

# MAURO GIULIANI

(1781-1829)

## Music for Guitar Solo

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**David Starobin, guitar**

# Mauro Giuliani

## Music for Solo Guitar, Volume One

Though we today possess representations of guitars dating back to the Hittites (ca. 1400 B.C.), the earliest extant six-string guitar dates from ca. 1787. The first six-string instruments were certainly experiments—attempts to improve upon the then-dominant five-string and five-course guitar. However, those adventurous luthiers could not possibly imagine the ramifications of the simple "improvement" that they were adding, for the six-string guitar would become the quintessential guitar, spawning an amazing variety of progeny. There were the fine early classic instruments of Fabricatore, LaCote, Panormo, J.G. Stauffer, and C.F. Martin; which were then followed by later generations of instruments by Scherzer, Torres, Fleta, Bouchet, Ramirez, and Hauser, to name only a few of the best six-string classic guitar builders. And these represent but a branch in a tangled forest. During the twentieth century there has been a steady growth in the guitar's adaptability to wildy diverse stylistic directions. The six-string instrument, its size and tuning forming a superb balance of playability and harmonic completeness, has become the standard for a vast array of steel string instruments. Used in jazz, rock, country, and myriad other styles; electrified, plasticized, and more recently, synthesized—the six-string guitar has arguably become the most representative instrument of our century.

While the precise birthplace of the six-string guitar remains unclear, any remarks about the early six-string guitar must focus upon the fanatic cultivation of the instrument in Vienna, ca. 1800-1830. Though the instrument achieved considerable popularity in many other European centers during this period, the concentration in Vienna of guitar-playing amateurs and professionals, publishers

of guitar music, superb guitar makers, and most importantly—great composers, established a climate which fostered some of the first compositions which would become standard guitar repertoire—music central to the art of the present day player.

"Centrality" certainly describes Mauro Giuliani's position in Viennese musical circles. Born in the Italian province of Bari in 1781, Giuliani settled in Vienna in 1806. During his thirteen-year stay in the "Imperial City", Giuliani worked, socialized, and collaborated with Beethoven, Hummel, Weber, Moscheles, Diabelli, Mayseder, and many other leading musicians. His musical activities ranged from the composition of beginners' guitar exercises to performances of his own guitar concerti (his many documented performances even included the world-premiere of Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony*, playing as a featured guest-cellist!). However, it was as a guitar virtuoso that Giuliani was so highly esteemed. Many of Giuliani's performances drew considerable critical praise for having taken the instrument to a higher level of expressivity. Writing in the British guitar journal *Giulianiad* in 1833, (some three years after Giuliani's death), an admiring critic states that:

"in his hands the guitar became gifted with a power of expression at once pure, thrilling, and exquisite. He vocalised his adagios to a degree impossible to be imagined by those who never heard him... In a word he made the instrument sing."

Giuliani's solo guitar music—a mercurial combination of grace, lyricism, and dazzle—is always well wrought, and crosses to deeper levels on surprising occasion.

Between 1807 and 1819 (the year in which he left Vienna), Giuliani would publish more than 100 opus numbers. These works ranged from collec-

tions of pedagogical pieces to three concerti for guitar and orchestra; from sonatinas to large-scale chamber works. Giuliani's abundant output of vocal music (more than 100 songs with guitar/piano accompaniment) was also published during this period, though not assigned opus numbers. The bulk of this music gradually went out of print, becoming the province of a scattering of libraries and private collections. Thus, it has become possible to assess the complete output only recently. The 1989 publication of Giuliani's Complete Works (Tecla Editions, Brian Jeffery, editor) combined with Dr. Thomas Heck's pathbreaking dissertation, *The Birth of the Classic Guitar and its Cultivation in Vienna, Reflected in the Career and Compositions of Mauro Giuliani* (©1971, UMI Dissertation Information Service) has given modern guitarists their first clear view of Giuliani's achievement.

### *Grande Overture, Op. 61*

1 Giuliani's *Grande Overture*, Op. 61, offers the guitarist one of the finest adaptations of sonata-allegro form in the instrument's repertoire. Published in Milan in 1814, it was Giuliani's first work to be published outside of Vienna, and is among the most frequently played of his compositions. Here, a slow introduction leads to an allegro full of sparkling virtuoso turns. Giuliani's thorough usage of the guitar's textural possibilities always dictates the shape of this buoyant score.

### *Agitato, Op. 51, #3; Grazioso, Op. 51, #14; Andantino, Op. 51, #7*

2 - 4 The three short pieces from Op. 51, first issued in 1814, come from a short collection of 18 pieces published as *Leçons Progressives*. These pieces are typical of the many sets of pedagogical works that Giuliani produced. A gener-

ous teacher, Giuliani transferred many of the finer qualities of his art to these studies—from songful melodies to insistence on a contrapuntal approach to guitar playing. Giuliani's copious expression markings add great subtlety to these lovely miniatures.

### *Six Variations sur un Theme original, Op. 20*

**5** The *Six Variations sur un Theme original*, Op. 20, gives a uniquely vivid view of Giuliani's guitar playing—almost a window into his practice room. In perhaps no other composition did Giuliani notate intensity, articulation, and color with the precision of detail that he offers in this remarkable score. Throughout, Giuliani takes great delight in upsetting the symmetry of his material, employing a complex network of accents notated on two levels. The emphatic character of the work's surface strongly suggests the influence of Beethoven, yet its spirit remains purely Giuliani's. First published in 1809, these variations are dedicated to Count George de Waldstein, one of Giuliani's pupils.

### *Prélude: Allegro di Fuga, Op. 83, #6; Prélude: Allegro mosso, Op. 83, #5*

**6 - 7** The two Preludes from Op. 83 are part of a minor mystery. In the spring 1990 issue of *Soundboard*, musicologist Matanya Opee revealed evidence that Giuliani's Op. 83, music much loved by generations of players, was in reality only an arrangement. The real composer was apparently the French guitarist Antoine de l'Hoyer, and his version for five-string guitar was published in 1812, some five years before Giuliani's. In a situation so seemingly plagiaristic, a likely assumption is that Giuliani was asked by the Viennese publisher Weigl

to make an arrangement for six-string guitar. Weigl then published the arrangement as a Giuliani original, a sensible marketing strategy in Vienna. This situation, common enough in music publishing, would not be so interesting were it not for the high quality of these works, and how little is known about Antoine de l'Hoyer. L'Hoyer's fine pieces contain exceptionally chromatic harmony—a great rarity in guitar music of this period. They indicate that a serious exploration of l'Hoyer's life and music is long past due.

### *Rondo: Allegretto, Op. 14, #1; Rondo: Allegro spiritoso, Op. 14, #5*

**8 - 9** The two little rondos from the Op. 14 set of *Six Rondeaux Progressives* are the simplest and most innocent music on this recording. Even in music of such modest pretense Giuliani loved to invest his work with warmth and wit. In #5, note the cuckoo that opens the piece and the out-of-kilter pulse (in the "minore"), which both eventually find their way back home.

### *le Jasmin, Op. 46, #4; le Romarin, Op. 46, #5; la Rose, Op. 46, #9*

**10 - 12** The three character pieces from *Choix de mes Fleurs chéries (ou Le Bouquet Emblématique)*, Op. 46, are as scented as their titles suggest. The coyly seductive Jasmine and the somber Rosemary are followed by one of Giuliani's most exquisite creations—The Rose. These pieces seem more personalized than many of Giuliani's etude-length works, suggesting an attempt at portraiture rather than still-life.

## *Minuetto, Op. 73, #9; Etude, Op. 100, #13*

**13** - **14** In 1819, Giuliani's financial situation deteriorated to such an extent that he was forced to leave Vienna. Dr. Heck reports that "his household goods were seized and inventoried (for auction) by the police in September..." The *Minuetto*, Op. 73, #9, was first published during this period. Its wistful, almost tragic character becomes even more poignant when juxtaposed with the sunny countenance of so much of Giuliani's music. The e-minor *Etude*, Op. 100, #13, was also published in early 1819. Its spinning figuration begins in the guitar's lowest register, gradually gathering momentum as it climbs toward the top of the instrument's range.

## *Variazioni sulla Cavatina favorita: "De calma oh ciel", Op. 101*

**15** Of the 151 opus numbers assigned to Giuliani's music, 46 numbers catalog sets of variations. The *Variazioni sulla Cavatina favorita: "De calma oh ciel"*, Op. 101, is one of the best examples of Giuliani's work in this favored form. The Cavatina is from Rossini's opera *Otello* (1816), and is sung by Desdemona. Giuliani's variations eschew formulaic repeats, building steadily to a brilliant conclusion. Published in 1819, this outstanding composition indicates that Giuliani took leave of Vienna at the peak of his musical powers.

-- notes by David Starobin

**David Starobin** was born in New York City, in 1951. He began his guitar studies at age 7, with the Puerto Rican guitarist Manuel Gayol, later working with Aaron Shearer at the Peabody Conservatory of Music. While a student, Starobin worked closely with pianist Leon Fleisher, who exerted a strong influence on the young guitarist. Among David Starobin's many honors are a Harvard University Fromm Grant, for "his commitment to the music of our time" (1984); a Lincoln Center Avery Fisher Grant (1988); and Peabody Conservatory's "Distinguished Alumni Award" (1999).

David Starobin is currently the chairman of the guitar department at the Manhattan School of Music, where he holds the school's Andres Segovia Chair. A leading advocate of contemporary music, more than 300 works - solo, chamber, and concerto - have been composed for and dedicated to Starobin. Among the list of composers who have written for Starobin are Elliott Carter, George Crumb, Poul Ruders, Mel Powell, Charles Wuorinen, Simon Bainbridge, Colin Matthews, Jonathan Harvey, Barbara Kolb, Richard Wernick, William Bland, Roger Reynolds, Gunther Schuller, Milton Babbitt, Per Nørgard, Lukas Foss, Mario Davidovsky, and Starobin's brother, Michael Starobin.

In 1981, David Starobin founded Bridge Records, Inc.. Starobin's work at Bridge Records as both guitarist and producer has earned ten Grammy nominations, and numerous "Best of Year" awards.

### The Instrument

Mr. Starobin recorded this album using a copy of a J.G. Stauffer guitar (ca. 1829), built by Gary Southwell, Nottingham, England. Johann Georg Stauffer (1778-1853) was the leading guitar builder in early nineteenth century Vienna, and is also remembered for inventing the Arpeggione (1823), an instrument made famous by Schubert's celebrated Sonata. A concert pitch of A = 430 was employed for this recording.

Producer: Michael Calvert  
Recording Engineer: Paul Zinman  
Edited by Michael Calvert and Eric Delente at GLC Productions  
Liner Notes: David Starobin  
Photography: Frederic Petters  
Design: Alexis Napolliello  
For Bridge Records: Becky Starobin, Carolyn Finger, Robert Starobin,  
Alexis Napolliello, Ashley Arrington  
Portrait of Giuliani printed courtesy of Mr. Robert Spencer

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*For Allegra and Rose*

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