace but clean, impassioned and "just right". Bach's 2nd Lute Suite was next, and JP's performance was masterful. The tempi were perfect, his articulation superb, the phrasing clear and convincing. He finished the concert with two movements from Albéniz's Suite Española, Cataluna and Sevilla. Both were exciting and fun to hear and brought the audience instantly to their feet for a well deserved "standing O". The cheers were rewarded with an encore — Paganini's 24th Caprice (arr. John Williams) — my personal highlight of the evening. I am tempted to say he "out-Williams'd John Williams" with this performance. He had the audience gasping for breath as he flew through the variations. When he finished, the crowd cheered wildly, hollered, whistled and wanted more.

This concert was well attended and a huge success for both JP and the CGS. We heard a tremendous young player share his soul and passion for music. We heard nothing of this young French guitarist prior to the week he swept the 1997 GFA Competition. If Judicaël Perroy continues to perform with the heart and soul that we heard this evening, his reputation will continue to grow long after his GFA Tour is finished... and we will all come to know him well — Steve Warner
beer at the band. Many of them could have been written by Roberts or Raymonds. The one I remember was good ol' Robert, aka Bob, Marley's "Asshole," or "Highlander" sung to the tune of "Lowrider." It was obvious from the range of songs and mixture of musical genres that The Reel McKenzies are "about" a lot of things. One thing for certain: I heard many of the opinions of lead vocalist Paul McKenzie, who dominated on stage and between songs. He ranted things like, "This one's for all of you out there who have to go to church in the morning, crap in a world of hypocrisy," or something like that.

Ah, alcohol, I don't think I've mentioned it enough. From the grand moment when the band marched on stage to the end of the show when people were getting in their last Scottish/moshing dance, the booze flowed. After all, how else could lead vocalist Paul McKenzie moisten those lips enough to spit all over the stage? He did this when his adrenaline was really going; he belted out the ballads and bounded across the stage. The crowd loved it. What really pumped them up was the song about scotch. The Reel McKenzies each had their own glass, with which they toasted the audience and drank up.

Except for one lucky lass sitting stage left, whom McKenzie gave a little rear flash, we never got to see what the boys were wearing underneath their kilts. That would have been chic and the Real McKenzies were anything but.

Judicael Perroy
Edmonton Classical Guitar Society
Muttart Hall
5 March

Many of us associate guitar playing virtuosity with the grindy antics of hairy, leather-clad thugs, or perhaps with the more spectacular showmanship exhibited during a KISS show when, apparently, Faires were launched from the freaking guitar. After attending a brilliant performance by the young 1997 First Prize winner of the Guitar Foundation of America Solo Guitar Competition, I believe that I now know what the real shit is.

Judicael Perroy is a twenty-six-year-old marvel. Born and schooled mainly in Paris, Perroy showed signs of musical promise at the tender age of seven when he began guitar studies at the Paris Academy of Music. By eleven he was performing Vivaldi concertos. A quick read of Perroy's achievements over the past two decades reveals a man of remarkable talent. Among his many honors, he was awarded First Prize from the Paris National Conservatory in 1992. As part of his '97 GFA prize, he has toured North America with over sixty recital dates scheduled—and, thanks to the Edmonton Classical Guitar Society, he showed up in Edmonton for one unforgettable evening.

The performance featured five pieces, including Bach's "Lute Suite #2" and Paganini's "Grand Sonata" presentations, and I suspect that the crowd would have coaxed still more from him had the crowd not promptly begun to disperse. The intimacy of the Muttart Hall lent itself splendidly to a magical display of guitar genius. Judicael presented himself quietly to the small crowd—all of his passion and intensity was reserved for the actual performance. A modicum of drama was injected into the proceedings when we were informed—in halting, Parisienne-English—that a broken fingernail might present additional challenges to an undertaking of Paganini. But Judicael persevered, and if there were difficulties in rendering this segment of the performance, then these ears failed to hear them.

Having gushed so profusely on the merits of this fine musician, I should be unpardonably remiss in not giving credit to the reason for Judicael's appearance in Edmonton. The Edmonton Classical Guitar Society provides a forum for lovers and performers of classical guitar, to socialize and share their knowledge and appreciation of all things classical... er... guitarish. This group is hardworking and sincere in their efforts to promote a solid network among guitar enthusiasts: everything from exclusive workshops to recital opportunities, not to mention informal coffeehouse gatherings.

On April 28, the Society welcomes David Russell, considered the world's greatest living guitarist. If you're looking for some real musical fireworks, then get in on this once-in-a-lifetime concert opportunity.
Perroy gives powerful performance at recital hall

Prize winning guitarist on major USA and Canadian tour

By CECEL VENDRELL
STAR REPORTER

The balmy air and full moon made Friday night the ideal evening for a powerful performance by the classical guitarist, Judicael Perroy, in the Music Recital Hall at Los Angeles Valley College. Born in Paris in 1973, Perroy began studying guitar at the age of 7 and has since won many international guitar competitions, including first place at the Guitar Foundation of America's competition in California in 1997. This concert is part of a GPA tour of major cities throughout the USA and Canada. If Friday night was any indication, his tour should be a definite success.

fascinating and fanciful trip into the sound of classical guitar. Dressed simply in a white shirt and black pants, the good-looking Perroy had a pleasant yet commanding performance style. He began with two works by Bach, a concerto that Perroy himself transcribed for the guitar and a suite. The opening allegro of the concerto was light and beautiful, defined by intricate fingerings. During the haunting and intimate largo, he was distracted by a talkative toddler in the audience and had to ask calmly that the child leave the room. The audience applauded in approval after the minor offender had gone.

In the second half of the concert Perroy played Cinco Piezas, a five piece work that had been written for his teacher by the Argentinian composer Astor Piazzolla. Perroy had first heard this work a long time ago, and it was obvious that it was a favorite of his. The eerie, dreamlike Usher Waltz by Nikita Koshkin, a bizarre and quirkily attractive piece that was fun and edgy, was punctuated by his technique of snapping the guitar strings.

Perroy received several standing ovations from the audience of approximately 80 people of diverse ages, with his encores enthusiastically welcomed.

There are three more classical guitar concerts scheduled for the fall season, said Robert Mayeur, director of the LAVC Guitar Ensemble and Orchestra. Valley students and friends would do themselves a favor by taking advantage of the international and local talent performing here as a chance to see world-class performers in an intimate and
Normally, it is easier for me to write a review about a guitarist I liked as opposed to a guitarist that left me cold. But as I sit down to do this review, I’m struck by the possibility that in describing the wonderful performance given by GFA winner Judicaël Perroy last November, I may run out of superlatives!

Mssr. Perroy has technique to spare, making the most demanding literature flow flawlessly from his instrument. Add to that a seemingly innate musicality and vibrant spirit, and you end up with a truly breathtaking and magical evening of music.

He had scheduled to begin in a traditional mode with the D-minor Lute Suite of Bach. Instead, he took the road less traveled and began with three works by Astor Piazzolla: Campeo was in turn mystical and powerful; Romantico lived up to its title, even though it was punctuated with many rhythmic surprises; and Compadre used the lively and exotic elements (such as slapping the guitar) that make Piazzolla so distinctive. All were played with stirring eloquence.

We then heard the Grand Sonata, Op. 39, of Niccolo Paganini. From the rococo pyrotechnics of the opening Allegro risoluto, to the seamless melodic line of the Romance, to the spectacular variations of the Andantino variato, Mssr. Perroy’s performance was a joy to behold.

The first half ended with La Catedral by Barrios. The artist’s thoughtful musicality was manifest in his unusual use of rhythmic accents in the second movement, marked Andante religioso. His formidable technique was demonstrated in the Allegro Solemne, which he marched through with unnerving ease.

Although we had to wait until the second half to hear Bach’s Lute Suite No. 2, it was worth the wait. The Prelude was impeccably phrased, and the Fugue was exceptionally well voiced and dynamic. In the Sarabande, a solemn tempo allowed for a very expressive rendition. The Gigue was sprightly, but the Double was taken at an awe-inspiring prestissimo with nary a note missed.

Excitement in the hall was high as he began two works by Albeniz: Catalufia and Sevilla. Suffice it to say that these sparkling performances yielded a standing ovation at the conclusion of the Sevilla.

The final work on the program was Granados’ Valses Poeticos. These were all played with grace and charm, with the final Melodico so sweet it brought tears to this reviewer’s eyes. Once again the audience was on its feet, and Mssr. Perroy acquiesced to play an encore. After such a demanding program, you might expect a work that did not place strenuous demands on the performer. No such thoughts occurred to Judicaël Perroy. He launched into a scintillating performance of John Williams’ transcription of Paganini’s Caprice No. 24. Just as a superstitious populace accused Paganini himself of collusion with supernatural forces, one could not but wonder about the source of the unrelenting technical prowess demonstrated by our performer.

I must congratulate Mssr. Perroy on the exceptional program he gave us, and I must further congratulate the GFA judges on their choice in last year’s competition. Finally, I’d like to thank Mssr. Roget for the thesaurus that allowed me to write this review.

— Dave Weisbart
Judicael Perroy

Matthew Hinsley

ACGS event:
Recital
Friday, December 4th, 8:00 pm
Jessen Auditorium, UT Campus
ACGS members, UTID and Seniors, $10 others
Call (512) 459-0243 for more information

I think I was most struck by the beauty of Perroy’s extreme upper range (1st and 2nd strings ve the 12th fret). His performance came with all trimmings one would expect from a rising international star. But often, even with the greatest of players, we guitarists sometimes let out some slack on the most difficult tasks, like facility, ease and all-like tone in the extreme-high register. His sen-
vity and extreme care combined with a jaw-dropping speed, gave the impression of an artistic dancer in ice. Somehow he was able to achieve this ex-
ordinary performance in the final, public rounds of what has become the world’s most important ter competition. I was in La Jolla, California, the annual Guitar Foundation of America Com-
petition. And following the competition I rushed on to the Pacific Coast, where the roar of the se would drown out all the sounds of the world, except for the music of Judicael Perroy lingering in a.

Each year ACGS honors the most recent winner of the GFA competition. For those of you who were lucky enough to see the concerts of Fabio
zanon and Antigoni Goni, these last two years, you well aware of the caliber of artists this competition promotes. Judicael Perroy will perform on

ACGS Out-Reaches

By Matthew Hinsley

We here at ACGS are very proud of this new project. With the help of the Texas Commission on the Arts and the City of Austin (under the auspices of the Austin Arts Com-
mision) we are providing ten (10), that’s right TEN concerts, within the city limits, to be given by one of the classical guitar world’s rising stars. These concerts are spread throughout most of the city and they are free. The concerts will take place between November 1st and November 14th. A listing of the confirmed times and places are on page two of this issue, but certainly feel free to call the society at 459-0243 if you would like more information. As a guitar enthusiast, it is hard to conceive of a reason not to see this great performer at least once while he’s here.

The concerts will be short and delightful. Having re-
cently returned from a US Embassy funded tour of Africa, where he was asked to play American music, Randall Avers has programmed works of Gershvin and Brubeck along side of guitar standards like Albeniz and Villa-Lobos.

Having performed all over the United States, Canada, Europe and now Africa, Avers continues to remain a player to watch. He firmly established a spot in the guitar scene after being a two-time prize winner in both of America’s most important international competitions: The Guitar Foundation of America (1991, 1993) and the Guitarists of Leadership and Distinction (1992, 1993). He was the first guitarist ever to

(see “Outreach” on page 2)
Ouest France 4/27/84

The young Judicaël Perroy, 11 years old, looking like Roberto Benzi with his curly hair, played « The Variations on Malbrough s’en va- t'en -guerre » by Fernando Sor. Obviously, the audience was held spellbound by this little guy who, hopefully, will neither be manipulated by the media, nor feed the music business. His variations are relevant of an already mature technique and personal sound (the Bach Prelude played as an encore is not at everybody’s level). But please, let us allow him to take his time and build up his personality. His debut is very promising; therefore his coolness and innocence have to be protected.

Les Cahiers de la guitare et de la musique N°45/1993
Bernard Piris

... Judicaël Perroy won the fist prize of the René Bartoli International Competition. This young French guitarist (20 years old) has amazing talent, but more than that, he has a strong understanding of music. He is truly an expert at what he does. To be continued...

Guitar Review N°104 / 1996

All the performances were of an extremely high standard. One would not normally single out one individual, Judicaël Perroy caused such a sensation with his outstanding performance of Barrios' Catedral that it would be an injustice not to flag up his name at this time.

Edmonton Sun March 16th, 1999
John Charles

... Breathtaking performance. Judicaël played a Bach Lute Suite that was stunning.