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A Neapolitan Guitarist in Paris

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FERDINANDO CARULLI: A NEAPOLITAN GUITARIST IN PARIS

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Front cover image: from *"Guitaromanie,"*
Charles de Marescot (detail)1820.
Back cover image: *"La Place du Châtelet,"*
Étienne Bouhot (detail) 1810.

Ferdinando Carulli:
A Neapolitan Guitarist in Paris
by
Peter Dunbaugh Smith



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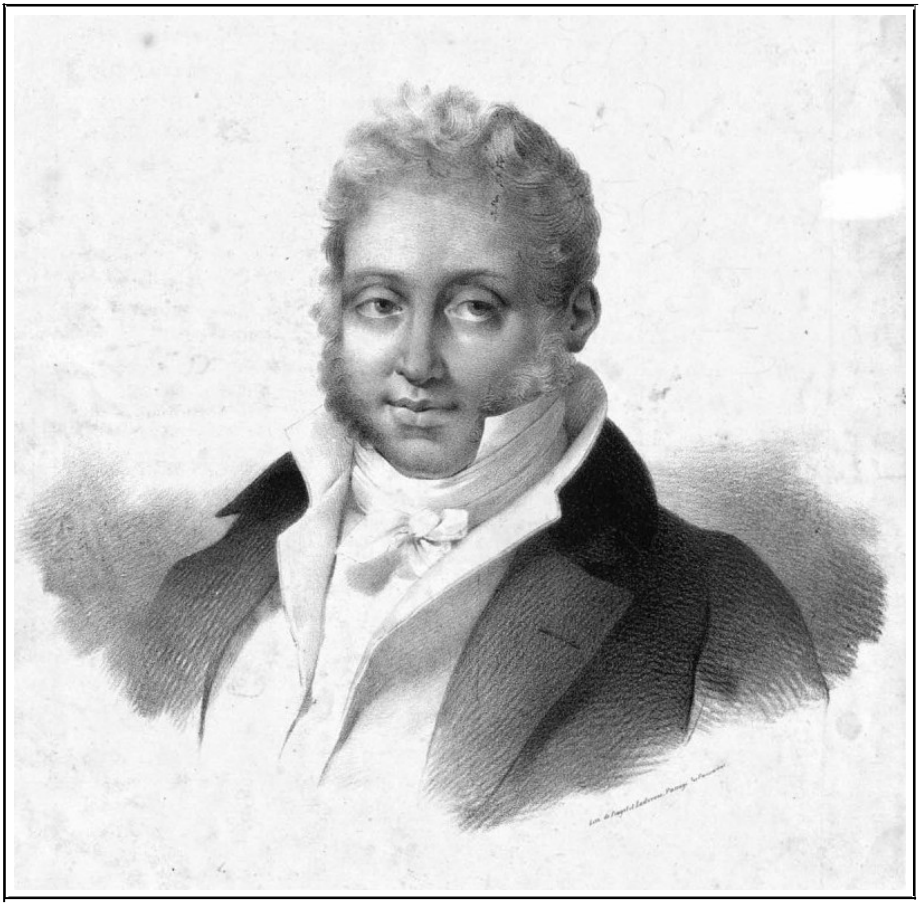
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PREFACE

The 1924 edition of Waldo Seldon Pratt's "New Dictionary of Music and Musicians" includes only this brief description as its entry for **Ferdinando Carulli:**

"Noted Italian guitarist, self-taught, becoming the first artistic virtuoso on his instrument, in Paris from 1808. Wrote nearly 400 guitar-pieces, a method and a text-book on harmony in guitar playing."

The purpose of this biography is to repay a guitarist's indebtedness to "the first artistic virtuoso." Appreciation grows through understanding, so my intent is to reflect on Carulli's pioneering musical career through three lenses; his music, his audiences, and the communities of musicians, printers, and instrument-makers (better known as luthiers) alongside whom he lived and worked.



Ferdinando Maria Meinrado
Francesco Pascale Rosario Carulli

born February 9, 1770 Naples, Italy
died February 17, 1841 Paris, France

A YOUNG GUITARIST IN NAPLES

Just outside the elegant doors of the Carulli family's patrician home near the *Palazzo Reale* on *via Nardones* lies the port city of Naples, a kingdom governed as an independent principality within the Spanish Empire. During Ferdinando's childhood there, this unique city-state of 400,000 inhabitants played an important historical role as both birthplace and nursery to one of Europe's earliest communities of six-string guitarists. Who could have guessed back then that a young son of the aristocratic Carulli family might soon grow up to become one of this enduringly popular musical instrument's most influential advocates?

Naples earned its nickname as "the conservatory of Europe" over many centuries. It had long been home to a number of ancient and highly-respected

church-sponsored music schools that boasted illustrious operatic luminaries including Alessandro Scarlatti (1650-1725), Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736), Niccolo Piccini (1728-1800), and Domenico Cimarosa (1749-1801) among their resident faculty. Even today, *Il Real Teatro di San Carlo* the king's royal opera house, retains its status as a world-renowned music venue. As the home of *opera buffa* (musical comedy), there was always a native rhythmic wit and a rich melodic fluidity echoing throughout the Neapolitan soundscape.

Young Ferdinando first began his musical studies as a cello player under the guidance of his local parish priest, who was also an enthusiastic amateur musician. Sometime after reaching the age of sixteen, he switched from cello to the six-string guitar. There's little in the way of instruction available to musical pioneers,

and so Ferdinando was forced to rely on himself as his sole teacher. His cello skills provided a solid technical foundation, but in order to capture the rich and complex harmonies of the musical city that surrounded him, he had to develop his own unique approach to the new instrument.

Ferdinando's cello teacher may have provided him with a basis for his guitar technique, but it seems evident that our young musician encountered other foundational role-models, perhaps even older mentors who may have helped guide his artistic development. He was certainly fortunate in his musical neighbors.

He found himself among a growing network of talented Neapolitans who shared his interest in exploring the creative possibilities offered by this new instrument, the one whose earliest stirrings were first heard just a few streets away.

THE NEW MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

It was only a few years earlier, somewhere between 1776 and 1779 in the *Rua Catalana* section of the city, when a local instrument-maker named Gaetano Vinaccia (c.1759-c.1831) developed what is now widely recognized as one of the earliest designs for a guitar with six single-course strings.

This was a conceptual change from the five pairs of double-course strings that characterized its widely popular predecessor, the baroque guitar. Through the use of six single strands of gut string fabricated from sheep's intestines, Vinaccia had enhanced the guitar's tonal warmth and increased its melodic expressivity. His new design also included the innovation of an additional bass string to extend the instrument's lower range.

Another highly skilled luthier, Gennaro Fabricatore (c.1750-1832) kept shop at nearby 42 *Strata San Giacomo*, where he and his son began to craft their own durable and audibly superior six-string guitars out of spruce, mahogany, and maple, woods that still remain essential raw materials for the manufacture of guitars.

In 1786, a local Neapolitan musician by the name of Federico Moretti (1769-1839) began to distribute the earliest hand-copied manuscripts of his method book for the new instrument. It was later published in print form in 1792 as "*Principj per la Chitarra*" ("Principles for the Guitar") by Luigi Mareschalchi (1745-1812), who was then in the process of reviving Naples' moribund music printing industry. With their new instruction book, Moretti and Mareschalchi helped establish an essential

level of support for six-strings as a new international standard for guitars.

A NEW SYSTEM OF NOTATION

One of the reasons why Moretti's instruction book was so influential was because it introduced an alternative system of notation for the six-string guitar, which was soon widely adopted as yet another new standard.

Previously, plucked string instruments were notated through an analogic system called *tablature*. Lines representing strings were drawn from left to right across a page, and then numbers representing a chronological sequence of which frets to press were inscribed over the appropriate string.

What Moretti did instead, was to adopt another pre-existing system, one that consisted of a single treble staff of five

horizontal lines upon which notes of a scale could be placed higher or lower on the staff to represent the sound of the musical pitch. The extended range of the guitar's new sixth string could be accommodated through extra ledger lines placed below the staff to indicate these lower pitches.

If Moretti's new approach sounds familiar, it's basically the same form of notation that's still used today by players of almost every instrument in the modern symphony orchestra.

Guitarists and composers benefited from the system's more accurate rhythmic notation, which proved particularly useful for the composition and performance of polyphonic music (music consisting of two or more simultaneous melodies).

Soon, Ferdinando would become one of the first guitarists to adopt Moretti's

method of notation. He continued to use it exclusively throughout his long career.

In 1794, Moretti's official duties required him to leave the city of Naples and travel to Spain. Although he continued to compose and perform on guitar, his military career eventually took precedence over his music. Moretti was only one year older than his Neapolitan neighbor.

NEW FRIENDS AND FAMILY

By 1797, Ferdinando had moved northward along the Italian coast to the Tuscan port of Livorno (better known to speakers of English as Leghorn), where he found employment as an in-demand music teacher and as a popular regional performer.

Here, he was welcomed into the home of the Gragnanis, a family of respected luthiers. Their father, Antonio

Gragnani (1740-1794) had been particularly well-known as a violin-maker in the Stradivarius tradition. The younger son, Filippo Gragnani (1768-1820) was close to Ferdinando's age and soon became another enthusiastic advocate for the six-string guitar.

Ferdinando began to use Livorno as a departure point for a number of well-received performances on solo guitar, with accompanied vocals. He toured throughout the Appenine region of northern Italy and continued into nearby German-speaking principalities.

It was during his residence at Livorno when Ferdinando Carulli married a French-born woman named Marie-Josephine Boyer. In June of 1801, their only child, Gustavo Carulli (1801-1876) was born there. It was not long before the younger Carulli would begin to prepare for

his own lifelong career as a professional musician.

THE MUSIC PUBLISHERS

Sales of printed music books had only recently become an essential source of income for professional musicians. One of the consequences of the French Revolution and its aftermath across Europe, was a dismantling of the old royal monopolies that strictly governed musicians' guilds and printing presses.

With Moretti's new approach to scoring, printed guitar music could be mass-produced more efficiently and sales were becoming reliably profitable. During this period in Carulli's career, we can trace the route of his musical travels through the relationships he established with various music publishers across the region.

After years of sharing his creative works only through hand-copied manuscripts, Carulli published some of his earliest compositions while he was still residing in Naples. Here he worked alongside Luigi Mareschalchi, Federico Moretti's first publisher.

Carulli dated a number of his handwritten manuscripts from the city of Bologna just prior to December in 1802. Soon, he would boast the first of his many international publications. The earliest of these was printed in 1803 at Augsburg, Germany by *Musikverlag Gombart*, a highly respected music publishing concern owned by the well-connected Gombart family. Carulli also published a handful of new compositions in the northern German city of Hamburg.

Later that same year, he moved to Milan, widely acknowledged as the music publishing capital of Italy. Here, his

primary publisher was Giovanni Re (fl. c.1795-c.1815), who later established an innovative monthly guitar periodical called *"Biblioteca di Musica per Chitarra"* ("Library of Music for Guitar") that prominently featured a series of Carulli's scores in its pages.

During his residency in Milan, other publishers included Giovanni Ricordi (1785-1854), who continued to print Carulli's new pieces even after a move to Leipzig, and the influential publishing house of Giocamo Antonio Monzino (1776-1854), son of the famous luthier and a talented guitarist and composer in his own right.

Carulli published some new pieces in both Vienna and Venice during early 1807, but it appears that neither he, Marie-Josephine, nor young Gustavo ever resided in either of the two cities.

Ferdinando Carulli's very first French publication was his *"Sonate Polonaises et Rondeaux,"* printed at Paris in 1807 by Ignatz Pleyel (1757-1831), an Austrian-born pianist and publisher who had studied composition under Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809). Carulli was visiting Paris to pursue the first of what would become many successful performances in and around the French capital.

Then, as now, publishers frequently discouraged composers from presenting their most difficult pieces to the music-reading public. These could receive only a limited volume of sales and rentals, while more accessible works for beginning guitarists would easily find a much wider market.

Poignantly, Carulli came to believe that his own public reputation as a composer was largely undeserved, since many of his best efforts remained

unpublished because of their perceived technical challenges. Later in his career he published his own scores, vindicating his reputation as a composer.

THE NEW EMPEROR

Carulli's life and career in both Italy and Paris were undeniably impacted by the rapid rise of France's newly appointed dictator, a brilliant Corsican soldier who had been christened *Napoleoni de Buonoparte*. Napoleon began his first Italian campaign in 1796 when his army swept through the northern Italian region of the Piedmont towards Venice, and soon destroyed the Austrian army's resistance from the North. In 1798, King Ferdinand VII of Naples led his soldiers into the ancient city of Rome as a challenge to Napoleon's invasion, but after a humiliating defeat he fled to the island of

Sicily leaving his kingdom in complete anarchy.

The French entered Naples, where they were met with unexpectedly fierce resistance from the only group that still fully supported their king, a sector of society known as the *"lazzaroni,"* the poorest of the poor. They were often described as beggars.

After the final defense of the city was summarily defeated, the Neapolitan nobles and the city's bourgeoisie chose to collaborate with occupying French forces and they established the short-lived "Parthenopean Republic."

Cimarosa, the celebrated composer provides a chastening example of the fate awaiting outspoken musicians who remained in Naples. He was jailed and narrowly escaped execution for his continued resistance to the new Napoleonic regime, until the fragile

“republic” collapsed and King Ferdinand returned to Naples to reclaim his throne.

Napoleon crowned himself “King of Italy” at the Cathedral of Milan in March of 1802, and then “Emperor of the French” at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris two years later. By February of 1806, the French army had once again occupied the city of Naples.

Anyone who is curious about Carulli’s own political alignment during these tumultuous years can simply consult his Opus 33, a twelve-movement “sentimental sonata for solo guitar” published in 1808 at the French capital of Paris. He named this work, *“Napoleone il Grande Tiempo della Gloria”* (“Napoleon the Great in the Temple of Glory”). A programmatic piece, each of its movements represents a dramatic chapter in the epic career of its subject. Of noble birth himself, it appears that Carulli had joined

the old nobility in their support for the new nobility embodied by Napoleon.

That same year, Napoleon installed his brother Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain and placed another relative, Joaquim Murat on the throne of Naples. The new king of Naples ruled as Gioacchino Napoleone. Soon after these events Carulli chose to move his family to Paris, which by then had become a ruling capital for the entire Napoleonic Empire.

THE FASHIONABLE MAN IN PARIS
L'Homme à la Mode à Paris

It's no later than the Spring of 1809 when we find Carulli settled down in Paris, where he established a permanent new home for himself and his small family. Shortly after his arrival, he attended a house concert where the host asked him to play for his guests. Carulli

agreed to follow a brilliantly executed performance by one of Paris' most celebrated musicians, the notorious Bohemian pianist and composer Jan Dussek (1760-1812). Ferdinando's own compositions for solo guitar and his vocals with guitar accompaniment were enthusiastically applauded by the sophisticated and influential Parisian audience. They immediately embraced him as their new and exciting novelty. Afterwards, it was reported that Dussek admiringly confided to Carulli, "Sir, you are a great artist!"

Soon after that evening's entertainment, Carulli would enjoy one of his most resounding successes. He performed a scheduled solo concert at Antonio Franconi's *Théâtre Olympique* on *Rue Saint-Honoré.* On that night, the city of Paris embraced yet another international musical celebrity as one of her own.

THE MUSIC EDUCATOR

Despite being largely self-taught himself, Carulli went on to publish one of the most popular and consequential guitar instruction manuals of the nineteenth century. Throughout his entire professional career, he continued to supplement his performance and publishing income by working as a music teacher. Here, he developed the essential practical field experience that informed this extremely successful course of study.

His Opus 27 "*Méthode*" was a two-volume instructional manual first published in Paris in 1810 by Nicolas Carli (1764-1827). In one of his many acts of paternal piety, he dedicated its publication to his young son, Gustavo. It became so successful that Carulli eventually had to update it through three different editions, including a supplement with additional

exercises, before republishing it in 1825 as a complete revision. He titled his Opus 241 edition "*École de Guitare*" ("School of Guitar"). This version of the work is the one that is most familiar to later generations of musicians. Together, these texts provided a foundational resource for ambitious guitarists over the course of many decades, and established Carulli's musical style as one of the primary models for six-string guitar playing not only in Paris, but throughout Europe.

Carulli viewed the guitar as the preferred instrument for accompaniment of vocal performances, and he supported this idea with another popular instructional textbook, his Opus 195 "*Solfèges avec Accompagnement de Guitare*" ("Vocal Exercises with Guitar Accompaniment").

Alexandre Petit (fl. c.1815-c.1835) of Paris published Carulli's theoretical treatise on guitar harmony, entitled

"*L'Harmonie Appliquée a la Guitare*" ("Harmony Applied to the Guitar") in 1825.

In hindsight, the scope and scale of Carulli's private instruction is difficult to assess. However, he often dedicated new publications to his pupils. Taken together, these names can comprise an impressive list of his individual students.

"GUITAROMANIA" IN PARIS

Paris soon became an attractive destination for other accomplished Italian guitarists. Filippo Gragnani, Carulli's old friend from Livorno, settled there sometime around 1810. Two future rivals, first Matteo Carcassi (1796–1853) arrived from Florence in 1815, and then Francesco Molino (1768–1847) from Ivrea (near Turin) became a permanent resident of Paris a few years later.

We may never fully understand the complex nature of the competitive rela-

tionships among these musicians, but the emergence of a passionate new audience who enthusiastically embraced them as new musical heroes can help provide us with a means to assess the intense fascination that Parisian music-lovers began to have with the six-string guitar.

The widespread adoption and the emotional appeal of this new instrument was celebrated by both professionals and amateurs alike. The cultural movement was parodied in an 1820 book by guitarist and publisher Charles de Marescot (1790-1842). "*Guitaromanie*" was a collection of short and accessible musical compositions that also included visual commentary. Marescot's illustrator provided readers with a series of vivid color plates that featured various guitar-based tableaux.

One of the most topical of these is entitled, "*Discussion entre les Carullistes et les Molinistes*" ("Discussion between

fans of Carulli and fans of Molina") in which the artist depicts a large drawing room filled with well-dressed young men beating each other over the head with their six-string guitars.

The broad popularity of the instrument was spoofed in another illustration, simply entitled "*Guitaromanie.*" This plate depicts a romantic male character playing guitar in a room surrounded by a large crowd of other guitarists, including men, women, and infants, with a horde of new figures rushing onto the scene, all brandishing their guitars.

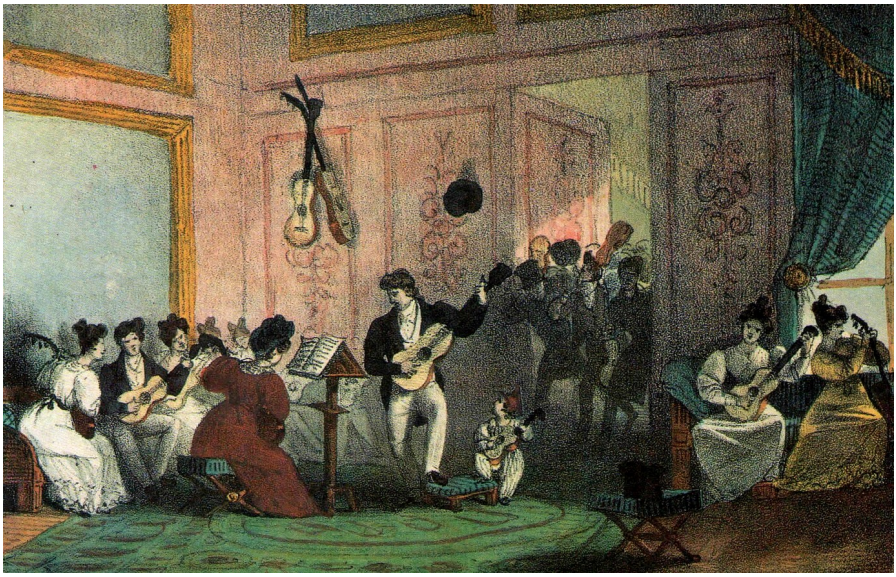
Despite a professional field populated by such strong competition, Carulli's own popularity among Parisian audiences (along with patrons and paying students) remained unsurpassed until around 1823, when Fernando Sor (1778-1839) arrived in Paris to stay.



“*View of Naples and Vesuvius*” c.1780 (unknown artist)



“*La Place de L’Etoile, Paris*” c.1830 (unknown artist)



Charles de Marescot's "Guitaromanie," Plate no. **1 1820**



Charles de Marescot's "*Guitaromanie,*" Plate no. 4 1820

The Spanish-born virtuoso had returned to Paris after nearly a decade of teaching and performing in London. Early in his own ground-breaking career, Sor had been profoundly influenced by the method of Federico Menotti, Carulli's old neighbor from Naples. By then, Sor had developed into an extremely influential performer in the Neapolitan tradition, and had built up a dedicated international following.

In 1826, Dionysio Aguado (1784-1849) arrived from Madrid for an extended visit with his good friend Sor in Paris, and soon developed his own audience. In 1829, a twenty-four year-old Frenchman named Napoléon Coste (1805-1883) made the pilgrimage to Paris for the purpose of pursuing guitar studies with Sor.

THE GUITAR COMPOSER

By mid-career, Ferdinando Carulli had already become one of history's most prolific composers for the six-string guitar. His extraordinary catalog features well over 400 original compositions, including hand-written unpublished manuscripts and print editions that document an impressive quality, quantity, and variety of creative productions.

One also can't help but notice that there is something inherently cheerful about so much of Carulli's music. Whether it's a Neapolitan's love of simple melody, or a Parisian's desire for elegant ornamentation, his compositions seem to speak directly to both of these contradictory impulses. Significantly, he composed the majority of his works for the six-string guitar as a solo instrument.

By adopting compositional techniques initially developed for pianists and violinists, Carulli was able to create an integrated solo style that combined melody with accompaniment. His themes could soar above a rhythmically chorded background or they could embed themselves within the musical texture of other secondary melodic lines.

Additional examples of his creative output were composed for small instrumental groups. Most of these featured the guitar in a prominent role, including guitar duets, violin and flute trios, as well as extended chamber works for string ensemble.

Large-scale compositions, such as his three major guitar concertos enabled him to highlight the unique character of the instrument against the rich texture of a large symphony orchestra. In Carulli's day, symphonic works were prized as the

pinnacle of accomplishment for a composer, and these three works continue to retain their place among the six-string guitar's highest artistic achievements.

The impressive scale of Carulli's three concertos has been challenged only by the three guitar concertos composed by his famous Viennese contemporary, the renowned guitarist and composer Mauro Giuliani (1781-1829), another Italian expatriate.

Despite his early success as a vocalist, Carulli's catalog lists only a handful of works arranged for voice and guitar, with these appearing only among his earliest scores. It appears that after around 1811, he would dedicate all of his efforts exclusively towards the composition of instrumental music.

It must be said up front that a large number of Carulli's published works are didactic in nature. After all, his most

reliable means of income was from his employment as a music teacher. Because of this, many publications are filled with student-level compositions. As noted earlier, publishers encouraged lighter content because they knew that virtuoso guitarists comprised a much smaller market when compared with amateur musicians. Carulli's contemporaries, including Giuliani and Sor, were all subject to these same economic pressures.

Because his economic security relied on satisfying the tastes of his Parisian audiences, many items in his extensive catalog are collected guitar arrangements based on contemporary popular melodies, including treatments of themes by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) and Ludwig von Beethoven (1765-1827).

Alongside educational and progressive studies designed to improve a learner's technical and interpretative skills, Carulli

also published a wide variety of thematic collections that featured original arrangements of national anthems, regional songs, familiar contredances, and popular waltzes.

One of these collections, Opus 79 "*Airs Nationale de Tout les Peuple de Europe*" ("National Airs of All the People of Europe") includes his well-known arrangement of the "*Tarantella*," an energetic dance made internationally famous by his hometown of Naples featured prominently alongside the other themes from across the continent.

Another interesting example is his Opus 204, a collection of twelve short pieces woven into a single unified work described as a "*Fantaisie.*" Beginning with "*L'amour*" ("Love") and "*La Jalousie*" ("Jealousy"), he designed each of its movements to mimic the various qualities

expressed by particular emotions and moods.

GUITAR SONATAS

Carulli was a pioneer and one of the most prolific exponents of a compositional form known as the classical guitar sonata. These works were conceived as larger-scale, more serious solo instrumental compositions. The most basic formal design for these sonatas is characterized through their use of multiple contrasting sections, or movements.

Historically, the term sonata was quite flexible, and it was often used to describe a wide variety of musical designs. Carulli's use of this form also seemed to embody the diversity of expression that the term implies.

These were extended solo works, most often consisting of three sections, beginning with a fast, up-tempo move-

ment, then a slow, reflective second movement, and finally another fast movement for a dramatic ending to the piece. On occasion, we find Carulli using only two movements in his sonatas (most frequently, a slower movement followed by one with a faster tempo).

Carulli's use of this form differed from guitar sonatas then being written by his contemporaries in Vienna, including such renowned composers as Mauro Giuliani and Anton Diabelli (1781-1858). Viennese audiences seemed to prefer a four-movement sonata design that included a "Minuet and Trio" as the next-to-the-last movement right before the finale. Interestingly, over the course of his career Carulli composed few minuets, adopting instead the more up-to-date waltz rhythms demanded by his Parisian audiences.

THEME AND VARIATION

Carulli's frequent use of a long-standing and popular formal design known as "Theme and Variation" provided an appropriate showcase for him to exhibit his creative technique and stylistic diversity. The structural design of this form is based upon the simple introductory statement of a theme (melodies from popular operatic arias were frequently used), followed by a series of musical variations on that theme. Ornamentation might be added to the melody. Rhythms might be changed, or accents added. If a melody was originally in a major key, it might be varied by repeating it in a minor key. The endless variety of possibilities are limited only by a composer's technical skill and creative imagination.

Later in life, Carulli became increas-ingly fond of exploring themes from

popular operas composed by his fellow Neapolitans including Giocomo Rossini (1792-1868), Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835), and Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848).

THE REVOLUTION OF 1830

A series of Carulli's compositions from this year seem to indicate a midlife revival of his revolutionary political fervor. His Opus 330 consists of a set of four variations based on the theme of "*La Marseillaise*." This patriotic melody first emerged as a rallying cry during the French Revolution and was later adopted as a national anthem for the new republic.

After the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo and the restoration of the absolute monarchy under King Louis XVIII in 1815, the song had been complet-

ely banned by the authorities. That is, until the July Revolution of 1830.

Louis' successor, King Charles X had been overthrown in a relatively bloodless popular uprising and then replaced by a constitutional monarchy led by his cousin, Louis Philippe. Carulli published Opus 331 soon afterward, titling it "*Les Trois Jours*" ("The Three Days"). This multi-movement programmatic composition outlines a dramatic narrative chronicling the three day revolution. Each of its movements is accompanied by a program note describing the oppression of the king and the inevitable progress of the French patriots' legitimate opposition to their unjust ruler.

Carulli's Opus 332 is a set of five variations with an introductory movement. He based this piece on a patriotic melody of his own composition, namely the finale of "*Les Trois Jours*," a nationalistic march

he entitled "*La Parisienne.*" The score includes a single descriptive subtitle announcing, "*Les Peuple est Vanqueur*" ("The People are Victorious"). The revolutionary spirit of "*La Marseillaise*" resonates throughout the inspirational theme and each of its variations.

CARULLI'S GUITARS

During his years living in France, Carulli frequently worked alongside the skilled Parisian luthier, René François Lacôte (1785-1871). Together, they made a number of subtle improvements on the basic construction of the six-string guitar. One surviving example of Lacôte's six-string design work is an instrument that was initially built for Carulli himself, and later given to his son Gustavo. The body of the guitar is made from rosewood, with ebony and ivory features. One of its most

unique characteristics is an oversized head-stock, artistically carved to look like a festive ribbon tied up in a bow.

Later, the two would collaborate on an innovative ten-string guitar they called a Décachorde, for which Carulli published his 1826 Opus 293, "*Méthode pour le Décacorde*" to provide instructional support.

LATER YEARS IN PARIS

As Carulli grew older, the excitement generated by his earlier performances began to wane. By then, audiences' musical tastes had evolved away from the clean simplicity of the classical style exemplified by Mozart and his generation, towards a more romantic style that increasingly favored lush and harmonically complex musical textures, like those of Beethoven.



LES TROIS JOURS

Pièce

analogue aux événemens des trois mémorables journées

27, 28 et 29 Juillet 1830

Composée pour

la Guitare

PAR

FERD. CARULLI

Opus 331.

By the late 1830s, even Carulli's most vigorous competitor, Fernando Sor, was beginning to find it difficult to secure patrons willing to sponsor his concert performances.

Mateo Carcassi, the guitarist from Florence, whose playing and compositional style emulated Carulli's own, began to replace the old master on some of Paris' public stages and in its private salons. Just a few years earlier, Carulli had generously dedicated his Opus 320, a hand-written manuscript consisting of six challenging "*Andantes*" for solo guitar, to his younger rival.

It would not be long before an entirely new generation of six-string guitarists, exemplified by Napoléon Coste Sor's former student, began to dominate Paris' guitar communities.

Carulli released his Opus 366 in 1836. An operatic *"Fantaisie"* with six

variations for solo guitar, it was to be his final published work. During these last years, Carulli's public performances became less and less frequent as he slowly retreated from the spotlight.

He could always find comfort in the success of Gustavo's career. His son had prospered. After studying piano, harmony, and composition in Paris, Gustavo's opera "*I Tre Mariti"* ("The Three Husbands") was staged at Milan's La Scala and upon his return to Paris he was appointed to the faculty of the prestigious *Conservatoire de Paris,* where he taught singing and harmony. He also taught privately, and maintained a studio just one door down the street from the brilliant Hungarian pianist and composer, Franz Liszt (1811-1886).

CARULLI'S MUSICAL LEGACY

Ferdinando Carulli's guitar methods remained in print for decades. To this day, they still provide guidance for players seeking to master the musical instrument he helped lift from its obscure origins and to which he dedicated his entire life.

For well over two centuries, in method books written by countless other authors, Carulli's brief *études* (studies) were regularly featured as miniature examplars of guitaristic achievement. Even today, it's almost impossible to find a published anthology of classical guitar music that doesn't include at least a few of Carulli's most accessible compositions. Dig a little deeper though, and you can discover his other scores, the ones that continue to challenge and reward even his most experienced interpreters.

Carulli's own concerns about his posterity notwithstanding, there's been a long-standing argument that a complete assessment of history's essential classical guitar composers must include Ferdinando Carulli, Fernando Sor, and Mauro Giuliani at the top of any list of the pioneering generation of six-string guitarists. Which of these three is most deserving of guitar history's top spot? The question has been hotly debated since the early eighteen-twenties.

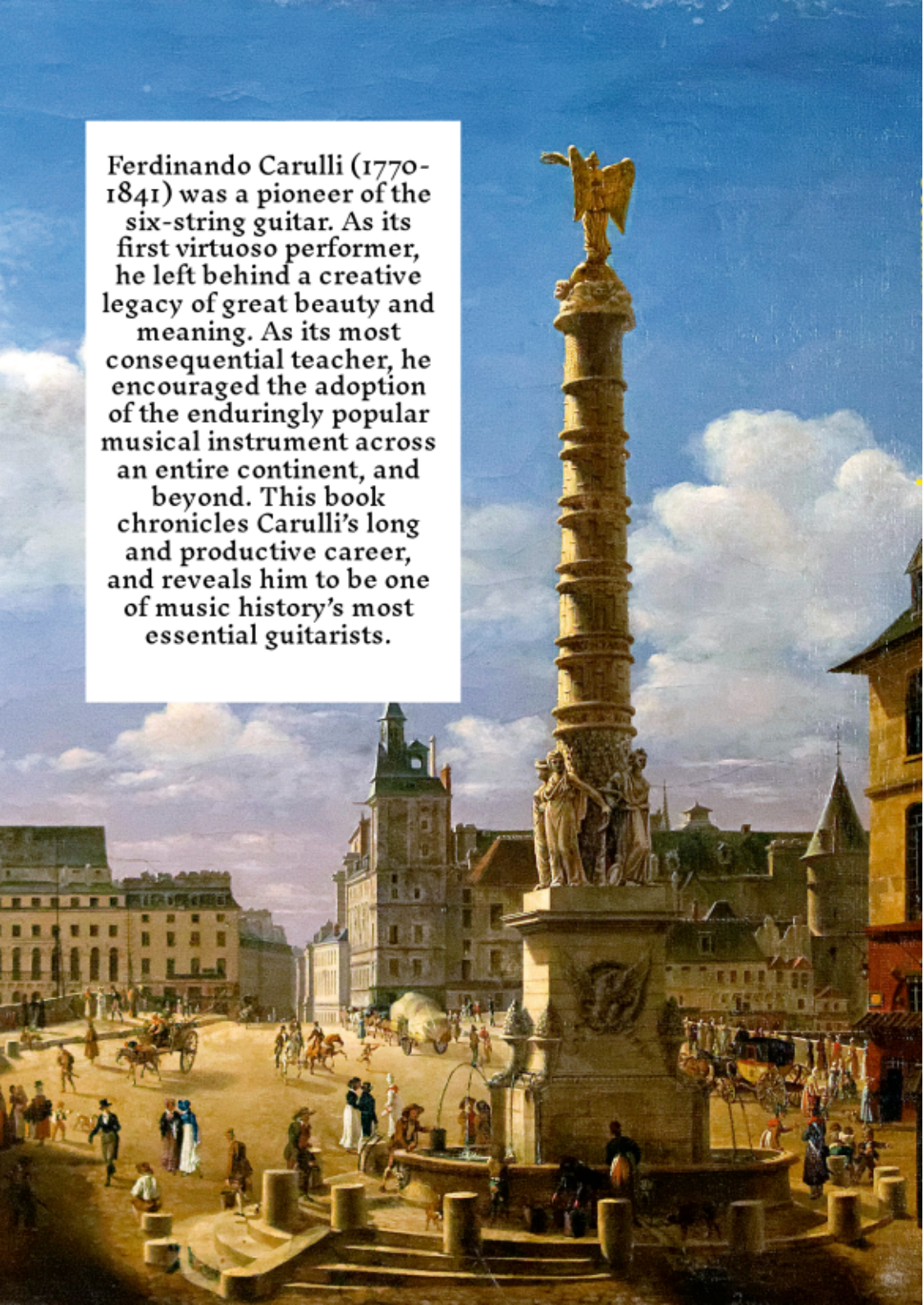
Although they were contemporaries, Carulli was slightly older than his two rivals and one might think that would give him some historical pre-eminence. However there's a longstanding tradition of advocacy for Fernando Sor among Spanish guitarists culminating in the consequential career of Andrés Segovia (1893-1987) and the publishers of the popular London periodical "*The Giulian-*

iad" helped to burnish Mauro Giuliani's posthumous reputation among English-speaking guitarists by hosting the riotous Sor/Giuliani feud in their letters column. Undeservedly, Carulli's best compositions appeared less often on mid-nineteenth century concert stages and in the repertoire of professional guitarists than equivalent works by his fellow pioneers.

Despite this historical oversight, Carulli's style has continued to reveal itself as an essential element at the core of hundreds of years of guitar-playing. He still lives and thrives in the guise of an old teacher who continually reveals to his students exactly why he's still the *maestro*.

We can be thankful too, that his best work still resonates with the distinctive sounds that once echoed through the streets leading up to his front door in Naples.

Ferdinando Carulli died at his home in Paris on February 17, 1841.



Ferdinando Carulli (1770-1841) was a pioneer of the six-string guitar. As its first virtuoso performer, he left behind a creative legacy of great beauty and meaning. As its most consequential teacher, he encouraged the adoption of the enduringly popular musical instrument across an entire continent, and beyond. This book chronicles Carulli's long and productive career, and reveals him to be one of music history's most essential guitarists.