

*Music has been with us since the beginning of time. It is an intrinsic and deep expression of the soul of man. It has the ability to bring a myriad of emotions from laughter to crying and exhilarate you to extreme heights. Being able to produce the vehicles that allow the musician to express himself brings great joy to me and is much of my inspiration.*

*I recall wondering in my earlier days when much of my inspiration was being stamped, why did prominent musicians choose guitars made by builders of other countries?*

*I also wondered, was it the type of guitar and it's sound that was inspiring the music of the time, or was it the musician, or was it the music and the composers that inspired the builders to produce the type of sound that they were turning out? And how did the influence of their cultures play into all of this?*

*When the inspiration began, as I listened to the early recordings of the classical guitar, I discovered that the sound that I was looking to produce was known as the "Spanish sound." It has a bigger more voluptuous cello type sound and very pretty. This type of sound is what inspires me most!*

*In the early days of the 1930's & 40's when the Spanish guitar was beginning to be recognized as a true classical instrument there was an ebb & flow, a sort of competition between the builders living in the different countries as to what type of sound was best suited for the instrument and its roll on the symphonic stage.*

*There were those, predominantly from Germany and France who was building a smaller guitar with a brighter more focused type of trebly sound, thought to be best suited for a Bach type composition. And there were those in Spain, the guitars origin,*

*who were building a larger guitar with what is known as a "Spanish sound".*

*The guitar is continually evolving. Today, in hopes of being able to produce the best guitars possible, luthiers are now building them with wildly different types of brace patterns and materials such as carbon instead of wood. Innovation is a good thing when it is a good thing, however I prefer the guitar made entirely with wood. Wood was a living thing and in my opinion produces a much sweeter living sound!*

*My hope is to keep alive the fine artistry of the masters who went before me and to build instruments that truly inspire. My plan is to continue to build upon what the fathers of classical guitar have wonderfully designed and to do my best to add the Malapanis touch into the 21st century guitar!*

*Though each guitar has its own personality, to the discerning ear, the gifted luthiers character can be heard in each of his instruments. The guitar is a beautiful instrument, like a small orchestra all by itself. I believe that a fine guitar should have a big, full, rich, beautiful tone, dark in color, powerful, and very sensitive to the touch. The high E string is the melody of the instrument and must be as thick and powerful as the rest of the guitar (very hard to achieve). The instrument should be well balanced, with a sweet singing quality and with great sustain; able to reach the most distant corners of a concert hall.*

*From beginning to end, my focus is centered on the final sound of each instrument, wondering, hoping if I have achieved exactly what I was hearing inside my heart. That moment may be better expressed saying it this way, can you remember what it was like when you were a child and you opened a gift on Christmas*

*morning and it was exactly what you had hoped for? I experience that kind of joy every time I finish an instrument and string it up and then finally play it!*

*I'd like to share a couple of inspirational high points in my career. After building my first five guitars I wrote a letter to Christopher Parkening asking him if he would be willing to meet with me to test my guitars. I told him that I was a Christian as well and that I believed that I was inspired to build guitars. After testing my guitars, Chris said to me, "The Romero's would love these guitars"! Who could have known that in less than a year, Angel Romero and I would meet in Anchorage, AK (my home town) and that he would be taking one of those guitars home with him. In our second meeting, Chris brought his Ramirez concert guitar and I brought my number six, eight and ninth guitar to our meeting. During our time together, Chris said something profound to me. He said, "Tom you are an artist and an artist must express himself"! He then encouraged me to keep building. What a meeting that was for me!*

*Lastly, Angel Romero invited me to a concert where he performed De Aranjuez. During an encore, he addressed the audience and said, "the maker of the beautiful instrument you are hearing is in the audience with us tonight, his name is Tom Malapanis" a Greek from Alaska. He then asked me to stand up and explained to the audience, "Music is my heart beat and my life, and the guitar is to me, like a singers voice is to them." Then he thanked me for the beautiful instrument!*

*Angel has been a dear friend to me over the years, in fact it is he that truly discovered and put me on the map!*

*Thomas Malapanis*

