

## *The Catalan Guitar, Part 1*

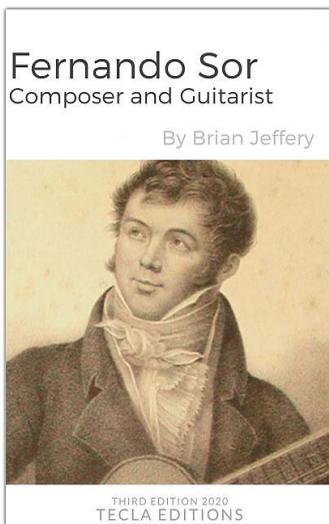
Four New E-books by Brian Jeffery & Josep María Mangado

RICHARD M. LONG

Brian Jeffery

*Fernando Sor: Composer and Guitarist*, 3rd edition

N.p.: Tecla, 2020, PDF or ePub<sup>1</sup>



IN 1974, writing in the Italian journal *Il Fronimo*, Brian Jeffery briefly summarized what was known about the life of Fernando Sor.<sup>2</sup> While the few available studies dedicated to Sor tended to concentrate on his compositions for guitar,<sup>3</sup> Jeffery was aware that the guitarist had also led a rich and varied life as an administrator and soldier in Spain, a composer of songs and opera and ballet, a teacher of piano and voice, and a political exile in France, England, and Russia. In a footnote to the *Fronimo* article, Jeffery announced that he was preparing a book on Sor. A few months later, Jeffery wrote to Thomas Heck, one of the founders of the newly formed Guitar Foundation of America, that he was planning a trip across the

Atlantic and offering an illustrated lecture on Sor. He also claimed to have “quite a lot to say about Sor’s songs.” Heck communicated this information in the third issue

1 <https://tecla.com/shop/books-and-music-scores/sor-fernando/brian-jeffery-fernando-sor-composer-and-guitarist-as-a-digital-download-pdf/>.

2 Brian Jeffery, “L’attività concertistica di Fernando Sor,” *Il Fronimo* 2, no. 6 (January 1974): 6–13.

3 For example, William Sasser, “The Guitar Works of Fernando Sor” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 1960).

of *Soundboard* and added that Jeffery promised his book would include “a detailed catalogue of Sor’s works.”<sup>4</sup>

Actually, Jeffery was preparing projects more ambitious than a catalog. In 1976 he published some recently discovered Sor songs for voice and guitar, followed in 1977 by a five-volume boxed set of Sor’s “complete works” in facsimiles of early editions — a total of over nine hundred pages.<sup>5</sup> It did not contain a catalog; that, along with much historical and biographical detail, was reserved for the full-scale biography, *Fernando Sor: Composer and Guitarist*, also published in 1977.<sup>6</sup> These works were not perfect. The editions selected, the quality of the reproductions, and the completeness of the “complete works” — all would attract criticism, but they also inspired imitation and set new standards for guitar research. The next decades would see improvements in photo reproduction and printing technology, the publication of more biographies of guitarists, and more sets of collected or complete works by guitarists.<sup>7</sup>

They also apparently sold well, because Jeffery published a new, revised nine-volume facsimile edition of Sor’s works in 1982, followed by a monumental five-year project, the Tecla edition of the complete works of Mauro Giuliani. In 1997, Jeffery launched another complete Sor, now in ten volumes and with the music entirely reengraved. For some reason this project was discontinued before all ten volumes were published, and was replaced in 2001 with eleven 9” × 12” volumes, engraved, with glossy covers printed in Hungary.<sup>8</sup> And this, too, would be followed by a corrected second printing.

The second edition of Jeffery’s biography *Fernando Sor, Composer and Guitarist* appeared in 1994, in the midst of an outpouring of new research on Sor. The new edition had been revised and improved here and there, but it did not reflect the new Sor

- 4 Thomas Heck, “Works in Progress / Completed,” *Soundboard* 1, no. 3 (August 1974): 20–21.
- 5 Fernando Sor, *Six Seguidillas boleras*, for voice and guitar, ed. Brian Jeffery (London: Tecla, 1976), and *Twelve Seguidillas*, for voice with guitar or piano (London: Tecla, 1976); Fernando Sor, *Complete Works for Guitar*, facsimile edition, ed. Brian Jeffery, 5 vols. (New York: Shattinger, 1977).
- 6 Brian Jeffery, *Fernando Sor: Composer and Guitarist*, 1st ed. (London: Tecla, 1977).
- 7 The facsimile edition was an increasingly promising idea in the 1970s, assisted by advances in commercial printing technology. Important guitar editions were (re-)published by Minkoff Reprint of Geneva, Studio per edizioni scelte of Florence, Chanterelle Verlag of Heidelberg and others. In 1976, three substantial volumes of facsimiles — one each for Carcassi, Giuliani, and Sor — were edited by Frederick Noad and “published under the auspices of The Guitar Foundation of America / by Golden Music Press” (New York: Shattinger). The Sor volume consisted of the “original” Meissonnier opp. 1–20, except that Noad substituted the more complete “revised” Meissonnier version of the “Mozart variations,” op. 9. Note that Shattinger was also the publisher of the five-volume *cw* of Sor the following year.
- 8 Fernando Sor, *The Complete Works for Guitar in Facsimiles of the Original Editions*, ed. Brian Jeffery, 9 vols. (London: Tecla, 1982); Mauro Giuliani, *The Complete Works in Facsimiles of the Original Editions*, ed. Brian Jeffery, 39 vols. (London: Tecla, 1984–88); Sor, *The New Complete Works for Guitar*, ed. Brian Jeffery, re-engraved, ten volumes (London: Tecla, 1997–) [began publication with A4 pages, apparently not completed]; Sor, *The New Complete Works for Guitar*, ed. Brian Jeffery, re-engraved, 11 vols. (London: Tecla, 2001). There was a corrected second printing of this last item.

research in Europe, notably Josep María Mangado's *La guitarra en Cataluña* (1998)—discussed elsewhere in this issue—and Luis Gásser's *Estudios sobre Fernando Sor / Sor Studies* (2002), an enormous collection of thirty essays by diverse international scholars. But Tecla—Jeffery's own imprint—was the publisher of the former work, and Jeffery was a contributor to the latter.<sup>9</sup> Even after the appearance of these new resources, Jeffery's biography remained the best work on Sor in English.

In the new millennium, Jeffery founded a new online entity, Hebe's Web, and began to sell digital files of selected music and books from his Tecla catalog. This brings us to 2020, when the third edition of *Fernando Sor, Composer and Guitarist* became available in either ePub or PDF format. Its publication coincided with his new digital edition of Sor's *Complete Works*, which enables the purchase of any of the individual works for guitar in the form of instant PDF downloads.<sup>10</sup>

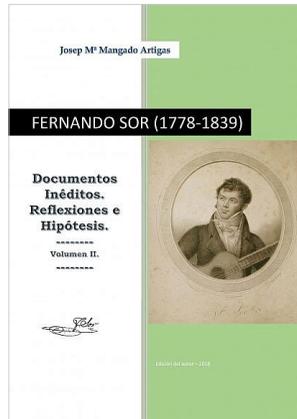
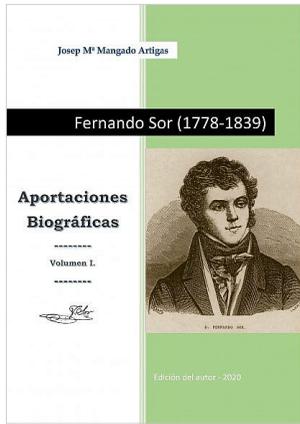
The new biography follows the same narrative format as its previous two editions, dividing Sor's life into five periods (Spain, Paris, London, Paris/St. Petersburg, and London/Paris), but the text is significantly revised in light of the new scholarship, and incorporates many of the discoveries from Mangado's three volumes on Sor (reviewed below). New information in the chapter on the London years, for example, includes the identification of Sor's Spanish wife, Joaquina, who joined him in London in 1815 but died soon afterwards, leaving Sor to raise their newborn daughter, Caroline. Sor was also joined in London by his brother Carlos; both were popular guitar teachers, but Fernando was spectacularly successful as a composer, especially with his "arriets" (Italian songs) and his ballet *Cendrillon*. Caroline accompanied her father and Félicité Hullin to Russia and back to Paris, where she died in 1837.

The third edition contains discoveries of obvious importance (e.g., Sor stipulates metronome markings for some of his *seguidillas*: very fast), but also includes marginal details that might have been left out of printed editions; these sometimes yield interesting connections. Learning that Sor lived for a time in Charlotte Street, London, Jeffery includes contemporary maps and architectural elevations of the street. But he also learns that one of Sor's neighbors may have been Mordaunt Levien, inventor and pioneer of harp-guitars. And Sor wrote some of the earliest music for harp-guitar. . .

This third edition of Jeffery's biography of Sor is a major upgrade from the second, filled with interesting details for *aficionados* of Sor or the guitar, but with much to interest a general reader. While the e-book does not support page numbers (since the number of pages varies with screen size), I estimate it contains the equivalent of well over three hundred letter-sized pages. But if you want still more, Mangado has compiled three volumes of primary sources that seem to leave no stone unturned.

9 Josep María Mangado Artigas, *La guitarra en Cataluña, 1769–1939: Con especial referencia a los guitarristas José Ferrer (1835–1916), Sor, Brocá, Viñas, Bosch, Costa, Más, y otros* (London: Tecla, 1998); Luis Gásser, ed., *Estudios sobre Fernando Sor / Sor Studies* (Madrid: ICCMU, 2002).

10 Jeffery's digital edition will have competition from a new printed version edited by Erik Stenstadvold, to be published later this year by Guitar Heritage of Heidelberg (<https://www.michaelmacmeeken.com/thematic-catalogue-sor/>). See Erik Stenstadvold, "Sor's Guitar Music: A Fresh Start," *Soundboard Scholar*, no. 6 (2020): 4–10.



Josep María Mangado Artigas

*Fernando Sor (1778–1839)*, vol. 1, *Aportaciones biográficas*

Sant Feliu de Llobregat, Barcelona: Self-published, Tecla, 2020, PDF<sup>11</sup>

JOSEP MARÍA MANGADO is a Catalan musician, *maestro*, and historian, born in Barcelona in 1953—“175 years after Fernando Sor [b. 1778], in the same street in which the Sor family resided.” He began his guitar studies with Josep Carnicé, a former student of Miguel Llobet, and also studied with Jordi Codina at the Conservatorio Superior Municipal de Barcelona. He served as professor of guitar at the Conservatorio Profesional de Música in Manresa (Barcelona) from 1980 to 2016. In 2017 he was awarded the Chitarra d’oro prize at the twenty-second Convegno Internazionale di Chitarra (Alessandria) for his many important contributions to the history of the guitar.

The three enormous volumes of Josep María Mangado’s *Fernando Sor (1778–1839)* were assembled in the years 2018–20 following several decades of research. The PDF files (the format reviewed here) have 552, 339, and 826 pages, respectively. Most of these files consist of primary documents and clippings accompanied by a running narrative by the editor (in Spanish) and with his translations of any sources not in Spanish (many are in French). There are also numerous illustrations, maps, diagrams, portraits, and photographs. Although the three volumes are distributed by Tecla, much (all?) of the layout seems to have been done by Mangado himself, and he has retained copyright on all three volumes.

The first volume of Mangado’s *trilogía* is subtitled “Biographic Contributions” and is itself divided into three parts. The first is dedicated to Barcelona toward the end of the eighteenth century and discusses social life in the years 1778–82 and the musical life of the city: in churches, in the theater, in private life, in print. There are

<sup>11</sup> Distributed by Tecla: <https://tecla.com/shop/books-and-music-scores/mangado/mangado-fernando-sor-volume-1/>.

also some pages on luthiers, a list of twenty guitar builders from the time of Sor, and color illustrations. The second part is about two hundred pages of miscellaneous documents and other biographical material about Sor: his youth, his years at Montserrat (1790–95), his army service in 1795, his time as a graduate and alumnus of the Royal Military Academy (1796–1800), his musical activities in Barcelona and Madrid (1795–1813)—including his opera *Telemaco nell'isola di Calipso*—and his deployments and activities during the Peninsular War (1808–13). An interesting digression explores the variant spellings of the surname “Sor.” The third part of the book is dedicated to some of Sor’s ancestors, relatives, and immediate family (cf. his brother Carlos). Some of the contents of this book previously appeared in other sources, such as Gásser’s *Estudios sobre Fernando Sor* (2003) and *Il Fronimo* (2007–8).<sup>12</sup>

Josep María Mangado Artigas

*Fernando Sor (1778–1839)*, vol. 2, *Documentos inéditos: Reflexiones e hipótesis*  
Sant Feliu de Llobregat, Barcelona: Self-published, Tecla, 2018. PDF<sup>13</sup>

THE SECOND VOLUME of Mangado’s Sor trilogy, subtitled “New Documents: Reflections and Hypotheses,” is organized much like Jeffery’s biographies—an Introduction plus five “chapters,” each dedicated to a geographical and chronological period in Sor’s life: Spain (1792–1813), France (1813–15), London (1815–22), Paris (1822–23), and Russia (1823–27). Sor’s final years in Paris, following his return from Russia in 1827, are the subject of Mangado’s third volume, discussed below. The second volume, like the previous volume, contains material previously published in *Il Fronimo*,<sup>14</sup> but most of its pages contain new research. Like the other volumes, the material is very miscellaneous, but it often fills in some of the lacunae in Sor’s life and career. For example, Mangado discovered that several years after Sor’s biological father died in 1790, his widow remarried. Her new name enabled Mangado to identify many new Sor relatives (for future research?), and to construct a much more detailed family tree.

Mangado’s title for this volume mentions new documents, and there are plenty of these, casting new light on Sor’s education, his military career, and so on. The title also mentions reflection, such as when Mangado considers the authorship of the melodrama *La Elvira portuguesa* (1801), often attributed to Sor. Mangado could find

12 Mangado, “Fernando Sor: Aportaciones biográficas,” in Gásser, *Sor Studies*, 15–61 (the title of the essay is the same as the title of the book under review). Mangado, “Fernando Sor: Nuovi dati biografici,” part 1, *Il Fronimo* 35, no. 140 (October 2007): 13–24; part 2, *Il Fronimo* 36, no. 141 (January 2008): 35–42; part 3, *Il Fronimo* 36, no. 142 (April 2008): 25–32; part 4, *Il Fronimo* 36, no. 143 (July 2008): 25–39.

13 Distributed by Tecla: <https://tecla.com/shop/books-and-music-scores/mangado/mangado-fernando-sor-volume-2/>.

14 Mangado, “Fernando Sor (1778–1839): Documenti inediti: Reflessioni e ipotesi,” part 1, *Il Fronimo* 43, no. 172 (October 2015): 45–54; part 2, *Il Fronimo* 44, no. 173 (January 2016): 18–31; part 3, *Il Fronimo* 44, no. 174 (April 2016): 33–43; part 4, *Il Fronimo* 44, no. 175 (July 2016): 9–24; part 5, *Il Fronimo* 44, no. 176 (October 2016): 35–45.

no contemporaneous document confirming this authorship, and so, in the absence of any extant scores, he declares the attribution to be inconclusive. As for hypotheses, here is an example: In 2002, Mangado had speculated that Sor, in the course of his self-exile from Spain in 1813, would not have missed an opportunity to visit his beloved Barcelona one last time. In the face of criticism for unsubstantiated conjecture, Mangado searched for evidence and... *voilà!* He located a long-sought chronicle of the city. The chronicler used an old Catalan spelling of the family name—"Sort"—but provided details that left no doubt that the composer had indeed visited the city on his way to France.

This volume also includes new details about Félicité Hullin, the ballerina whom Sor met in London, accompanied to Russia, and possibly married, though no marriage certificate has been discovered. There is information about Hullin and her family (profusely illustrated), about the operas *Cendrillon* and *Le sicilien, ou L'amour peintre*, and about Sor and Hullin in London and Paris in 1822–23.

Josep Maria Mangado Artigas

*Fernando Sor (1778–1839)*, vol. 3, *La actividad guitarrística en París (1825–1839)*  
Sant Feliu de Llobregat, Barcelona: Self-published, Tecla, 2010, PDF<sup>15</sup>

MANGADO'S THIRD SOR VOLUME is an enormous collection of miscellanea (the PDF file has 826 pages) related to Sor's later Paris years and the guitar activity in the city in those same years. Its seventeen "chapters" are arranged chronologically, so that each year from 1825 to 1839 has a unifying theme. He dedicates his first chapter (1825) to *guitaromanie* or "guitar madness"—a phenomenon in which the guitar gained enormous popularity among the aristocracy (and therefore, also among the bourgeoisie).<sup>16</sup>

Mangado provides a concise description of the *guitaromanie* and documents it with several appendices containing lists of concerts by local and visiting virtuosos, plus other guitar-related news such as announcements in French periodicals of new and forthcoming music publications and advertisements for guitar lessons. When Sor returned to Paris from Russia, he found a situation in which the guitar was fashionable, a city with enormous opportunities but also formidable competition. Chapter 2 (1826) discusses Dionisio Aguado, another great Spanish guitarist who lived for a time in Paris and became Sor's friend and colleague. It also discusses Ferdinando Carulli, a Neapolitan guitarist and composer who had established himself in Paris almost two decades earlier. Many of the foreign guitarists were already situated in

15 Distributed by Tecla: <https://tecla.com/shop/books-and-music-scores/mangado/mangado-fernando-sor-volume-3/>.

16 The term *guitaromanie* became the title of a little anthology of guitar pieces by Charles de Marescot dating to c. 1825. It contains some amusing lithographs satirizing the guitar "craze." See Damián Martín, "The Guitarist behind *La guitaromanie*: Charles de Marescot," *Soundboard Scholar*, no. 4 (2018): 4–16. Mangado's large reproductions of the (relatively small) lithographs are excellent.

Paris (Molino, Carcassi), but others such as Horetzky, Regondi, and Sagrini, were visitors passing through.

The next chapters (1827–31) describe Sor’s return to Paris, his ballets, his concerts, and his *Méthode*, with appendices documenting his compositions, various performances (by himself and by others), and his role in the invention of the “harpolyre.” Mangado reports Sor’s participation in five concerts in 1831; other concerts that year included seven each by Huerta and Regondi. Paganini attended one of Sor’s concerts and applauded him enthusiastically. Dozens of new guitar pieces were announced by Carcassi, Carulli, and others. The new *Dictionnaire des artistes de l’école française au XIXe siècle* of Charles Gabet included biographical entries on Sor as well as Aguado, Aubert, Carulli, Castellacci, Gatayes, Meissonnier, and others.

Mangado dedicates about a hundred pages to Sor’s association with the prominent Belgian composer, critic, and encyclopedist François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871). In the years 1832–55, Fétis organized six elaborate *concerts historiques* that presented the music of previous centuries performed on period instruments, anticipating the Early Music movement of the twentieth century. Fétis recruited the best musicians in the city, and Sor collaborated with him in at least four of these concerts. In the second Concert historique, eight guitarists accompanied a sixteenth-century *villancico* for six female voices; the performers included Aguado, Carulli, Trinidad Huerta, and Sor. Also on the program was *La Romanesca*, an anonymous “fameux air de danse italien” with a guitar obbligato, supposedly dating to the end of the sixteenth century. The *Romanesca* became enormously popular but may well have been a pastiche composed by Fétis himself. The same suspicion applies to a number of other pieces in Fétis’s productions. In the third Concert historique, the Tuscan guitarist Luigi Castellacci played mandolin and Sor played a lute. Mangado, as usual, provides detailed documentation of the concerts, the critical responses, and the judgments of scholars.

Subsequent chapters deal with Sor’s ballets — especially the sensationally popular *Cendrillon* — his daughter Caroline, his relations with other guitarists (Aguado, Coste, and Legnani), and his death in 1839. Mangado’s close reading of the Parisian press also uncovered a previously unknown concert by Nathalie Houzé, a talented student of Sor in the 1830s about whom little is known. Mlle Houzé was the dedicatee of Francesco Molino’s *Gran sonate très brillante*, op. 51, and a portrait of her was included in Molino’s *Grande méthode complete*, op. 46, with the caption “Mad<sup>elle</sup> N. H. Élève la plus forte de M<sup>r</sup>. F. M.<sup>o</sup>” In about 1830 she became a pupil of Sor; her new maestro dedicated no fewer than four pieces to her: op. 39 (1830), op. 42 (1831–2), op. 54bis (1833), and the *Fantaisie* WoO (discovered in 1991) that Mangado dates to “around 1833.” Houzé’s concert, which took place in 1838 — place and date otherwise unspecified — gives her name as “Mlle Natalie H. . .” and describes her as a “young and pretty person” who has performed many of Sor’s pieces with “a marvelous perfection.” The reviewer (*L’Indépendent, Furet de Paris* [March 4, 1838]) describes her talent as “made to shine in the bright light of day” and urges her to perform for the public. She is not known to have ever done so.

Such interludes are intermingled with curiosities or diversions that came to the author’s attention, such as a Catalan phrenologist’s 1852 meditations on the skulls

of musicians, including those of Sor and Aguado, or the attraction of Freemasonry for musicians. Mangado does not pay much attention to Sor's compositions for voice (as Jeffery does), but he includes an appendix of 83 songs with guitar accompaniments arranged by Matteo Carcassi that were published in 1834 in *Le Ménestrel*, a Paris periodical. I would have liked to have made copies of some of them, but the locked PDF format seems designed to discourage extraction. Screenshots are always possible, of course, but they produce poor copies. The appendix includes works by many of the most celebrated songsmiths of the period: Adolphe Adam (six works), Amédée de Beauplan (ten), Édouard Bruguère (eight), Pauline Duchambge (four), Théodore Labarre (one), Francesco Masini (two), J. Merlé (two), Charles Plantade (six), Jacques Strunz (one), and Étienne Thénard (three).

At the end of volume 3 there are tributes, with photographs, to contributors Matanya Ophee (1932–2017) and Josep Dolcet Rodríguez (1961–2020). Dolcet was awarded a doctorate in musicology from the University of Barcelona and was the founder and president in 2010 of the Societat Sor de Barcelona. Orchestral works of Sor will be published by the Tritó Edicions of Barcelona through his efforts.

There are obvious financial reasons not to print books: an e-book or computer file costs less because it takes up space on a hard drive rather than on a bookshelf or in a music shop or warehouse, and it saves paper. Either music or text can be delivered electronically, instantly. A digital search can replace an index, and revisions or corrections can also be made easily, without expensive reprinting of the entire file. And there is no pressure to be concise in style or to leave out details, because adding another hundred pages to an e-book ultimately costs little or nothing. Of course, you may have to read it while sitting at a computer or juggling an iPad on your lap, or heaven forbid, on a cell phone. And when the text or screen size is changed in an e-book, the page numbers all change, making citations and footnotes a problem. And in PDF files, the page numbers in the original document must start with “one” (1), or they will disagree with the page numbers generated by the software. And then, if you want to print out any of the music, standard printer paper is smaller and of lower quality than that used in commercially produced sheet music. Nevertheless, it is not likely that any of these new e-book publications would have been commercially viable using the old print format.



### *About the Reviewer*

RICHARD M. LONG received his PhD in European History from Florida State University, where he was also active as a musician. He taught at Florida State University, the University of South Florida, and Hillsborough Community College, and was a professor of history and humanities for over three decades, retiring in 2007. He is the author of the textbook *Studying Western Civilization* (2 vols., D. C. Heath, 1995) and has been a frequent contributor to the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe (now the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era, 1750–1850). Beginning in the 1980s,

Long switched his principal research interest from European diplomatic history in the Revolutionary era (1789–1815) to the history of the classical guitar in the same period. He has published many articles in the field as well as dozens of CD liner notes for Philips, Naxos, Azica, and other labels. He has also published dozens of critical editions and transcriptions. In 1982 he founded Tuscany Publications, an affiliate of the Theodore Presser Co. He also served as editor of *Soundboard* from 2001 to 2012. In 2010 he was named to the Guitar Foundation of America Hall of Fame. He is the book and score review editor for *Soundboard Scholar*.

### *About Soundboard Scholar*

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### *About the Guitar Foundation of America*



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