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STETSON UNIVERSITY

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World-Renowned Classical Guitarists Perform Virtually at Stetson University's Great Guitarists Extravaganza

Irina Aleksandrova, Ben Gateno and the Newman & Oltman Guitar Duo to take center stage during three-day event

DELAND, Florida, Feb. 25, 2021 – The classical guitar's soft, smooth sounds have stood the test of time for four centuries. The acoustic, wooden guitar has nylon strings and a thin soundboard designed to project its warm sound in large, yet intimate concert halls, and continues to attract guitarists and audiences who are carrying the torch for generations to come.

Classical music aficionados and the Central Florida community will have an opportunity to hear the plucked-string instrument while virtually experiencing the talent of several virtuosos during free Great Guitarists Extravaganza Facebook Live performances, March 17-19, on the [Stetson University School of Music's Facebook page](#). A Live Artist Q&A will follow each concert.

Great Guitarists Extravaganza virtual concert schedule:

- **Wednesday, March 17, 7:30 p.m.:** [Ben Gateno, DMA](#)
- **Thursday, March 18, 7:30 p.m.:** Irina Aleksandrova
- **Friday, March, 19, 7:30 p.m.:** [Newman & Oltman Guitar Duo](#)

"The Great Guitarists Extravaganza strives to bring the highest quality and most impactful performances to Central Florida," said [Stephen Robinson, DM](#), professor of music at Stetson. "Audiences can expect outstanding concerts performed by international artists who are recognized for their diverse, creative programming and musical brilliance."

The Great Guitarists series, now in its fourth year, is presented by the School of Music and [Artists and Lecturers Series](#). Stetson's guitar program, founded by Robinson nearly 40 years ago, has invited world-renowned guitarists to perform for the Central Florida community. The guitarists also have provided School of Music guitarists and middle and high school guitar students with instruction prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Award-winning classical guitarist Aleksandrova will be making her United States debut during the Great Guitarists Extravaganza. She will be performing works by Johann Sebastian Bach, Nikita Koshkin, Johann Kaspar Mertz and Joaquín Rodrigo.

A native of Baku, Azerbaijan, Aleksandrova moved to Moscow with her family when she was five years old and later won a scholarship to study and perform at the 2018 Volterra Project Summer Guitar Institute in Volterra, Italy. She was the grand-prize winner of Moscow's fifth annual International Competition and Festival, The Golden Age of the Guitar three years ago.

Gateno hails from southern Minnesota and earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Rochester Eastman School of Music. He enjoys playing blues, classical, country and ragtime music and provides private guitar lessons. His concert performance will include music by Manuel de Falla, Agustín Barrios Mangoré, Manuel Ponce and Federico Moreno Torroba.

The Newman & Oltman Guitar Duo have been performing for more than 40 years and is recognized for their matchless technique, ensemble precision, innovative programming and commitment to expanding the repertoire for guitar duo. Michael Newman and Laura Oltman have released 10 albums that feature a broad range of musical compositions, including baroque and classical works to Spanish and Latin-American rhythms. They have also toured across five continents and performed at the world's cultural capitals during their music career.

Newman and Oltman are dedicated to inspiring the next generation of guitar players through their many educational endeavors. For the past 20 years, they have been the founders and artistic directors of the New York Guitar Seminar at Mannes in New York City.

The classical guitarists' Stetson program will include compositions by Isaac Albéniz, Manuel de Falla, Enrique Granados and renowned Cuban composer Leo Brouwer's "The Book of Imaginary Beings." Brouwer wrote the musical piece for the guitar duo, which is the centerpiece of their recording with the same name that was released on the MusicMasters label.

About Stetson University

Founded in 1883, [Stetson University](#) is the oldest private university in Central Florida. Stetson focuses on intense learning experiences in a supportive community that allows students to develop their voice in a connected, inclusive environment. Stetson University ranks No. 4 on U.S. News & World Report's 2021 list of Best Regional Universities (South), and has been recognized as one of The Princeton Review's 386 Best Colleges, 2021 edition. [Stay connected](#) with Stetson on social media.

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