

**I am composing music for classical guitar. Who publishes this kind of music, and how should I approach them?**

A publisher will take an unsolicited manuscript more seriously if the score is neatly copied (preferably typeset on a computer) and accompanied by letters of recommendation from respected guitarists, a professional resumé, and an excellent quality recording. If a guitarist who champions your work already has a relationship with a publisher, it may be more effective for her or him to make the initial approach on your behalf. Most publishers will only be interested in works that they can expect to sell—so if you can't interest performers in the music, it won't seem marketable to a publisher.

How do you interest performers? Musical America publishes an annual *International Directory of the Performing Arts* in which classical performers with management in the United States are listed by instrument. It's always a long shot, but you can try sending scores (and tapes) to guitarists in care of their managers and hope that someone will take the time to look at them. It would be unrealistic to *expect* an answer, however, since your inquiry is unsolicited. If the work is wonderful, it will sell itself. If you don't get an answer, assume the individual is not interested and try someone else. If you never get any positive response from performers, show your piece to a respected composition teacher for musical advice and guidance.

If you are fortunate enough to summon up the requisite artistic backing, there are many companies you could approach who currently publish guitar music. Order a catalogue from Guitar Solo (514 Bryant St., San Francisco, CA 94107), which includes listings that will give you an excellent idea of who publishes what. For starters, here are some names that come to mind: Guitar Solo Publications, Orphée, G. Schirmer, Music Sales, Boosey and Hawkes, European American, Peer-Southern, Mel Bay, Theodore Presser, Hal Leonard, MMB Music, American Composers Alliance, Cavata Music Publishers, Editions Salabert, Schott and Co., Chanterelle, Zanibon, Brazilliance, Suvini Zerboni, Novello, Faber, UME, Max Eschig, Tecla, Edizioni Musicali Bèrben, Carl Fischer, Sikorski, Ricordi, and Editions Musicales Transatlantiques. Addresses for most of these companies are listed in the Musical America *International Directory of the Performing Arts*.

**How can a classical guitarist—one among so many—find a niche and make a living by performing and teaching?**

There are never any guarantees. But if you want to teach, you should get a master's or doctorate degree in music from a reputable university or conservatory. It might be useful to become proficient in other areas of music as well—such as theory, history, ear training, jazz or folk styles—since job descriptions often involve skills in addition to teaching classical guitar. And it is essential to have excellent training before the graduate level. Ideally a player should be well versed, technically and stylistically, in the different periods of music from the Renaissance to contemporary.

For the aspiring performer, the most important question to ask is, What can I contribute to the guitar world that will be different, valuable, and compelling? To answer

## Making a Career

this requires searching one's innermost resources to discover and create something extraordinary that has never been done before. It may mean bringing unusual repertoire to the fore by unearthing and editing lost or forgotten compositions, or by making innovative, effective transcriptions and arrangements. Working with outstanding composers to create new works also has great potential. The collaboration could expand the musical vision and technical resources of the guitar, increase the instrument's exposure, and further enhance its credibility, especially when prestigious composers are involved.

Other ideas to pursue might include performing in unusual ensembles, creating new fusion approaches, and developing technical innovations. Above all, the player should aspire to musicality of the highest order, technical control and fluency, and a strong, personal, and distinctive voice.