

José
FERRER
(1835–1916)

Complete Guitar Duets
Jørgen Skogmo • Jens Franke



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'Like Francisco Tárrega, his better-known Spanish friend, Ferrer wrote music that's gloriously perfumed, rich in subtlety and nuance – an invitation to dance.' – Jens Franke

This album presents the first integral recording of the complete published and manuscript duets by the Catalan master José Ferrer, last of the charismatic Romantic guitarist-composers. Journeying from languorous dance to grand Italian opera, here is music of *soirées* and faded walls, starched gallantry and cognac, Iberian salons and forgotten Parisian boudoirs.

José Ferrer y Esteve was born in Torroella de Montgrí on the Costa Brava, originally the *port reial* of the Kings of Aragon – within earshot of the bells of the local parish church, Sant Genís (where he might have had general musical training) and sheltered from the wind by the Montgrí Massif mountain range towering from east to west. From the age of five, he studied with his father, an amateur guitarist, and may possibly have taken advice from one of his father's other pupils, José Costa y Hugas. By 1860 he had settled in Barcelona, where for two years he took lessons from José Brocá y Codina (1805–1882), a largely self-taught student of Aguado. In 1878 he met Francisco Tárrega. Teaching, playing, composing and pursuing photography, he subsequently spent two extended stays in Paris (1885–98 and 1901–05), leading to a variety of teaching appointments, including at the Académie Internationale de Musique and the Institut Rudy, and concerts in venues such as the Salle Herz and Salle Pleyel. He was also guitarist to the Comédie-Française. In 1888, at the invitation of Felip Pedrell, he published an article on the guitar in *La Ilustración Musical Hispano Americana de Barcelona*. In 1893, under the chairmanship of the dramatist Victorien Sardou, author of *Tosca*, he became a member of the Société des auteurs et compositeurs de France, the Berne Convention governing copyright having been signed in September 1886. In between he returned briefly to Barcelona (1898–1901), giving lessons, free to students, at the Conservatori Superior de Música del Liceu, founded in 1837.

A dynamic Spanish presence together with a strong

core of Gallic masters, established or in ascendancy, coloured Ferrer's Third Republic Paris years, physically at least if not creatively. The mix was heady: the pianists Ricardo Viñes (champion of Ravel, Debussy, Falla and Albéniz) and Joaquim Malats; Pablo Casals, in 1895 second cellist of Théâtre Marigny orchestra; transiently, the painter Joan Brull. Commanding the organ loft at Saint Sulpice, Widor bridged the changing of the French guard, *la belle époque*; from Franck and Saint-Saëns to Debussy and Ravel, to the loner of Montmartre, *Le chat noir* and Arcueil, Erik Satie, 'gymnopedist' and 'phonometrician'. Down streets on either side of the Boulevard Saint-Germain were two celebrated Left Bank eateries: the Restaurant Foyot, established by Louis-Philippe's chef; and the Café Procope, going back to the late 17th century. Widor and his *comtesses* held court at Foyot; Paul Verlaine and his *cocottes* at Procope – its gas-lit interior 'as dark as a finely coloured old meerschaum pipe' (Edward [Edouard] Cucuel, 1899) – one a brilliant, witty raconteur; the other 'the great poet of the slums, the epitome and idol of Bohemian Paris'. Rodin meanwhile, along with his young muse and mistress of desperate, torn destiny, Camille Claudel, permeated, abandoned and crossed the capital in other ways, she conceiving *La Valse* in 1889, he bronze-casting *Le Penseur* in the first years of the new century.

Ferrer's companions and colleagues included Albéniz and Massenet, and the guitarists Julián Arcas, José Viñas and Francisco Tárrega. Little is known of his personality. However, Ferrer's friendship with musicians of his own age or substantially younger (Miguel Llobet and Emilio Pujol, born 1878 and 1886 respectively), his dedications to fellow composer-guitarists (Brocá, Tárrega) and the 'various young ladies of different nationalities who comprised his musical clientèle', and his popularity at society *soirées* – the menu of one particularly fine dinner languishes among his manuscripts – seem indicative of generosity and grace

of spirit (Simon Wynberg, 1987). Artistically, Ferrer's style was light-touched and technically idiomatic, his modern reputation resting pretty much exclusively on a small number of reprints issued since the 1980s. Rather in the manner of Fernando Sor and Schubert, not to mention the zarzuela tradition, he had the happy knack of spinning melodies, clichés and basic harmonies into elegantly shaped lockets of charm and *evocación*, nuanced shadows and textures plumbing profounder depths. He left 63 opuses, the majority for solo guitar; others are extant in manuscript, including a largely unknown (undated) guitar method (Josep Maria Mangado Artigas, *La guitarra en Cataluña, 1769–1939* [London 1998]). He was a man who never tried too hard. Neither should the performer or listener.



Fantasia sobre motivos de La Favorite after Donizetti [2 December 1840, Académie Royale de Musique, Paris] (Barcelona, 28 February 1881). Published 2018, edited from the autograph by Jens Franke and Marta González Bordonaba. *Ange si pur*, Act IV Romanza (E major, *larghetto*); *Rayons dorés, tiède zéphyre*, Act I Chorus (A major, *andante*). *La Favorite*'s early history was interesting: Wagner prepared the French/Italian vocal score, c. 1840–42, and Arthur Sullivan edited Charles Lamb Kenney's English version. Ferrer's realisation, understandably, transposes keys to suit the instrument.

Bolero in E minor, Op. 39 'Hommage à Mademoiselle Hélène Bergounioux [?Bergouniaux]'. Published Paris 1897–98, for piano and guitar, or two guitars. In *da capo* form, the trio and coda are in the tonic major.

Fantasia sobre motivos de Lucrezia Borgia after Donizetti [26 December 1833, La Scala, Milan] (1878). Solo guitar, unpublished manuscript. Introduction; *Senti! La danza*, Prologue Chorus (D major, *vivace*); *Andante* (G major); *Di pescatore ignobile*, Prologue (D major, *larghetto*); *Brindisi, Il segreto per esser felici*, Act II (D major, *allegretto*). The muted 3/4 *Andante* link between *Senti!* and *Di pescatore ignobile* is a mesmerisingly beautiful slow variation on the former, notably testing in its melodic harmonics and barely articulated accompaniment.

Terpsichore: Vals, Op. 45. Dedicated 'a mon élève Monsieur Octavio Prates'. Published Paris 1903–04. The music, in 3/8, divides between A minor (introduction and opening waltz) and A major (second half and coda).

Minué in A major, WoO 10 (1883). Published 1992. According to the two-page manuscript, this early duo was written in Barcelona.

Mélancolie: Nocturne in C major, Op. 23. Dedicated 'a mon élève Monsieur Maurice Thomas'. Published Paris 1895, for two guitars, or flute and guitar. A simple, expressive *bel canto* piece in A–B–A–C form (the B section in G major), framed by an introduction and codetta.

Les Sirènes: Valse in G major, Op. 26. Dedicated 'a mon cher ami Monsieur Bourjeaurd'. Published Paris 1895–96, for banjo and guitar, or two guitars. A 3/8 setting in *da capo* form, flanked by an introduction and 'finale'. The second of the three sections comprising the waltz proper

is the spicier for closing in the mediant minor (B).

Mazurka, WoO 1. Published 1925. The dance material, rhythmically essentialised, divides into two halves, in D and G major successively, prefaced by an *andante* introduction. Aside from palely echoing at the start 'shy hesitation, the lady tensing like a bird about to take flight' (Liszt), the brave new world of Chopin, his seeking after a Polish 'soul that voices the sorrow and revolt of a dying race' (James Huneker), is not Ferrer's concern.

Vals original, WoO 9 (Barcelona, 6 July 1879). An apprentice piece, published 1992. In Ferrer's customary *petit* 3/8 metre, rather than 3/4, the music opens with an introduction in A minor. The *da capo* 'vals' at the core, an A–B–A–C design, is in the tonic major, with the B and C sections balanced on either side in dominant E and sub-dominant D major respectively. The coda draws the piece to a close in D – another Ferrer foray innocently, skeletally, suggesting the 'progressive tonality' road.

De noche en el lago: Fantasía con variaciones in D minor, Op 14. Dedicated 'a mi querido amigo el muy notable guitarrista [to my dear friend the very remarkable guitarist] D Federico Cano': born in Lorca, once a frontier bastion between Christian and Muslim Spain, Cano (1838–1904) was a regarded composer for his instrument. Published Barcelona c. 1888, for solo guitar. Structurally, the work is cast in the form of a *moderato* introduction in D minor, poetically rhetoricised, followed by a 6/8 theme, *allegro moderato*. Three variations ensue, the second,

andante piangendo, expanding magically on the 'lake night' intensities of the introduction. The two-page 3/8 coda, *allegro*, climaxes in the major, with intricate elements of 'concerto' bravado, 'bell' harmonics, and 'orchestral' flourish. One wonders if ghost clouds sailing the moon lie behind the tart G minor/D major cadence chords?

Sérénade espagnole in A major, Op 34. Dedicated 'à mon cher ami Monsieur Domingo Bonet'. Published Paris 1897–98. An agreeably 'active' ensemble piece, *allegretto* 3/4, preceded by an *andantino* 6/8 introduction in the minor, simpler on paper than in execution. This performance follows the post-war edition issued by the French luthier Paul Beuscher of Boulevard Beaumarchais, Paris – these days more celebrated for a catalogue including Piaf, Trenet, Montand and Morricone.

Fantasia sobre motivos de La traviata after Verdi [6 March 1853, Teatro La Fenice, Venice (Barcelona, 28 April 1884). Published 2018, edited from the autograph by Jens Franke and Marta González Bordonaba. Following an introduction (A minor, *andante*), this melodically rich, highly characterised, ornamentally developed potpourri is based on four arias. *Ah, fors'è lui che l'anima*, Act I (E minor/major, first guitar cadenza); *Ah! gran Dio! Morir si giovine*, Act III (A major, *allegro*); *Di Provenza il mar, il suol*, Act II (A major, *andante*); *Brindisi, Libiamo ne' lieti calici*, Act I (A major, *allegretto*).

Ateş Orga

Editions:

Schott GA 570 (ed. Jens Franke/Marta González Bordonaba), 2018 [1](#) [12](#); Jacques Pisa [2](#) [6](#) [7](#); MS Autograph, Robert Spencer Collection, Royal Academy of Music [3](#); Columbia Music Co CO 177 (ed. Sophocles Papas), 1969 [4](#); (i) MS Autograph, Robert Spencer Collection, Royal Academy of Music; (ii) Chanterelle ECH 529 (ed. David Burden), 1992 [5](#) [9](#); Biblioteca Fortea, DF 367, 1925 [8](#); A Vidal y Roger, A 7213 V, 1888 [10](#); P Beuscher, PB 4182 [11](#)

The Robert Spencer Collection, Royal Academy of Music, London, hold the autographs of tracks 1, 3, 5, 9 and 12, used here by kind permission. The dedication and generous help of Marta González Bordonaba and Óscar Colomina i Bosch, Director of Music at the Yehudi Menuhin School, is gratefully acknowledged.

Jørgen Skogmo

The Norwegian guitarist, theorbo-player and mandolinist Jørgen Skogmo studied with Robert Brightmore and David Miller at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. As solo guitarist he has won several prestigious international prizes including Admira Young Guitarist of the Year and the 2002 Ivor Mairants Guitar Award. In London he has played at the Purcell Room, St John's Smith Square, the Young Vic and Wigmore Hall; in New York at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Centre; and in Paris at the Palace of Versailles' Royal Chapel. He has appeared with the English Baroque Soloists (Sir John Eliot Gardiner's *Monteverdi 450*), Gabrieli Consort and Players, the BBC Philharmonic, The King's Consort, The Sixteen, Florilegium, the London Handel Orchestra, Ex Cathedra, Northern Sinfonia, English Touring Opera, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Ulster Orchestra and I Fagiolini. He has also appeared at the BBC Proms under Sir Simon Rattle (Mahler's *Eighth Symphony*), and at English National Opera (Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses*), Glyndebourne Opera and Teatro Real, Madrid. As mandolinist, he has recorded Schoenberg with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Robert Craft (Naxos). Other recordings, featuring theorbo or Baroque guitar, include Paul McCreesh's version of Handel's *Tamerlano* with Plácido Domingo (Opus Arte DVD) and Charivari Agréable's *Giuseppe Torelli: The Original Brandenburg Concertos* (Signum Classics). In 2013 he released a debut solo recording, *Intermezzo*, featuring works by Agustín Barrios, Antonio Lauro and Roland Dyens. www.jorgenskogmo.com

Jens Franke

Jens Franke, born to an eminent German musical family, trained at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and King's College, London. An artist of eclectic taste, he has worked with English National Ballet, and was formerly orchestral guitarist of the European Union Youth Orchestra, in which capacity he appeared in concert with Bernard Haitink, playing such venues as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Konzerthaus in Berlin, and Sadler's Wells in London. He has commissioned a number of new works for guitar including a theatre cycle by Oscar Colomina i Bosch setting Harris's *List of Covent Garden Ladies* (an 18th-century listing of London prostitutes), premiered at the Barbican Centre in December 2011. Recent recording credits include two EPs; eight albums for Schott, London, associated with a series of Romantic and Baroque anthologies; an album of music by Johann Kaspar Mertz (Stone Records); a collection of Schubert songs with Anna Huntley, recorded at Wigmore Hall (Quartz); and Antoine de Lhoyer's complete chamber works for guitar trio and quartet (Naxos 8.573575). www.jensfranke.org

Instrumentarium Matched guitars by Michael Gee: 654, 655 (2017), based on an instrument by Antonio de Torres (1817–1892): FE 12, Sevilla early 1860s. A=440.

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This programme presents the first integral recording of the complete published and manuscript duets by the Catalan master José Ferrer, last of the charismatic Romantic guitarist-composers, whose light-touched skill at creating music of elegance, charm and nuanced shading made him a darling of cultured society. Taking us from languorous dances to the glamour of Italian grand opera, this is mesmerisingly beautiful music redolent of a lost era of soirées and gallantry, Iberian salons and forgotten Parisian boudoirs.

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(1835–1916)

WORLD PREMIERE
INTEGRAL
RECORDING

Complete Guitar Duets

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|----|--|-------|
| 1 | Fantasia sobre motivos de <i>La Favorite</i> (Donizetti) (1881) | 6:47 |
| 2 | Bolero in E minor, Op. 39 (pub. 1897–98) (version for 2 guitars) | 2:58 |
| 3 | Fantasia sobre motivos de <i>Lucrezia Borgia</i> (Donizetti) for solo guitar (1878) | 8:11 |
| 4 | Terpsichore: Vals, Op. 45 (pub. 1903–04) | 3:35 |
| 5 | Minué in A major, WoO 10 (1883) | 2:24 |
| 6 | Mélancolie: Nocturne in C major, Op. 23 (pub. 1895) (version for 2 guitars) | 3:04 |
| 7 | Les Sirènes: Valse in G major, Op. 26 (pub. 1895–96) (version for 2 guitars) | 3:48 |
| 8 | Mazurka, WoO 1 (pub. 1925) | 3:35 |
| 9 | Vals original, WoO 9 (1879) | 5:30 |
| 10 | De noche en el lago: Fantasia con variaciones in D minor, Op. 14, for solo guitar (pub. c. 1888) | 9:55 |
| 11 | Sérénade espagnole in A major, Op. 34 (pub. 1897–98) | 4:48 |
| 12 | Fantasia sobre motivos de <i>La traviata</i> (Verdi) (1884) | 12:45 |

Jørgen Skogmo, Guitar (3 solo)
Jens Franke, Guitar (10 solo)

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 Producer: Ateş Orga • Engineer and editor: Dave Rowell • Booklet notes: Ateş Orga
 Instruments: Matched guitars by Michael Gee: 654, 655 (2017), based on a historical instrument by Antonio de Torres (1817–1892): FE 12, A=440 • This recording was made possible thanks to sponsorship from Furestiftelsen, Oslo • Publishers: See booklet • Cover photo © Galyna Andrushko / Dreamstime.com

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68:36



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