

NAXOS

Ferdinando and Gustavo CARULLI

Music for Guitar and Piano • 2

Franz Halász, Guitar • Débora Halász, Piano



Ferdinando Carulli (1770–1841) and Gustavo Carulli (1801–1876) Music for Guitar and Piano • 2

Of all the early nineteenth-century guitar maestros, the music of Ferdinando Carulli has been the most neglected. Despite his huge output Carulli has come to be regarded as primarily a pedagogue rather than as a composer of concert works. This Italian maestro, originally from Naples, settled in Paris in 1808, where his comprehensive *Guitar Method, Op. 27*, was written and published with enormous success. His creative contribution to the guitar was underestimated until a thematic catalogue by the Italian scholar Mario Torta appeared in 1993, describing him as ‘a composer, virtuoso and successful teacher who played a decisive rôle in moulding the future of his instrument... There is a wealth of invention in his finest solo compositions and great instrumental variety and strength in his chamber music’. Carulli composed some four hundred works for the guitar, including solos, duos and trios, guitar ensembles, chamber music and concertos as well as many studies and exercises. For two of the pieces presented here, *Op. 236* and two Overtures from *Choix de Douze Overtures de Rossini*, the original editions acknowledged that Ferdinando’s son, Gustavo Carulli, guitarist, composer and singing teacher, shared in the composition.

Carulli’s reputation as a worthwhile composer was considerably enhanced in the twentieth century when recordings by Julian Bream and John Williams of his *Duo in G, Op. 34*, and *Serenade in A, Op. 96*, were issued in the early 1970s. Prior to that, Carulli’s most popular works had been his *Guitar Concerto, Op. 14*, and the *Serenade in A, Op. 96* (recorded by the Presti/Lagoya guitar duo).

The present selection is dedicated to Carulli’s unique attentiveness to the guitar and piano repertoire, a combination of great appeal to Parisian salons and family gatherings. Although several other guitarists of his era were also attracted to this medium, particularly his compatriot, Mauro Giuliani (1781–1829), who worked with the virtuoso pianist, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Carulli’s prolific expertise in bringing together two apparently disparate instruments was widely appreciated

by his contemporaries as the publication of more than twenty such works surely demonstrates.

Carulli’s *Duo, Op. 11*, published in 1809, is the composer’s earliest opus number for guitar and piano and represents one of his first experimental attempts at bringing the two instruments together. The inspiration here from the opening bars of the *Allegro* is clearly Mozartian as guitar and piano together introduce the theme. The sparkling pianoforte runs can scarcely be matched for brilliance by the guitar but where the guitar is given an opportunity to articulate the themes, the effects are captivating.

The slow movement, *Larghetto*, presents a set of four variations. Once again the piano dominates in both the main melody and the first variation. But in the second variation, marked *dolce*, the guitar is heard with its own inventive lines over the quiet accompaniment. The piano returns with renewed vigour and vivacity in the third variation. The final variation provides an arpeggiated dialogue between the partners. *Rondo: Allegretto*, allows the guitar a solo introduction before the piano’s entry to strengthen the theme with octaves. In this movement the two instruments maintain a more equal balance despite some rapid pianistic demisemiquaver passages from time to time. By the end of the work a sense of coherence and tonal synthesis has been satisfactorily achieved.

Duos, Op. 150 and *Op. 151*, published in the 1820s when Carulli was in his early fifties, both present a slow movement followed by a *Rondo*. They demonstrate Carulli’s mature expertise in bringing together guitar and piano sonorities. In *Op. 150* the *Larghetto* is a short witty movement, characterized by *sforzando* chords punctuating the opening statements and their repetitions. The subsequent *Rondo: Andante*, gives the pianist ample scope for virtuosic display, yet the guitar is very much an equal partner here. *Op. 151* offers a slightly longer *Andantino* movement, in ternary form, the opening section being repeated without modification for its conclusion. The *Rondo, Allegretto* is a joyous dance in six/eight time, the

piano once again demonstrating instances of technical brilliance balanced against the guitar's insistent *cantabile*.

Carulli's set of *Three Waltzes, Op. 32*, published around 1815, is distinguished by delightful dialogue between the guitar and piano as they share and echo the tasteful Italianate melodies. Written when the waltz was at the peak of its popularity, hence the attractiveness of the form to composers such as Beethoven, Schubert and Weber, Carulli's sophisticated dances are close to the ballroom in their lyricism. The three waltzes here are respectively in the keys of G, D, and A, indicating that they are a unified group, each gaining additional musical coherence from their inclusion within the triptych.

The early nineteenth century guitarists were deeply attracted to the music of Rossini (1792–1868) as a source for transcriptions, intending to bring the excitement of grand opera into the salon. *Mélange en Duo (Motifs de Rossini), Op. 236*, is thus a panoramic display in miniature of various Rossini masterpieces, each one popular among the sophisticated audiences attending performances of Carulli's arrangements. The motifs, selected from operas as diverse as *Tancredi*, *The Barber of Seville*, *The Thieving Magpie*, and *Cinderella*, are woven into a sequence full of contrasts in which the combined talents of Ferdinando and Gustavo Carulli serve the music of the Italian grand master with affection as well as ingenuity and insight.

Grande Marche de Ries, Op. 168, published in 1822, is a transcription of a work by Ferdinand Ries (1784–1838), the German pianist and composer. Ries studied with Beethoven in Vienna and in later years toured widely, visiting Russia, Sweden, and England. *The Harmonicum* described his playing as 'distinguished from that of all others by its romantic wildness'. Ries spent his final years

in Germany, contributing during this period to one of the significant early biographies of Beethoven.

The next two works are further Rossini selections, published without opus number in the 1820s under the title of *Choix de Douze Ouvertures de Rossini* (Choice of Twelve Rossini Overtures). These arrangements are based on the overtures of *Cinderella* and *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. The latter, written when Rossini was twenty-one, tells the story of Mustafa, a Turkish Bey in Algiers, desirous of marrying an Italian girl. When Isabella, a lady of the appropriate nationality, is shipwrecked in North Africa, the plot begins in earnest with many twists and turns. By the end of the opera Mustafa has grown weary of the idea of Italian girls and returns to his wife and true love, Elvira.

A very accomplished and imaginative work in three movements, Carulli's *Grand Duo, Op. 86*, was published in Paris around 1814. The first movement, *Allegro*, opens with fourteen bars of solo piano announcing the main theme. What follows is a dazzling interchange of tonal colours, ingenious modulations, and musical discourse, showing Carulli's mastery at its most lyrical and inventive. The slow movement, *Largo*, permits the pianist nine introductory bars in which to revel in intricate filigree before the entry of the guitar brings the two elements together with poignant sonorities explored in harmonious partnership. The final *Allegro*, in ternary form, is a sparkingly virtuosic work in three-eight time, a light-hearted dance with ample scope for precise ensemble playing and individual brilliance.

Graham Wade

Acknowledgements are made for the kind assistance of Mario Torta in the compilation of these notes



Franz Halász

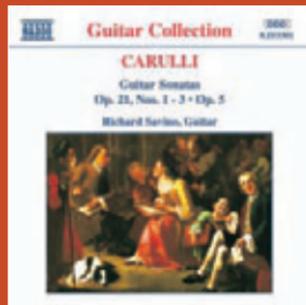
The American-born German guitarist Franz Halász is among the most outstanding artists in his field. He began his career in 1993, winning first prizes at the Andrés Segovia Competition in Spain and the Seto Ohashi Competition in Japan. A guest performer at major festivals and events such as the Rose Augustine Series in New York, the Toru Takemitsu Memorial Concert in Tokyo, and in Germany the Kissinger Sommer, Brandenburgische Sommerkonzerte and Mecklenburg Vorpommern, as well as in England, Portugal, Brazil and elsewhere, he has also shared the stage with well known artists such as Siegfried Jerusalem, Patrick Gallois, Robert Aitken, Alban Gerhard and Boris Pergamenschikov among others. He is professor at the Nuremberg Musikhochschule and offers master-classes at prestigious institutes all over the world, including the Manhattan School of Music, the San Francisco Conservatory, the Academy of Music in Oslo, and São Paulo University. His many recordings for BIS include among others the complete guitar music by Joaquín Turina and Toru Takemitsu.

Débora Halász

Praised by critics in her début recordings, the Brazilian Débora Halász is among the leading South American pianists of her generation. Winner of the most important competitions in her native country, she made her début with the São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra at the age of fifteen. Four years later the Critics Prize (APCA) named her the best soloist of the year for her interpretation of Rachmaninov's *Third Piano Concerto*. In 1989 she went with a DAAD scholarship to Germany, and since then has been invited to many European, South and North American Music Festivals and Concert Series. With her husband she established in 1993 the Duo Halász, for guitar and piano / harpsichord, arousing further critical acclaim. She has also partnered musicians such as Lavard Skou Larsen, Sebastian Hess and Patrick Gallois. Her ambitious recording of the complete piano music of Heitor Villa-Lobos, a project of some eight CDs, has been enthusiastically acclaimed by the international press. She has also recorded for BIS works by Ginastera, Shostakovich and Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Her passion for baroque music led her to search for a historically accurate instrument for that repertoire, and she plays a historic copy of a Haas instrument, dated 1734, specially made for her. It is on this instrument that she has embarked on the recording of the complete works for harpsichord by the Portuguese baroque composer Carlos Seixas, a co-production between Naxos and Bavarian Radio.



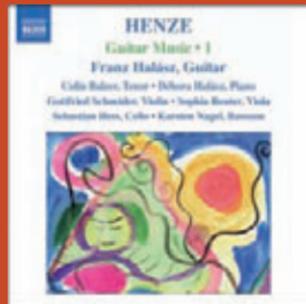
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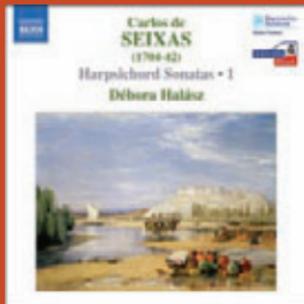
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Playing Time
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Franz and Débora Halász continue their revelatory exploration of Ferdinando and Gustavo Carulli's neglected yet highly appealing music. As popular with the glamorous Parisian salon set as with music-loving families who played them at home, these sparkling and melodious works brim with virtuosity and vivacity. Original compositions rub shoulders with *mélanges* of beloved opera melodies and arrangements of operatic overtures, variations, waltzes and dazzlingly dancing duos. The artists have been praised for their 'perfect rhythmic and tonal agreement'. Volume 1 is available on 8.570587.



Ferdinando
CARULLI
(1770–1841)

Gustavo
CARULLI
(1801–1876)



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Ferdinando CARULLI

Duo in C major, Op. 11

1 I. Allegro 4:04

2 II. Larghetto 3:45

3 III. Rondo: Allegretto 5:22

Duo in C major, Op. 150

4 I. Larghetto 1:52

5 II. Rondo: Andante 3:19

Duo in G major, Op. 151

6 I. Andantino 2:18

7 II. Rondo: Allegretto 3:02

Three Waltzes, Op. 32

8 I. Waltz in G major 2:07

9 II. Waltz in D major 2:32

10 III. Waltz in A major 3:26

Ferdinando and Gustavo CARULLI

11 **Mélange en Duo sur des Motifs de Rossini, Op. 236** 7:54

Arranged by Ferdinando CARULLI

12 **Grande Marche de Ries in D major, Op. 168** 4:25

13 **Overture to Rossini's 'La Cenerentola'** 8:30

14 **Overture to Rossini's 'L'Italiana in Algeri'** 8:12

Ferdinando CARULLI

Grand Duo in E minor, Op. 86 13:59

15 I. Allegro 6:21

16 II. Largo 3:51

17 III. Allegro 3:42



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