

A SHORT (yet surprisingly complete) HISTORY OF THE MODERN ARCHGUITAR

GREGG MINER



Introduction

If you're unfamiliar with the term "archguitar," don't feel bad. It *is* a far more "niche" instrument than even the harp guitar. And if you think you *are* familiar, guess again. Like the harp guitar, the subject continues to become more complex. When we booked our *second* arch guitarist for the Harp Guitar Gathering in 2014, I thought it would be a good time to share with my "harp guitar audience" a brief presentation for the benefit of both audience and performer Jon Mendle. Little did I know it would lead me down a rabbit hole, filled with a surprising variety of performers and luthiers. This is an expanded article, taken from a more complete presentation I gave at the 2019 meeting of the American Musical Instrument Society.

I discovered the archguitar through my friend Frank Doucette. While living in western MA in the 1980s, he found himself two hours away in Harvard Square, Cambridge where he discovered street performer Peter Blanchette and his archguitar. Over the next decade he fully explored the recordings of Blanchette and his associates. Upon my own introduction, I too fell in love with the instrument: the *tone* (more complex, lute-like and full of mystery and character compared to your garden variety classical guitar), the *range* (like a harp guitar or arch-lute, always descending lower than a standard guitar, and sometimes higher as well), the *performers* (inventor Peter Blanchette, his occasional partners, then practitioners like James Kline and Jon), and the *music* (Bach, Early Music, Classical, "Folk," "World" and "Celtic" depending on the album). More than learning about this unique instrument (or, as you will see, instruments), I would urge you also to seek out these recordings. But first, what I necessarily led with for my original presentation: "**So, is it a harp guitar or what?!**"



Photo credit: Peter Blanchette

Let's begin with some definitions for which the archguitar may or may not be a candidate:

Some quick definitions



GR Harp Guitar

↳ A guitar, in any of its accepted forms, with any number of additional unstopped strings that can accommodate individual plucking

GR Fretted Harp Guitar

↳ Designed and constructed in a fully fretted configuration for "manufacturability," not for "use"

GR Extended Range Guitar

↳ Fully fretted guitars with extra strings beyond the standard guitar's low E and/or high E string.

GR Archguitar

↳ ???

- **Harp Guitar:** Surely my readers all know by *now*? (see slide above if not)
- **Fretted Harp Guitar:** The musical intention and performance practice is one utilizing *unstopped* bass strings, as in a harp guitar.
- **Extended Range Guitar** (also known as a "Multi-stringed Guitar") These are:
 - *Fully fretted across all courses* (7, 8 and 10 are common)
 - *Every string is designed to have one or more of its frets utilized* (fingered)
 - *The player frets* (stops with a left-hand finger) *every string in actual practice*
- **Archguitar?** Let's find out!

The First Archguitar

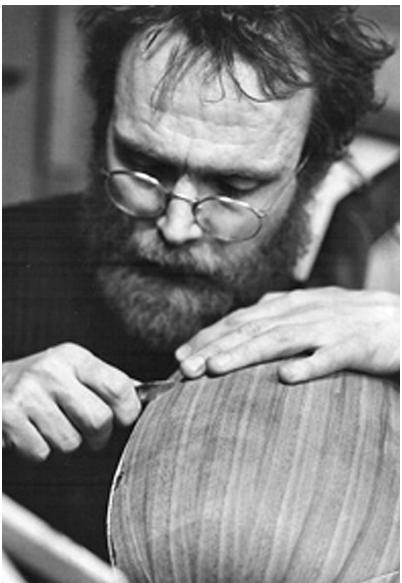


Photo credit: Walter Stanul

In the late 1970s, a fellow named Walter Stanul (left) was both an accomplished, if slightly radical, luthier and a guitar teacher at Boston Conservatory.

One of his students was 20-year-old Peter Blanchette (right), who had switched from electric to classical guitar after hearing Julian Bream.

Around 1980, teacher and student were sharing a love of early music, hanging out

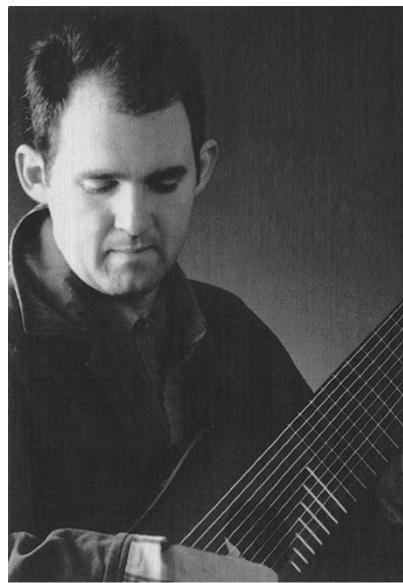


Photo credit: Peter Blanchette

together, going to guitar concerts, playing, etc. Both guitarists were frustrated by lack of bass range for playing lute and harpsichord repertoire. At this time, they heard a classical guitar duo where one tuned his low E down to B. This inspired Blanchette to explore an extended range, along with arranging for guitar duos and ensembles.

And so, in 1981, Peter Blanchette asked Walter Stanul to build him a brand-new type of instrument that could “be played like a guitar but sound like a lute.”

And thus the **“archguitar”** was born, completed in 1982.

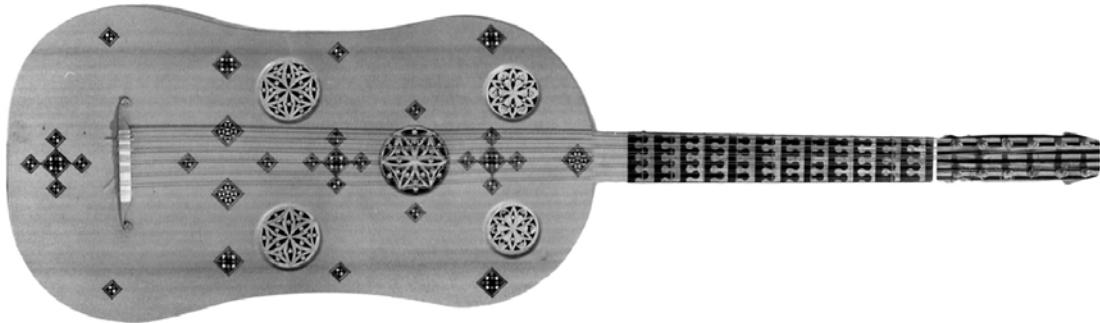


Photo credit: Peter Blanchette

By chance and good fortune, I met Walter Stanul at the G.A.L. convention in 2006, and found him fascinating and wonderful. We chatted quite a bit about archguitars and harp guitars, and I continued corresponding with him and some of the archguitar players afterward. I interviewed both of these gentlemen again in 2014 as I put this study together.

The Original Archguitar

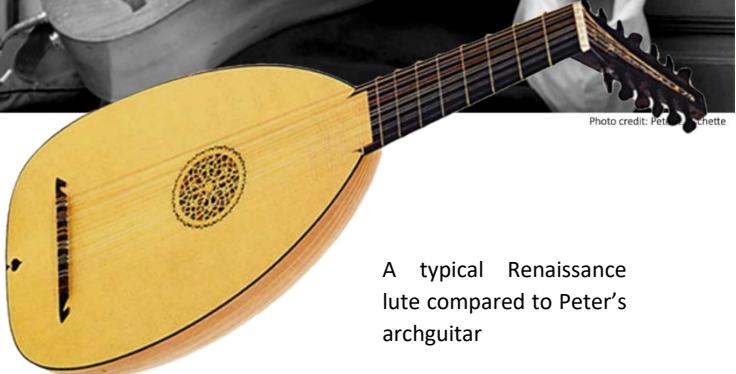
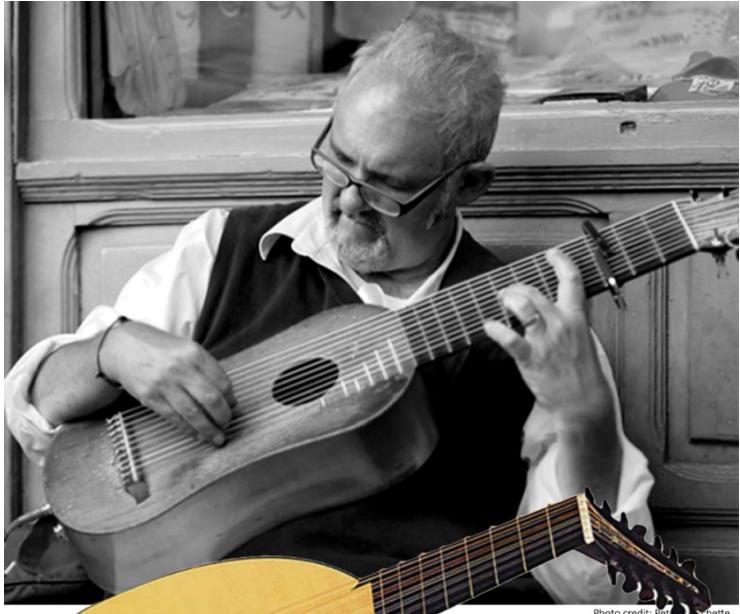
What Stanul and Blanchette came up with had eleven single strings, all fretted and of the same scale (660mm, or almost 26"). To achieve the lute-like tone, they would keep the body very small and light. The strings were also kept closer to the soundboard (as on a lute) to sound more lute-like. For the body shape, they decided to base it on an ancient guitar cousin: the 6-course, double strung vihuela.



Blanchette not only wanted more range in the bass, he chose to increase it *upwards* as well, tuning the first string to G. With a 660mm scale, Walter used fishing line for the 1st string, then a normal nylon E string for the 2nd, etc. – all to achieve light tension and a delicate sound. So far so good.

But it didn't then end up at terz guitar tuning – Blanchette also moved the major third interval over a string, effectively tuning it exactly like a Renaissance lute. As this was also the 6-course vihuela's tuning (in g or a), in reality, it would seem to me to be more of an *arch-vihuela*, and in fact, on one early CD, Blanchette even called it the Vihuela-Arch Guitar. So, ironically,

the only remaining “guitar” feature of the original archguitar is its having single strings (and of course prior to 1800 those were doubled on the guitar as well!).



A typical Renaissance lute compared to Peter's archguitar

You may recall that I long ago placed Blanchette's archguitar in my "Extended Range Guitars" gallery rather than "Fretted Harp Guitars" as it was designed to have any string fret-able, and has indeed been played thusly according to Peter. I'll show the unique tuning of the bass strings shortly.

The Term

Where did Blanchette get his name?

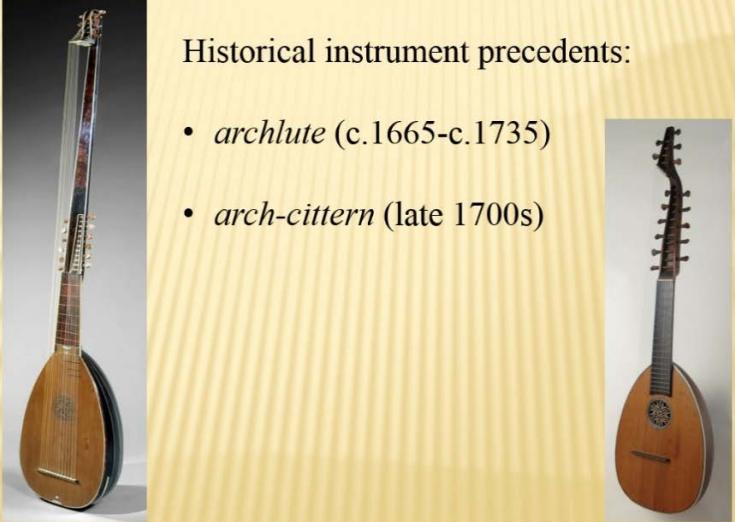
History has recorded various archlutes, and a century or two later, the arch-cittern.

(Note that both have floating basses.)

But there was never an *archguitar*...

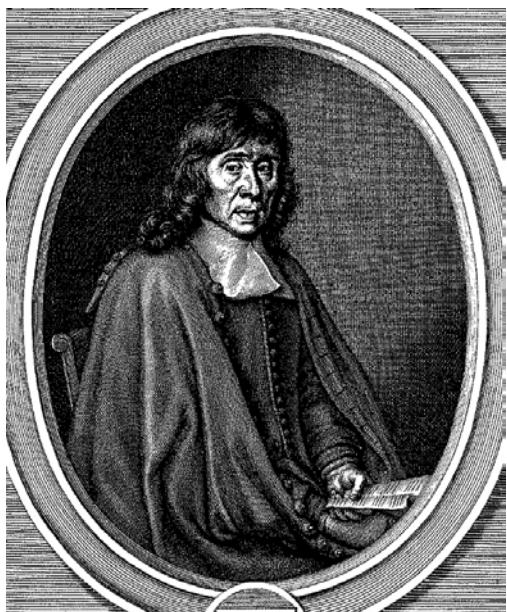
...or was there?

THE TERM



Historical instrument precedents:

- *archlute* (c.1665-c.1735)
- *arch-cittern* (late 1700s)



In his 1676 book *Musick's Monument*, lutenist Thomas Mace described a trip to Italy, where he saw "lutes, archlutes, guitars, and *archguitars*."

Blanchette himself pointed out this source and this quote to me, but discounted Mace's comment as a fabrication or error, and so appropriated the name.

I suggest however that it could easily have been a generic word for instruments Mace may have seen, which we know existed.

Here are three, all Italian instruments from the time of Mace's book or before.

They're only illustrations, but they seem to accurately show real instruments.

The unidentified lute-shaped instrument in the famous painting



by Grammatica is extremely specific and accurate, and most agree it was actually in guitar tuning – however, it could also be a form of mandora (essentially a lute tuned like a guitar).

None of these have instrument names attached to the images, but Mace might understandably have described any such instruments he ran across as an “archguitar”.

Be that as it may, what exactly does “arch” even *mean*?

Though I've only seen it applied to the two instruments above with floating basses, that wasn't the specific meaning. It *may* have been intended as a reference to the fact that they were larger and more elaborate variations, with a wider range than the basic instrument.

So how do we describe this specific musical meaning?

Dictionary.com recently added additional definitions that could apply to instruments: *Chief*, *Principal*, *Extreme* and *Ultra*. Like those words, *Arch* is meant to “denote individuals or institutions directing or having authority over others of their class (as in archbishop) – i.e.: eminent above all others of the same kind.”

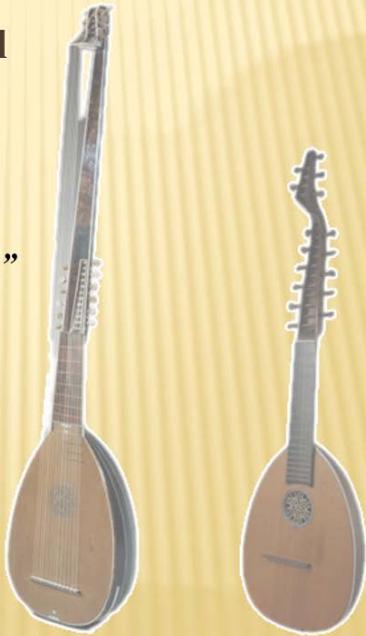
True, but that's all too wordy. For me, arch implies simply “more” or “super”, as in “arch-villain” and “arch-nemesis.”

And so, I have finally formally and accurately translated the term “arch” in its *musical* context:

THE TERM

Definition of “arch” in musical terms:

- *Floating basses?*
- “chief,” “principal,” “extreme,” “ultra” (Dictionary.com)
- “**Badass**” (Miner)



Feel free to quote me.

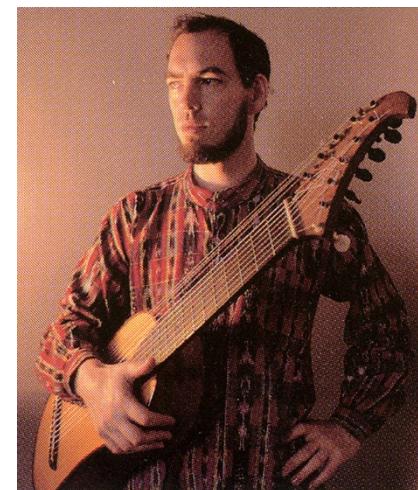
The Archguitar Diversifies

Continuing then our history of the modern badass-guitar...



Walter Stanul soon built more instruments for fellow Boston musicians including Elliot Gibbons (left) and Peter Michelini (right), who would become occasional duo partners of Blanchette's.

They requested 13- and 12-string versions, and perhaps because these would require lower pitch, Stanul decided to extend the length of the lower strings. Like theorboes and harp guitars, it made sense to then float them. This small difference meant that the archguitar could now be either fully fretted – an “extended range guitar” – **or** a form of “harp guitar.”





This design however was never repeated again by Stanul, though he continued to be creative through the 1980s. (At left, Gibbons' original 13-string archguitar.)

He made one for himself, similar to the original Blanchette prototype but with the bass portion of the fingerboard extended for lower pitches (at right). The frets were intended for placement of “individually adjustable One-String Capos” and *not* for fingering behind the nut. However, the left hand *might* fret all the way across, so this is still an extended range guitar and not a fretted harp guitar. Walter recently told me about the individual capos: “This is so much better than retuning the basses since they always go out of tune. Recently I figured out a super way to achieve this! I can’t wait till I retire so I can develop this idea fully.”

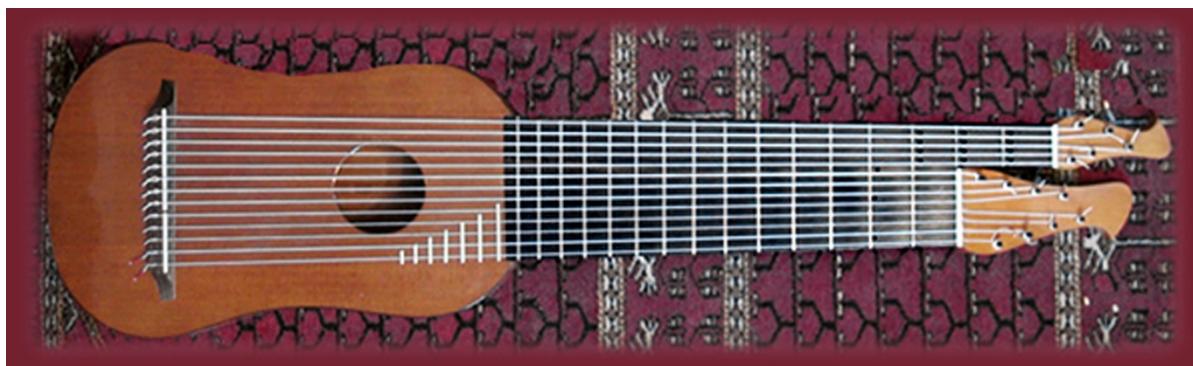
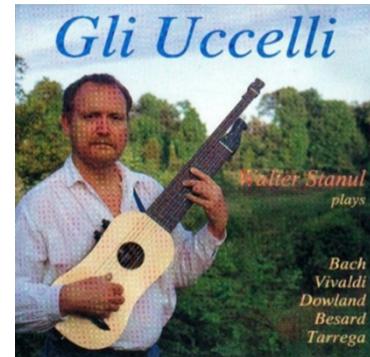


Photo credit: Jean Chaine

This similar Stanul creation above is a *tenor* – a whole-step below a guitar in pitch. It was designed by Elliott Gibbons, in response to his first instrument (above) in an attempt for more bass tone. It remains in the possession of Walter and is often borrowed by Peter Blanchette (who played it on his various “Virtual Consort” recordings). At right is electric bass player Jean Chaine with the instrument (Chaine played on



Photo credit: Jean Chaine

Blanchette’s *Had Miles Met Maurice* album). As seen, it still technically (if painfully!) has the option of fretting all strings if needed, so it remains in the Extended Range Guitar category.

Not Quite Archguitars



Photo credit: Walter Stanul

Stanul took that long fretted bass neck even further here! This was just a fun little experiment to add extra basses to one of his古典s.

Walter told me that he also built a couple more traditional harp guitars, including one Gibson-ish creation. Someone clearly needs to go through his file cabinets and look for all of his forgotten instruments!

Another player of that old Boston crowd was John Bigelow (below). He had Stanul build him an 11-string with a typical classical body as he wanted a modern sound. He has a high A string, then normal guitar tuning for the next six.



Photo credit: www.communityartsadvocates.org

Bigelow prefers to call it an 11-string guitar, saying “some might call it an arch-guitar, sometimes I do” (he omits any mention of Blanchette in his 50-page web article on it).

I would suggest that this deviates enough from the original archguitar intent and shouldn't be called an “arch-guitar.” To me, it doesn't seem as much of a unique invention as he claims, but a modern 11-string classical guitar, in his own tuning.

More Original Archguitars, 1980s -2010s



In 1991 Stanul built Elliot Gibbons a new “terz” 13-string (at left). Below, Elliot in 2013 playing his more recent version.



The instrument harkens back to Blanchette’s original archguitar, with two additional strings. “Terz” (short for “terz guitar”) simply means a guitar tuned up a minor third; in this case Gibbons tunes his 1st string to the same G as Blanchette, but sticks to guitar intervals rather than lute intervals. His bass tuning is his own.



Peter Blanchette remains very active, and Gibbons, who lives and gigs in San Francisco, occasionally comes out and joins him (above, a 2014 concert).

Peter Michelini has been absent for some time.

Jean Chaine is back to playing bass; his tenor is with Walter Stanul and often borrowed by Blanchette.

Archguitar Tunings

Tracking down and getting info from archguitarists is akin to herding cats; some of these guys are seriously off the grid!

Thus, some tunings have been quite difficult to obtain, resolve and collate, and so – along with some possible changes over the decades – I would take some of these with a grain of salt.

Interval steps are always noted from the highest string, which is on the left. I also note where the interval of the 3rd occurs (from the higher note to the left).

Blanchette changed his at some point. Currently, it's this:

<img alt="Musical staff showing the tuning for Blanchette's archguitar. The staff has a treble clef and a bass clef. The tuning is: 4th (open), 4th (open), 3rd (open). The notes are: G4, D4, A4, E5, B5, G6, D6, A6, E7, B7, G8, D8, A8, E9, B9, G10, D10, A10, E11, B11, G12, D12, A12, E13, B13, G14, D14, A14, E15, B15, G16, D16, A16, E17, B17, G18, D18, A18, E19, B19, G20, D20, A20, E21, B21, G22, D22, A22, E23, B23, G24, D24, A24, E25, B25, G26, D26, A26, E27, B27, G28, D28, A28, E29, B29, G30, D30, A30, E31, B31, G32, D32, A32, E33, B33, G34, D34, A34, E35, B35, G36, D36, A36, E37, B37, G38, D38, A38, E39, B39, G40, D40, A40, E41, B41, G42, D42, A42, E43, B43, G44, D44, A44, E45, B45, G46, D46, A46, E47, B47, G48, D48, A48, E49, B49, G50, D50, A50, E51, B51, G52, D52, A52, E53, B53, G54, D54, A54, E55, B55, G56, D56, A56, E57, B57, G58, D58, A58, E59, B59, G60, D60, A60, E61, B61, G62, D62, A62, E63, B63, G64, D64, A64, E65, B65, G66, D66, A66, E67, B67, G68, D68, A68, E69, B69, G70, D70, A70, E71, B71, G72, D72, A72, E73, B73, G74, D74, A74, E75, B75, G76, D76, A76, E77, B77, G78, D78, A78, E79, B79, G80, D80, A80, E81, B81, G82, D82, A82, E83, B83, 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This was Michelini's tuning for his 12-string harp-guitar-style archguitar. With its longer floating subs, he was able to go down to low E an octave below the guitar.

Michelini

This is Stanul's tenor that appears on Blanchette's "Virtual Consort" recordings. The top string was a D, so it is basically guitar down a whole step. But because

Peter often borrowed it, they stuck to lute intervals. It goes down to low F, compared to Peter's low A, then does the typical re-entrant thing.

As I mentioned earlier, Bigelow "invented" his own instrument and tuning. I find it fascinating to look at the tuning relationships. Bigelow explains that he "added an extra top string to normal guitar tuning" – which he did. But this ends up moving the guitar's third *over*, so technically he ends up in lute tuning like Blanchette, but *up* one whole step further.

Bigelow

We finally get back to good ol' guitar tuning with James Kline, who we will be discussing next. He tuned/tunes the 1st six strings to standard guitar pitch, continues with another 4th to get a low B, then invents his own thing. But it's interesting that – ignoring the last two notes – the last five are the same intervals as Blanchette – something they both say naturally makes sense for typical Renaissance and Baroque bass figures.

Kline

The Archguitar's Second Wave:

We've now covered the archguitar from its beginnings 1982 and its "cast of characters": originators Peter Blanchette and Walter Stanul along with fellow Stanul AG owners and occasional Blanchette performance partners Peter Michilini, Elliot Gibbons and Jean Chaine, with, peripherally, John Bigelow.



Photo credit: James Kline

1993 saw the beginning of a more "global" archguitar movement beyond the environs of Boston, with the *arch guitar* debut (note the tweaked spelling) of James Kline (left).

Inspired by Blanchette & Co., Jim – then based in Brussels – also ordered an archguitar from Stanul; but when he found that the wait would be too long, he commissioned his from England luthier Gary Southwell (right).



The pair deviated from Blanchette's instrument in many ways, but agreed it would retain the critical component: a small instrument with lute-like tone. It had the same eleven strings, but they chose to have the last three floating (as Jim didn't plan to fret them). As seen above, Kline also utilized a different tuning on his 24.75" scale instrument. Southwell also came up with a different, more "Baroque guitar" body shape, which his curlicue mustache bridge accentuated.

Finally, purely for aesthetics (and perhaps better semantics) Jim also chose to spell "*arch guitar*" as two words.

Southwell made at least one other arch guitar in 1997 (below). It's very similar to Kline's, other than being fully fretted with a full-width neck. (Thus, Kline's is both an "archguitar" and a "harp guitar," while the other is an "archguitar" and potentially a "fretted harp guitar" [based on technique]. Both are also "extended range guitars.")



Photo credit: www.guitar-auctions.co.uk

In 2002, Jim commissioned a near-duplicate instrument (right) from his friend Alan Perlman in San Francisco. They kept the design the same, but gave it a slightly different voicing. The original Southwell was relegated to Perlman's closet for a decade, during which time it was briefly loaned to Jon Mendle. In 2012 the iconic instrument became part of my own collection, though I eventually sold it to a fan of Kline.



Since 2003, Jim has never looked back, playing this type of instrument exclusively in all of his recordings and performances.

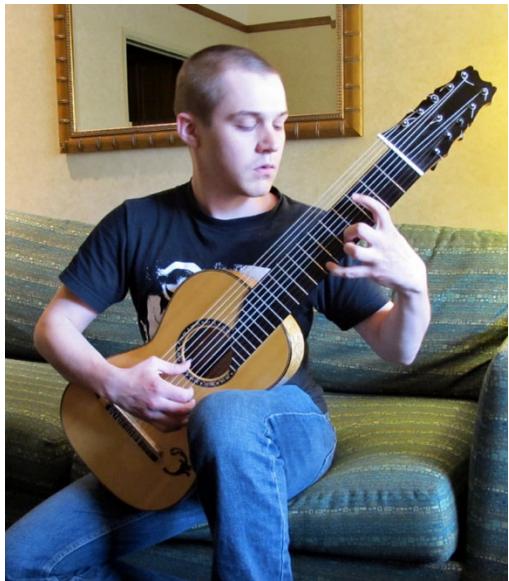
In 2003, Jim came up with the ingenious idea to add a bank of short nylon harp strings to the Perlman. Rather than building something new from scratch, they simply added on to the existing instrument, a great idea also for travel!



Photo credit: Alan Perlman

No archguitar ever had “super-trebles” (the term comes from the modern harp guitar); this was Jim’s own idea, which he named the “Arch Harp Guitar.”





Inspired by Kline's recordings, classical guitarist Jon Mendle (left) briefly borrowed Jim's original Southwell arch guitar from San Francisco neighbor Alan Perlman, before ordering his own new instrument. Completed in 2007, it is a very close copy of Perlman's first 11-string for Kline.



Photo credit: Joe Morgan

In 2011, Jon released *L'Infidele*, a full CD of his arch guitar arrangements of classical guitar and lute music and performed at the 2014 Harp Guitar Gathering® (right).

Archguitar Evolution or Revolution?



Photo credit: Alan Perlman

So far, the most radical departure from Peter Blanchette's original archguitar would appear to be Jim Kline's alteration into a 19-string instrument with unfretted melodic (super-treble) strings. However, I wouldn't necessarily call this a deviation but more of a *variation*. Meaning, still an "arch guitar," even though an expanded or "hybrid" version (an "arch harp guitar").

The situation became more complicated with the introduction of steel strings, which started with Kline's own experiment in 2005 (left). Built once again by Alan Perlman, it was a near-duplicate of Jim's nylon-string AHG, strung all in steel. So, is it an "arch guitar"? I suggest "not precisely" and refer to it always as a "*steel string arch guitar*." The instrument was recorded just once for Bardou's *A Feather Upon the Shore* CD, and is well worth hearing for comparison. Though 95% of all super-treble harp guitar players use steel strings (even when the rest

of the instrument is nylon), Jim quickly decided not to pursue this instrument and sold it. Indeed, his uniqueness (and popularity?) is due to him being one of the very few to play nylon trebles. (Steel supers provide a bright "fretless zither" sound rather than a traditional "harp" tone.)

Around 2006 a music-for-healing player named James Schaller (right) asked Perlman to build him a version of Jim's 19-string instrument but all on one body. As it has a large classical guitar body with a classical sound, he doesn't call it an arch harp guitar, a decision I'd agree with.



Photo credit: Steve Ganz

Similarly, that same year classical guitar builder Steve Ganz built an 11-string for player Canadian player Jacek Kado (left) "inspired by the arch guitar built for James Kline by Gary Southwell." Again, they only refer to it as an 11-

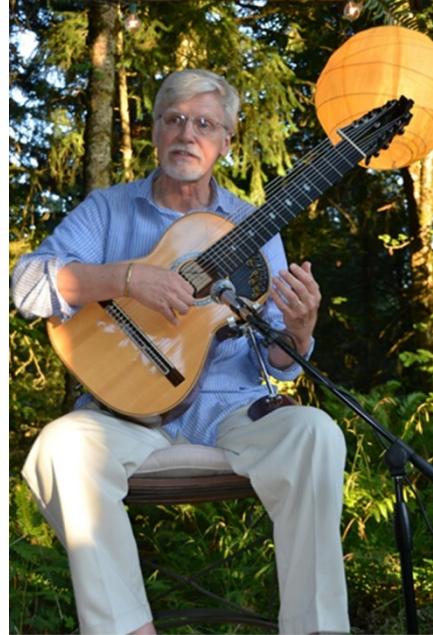


Photo credit: John Doan

string guitar, recognizing it's larger, more traditional classical guitar form and sound.



Photo credit: Jim Worland

Harp guitarist and James Kline fan Ed Dowling asked harp guitar builder Jim Worland to design and build a slightly more modern archguitar, completed in 2008. For this 13-string variant, Ed asked for a similar delicate "lute-like" sound. As they deemed it successful, they would probably be safe in calling it (as they do) an "arch guitar."

Ed next had a beefier steel-string version made by Tonedevil Guitars' Powell brothers. Even though configured and tuned similarly, Ed doesn't consider it an archguitar (and neither would I) due to the deliberately different tonal goal.

The archguitar will undoubtedly continue to evolve, but at what point do we have to institute some sort of guidelines before things get out of hand?! And who should do so? The problem is that anyone can



Photo credit: Tonedevil Guitars

call their instrument an "archguitar," but I suspect Blanchette and Stanul might beg to differ.

A Definition

So, what have we learned from all this?

No one, including the inventor, has yet precisely defined an archguitar. So, I'll take a stab at it and suggest something like this:

“ARCHGUITAR” (also “Arch Guitar”)

“A modern multi-string guitar variant meant to provide a larger compass and more lute-like tone.”

Variations

- Body shape: Vihuela-based or small bodied
- Size: Small to medium
- Tone: From “lute-like” towards, but never reaching, “modern classical guitar” tone
- Stringing: Typically from 11 to 13
- String Material: Nylon
- Tuning: Lute or Guitar intervals on first 6, can be guitar pitch *or* transposed higher or lower; basses tuned to suit player
- Frets: Full, split-length or floating basses

My first simple statement is the only possible definition. Those are the *only* common denominators – *if* we want to honor the intent of Blanchette and Stanul, while including Stanul’s following variants along with those like Kline who were inspired by Blanchette’s instrument.

Other options – which can occur in any combination – would fall under “Variations,” specifically:

- **Body:** Not “traditional classical guitar” *bodied* – if you included that, then anyone could start saying they play archguitars. However, some of Stanul’s own archguitars border on “classical guitar” shapes and size.
- **Size:** Normally nothing too huge.
- **Tone:** it’s clear that Blanchette’s original premise was the unique lute-like tone on a guitar-type instrument. Stanul mostly adhered to that, as did Kline’s instruments. Having an archguitar that sounds like a full-size classical would thus seem to defeat the purpose.

- **Stringing:** Stanul built his own large 8-string, so we don't seem to be necessarily locked in to 11-13. I noticed that all players have so far avoided *ten* strings – and a good thing too, as “10-string guitar” definitions are still a hot topic (warring camps, it seems). Note that I don't include “up to 19.” Adding super-trebles transforms an archguitar into an “arch harp guitar.” This is from Kline's naming convention; the “harp” referring to the trebles only, the basses (floating or not) being part of the original “arch guitar.”
- **String Material:** As I said, Kline's steel string experiment was on a the same archguitar template, but I think defeats the intent, as do all such experiments. So, I would not include it as a variation.
- **Tuning:** A wide variety, which still adhere to basic guitar or lute tuning (lute being just guitar moved over a string).
- **Frets:** Unlike the harp guitar, which is *defined* by its floating strings, that is irrelevant on the archguitar, which can have many configurations. (Thus, while James Kline and Jon Mendle both played our *Harp Guitar Gatherings*, one can't invite archguitarist Peter Blanchette, much as they might like to!)

And so, the answer to our original question: **Is it a harp guitar or *what*?**

It seems that the archguitar can be a *Harp Guitar*, *Fretted Harp Guitar* or *Extended Range Guitar*.



Archguitar: The Future

I completed my original PowerPoint presentation of most of this material in late 2014. Now four years later, what does the future hold?

Well, it's hard to say. Some of the players mentioned above are no longer in the game.



The most proficient of the second wave, Jon Mendle, continues to broaden his horizons, though it doesn't sound like he's abandoning his arch guitar altogether. His latest focus is 19th century guitar music from the late Classical and Early Romantic eras, which he performs on a "heptacorde" (seven-string guitar, with a floating low D string) built by Michael Thames in

His last arch guitar project was performing the two-part piece "Into the Air," written for him by southern California composer Garry Eister

Luthier Alan Perlman continues to stay involved through the occasional new project. In 2014 James Kline asked Alan to build him another brand new 19-string arch harp guitar, completed in July, 2015. Jim recently explained:

"I've had the new one for the last three years (Alan made the attachment at the same time). I absolutely love both of my Perlman guitars. The new one (GM: made of Ceylon satinwood, Alan says) is bright and clear, sensitive and strong (like my wife wishes I would be). My older one has a rounder sound and a luscious vibrato. I use the new one for concerts



Photo credit: James Kline

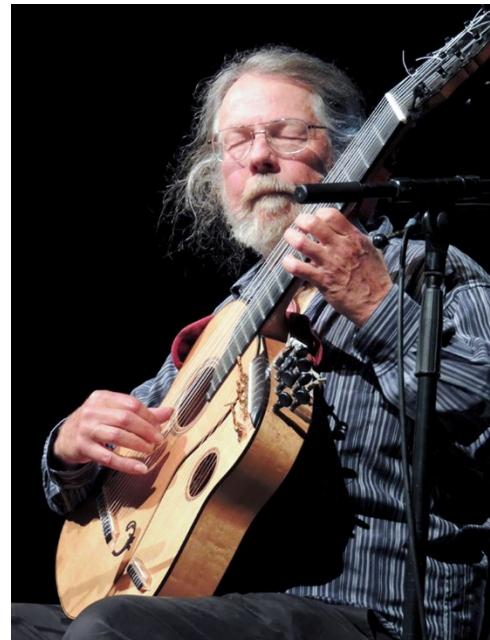


Photo credit: Harp Guitar Europe International Festival

now, but still love to play the old one and often take it into the woods with me. I occasionally use the old one for amplified gigs as well, it sounds great plugged in. That said, I don't do a lot of amplified gigs anymore, I'm playing in churches in France and Spain a lot."

Meanwhile, Boston guitar teacher Matt Dorko briefly played “jazz archguitar” (that would have been interesting to see!).



Photo credit: Mané Larregla



Photo credit: Peter Blanchette

And most recently, Mané Larregla from Madrid (left) acquired a Stanul archguitar identical to Peter’s (except that it can be disassembled for the overhead compartment for airline travel). He’s spending 2018 performing with Blanchette in an archguitar duo in Spain with the goal of a new duo recording by year’s end.

The best news is that the stars of our story, Peter Blanchette and Walter Stanul, remain as active and creative as ever.



Peter remains as busy as always, performing on his original (!) 1982 archguitar, along with soundtrack and composing projects. Don’t miss [Northampton Community Television’s 2014 interview](#), where he performs and discusses the background of his instrument.

In 2009 Peter founded, and remains Artistic Director of, the Happy Valley Guitar Orchestra, a

“true avant-garde orchestra, comprised of more than a dozen adventurous acoustic and electric guitarists from widely varied traditions,” based in Northampton, Massachusetts.

In 2011, a Kickstarter project was started for documentary filmmaker Jesse Epstein to produce a film about Blanchette’s orchestra and instrumental career. Phase 1 is complete, but funds have been difficult to obtain to finish it.

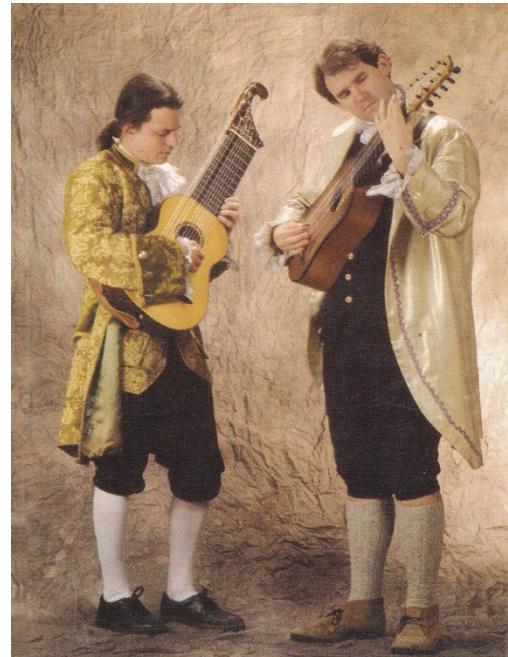


[A wonderful segment](#) from the film was uploaded in 2014 that shows Walter Stanul (above left) and Peter in Walter's workshop as the two discuss the birth of the archguitar. Later, we hear the two old friends – once teacher and student – duet together on the porch. I see that Walter has yet another instrument he built – an 8-string that, again, muddies the waters between archguitars and classical guitars (will no one take my organology seriously?!).

I, for one, hope to see the completed film one day, for what a lasting testament to the story of the modern archguitar it will be.

Sources: The individual web sites of the players and builders featured in this article; CD and cassette packaging and liner notes of the artists; personal interviews and communication (Blanchette, Stanul, Chaine, Kline, Mendle, Perlman, Worland, Dowling)

A special thanks to all the fine archguitar performers and builders for making this article possible.



Appendix: Recordings

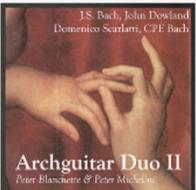
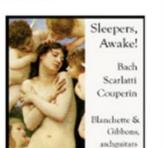
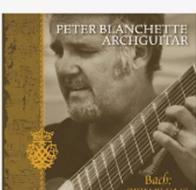
Though many of Blanchette's and Gibbons' original recordings were released only on cassette, and later (sometimes) CD, all are available digitally from the artists. Kline's CDs are all in print and available in the U.S. exclusively through Harp Guitar Music. Mendle remains in stock there as well. I can easily recommend any and all of these recordings for your music library.

Peter Blanchette Recordings

Elliot Gibbons Recordings

James Kline Recordings

Jon Mendle Recording

Blanchette				Gibbons	Kline
 Meseta Peter Blanchette archguitar	 Archguitar Duo II: Goldberg Variations, Dowland, more ...	 Stravinsky & Shostakovich archguitar	 Style Brisé [the Broken Style]	 Harmonious Blacksmith Elliot Gibbons, solo singer	 Trobadour's Odyssey James Kline
 Una Limosa Peter Blanchette, the Virtual Consort	 Cinema Italiano Peter Blanchette, 8-string alto and 13-string tenor archguitars	 Archguitar Christmas	 British Isles Archguitar Peter Blanchette, archguitar - with Kenny Butler, violin	 Sleepers Awake! Bach, Scarlatti, Couperin Blanchette & Gibbons, archguitars	 Music of the Lost Cathedral James Kline
 1503-1703 Bossinensis & Weiss Peter Blanchette, Virtual Consort	 Archguitar Duo III Peter Blanchette & Peter Michelini	 Bach Suite III for 'Cello Solo	 Had Miles Met Maurice Peter Blanchette and The Virtual Consort	 Mysterious Barricades Peter Blanchette	 Bardou James Kline

About The Author: Creator and Editor of Harpguitars.net Gregg Miner has been fascinated by harp guitars since the early 1970s. He purchased his first instrument (a 1916 red sunburst Gibson) in 1983, then fell in love with the harp guitars of Chris Knutsen when he found his first one in 1988. He collects harp guitars, researches harp guitars, writes about harp guitars, plays harp guitars, produces harp guitar CDs, buys and sells harp guitars, and runs Harpguitars.net, Harp Guitar Music and the Harp Guitar Foundation. You would think that by now he would be sick of harp guitars, but he is not.

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