

Mauro Giuliani (1781 – 1829)

I have chosen to write about Giuliani because of the important role he played in establishing the guitar as a worthy solo instrument in the eyes of musicians and connoisseurs other than guitarists. Knowing the acceptance of the guitar in our time more than 150 years later, we don't know how it could have been if guitarists like Giuliani would not have been there to give this new instrument the attention that it deserved, to develop it further and to change the course of its history.



A small introduction

Born in Italy Bisceglie, Giuliani moved to Barletta at a young age where he started his music studies on the cello. Even though he never completely abandoned the cello, he played at the premiere of Beethoven's 7th symphony in 1813 for instance; he soon devoted himself to the guitar completely and gained great skills for the somewhat unappreciated instrument.

Predecessors

Some of Giuliani's important predecessors who deserve to be mentioned and about whom much more could be researched and discussed if interested in the history of the development of the guitar; are Leonard von Call (1767-1815) who was the early protagonist of the era with his numerous simple salon pieces played for the bourgeoisie

(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K98EFcz_bDE);



Simon Molitor (1766-1848) who published his 'Große Sonate für die Gitarre allein, als Probe einer besseren Behandlung dieses Instruments op.7' in 1807 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfbhrDLM18Q>), important mostly because of the preface with which Molitor provided this opus. In the preface Molitor strives to connect the development of the lute and other stringed instruments of the antiquity with the guitar at that time. He discusses what the best way of playing is for the guitar and highlights that a better notation for the guitar music has to be developed. He gives detailed information about the development of the guitar and how it was stringed through the ages. He also has to be mentioned for starting one of the first guitar schools together with Wilhelm Klingebrunner (1782-1850) with whom he wrote several guitar methods.

Wenzeslaus Thomas Matiegka (1773-1830), one important composition of his is his opus 21 for flute, viola and guitar to which Franz Schubert added a cello part. Schubert was drawn to Matiegka's music for its early romantic character; (<http://naxosmusiclibrary.com/catalogue/item.asp?cid=BM31.9016>, Matiegka)

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETHK29KIRgE>, Schubert)

Franz Tandler (1782-1806), even though not mentioned many times in literature described by Molitor as a player not only with a rare proficiency, but also mastering the guitar technically to perfection, something only a true connoisseur could appreciate. Upon his death, Matiegka and Molitor honoured Tandler by writing him the Marche Funebre (http://www.lievens.biz/gitaar/sheet/molitor_marchefunebre.pdf, refresh if it appears in code);

Anton Diabelli (1781-1858). He was mostly known for publishing music with his agency Cappi & Diabelli. Later he also published some of Giuliani's works.

Vienna

All these composers were situated in and around Vienna at the highlight of their career and they helped pave the way towards acceptance of the guitar as a solo instrument. They popularised and standardized the 6 single-string guitar and all before Giuliani moved to Vienna in 1806. It was in Vienna where Giuliani gained fame as 'greatest living guitarist'.¹This was because of teaching, but mostly because of executing and composing guitar pieces. It would however not have been possible to have achieved much in a short period of time, were it not for his predecessors to pave the way and gain a certain trust with the instrument.

Even though much can be credited to the guitarists before Giuliani, he is seen, probably more than any other guitarist as responsible for the acceptance as solo instrument². Before his time, the guitar was mostly seen as accompaniment instrument for a vocalist or solo instrument. He gained fame throughout Europe due to his instrumental and musical taste on his tours. He was one of the first guitarists who had concert tours throughout Europe and was acquainted with the most important individuals of the Austrian society including Rossini and Beethoven. He helped define a new role for the guitar in the context of the European music.

Only after 2 years in Vienna, in 1808 Giuliani's opus 30 with full string and timpani accompaniment premiered. He didn't only receive extraordinary reviews for his compositional skills, but also as instrumentalist he was hailed. He already established himself as unprecedented guitarist in Vienna. Some critics refused to accept the 6-string guitar as a dignified instrument, also because of some complaints about audibility, but those same critics praised Giuliani's virtuosity.

Giuliani's G. Fabricatore (1809):

¹ Oxford Grove Music Encyclopedia: Mauro Giuliani

² Encyclopedia of World Biography/2005.



In 1814 he was appointed as the court musician for the Empress Marie Louise, Napoleon's second wife. In 1815 he was the official artist during the most important celebration of the Congress in Vienna and that same year he gives a series of concerts in the botanical gardens of the Schonbrunn Palace: 'Dukaten Concerte', named after the price per ticket. His music was published in abundance during this period. He is seen as being among the group of the most prominent Viennese Musicians along with Beethoven and Johann Hummel. Shortly, he established himself in Vienna.

Notational System

An important merit within the written guitar music credited to Giuliani, at least in part, by many is the progress in notation. Something already pointed out by Molitor as being necessary. Giuliani's notation system makes clear when the music consists of 2 or more voices, all in one staff. This is achieved by the stem direction of the note and fitting rests for every voice. The direction of the stem of the melody voice is always upwards and the others always downwards, no matter the pitch of the note. (See example below)

Een



Works

Mauro Giuliani wrote over 180 pieces:

- about 130 pieces for solo guitar;
- 10 for guitar and piano;
- 15 for two guitars;
- 15 chamber music pieces with guitar;
- 7 pieces for voice and guitar;
- 1 piece for voice, another instrument and guitar;
- 3 concerts for guitar and orchestra
- Arrangements for guitar solo:

Giuliani's composition can roughly be divided in 3 periods. The first being the one with the virtuoso pieces from when he first arrived to Vienna; he composed a Sonata for solo guitar and his first concerto, op. 30 along with some studies for right and left hand.

Then without having a clear transitional date, the second period in which Giuliani became confident as a renowned Viennese citizen composing over a hundred pieces, his second and third concerto and many songs and pieces for guitar and violin and guitar. This period achieved Giuliani as the main guitarist of Vienna and a well-rounded composer for not only guitar but also the other combinations I listed before. From this period is his Grande Overture in the Italian style.

The last period is after 1819 when he left Vienna to go back to Italy due to his financial problems. He continued being influenced by his great idol Rossini.

Opus 30, composed in Giuliani's first period. This piece requires exquisite solo guitar techniques such as chordal accompaniment, scales, challenging large interval leaps in octaves and rapid right hand arpeggio's. This virtuosic style was very much based on Italian opera style.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeIc2Bm0Ffs>

From the second period Grande Ouverture op. 61 is a composition written ca 1810. It shows classical principals of Haydn and Mozart with her Sonata-like structure after a slow minor mode introduction. The allegro is mostly based on quick passagework with scalic figures and features a crescendo for humoristic purposes in several places. One could also take this from an Opera Overture from one of Giuliani's idols, Rossini. The Italian influence is clearly prominent here and never really leaves Giuliani's work. As his biographer Thomas Heck describes Giuliani's musical substance: "Viennese classicism nourished by Italian lyricism".

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0CcJtnERP0>

Op. 46 Choix de mes fleurs chéries ou Le Bouquet Emblématique ca 1812, from the second period. A very beautiful set of pieces in classical style that together form a bouquet of flowers. Here is a recording of The Rose:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdlttA5dME>

Rossiniana No. 1. Opus 119, third period ca. 1820. A composition in Rossini's bel canto style with which Giuliani seeks to approach his audience by using themes of an important composer in a series of potpourri's. He chose to use his example Gioacchino Rossini and wrote in the style of -. The piece starts with a chord based andantino introduction and the tension increases by applying one of Rossini's favourite techniques: repetitive, small melodic cells. The Andante grazioso that follows is a minor mode aria in which Giuliani processes some unexpected humor that is further developed in the Variations that follow. The piece ends with an Allegro Vivace that is based on a sequence of orchestral crescendo's, also a trademark in Rossini's overtures.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fHTSMADr1s>