

An international concert for the 21st century

The success of teaching piano online has given way to a wide range of classes, concerts and workshops



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ÓRGIVA. A campsite in Órgiva is to play host to a truly international and 21st Century concept; a concert in which the performers will play pieces including Vivaldi's Spring and Ode to Joy, as well as their own compositions, from home, which is as far afield as Guam; a small island in the Pacific Ocean, Chile, India, Bahrain and Australia and the performers will be streamed live via Youtube. A few more local musicians will be in attendance in Órgiva.

This is the third concert of its kind, organised by Music Lessons Anywhere; an online music class concept founded by Tracy Rose.

This year the performance is set to be even bigger and more ambitious than previous years, as the only instrument involved was the piano. This year promises a full programme of guitar, choir and of course the piano, among others.

Since the first concert in 2014, Tracy's company has become the number one 'Google hit' for online music tuition. Her reputation has grown rapidly particularly among "travelling families," as she put it; in particular children whose parents work for governments or the armed forces, meaning that they find it difficult to commit to lessons in one place due to the nature of their parents' jobs.

Although around 75 per cent of Music Lessons Anywhere's pupils are children, Tracy and the other six teachers who have, since she started, joined her, also give lessons to adults, around 50 per cent of whom are native to the country from which they receive on-line lessons.

Tracy now has teachers in Spain, Japan, Australia and the UK and between them they prepare their students for ABRSM (Associated Board for the Royal Schools of Music) exams in countries including Saudi Arabia, where the exam board holds annual music exams in Riad.

Availability of teachers

Tracy says that some of her success has also come about due to a lack of availability of music teachers in countries such as Saudi Arabia, which has driven musicians to look for more innovative ways of learning such as Skype and YouTube.

Further initiatives that have developed out of the initial success



Luis Rincón at the piano with a Skype in the background . :: SUR

INFORMATION

► **When.** Saturday 4 June at 3pm

► **Where.** Camping Órgiva (email admin@musiclessonsanywhere.net for reservations) or online at: www.youtube.com/c/TracyRoseMusiclesssonsanywhere/live

► **Who.** Tracy Rose, Music Lessons Anywhere, www.musiclessonsanywhere.net

of Music Lessons Anywhere are on-line workshops where students can 'meet' via the wonders of technology and participate in so-called music clubs.

The next step for the organisation is to roll out a programme to give music lessons in schools. The project will start in international schools in Spain and Tracy hopes from there the concept will catch on in other countries.

The former Head of Music at St George's British School in Malaga, says that many international schools don't have designated music teachers, so the proposal aims to introduce music into the curriculum via the internet.

Organisation

As for the organisation of this Saturday's concert, Tracy says that timings have been "the biggest headache." The programme starts off in Guam, where the performers will start at midnight local time, followed by a guitar recital direct from Australia, which also means that the performers will be staying up late!

The event starts at the more sociable time of 3pm Spanish time, with live streaming from 2.30pm.

It is possible to attend the event itself at Camping Órgiva in the Alpujarra, although prior email confirmation of attendance is necessary. Anyone with internet connection at that time can watch the event via YouTube and a programme is available via the Music Lessons Anywhere website.

WILDLIFE

ERNY HARRISON



Arachnophobia

Nasty bites from Spanish spiders

During WWII we were lucky enough to have a cellar underneath our house, so we didn't have to rush off to one of the many shelters but only had to go down a staircase. When the war progressed we got into the habit of sleeping there every night. Like all good cellars this one was smelly and damp, but one gets used to that.

What I never could get used to was the number of spiders which regarded us as intruders and ran around at will. However hard my parents tried to get rid of them they seemed always to increase in number and size.

They were a child's nightmare.

Even today, it doesn't matter what size it is, I am panicked by the look of one and have to stop myself from running. After all, I am no longer a child and what harm can a spider do?

Spain counts over 1,700 species of spiders, ranging from tiny little friendly ones to the big hairy spiders, which can grow up to three centimetres long. Of all those only three can be dangerous and are indeed poisonous.

The brown or violin spider (*Loxocles reclus*) and the Mediterranean recluse spider are, as their names imply rather shy species. Unfortunately they prefer to live indoors. You will find them in the loft, cupboard, garage, in your wardrobe or storage room. They are mostly reddish brown or pale and have long legs that run in all directions. Of course they are not out to attack you, but anything unusual and they will see it as an attack and they will bite in what they see as self defence.

Although not painful at the time (it will feel like a little sting) the bite can become nasty after a couple of hours and should be taken seriously; the effect on children and the elderly can be especially serious. It is important that you seek medical help. The sore will grow and can become gangrenous.

In ideal circumstances you should take the spider with you when you seek medical help so that it can be properly identified and the right treatment given.

Among poisonous spiders, the Mediterranean or European black widow, in Russia called the steppe spider, (*Latrodectus tetricus*) is the most dangerous one.

The black widow is a little spider. The female, larger than the



Mediterranean black widow

male - which cannot bite - is about 2cm long with a black hour glass figure with 13 red-orange spots on its back. It mates in June or July and deposits 250-300 eggs. Her young will need a full year to grow into adulthood.

The black widow has eight legs and lives in wood piles, under eaves or in grassy areas. Don't get too close to it when you see one, because it's not shy like the recluse spider. They cause a serious problem in greenhouse estates, especially in the USA.

A study of 12 hospital cases showed that 11 of the patients had been bitten by the black widow.

Its venom is neurotoxic, i.e. it affects the brain. It is medically a very complex and painful situation, although not fatal. It causes nausea, breathing problems, muscle pains and a condition known as tarantism.

Tarantism is a form of over-excitement, of hysteria and so named after the Italian city of Taranto, where the first outbreak occurred. In the Middle Ages sufferers were supposed to be cured by making them dance frantically to the music of the Tarantula and even as late as 1875 the Spanish Royal Faculty of Medicine recommended this treatment. Spanish treatment of sufferers had its own specialities. On the island of Hierro in the Canary Islands patients were fed with "doses of human excrement".

One of the many problems to diagnose whether someone has been bitten by the black widow is the time it takes for the symptoms to appear, which can vary from 20 minutes to well over two hours.

There is however a good side to this venom. Medical research shows the components in the venom might be helpful in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease and can help to prevent permanent brain damage in patients who have suffered severe strokes.

And maybe Aristotle knew a thing or two: it is said that he swallowed a spider a day to keep the doctor away. Rather him than me!