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SOR

Songs for
Voice and
Guitar

Nerea Berraondo,
Mezzo-soprano

Eva Beneke, Guitar

Fernando
SOR
(1778–1839)

Songs for Voice and Guitar

Italian Arias

Three Arias from Don Giovanni
(Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, arr. Sor)

- 1 Batti, batti, o bel Masetto
(‘O my sweet Masetto’) 2:59
- 2 Deh, vieni alla finestra, o mio tesoro
(‘Oh, come to the window, my love’) 1:36
- 3 Vedrai carino se sei buonino
(‘If you’re good, my little love’) 2:54
- 4 Lagrime mie (‘O tears’) 2:09

Spanish Songs

- 5 Las quejas de Maruja (‘Maruja’s lament’) 2:42
- 6 A conquistar tu plaza
(‘I was on my way to conquer’) 1:23
- 7 Acuérdate, ben mio (‘Remember, my love’) 1:14
- 8 Al mediator jugando
(‘I’m playing a game of mediator’) 0:40
- 9 Ausente de mi dueño
(‘When absent from my master’) 2:14
- 10 Boleras del Caramba 2:36
- 11 Cesa de atormentarme (‘Stop tormenting me’) 1:08
- 12 ¿Cómo ha de resolverse?
(‘How can a man resolve’) 1:20
- 13 De amor en las prisiones
(‘Held prisoner by love’) 1:02
- 14 El que quisiere amando
(‘He who wishes to love’) 1:37
- 15 Las mujeres y cuerdas
(‘Women and guitar strings’) (‘1st version’) 0:51

- 16 Mis descuidados ojos
(‘My unsuspecting eyes’) 1:34
- 17 Las mujeres y cuerdas (‘2nd version’) 1:07
- 18 Favores ni desprecios
(‘Neither favours nor slights’) 1:44
- 19 Muchacha, y la vergüenza
(‘Tell me, my girl’) 1:02
- 20 No doblarán campanas (‘No bells will toll’) 1:54
- 21 Si mis ojos te dicen
(‘If my eyes are telling you’) 1:01
- 22 Si dices que mis ojos (‘If you say my eyes’) 1:32
- 23 Prepárame la tumba
(‘Prepare a grave for me’) 1:35
- 24 Seguidillas del requiem eternam
(‘Requiem Seguidillas’) 1:57

French Songs

- 25 O vous, que Mars rends invincible
(‘O you whom Mars makes invincible’) 2:08
- 26 Mon dernier mot (‘My last word’) 2:31
- 27 Valse du ballet de Cendrillon
(‘Waltz from the ballet Cendrillon’) 1:29
- 28 Appel des nègres aux Français
(‘Appeal of the Negro slaves to the French’) 3:28
- 29 Laurette 3:10

Spanish Patriotic Songs

- 30 ¿Adónde vas, Fernando incauto?
(‘Where are you going, unwary Ferdinand?’) 3:06
- 31 Los defensores de la patria
(‘Defenders of the nation’) 1:23

Publishers: Chanterelle Verlag 1-23 25-31; Tecla Editions 24

Fernando Sor (1778–1839)

Songs for Voice and Guitar

Fernando Sor, one of the great guitarists of his era, was a prolific composer mainly remembered for his concert works including sonatas, sets of variations, fantasias, études, minuets, waltzes, divertimentos, songs, among others. He also composed orchestral pieces, ballets, an opera, and choral music, all now lost to posterity. Of his many remarkable compositions, his output of songs remains perhaps the most neglected. However, the songs recorded here in three languages demonstrate the superb flair and range of his vocal works as well as the variety of his virtuosic guitar accompaniments.

Sor, born in Barcelona and educated at the school of Montserrat monastery and the Barcelona military academy, moved to Madrid in 1799 and held administrative sinecures which took him to many parts of Spain including the south. When in 1808 the French invaded Spain, he fought against them for a while, but around 1810 Sor took on an administrative post with the French, a move which compelled him to become an exile from his native country when Napoleon was ejected from the peninsula.

He then lived in Paris and London and built up an esteemed reputation as a guitarist in both cities. His ballet *Cendrillon* ('Cinderella') was performed in London, Paris and Moscow. In 1823 Sor travelled to Russia in company with the ballerina Félicité Hullin, who danced the role of *Cendrillon* for the opening of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. Returning to Paris in 1826, Sor continued with recitals and publishing compositions while teaching the guitar to a number of pupils including some of high social standing.

Sor, described by the critic, François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871) as 'the Beethoven of the guitar', was probably more influenced by Haydn and Mozart. Certainly, as he explained in his *Guitar Method*, Sor wanted the guitar to represent a miniature orchestra capable of many qualities of timbre, often imitating instruments such as trumpet, oboe, or even the harp. Following the death of his daughter Caroline, on 8 June 1837, Sor went into decline, and became ill in the summer of 1838 with an ulcerated

chest and throat. The guitarist was buried in the Cimetière de Montmartre on 12 July 1839, where his tomb was rediscovered in the 1930s and the gravestone restored by the society known as Les amis de la guitare de Paris.

The three groups of songs presented here (in addition to Sor's setting of two patriotic songs), offer distinct styles of composition, ranging from 18th-century classical concepts to the more ethnic dance elements of Spanish folk song.

The three songs from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* illustrate the customary practice of guitarists of the period to arrange operatic arias, enabling some of the glories of the theatre to be enjoyed in the salon. *Batti, batti, o bel Masetto* ('O my sweet Masetto') [1], from an aria in Act I, Scene IV, is sung by Zerlina, a country girl engaged to be married to Masetto. The scene takes place in a garden outside Don Giovanni's palace. Zerlina, under pressure of being seduced by Don Giovanni, begs forgiveness from Masetto with the plea 'Come and beat your poor Zerlina!' Zerlina almost persuades him of her innocence when Don Giovanni's voice sounds offstage and frightens her. This aria is one of the most popular moments in the opera. *Deh, vieni alla finestra, o mio tesoro* ('Oh, come to the window, my love') [2], from Act II, Scene I, is sung by Don Giovanni as he serenades Donna Elvira's maid with a mandolin outside her window. Partially disguised with a hat and cloak borrowed from his servant Leporello, Don Giovanni pleads with the girl to give him comfort and not to be cruel as he only wants to show how much he loves her.

In Act II, Scene I, Masetto and his friends arrive. They are looking for Don Giovanni and eager to kill him. Don Giovanni still in disguise with hat and cloak convinces the gang that he also hates Don Giovanni. He gets rid of Masetto's friends, takes Masetto's weapons away and beats him before running off laughing. In a dark courtyard in front of an inn, Zerlina finds Masetto bruised and beaten. He explains what has happened and in the aria *Vedrai carino se sei buonino* ('If you're good, my little love') [3], Zerlina promises to heal his wounds with her love.

Lagrima mie ('O tears') [4], was published in Sor's *Méthode* as an example of simple accompaniment to songs with guitar.

The 20 Spanish songs demonstrate quite different musical concepts. They come under the category of *Seguidillas* or *Boleros*. The guitar historian, musicologist and publisher, Matanya Ophee, advises that some of the songs may not be by Sor at all, but 'precisely because we do not have the means of establishing the truth of the matter convincingly, we may continue to perform these songs as if they were written by Sor'.

The eminent name of Sor may have been used by unscrupulous publishers eager to promote their wares. Certainly, these Spanish songs are not in Sor's customary style and the names of the authors of the verses are also unknown as with many popular songs through the centuries. The first Spanish song *Las quejas de Maruja* ('Maruja's lament') [5], begins with a gentle, waltz-like lilt. The essence of the song is 'You say you love me, anyone can see it... but you're burning me with your coldness.'

A conquistar tu plaza ('I was on my way to conquer') [6], opens almost like a guitar study of the period. The slightly enigmatic text suggests that to conquer the lover, the singer strategically 'played a master and set up camp elsewhere'.

Acuérdate, ben mio ('Remember, my love') [7] tells of the fickleness of a woman who once was passionate but is now fleeing from the lover. The song has a Bizet-like quality of lyricism. *Al mediator jugando* ('I'm playing a game of mediator') [8] is a virtuosic song, the mediator playing the part with three women. *Ausente de mi dueño* ('When absent from my master') [9], ponders the sadness of absence, when 'the hours turn into centuries' like 'a rehearsal for death'. This extended song has a flamenco style of accompaniment with a finely ornamented melodic line. The intricate accompaniment of *Boleros del Caramba* [10] supports a melody full of embellishment and vitality. The verse tells of missing the loved one's arrival through sleep. Further verses insist on the perfidy of love. *Cesa de atormentarme* ('Stop tormenting me') [11] has a short poem in which the

memory of past happiness is a torment. *¿Cómo ha de resolverse?* ('How can a man resolve') [12], ponders how to decide to set sail if a storm is on the horizon in a poem which may be interpreted literally or concerning the decisions of love. *De amor en las prisiones* ('Held prisoner by love') [13] is another allegorical verse in which the lover lives happily in the prison of passion, blessing the chains which bind, where freedom would be more regrettable than death. *El que quisiera amando* ('He who wishes to love') [14] explains that pain is an inevitable part of romantic feelings. If your lover scorns you, it is best to retaliate in kind.

Las mujeres y cuerdas ('Women and guitar strings') provides a comparison between women and guitar strings. They both have to be carefully tuned – too slack they do not sound, too tight and they will break. There are two versions, the first highly ornamented but marked *Andantino* [15], while the second is more brilliant with a rippling guitar accompaniment which again shows flamenco influence [17].

Mis descuidados ojos ('My unsuspecting eyes') [16] tells of how the lover's careless eyes have seen the beautiful face of the beloved and is now in captivity with no hope of rescue. The eyes of the beloved are also dangerously charming. *Favores ni desprecios* ('Neither favours nor slights') [18] has a cryptic verse expressing how whatever responses the lover receives, whether favour or disdain, they should be paid back in the same currency.

Muchacha, y la vergüenza ('Tell me, my girl') [19] is an argument between mother and daughter. The former wishes to know where the girl's sense of shame has gone. The girl replies that cockroaches have eaten it. The mother retorts that the girl must be lying because cockroaches have no teeth. *No doblarán campanas* ('No bells will toll') [20] confesses that no bells will toll 'when I die' as the death of a sad man makes hardly any sound. *Si mis ojos te dicen* ('If my eyes are telling you') [21], returns to the imagery of eyes which in this instance can signal love and are therefore very daring. *Si dices que mis ojos* ('If you say my eyes') [22] is another variation on the theme of eyes. Here the lover is told that his eyes are killing the beloved, and therefore she should take

the last rites as he is coming to see her. He also will die if he does not see her.

Prépárame la tumba ('Prepare a grave for me') 23 is a sombre song where the lover will die in the arms of the mother of falsehood, the arms of such a person being more frightening than death itself. The sequence of Spanish songs concludes with *Seguidillas del requiem eternam* ('Requiem Seguidillas') 24, a song full of southern Andalusian energy and colour.

The five French songs return us to a different experience of mood and feeling. *O vous, que Mars rends invincible* ('O you whom Mars makes invincible') 25 was sung in the comic opera *Soliman II ou Les Trois Sultanes* ('Soliman II or The Three Sultans') by the Italian-Russian composer Catterino Cavos (1775–1840). The verse comments on how even the strongest person can be weakened and destroyed by love.

Mon dernier mot ('My last word') 26, written by Pierre-Ange Vieillard de Boismartin (1778–1862), expresses a desire for success and wealth. The last lines of each stanza progress from *je n'en veux plus* ('I want no more of you') to *j'en veux toujours* ('I still want plenty more of them').

Valse du ballet de Cendrillon ('Waltz from the ballet Cendrillon') 27 has a message, that if you are in love *peut-on compter sur le bonheur?* ('can you count on happiness?') *Appel des nègres aux Français* ('Appeal of

the Negro slaves to the French') 28, an anti-slavery poem by the unknown poet, Louis Mialle, is a passionate appeal from the slaves to the concepts of French liberty. *Laurette* 29, with a text by Mr Terrason, extols the virtues of an ideal beauty, and reiterates a plea in the concluding two lines of each stanza: *Trouvez-moi donc une Laurette parmi vos dames de la cour!* ('Find me then a Laurette among the fine ladies at court!')

Of the Spanish patriotic songs, the first, *¿Adónde vas, Fernando incauto?* ('Where are you going, unwary Ferdinand?') 30, looks back on the events of Napoleon's invasion of Spain with the ambivalence of an expatriate forced to flee his homeland. In the end comes a heartfelt desire that Spain should be united and all Spaniards should live as brothers. *Los defensores de la patria* ('Defenders of the nation') 31 develops the traditional theme from Horace's *Odes of Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* ('It is sweet and proper to die for one's country').

Graham Wade

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Evva Beneke would like to thank Chopper Black, Harry Chalmiers, Stephen Kakos, Thomas-Müller Pering and La Bella Strings for their support.

Nerea Berraondo

Nerea Berraondo is a native of Pamplona, Spain. At the age of 27 she has already sung several principal roles in many of the major opera houses of Europe, working with conductors such as Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Maximiano Valdés, Marco Guidarini, José Antonio Montañó, Ernest Martínez Izquierdo and José Miguel Pérez-Sierra. Symphonic repertoire highlights include the Spanish premiere of Giya Kancheli's *Styx* with violinist Gidon Kremer; Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at the Palacio Euskalduna with Juanjo Mena; Falla's *El amor brujo* and *La vida breve* in London and Baluarte respectively; and Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* at the Palau de la Musica with Yaron Traub, in addition to being a guest soloist with orchestras across Spain. She has worked extensively in the field of early and baroque music and recently recorded a disc of Marini's vocal works with her ensemble Aldatu on the Arsis label. Nerea Berraondo has won several international prizes and competitions and performed at the opening recital of the Centro Nacional de Difusión Musical (CNDM) season to an audience of 3,000 with Eduardo López Banzo. In 2012 she was bestowed a Merit Award by the CNDM.

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Eva Beneke

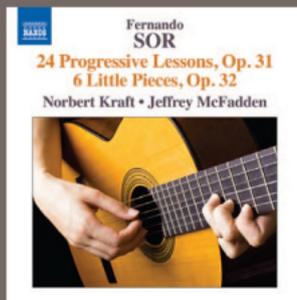
Eva Beneke studied guitar in her native Berlin at the University of Arts, and later at the Franz Liszt Hochschule in Weimar. In 2012, she received a doctorate with honours from the University of Southern California where she studied with Scott Tennant, Pepe Romero and Bruce Forman. As a prizewinner, internationally acclaimed soloist, chamber musician and published arranger, her performances have been broadcast nationally and internationally on radio and television. Highlights of her career include appearances with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin under Kent Nagano, and invitations to international music festivals. A frequent collaborator, she has quickly become one of the most sought-after chamber musicians in her field: her 2012 album *In Dulci Jubilo – A Classical Guitar Christmas* is a duo collaboration with GRAMMY®-winning guitarist Scott Tennant (of the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet) and Guitar Salon International. Her solo debut CD with works by Bach, Beneke and Domeniconi received critical acclaim. In the Fall of 2012, Eva Beneke joined the faculty at McNally Smith College of Music in Saint Paul, Minnesota where she maintains an active guitar studio. Eva Beneke plays strings by La Bella.

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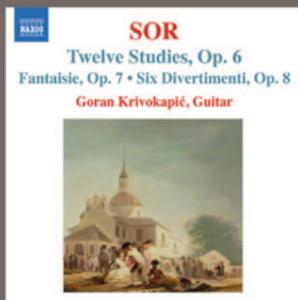


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Fernando Sor was one of the greatest guitarists of his era and his works are still extremely popular today. His songs, however, are much less well known. They demonstrate the superb flair of Sor's vocal writing, in three languages, as well as the variety of his virtuosic guitar accompaniments. The three groups of songs presented here (in addition to Sor's setting of two patriotic texts) offer distinct styles of composition, ranging from arrangements of arias from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* to the dance elements of Spanish folk song.

Fernando
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(1778–1839)

Songs for Voice and Guitar

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|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| 1-4 | Italian Arias | 9:38 |
| 5-24 | Spanish Songs | 30:13 |
| 25-29 | French Songs | 12:46 |
| 30-31 | Spanish Patriotic Songs | 4:29 |

Nerea Berraondo, Mezzo-soprano
Eva Beneke, Guitar

A detailed track list and publishers' details can be found on page 2 of the booklet.

The sung texts and English translations can be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/573686.htm
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