

STEPHEN ARON Classical Guitar

Full Biography

Described by the New York Times as “cultivated and musical,” Stephen Aron has established himself at the center of the American classical guitar scene. His first solo CD, *Sketches*, features the first recordings of works by Ned Rorem and David Bernstein. Of this recording, the Cleveland Plain Dealer said it features “interpretations that sing with vibrant rhythm, subtle color and a feeling of intimacy.” Mr. Aron’s CD, 3-disc set, features the complete 51 Chopin Mazurkas on solo guitar (Mel Bay). This recording, in presenting an entire series of works by a major non-guitar composer, represents an audacious industry first. “He has produced what must certainly be regarded as the most important contribution to the repertoire (by arrangement) in recent years...breathtaking” (Guitar Review). The set was recently re-issued in a one-disc version “My Favorite Mazurkas” by Clear Note Publications. His latest recording, of the *Lieder ohne Worte* of Mendelssohn and the complete *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15 of Schumann, *Romantic Guitar*, was released this year by Clear Note. A book of thirty of the Mendelssohn works accompanied the CD release.

An avid arranger, his work is published by Tuscan Editions (“wonderful guitaristic arrangement,” *American Music Teacher*), Mel Bay Publications (“historic,” *Guitar*), and Clear Note Publications. His edition and recording of the *Complete Guitar Works of Burle Marx* was released in 2007 by Clear Note (“Fascinating...This is a book to be ignored at your peril. If this music...is not played by lots of performers in the next few years, then there is simply no justice in the world of music,” *Classical Guitar*). Stephen Aron’s recordings have been described as “stunning” (Guitar Review), “inspired” (Classical Guitar) and “exemplary” (Soundboard). A vigorous chamber music advocate, he performs regularly with JoNell Aron, a soprano with whom he has recorded two CD’s, one of original arrangements of vaudeville songs called *Shine On Harvest Moon*, and one of original arrangements of sacred songs entitled *In My Heart*. Of *Shine On Harvest Moon*, *Fanfare* magazine said it was “warmly recommended,” while *The Rag Times* declared it was “exceptional and appealing; get this CD.” Of *In My Heart*, *Soundboard* stated “there are many reasons to like this superbly produced CD...it is one of the best discs to cross my desk.” He is a regular guest with the *Gabrieli Ensemble* (strings) and his quartet *Poco Tango*, (flute, guitar, bass and percussion) performs regularly in the region. Mr. Aron has also published a collection of arias arranged for voice and guitar from Handel’s *Messiah*, and an original composition for solo guitar, *Rockport Stomp* (both with Clear Note). *Classical Guitar* described *Rockport Stomp* as “imaginative, adventurous, effortlessly entertaining and a great deal of fun to play.”

Stephen Aron has adjudicated and produced numerous national and international competitions. He has given lectures, performed and taught masterclasses at six

GFA Conventions, the Boston Conservatory Guitar Festivals, the Stetson International Guitar Festivals, the Portland Guitar Festivals, the Great Lakes Festivals, the Weathersfield Chamber Music Festival, the Rantucci Guitar Festivals, the Appalachian Guitar Festivals, The Eastman Guitar Festivals, The Ithaca College Winter Guitar Festival, the Yale University Guitar Extravaganza, the Piccolo Spoleto Festival, the East Carolina University Guitar Festival, the Alexandria Guitar Festival, the Rosario Guitar Festivals, the Eastern Tennessee Guitar Festival, the ASTA, the MANC, and the National Summer Guitar Workshops. He has performed and taught at such schools as Manhattan School of Music, Cleveland Institute of Music, Yale University, University of Southern California, Tulane University, Magill University, MIT, Cal State Fullerton, Miami International University, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the Mannes College of Music. The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the GFA from 1991-93, Aron hosted and directed the GFA International Festival in 1988 in Akron, and was again the host and artistic director of the GFA International Convention in 2005, in Oberlin. Aron is a graduate of the Hartt College of Music and the University of Arizona.

In addition to his post as Professor of Music and Chairman of Guitar Studies at the University of Akron (since 1981), Stephen Aron is Teacher of Classical Guitar and founder of the classical guitar studies program at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music (since 1991).

More info is available at www.stephenaron.net.

STEPHEN ARON

Classical Guitar

Brief Biography

Described by the New York Times as “cultivated and musical,” Stephen Aron performs regularly throughout the US, Canada and recently completed a tour of Italy. An avid arranger, his work is published by Tuscan Editions (“wonderful guitaristic arrangement,” American Music Teacher) and Mel Bay Publications (“historic,” Guitart). His original composition “Rockport Stomp” and the “Complete Guitar Works of Burle Marx” were recently released by Clear Note Publications. Aron’s recordings have been described as “stunning” (Guitar Review), “superbly produced” (Soundboard), “warmly recommended” (Fanfare) and “inspired” (Classical Guitar). His new recording and publication of thirty Lieder ohne Worte by Felix Mendelssohn for solo guitar were released this year. Aron has adjudicated numerous national and international competitions and has been a repeat guest, giving performances, lectures and masterclasses at Guitar Foundation of America Conventions, Stetson Guitar Workshops, Portland Guitar Festivals, Eastman Guitar Festivals, Rantucci Guitar Festivals, Alexandria Guitar Festivals, and Appalachian Guitar Festivals as well as at the Yale Guitar Extravaganza, the Ithaca College Winter Guitar Festival, the National Summer Guitar Workshop, the Eastern Carolina University Guitar Festival, the Eastern Tennessee Guitar Festival and others. In addition to his post as Professor of Music and Chairman of Guitar Studies at the University of Akron, Stephen Aron is Teacher of Guitar and founder of the classical guitar studies program at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

www.stephenaron.net

STEPHEN ARON

Classical Guitar

Reviews

IN PERFORMANCE

"Stephen Aron's program showcased both his personality and impeccable musicianship. ...I always look forward to hearing Mr. Aron perform any of his Chopin arrangements. It has been said that the mark of a great arranger is when the music sounds as if it were written for the instrument being played; this certainly holds true for Stephen Aron."

- GFA Soundboard

"A cultivated and musical young guitarist...his phrasing and dynamic shading were exemplary"

- New York Times

"The slow pieces were delightfully melodic; the fast pieces left the audience in awe; a standing ovation brought him back for an encore"

- GFA Soundboard

"Notes were gorgeously edgy, stunning the audience with their evocation of regret and lament"

- Daytona Beach News Journal

"Stephen Aron thrilled the capacity crowd...spectacular renditions soared gloriously"

- The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

"Spirited performance...most effective playing...a fine recital"

- GFA Soundboard

"A stunning concert which demonstrated the virtuosity of both performers"

- GFA Soundboard

"It was an exciting concert. Aron has the ability to play with such precision that no matter how soft a passage gets, the notes literally zing out into the audience. His style, while full of romantic vibrato, was also delicate and lyrical"

- Cleveland Plain Dealer

"Expert and entertaining"

- GFA Soundboard

ON RECORD

"His sense of how to handle the material on guitar is completely convincing. The lines are beautifully phrased, with a sweeping rubato almost never heard on guitar recordings...The effect is voluptuous and mesmerizing. The fast pieces are impressively virtuosic, the slow ones are full of subtlety and nuance. The overall effect is breathtaking...Mr. Aron has not only managed to create the most convincing case yet of Chopin on the guitar, but he has gone a very big step further. He has produced what must certainly be regarded as the most important contribution to the repertoire (by arrangement) in recent years: a fully unified major cycle of works by a major composer." (Complete Chopin Mazurkas)

- Guitar Review

"Inspired" (Complete Chopin Mazurkas)

- Classical Guitar Magazine

"An impressive feat" (Complete Chopin Mazurkas)

- Acoustic Guitar

"There are many reasons to like this superbly produced CD...it is one of the best discs to cross my desk" (In My Heart)

- GFA Soundboard

"Warmly recommended" (Shine On Harvest Moon)

- Fanfare Magazine

"JoNell Aron has a youthful quality and crystal clear diction; Stephen Aron plays well with vitality and wit. This CD will obviously have strong appeal." (Shine On Harvest Moon)

- Classical Guitar

"Exceptional and appealing; get this CD" (Shine On Harvest Moon)

- The Rag Times

"Aron's playing is clean, crisp and understated...he gets into the spirit of the music and gives interpretations that sing with vibrant rhythm, subtle color and a feeling of intimacy" (Sketches)

- Cleveland Plain Dealer

IN PRINT

"Well thought-out and fun to play...an interesting and beautifully-produced edition" (Kinderszenen-Schumann)

- Classical Guitar Magazine

"This wonderful piece is imaginative, adventurous, effortlessly entertaining and a great deal of fun to play. It would be fabulous when played by a top class guitarist in concert and deserves to do well." (Rockport Stomp)

- Classical Guitar Magazine

"This is a book to be ignored at your peril. If this music or at least some of it is not played by lots of performers in the next few years, then there simply is no justice in the world of music...fascinating." (Complete Guitar Works of Burle Marx)

- Classical Guitar Magazine

"Where to begin? The word 'monumental' does not seem to give justice. Stephen Aron's exhaustive work...would seem to require a life's work, but there it is. I hold it in my hands and am amazed...His 3-CD recording of the entire work is deserving of a separate review and must be used as a reference to grasp the magnitude of this carefully realized, historic, and important new work." (Complete Chopin Mazurkas)

- Guitart

"Stephen Aron has arranged the guitar accompaniment with skill and sensitivity..." (The Soprano Arias from Messiah)

- Classical Guitar Magazine

"This colorful collection is truly something new and interesting. The volume is beautifully done...these songs with guitar accompaniment would be a great deal of fun" (On a Sunday Afternoon)

- National Association of Teachers of Singing Journal

"A perfect example of how it really should be done...Mr. Aron's artistic integrity and moreover love of his subject shines out for all to see...the best attempt yet to make the works of Chopin available to the guitarist." (Complete Chopin Mazurkas)

- Classical Guitar Magazine

"Very exciting" (Complete Chopin Mazurkas)

- Acoustic Guitar Magazine

"La Danza, that intoxicating tarantella once so splendidly sung by Caruso...is a little masterpiece...the music lies surprisingly well on the guitar. Seemingly virtuosic, the piece is not so very difficult to perform, and is a remarkably

idiomatic addition, by a major composer, to the...19th Century repertoire." (La Danza--Rossini)

- GFA Soundboard

"Incontestablement sonne fort bien." (Kinderszenen--Schumann)

- Les Cahiers de la Guitare et de la Musique

"The entire suite is at last available in a wonderful guitaristic arrangement suitable for any kind of program" (Kinderszenen--Schumann)

- American Music Teacher