

Fernando Sor on the Move in the Early 1820s

By Erik Stenstadvold

The life and music of Fernando Sor (1778–1839) are well known to most guitarists, thanks mainly to Brian Jeffery’s groundbreaking work.¹ In summary, Sor spent the first half of his life in Spain, but, due to the Napoleonic turmoil, he emigrated to France in 1813 at the age of thirty-five. It was only from this date forward that he pursued a purely musical career. After two years in Paris, Sor moved to London where he stayed for several years. Then, in 1823, circumstances led him to Russia after a brief interlude back in Paris. Finally, in late 1826 or early 1827, he once again returned to Paris, this time for good.

Scholars have wondered about the details of his final months in England in 1822 and his subsequent Paris sojourn. It is well known that Sor became romantically involved with a young ballerina at about that time. But was she the main (indeed the only) reason he left London, relocating first to Paris and then to Moscow? What other factors might have influenced his travels during those pivotal years? The purpose of this article is to throw new light on these questions and to add to our knowledge of Sor’s activities in a brief but defining period of his career.

It is easy to forget that Sor was more than just a guitarist and guitar composer. It may perhaps be somewhat fanciful to call him “a reluctant guitarist,” as Wolf Moser has done,² but it is quite clear that in certain periods of his career, guitar-related activities were only a part, sometimes even a minor part, of his total musical undertakings. This was particularly apparent during his London years.³

Some eight guitar works by Sor were published in England, while his publications of piano and vocal music far outnumbered them. Much of this music was widely acknowledged: the various sets of Italian *Arietts* for voice and piano received the most enthusiastic reviews in Ackermann’s *Repository of Arts* and elsewhere. Sor’s status in London’s musical life was notable. He was an Associate of the Philharmonic Society and had played in the third concert of their 1817 season at the Argyll Rooms; he had also become an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music at its foundation in 1822. Furthermore, two one-act ballets for which he provided the music had been staged at the King’s Theatre in the 1821 season.

His success as a ballet composer was crowned with the three-act grand ballet *Cendrillon*, which was premiered at the King’s Theatre on 26 March 1822. It was based on the popular Cinderella tale and choreographed by the French dancer and ballet-master, Mr. Albert (François Decombe), who also danced a leading role as *Prince Rainir*. Sor’s involvement is duly recorded, but little has been known of the actual reception of the ballet and of the music in particular.⁴ Yet it had good coverage in the press. The *Morning Post* published a review the very next day:

Every person must be well acquainted with the popular story of *Cinderella*; and as the plot of this Ballet does not at all vary from the original from whence it is taken, we shall not enter into any particulars concerning it. The Music, part of which only is original, is composed and arranged by Mr. Sor. The Overture of *Pandore*⁵ was substituted for the one intended for this Ballet, in consequence of its not being quite finished, but we understand it is to be forthcoming on Saturday next; such of the airs as are original are very good, and do Mr. Sor much credit: a great deal of the music is selected from other Ballets, some from the Opera of *Il Nozze de Figaro* [sic]. The scenery and decorations are entirely new, and no expence has been spared to make this a superb spectacle, as well as an interesting ballet. Too much praise cannot indeed be bestowed on Mr. Albert and the Managers for the exertions they have made in getting up so complete an entertainment.

Not all the reviews were as complimentary regarding Sor’s compositional merits. The *Morning Chronicle* (28 March 1822) wrote that the music “is by M. Sor, a composer who generally manifests so much genius and ability, that we were, perhaps, unreasonably, rather disappointed by his present production.” The *Examiner* (31 March) was far more laudatory:

Having been accustomed of late to much light and trifling music in the dances, the compositions of Sor were received with double relish. The constant succession of pleasing and original airs, with the skillful construction of the accompaniments, mark the work of a man of science and fine taste, and the beautiful solos for the wind instruments dispersed throughout it, admirably performed as they were, gave great variety to the general effect.

These enthusiastic reviews were topped by the voice of the *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* (vol. 6, May 1822): [The] music is excellent—the best, perhaps, of any Ballet-composition that has appeared at this theatre. Some of the movements are so beautiful, that, Goths as we are, we almost felt a regret at hearing them in a ballet. The author of this music, a few selections excepted, is Mr. Sor, a Spanish *gentleman*, whose arietts have, for some years past, eclipsed every other vocal composition in this country. Mr. Sor is the man to compose an opera for the King’s theatre.

“Mr. Sor is the man to compose an opera for the King’s theatre”—a flattering suggestion indeed! This, of course, never happened. Nonetheless, Sor was involved in another operatic production in this final year of his stay in England: *Gil Blas*, staged at the English Opera House, Strand. This circumstance has attracted but little attention in the Sor literature.⁶

***Gil Blas*—an English opera by Sor?**

Gil Blas was an “Operatic Drama” with spoken dialogue, loosely based on Alain-René Lesage’s picaresque novel of the same name. After several delays, the opera was premiered on 15 August 1822. Of almost Wagnerian proportions—five acts, lasting nearly five hours—it was heavily criticized for its unbearable length, both by the audience and the critics; for the second presentation it was cut by an hour and a half but still considered too long. The text was a co-production of John Hamilton Reynolds (1794–1852) and the young Thomas Hood (1799–1845), and the music was by Sor and a certain Matthew Moss. Unfortunately, the score is lost—quite possibly it vanished in the fire destroying the theatre in 1830—so we shall probably never know how much music the drama actually contained, or how much of it was by Sor. However, a review in the *Morning Chronicle* (16 Aug.) makes clear that the play had a “mixture of music and dialogue,” implying that there must have been a substantial amount of music.

Some of it has nevertheless survived. Soon after the premiere, the overture and six songs were published in arrangements with piano; two of them were by Sor.⁷ Yet there is good reason to believe that his contribution went well beyond those two songs. An advance notice in the *Morning Post* on 27 July 1822 declares that a “report speaks favorably of the Music, some of which is in the true old Spanish style, composed by Mr. F. Sor, the celebrated performer on the Guitar.” Another notice on that same day in the *London Literary Gazette*, stated that a “new five act Opera, . . . the music by Mr. Moss and Mr. Sor, is in rehearsal at the English Opera House.” It seems unlikely that Sor’s name would have been given such a prominent place in the advance publicity if his role in the five-hour operatic drama had been confined to merely two songs.

The critics were quite severe in their verdict upon the production, partly because of its length and partly due to lack of dramatic development, but also because the plot of the two last acts had little or nothing to do with the original *Gil Blas* story. But the individual performers mostly fared well, and the music, whoever composed it (only two reviews mention the composer(s) by name), was positively received by the majority of the critics. The *Morning Chronicle* (16 Aug.) wrote that the music “possessed a good deal of merit” and the *Examiner* (18 Aug.) that it was often “feeling and elegant.” Similar brief and general characterizations appeared in some other newspapers and periodicals.⁸ Only the *London Literary Gazette* (17 Aug.) was negative, stating, without mentioning Sor, that “the music by Mr. Moss is very mediocre.”

By 8 September, there had been eighteen performances, and the *Examiner* reported that future representations of *Gil Blas* would be confined to the two first acts. At the premiere, these acts, which were the ones modeled most closely on Lesage’s novel, had been best received by the critics. Here the popular actress-singer Miss Fanny Kelly (1790-1882) played the role of young *Gil Blas* at age seventeen; incidentally, she is also reported to have learnt the guitar under Sor.⁹ On 21 September, the *Morning Chronicle* wrote that *The Youthful Days of Gil Blas* (a name now applying to the new two-

act version), “even after twenty-seven representations, goes off with as much applause as ever.” The last performance was on 5 October 1822, when the theatre closed for the season.

With two major scenic productions in one season, *Cendrillon* and *Gil Blas*, Sor’s future in London looked bright indeed. So why, at the height of his fame, did he suddenly leave?

Departure from London—ballets and ballerinas

The Sor article in Ledhuy’s *Encyclopédie Pittoresque* of 1835, considered to be partly autobiographical, provides no explanation for the sudden departure.¹⁰ Here it briefly says that “Sor left London to go to Russia” and that “on his way he found *Cendrillon* in rehearsal at the grand Opéra, and could enjoy the success of his work before continuing the journey.”¹¹ However, Sor’s involvement with ballet extended beyond writing music: around this time he became romantically involved with the ballerina Félicité Hullin, who was invited to Moscow as *prima ballerina*. Brian Jeffery suggested that she was the reason for his departure from London and subsequent journey to Russia.¹²

Félicité Hullin was a budding young dancer, still in her late teens when Sor, in his mid-forties, began courting her; in fact, she was only seventeen if her reported day of birth, 9 March 1805, is correct. She was the second of three dancer daughters of Jean-Baptiste Hullin, a French dancer and ballet-master who had been engaged for both the 1819 and 1820 seasons at the King’s Theatre.¹³ Félicité was also on the roster of the King’s Theatre dancers, and the young girl had become the darling of the audience in a Russian-style *pas de deux*, *La Cosaque*.¹⁴ The Hullins appear regularly in announcements of ballets in London in the first half of 1822, but disappear from the newspapers after July. We may thus conclude that the father took his family back to Paris, where Félicité was to prepare for her official début at the Opéra.¹⁵ Jeffery mentions her two preliminary examinations there in September and November.¹⁶

On 5 February 1823, she had the first of a series of five début presentations under the auspices of Albert (the other presentations were on 19 and 26 February, and 5 and 10 March). The response after her first appearance, in which she danced a *pas de deux* with Albert, was mixed. The review in the *Journal de Paris* (10 Feb.) was fairly positive, whereas that of *Le Miroir des spectacles* (7 Feb.) was more disapproving, stating that her dancing lacked suppleness and harmony, and that “she jumps and does not dance.” *Le Réveil* (7 Feb.) was similarly negative and remarked that one cannot dance at the Opéra as one does at the common theatres. Anyhow, this does not necessarily indicate that Félicité Hullin was a mediocre dancer. The negative reviews may well have arisen as a result of the changing aesthetic in dancing: a new style with emphasis on difficult technical feats was rapidly developing at the expense of the old qualities of grace, ease and elegance.¹⁷ Not all critics welcomed this development.

At some stage during this period, she presumably received an invitation to join the Moscow Ballet. Sor and Félicité set out

together, leaving Paris during the late spring of 1823 and arriving in Moscow in November.¹⁸ But was she in fact the reason Sor left London?

There is no doubt that they departed England at about the same time—Sor perhaps a month or two later—but that may have been coincidental. There is no evidence that their romantic relationship had commenced by this time; it may just as well have evolved later while they were both in Paris for several months. As we shall see shortly, Sor had his own reasons to go there.

It is not known when or in what manner Félicité received her presumed invitation to Moscow, but it is rather unlikely that it would have come while she was still a juvenile dancer in London. The Russian envoys would surely have gone to Paris, the world's ballet metropolis, to find a new *prima ballerina* for their next season.¹⁹ Thus an invitation must have come as a result of her presence there, most certainly after her official *début*. If so, then there would have been no causal connection between her leaving London and her journey to Moscow. Nor would there have been any such connection for Sor, even if the first flowering of their relationship had occurred in London.²⁰

I would like to propose another, more likely explanation. When Sor left London, he was not heading for Russia—that decision came later—but for Paris, and the reason was the forthcoming production of *Cendrillon* there. That *Cendrillon* was to be staged at the grand opera must have been a special attraction for him; for the first time his music would extend to a wide audience in Paris. It is quite understandable that he wanted to be present for that. When Sor first arrived in Paris in 1813, he had aspired—*sans succès*—to become an opera composer, as the article in Ledhuy's *Encyclopédie* vividly reports.²¹ So now, ten years later, he finally had the opportunity to show Paris what he was good for with respect to music for the stage. Certainly writing music for ballet was less significant than being an opera composer, but a successful result would surely be noticed and could thus prepare the ground for something more ambitious. With London's favorable reviews fresh in his mind, he had reason to be optimistic.

The preparations for *Cendrillon* in Paris

The Ledhuy article reveals nothing about the length of Sor's Paris sojourn, only that he arrived during the rehearsal period of *Cendrillon*. The impression one receives is that this was just a brief interlude on the road to Moscow (an interpretation Jeffery adheres to in his Sor monograph). It may therefore come as a surprise that Sor was back in France already by early October 1822, five months before the premiere, and that the preparations for the staging in Paris were already in progress.

Cendrillon's success in London had been noted in Paris. Shortly after the London premiere, *Le Miroir des spectacles* (9 April 1822) published a notice referring to the *Morning Post* review cited at the beginning of this article. Here we also read that "Albert represents the prince wonderfully, and this talented dancer, whom we will be

delighted to see again in Paris, will be greatly missed in London." Albert, in fact, had his last appearance in London on 23 April before he returned to France.²² And with him came *Cendrillon*.

There were moves to have the new ballet staged at the Opéra. Already on 5 June 1822, another notice in *Le Miroir* reported that it would not be long before *Cendrillon* would appear in Paris, the selection board at the Opéra had just pronounced in favor of it. Undoubtedly, Albert's reputation had occasioned this. In contrast, Sor was far less known; he had not appeared in Paris for about seven years and, although some may still have remembered his guitar playing from that time, none of his orchestral music had ever been performed there.

On 4 October, *Le Réveil* cited a notice in the *Courrier des Spectacles* of the previous day announcing that Sor has come from London, where he lives, to Paris, here attending the production of a work "for which he composed the music"²³ Sor was indeed back in France already. On 4 October he played in a *soirée musicale* at Manuel García's Paris residence. During the next six months, there are reports of a number of concerts in which he played. We shall return to that.

Sor's presence during the rehearsal period of *Cendrillon* was of great importance. Albert, who had produced the ballet in London, was also the ballet-master of the Paris staging, in addition to dancing a leading role. In this period the ballet-master not only choreographed the dances, but was also responsible for adapting the story for the ballet scenario in addition to being the producer of the stage action; he was literally the *compositeur* of the ballet. The composer of the music had a lesser role. As ballet-master, Albert would surely have needed modifications and adjustments to the music as the requirements of the new production arose; according to Sandra Noll Hammond, many changes were made in the choreography and score for the Paris performance.²⁴ Sor's presence secured his musical control and made possible the implementation of necessary changes and additions in close collaboration with Albert.

The ballet of Sor's time was very different from the later Romantic ballet with which we are familiar today.²⁵ The ballet-pantomime genre, to which *Cendrillon* belonged, was a mute drama where the narrative was unfolded mainly through mimed scenes with little or no dancing. The actual dance scenes often comprised only about half of a ballet. The structure of most *pas* followed a strict formula, and this made it challenging for a composer to create music with sufficient variety and dramatic development to prevent monotony. Sor did not avoid that criticism, as we shall see.

The music was often an amalgam of music composed for the occasion and re-arrangements of familiar musical material by other admired composers. The London production of *Cendrillon* had contained a fair amount of borrowings (including extracts from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*) as the *Morning Post* review indicated; the Paris production was similar in that respect. This practice was encouraged by many critics; the rationale was that well-known music could

serve useful programmatic ends. In a long discourse on ballet music from 1822, the influential critic Castil-Blaze argued that a recognizable opera air, even shorn of its words, preserves a memorable expression that could help to clarify the enigmatic language of the mime. However, to Castil-Blaze, there was an additional, purely musical dimension: most composers were not able to write ballet music of sufficient quality to sustain the musical attention throughout a whole spectacle. The inclusion of familiar music would thus also raise the musical appeal of a ballet.²⁶ There was nonetheless a growing tendency through the 1820s and early 1830s to produce ballet scores with fewer borrowings and more originally composed music, although this was a hotly debated issue.²⁷ Sor was, in fact, criticized for not incorporating more borrowed material.

On 25 November 1822, the *Journal de Paris* reported that *Cendrillon* would be performed immediately after *Sapho*, a new opera by Anton Reicha. The premiere was scheduled for early January. However, on 6 January 1823, the *Journal de Paris* announced that the ballet would not be put on until the beginning of February. But there were further delays. On 3 February, *Le Réveil* gave notice that *Cendrillon* was to be staged in the course of that month. That did not happen either, as the premiere finally took place first on 3 March. The set designer, Monsieur Cicéri, was answerable for the postponements, at least partially; he was criticized for having taken two months to create his sumptuous scenery, thereby delaying the production.²⁸

Concerts in Paris

Sor appeared in a number of concerts in the French capital during this long production period. Jeffery includes one reference to a concert in February 1823, originally reported in the *Harmonicon*.²⁹ Furthermore, Luis Briso de Montiano has recently shown that Sor participated in some private concerts at the Paris residence of the celebrated Spanish tenor Manuel García at the end of 1822.³⁰ I have found further details of these events, along with references to several other concerts; thus we now know of some eleven or twelve occasions between October 1822 and April 1823 when Sor performed in Paris.

It appears that Manuel García took Sor under his wing during the first months; the majority of the concerts in 1822 occurred either at García's residence or at the premises of the *Cercle harmonique*, an exclusive concert series and venue run by him.³¹ García and Sor would have known each other from London where they had performed in the same concert on at least one occasion.³²

Several of the concerts were reviewed, indicating that the key performers were prominent members of the Paris musical scene. Sor's guitar playing was considered extraordinary despite the frequent disparaging comments about the instrument *per se*.³³ He was unanimously praised for his performances, in some cases even hailed as the highpoint of the evening. This notwithstanding, only one of his own two benefit concerts occasioned a faint echo in the press.

Relatively few reports of Sor's actual performances have yet come to light; the Sor-related parts of the reviews are therefore presented here in their entirety.³⁴ (The original French text of all the quotations are in the Appendix. For easy cross-reference, they are provided with identification numbers.)

1822

4 October. A soirée musicale at Manuel García's residence:

Mr. Sor gained all the applause with his guitar: it is impossible to give greater charm to such an unrewarding instrument. The guitar can be taken no further. – *Journal de Paris*, 8 Oct. (A1)

9 October. A second soirée musicale at García's residence:

Mr. Sor, the Amphion of the guitar. – *Journal de Paris*, 14 Oct. (A2)

27 November. Inauguration of the *Cercle harmonique*.³⁵

... a guitar solo performed by Mr. Sor, who has brought this instrument to the highest degree of perfection.
– *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 1 Dec. (A3)

The review mentions that other instrumentalists included the violinist Francesco Vaccari (Francisco Vacari) and the young pianist Henry Herz, in addition to some singers. *Le Miroir* claimed that the audience numbered more than six hundred, the *Journal de Paris* (2 Dec.) that it was nearly four hundred.

13 December. Sor gave a concert at the premises of the *Cercle harmonique*.³⁶ No proper review has come to light, but there is a brief mention in connection with an announcement of a new Vaccari concert:

The concert given by Mr. Sor, the guitarist, in the beautiful premises of Mr. Garcia, attracted a large and very brilliant audience. This virtuoso received much applause, and deserved it.
– *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 19 Dec. (A4)

Sor's concert had been announced in *Journal de Paris* (13 Dec.), according to which many unnamed French and foreign artists participated. Sor probably performed his *Cinquième Fantaisie*, Op. 16, which was published in early 1823 (see below).

15 December. Concert of the young pianist, Mlle. Elisa Berlot. Two reviews are known:

The third concert of Miss Berlot the day before yesterday attracted a large and brilliant gathering ... but the repeated bravos, testimonies of the most vivid and unanimous satisfaction, were bestowed on Miss Berlot ... and Mr. Sor, who was heard three times on the guitar. This amateur has charmed the audience with the perfection, the lightness and the method he demonstrated in the performance of various pieces that he played. Under the fingers of Mr. Sor, the guitar is no longer an instrument limited in its resources, cold in its

Fernando Sor on the Move ... (cont.)

expression, soundless and tedious; it is a harp, a dazzling *clavier*, a harmonious viol. As a performer, Mr. Sor has without question no equal; as a composer for the guitar, he has few rivals. — *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 17 Dec. (A5)

... but the honors of the evening were for Mr. Sor, who drew forth the most ravishing sounds from his guitar. — *Le Réveil*, 18 Dec. (A6)

24 December. Concert of Vaccari at García's residence (or, more probably, the premises of the *Cercle*); unclear if Sor also participated.³⁷ (Announced in *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 17 Dec.)

1823

16 January. Concert of the violinist Chevalier Michel Ange Lagoanère at the salons of M. Dietz. A great number of contributing performers, including Sor. (Announced in *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 9 Jan.)

2 February. Concert of Joseph Guillou, first flute at the Opéra and professor at the Conservatoire.³⁸ Other performers included the famous violinist Pierre Baillot. According to an announcement in the *Journal des Débats* (2 Feb.), Sor played an unspecified *Air varié*. Two reviews are known:

Mr. Baillot was heard with amazement rather than pleasure ... Mr. Soor [sic], in contrast, charmed everyone with the graceful harmonies he drew from his guitar. Under the fingers of this amateur, the guitar is no longer that thankless *clavier* from which barely a few sounds escaped before he questioned it; now it is an instrument whose vocabulary is established. It expresses what it could only hint at before; [now] it speaks, formerly it stuttered. Who knows if Mr. Soor will not one day be called the Racine of the guitar? — *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 3 Feb. (A7)

The guitar is an instrument whose resources are quite limited, and which up to now has only served to accompany romances and light songs. In the hands of Mr. Soor, it becomes the faithful and expressive interpreter of the most varied inspirations, and what he can draw from it is truly prodigious. Whoever has not heard Mr. Soor play the guitar can never conceive that this praise still falls short of the truth. — *Journal de Paris*, 3. Feb. (A8)

6 March. Sor, “le célèbre guitariste,” gave a *soirée musicale* at the salons of M. Dietz. No further details known. (Announced in *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 5 March.)

8 March. Concert of the pianist Henry Herz at the salons of M. Pape. Other contributors included Gustave Vogt, celebrated oboist and professor at the Conservatoire. Sor played an unspecified *Air varié* according to an announcement in the *Journal des Débats* (8 March).

Mr. Vogt and Mr. Soor each achieved on his own instrument the success to which they have long been accustomed. Everyone knows how the former makes the oboe speak; the latter succeeded in making the guitar do the same, which is more difficult. Carcassi is the only guitarist who can be compared to Mr. Soor. — *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 11 March. (A9)

19 March. Another concert of the pianist Elisa Berlot. Sor played an unspecified solo as announced in *Le Réveil* (18 March).

13 April. Another concert of Lagoanère. The young harpist Théodore Labarre, Guillou (flute) and Sor were among the participating instrumentalists. (Announced in the *Journal de Paris*, 12 April.)

The reception of *Cendrillon* in Paris

Cendrillon was finally premiered on 3 March 1823. It was a great success, not least due to Cicéri's lavish stage settings. It was performed over a hundred times, and staged anew in Paris several times during the next decades.³⁹ Previous writers have generally agreed that the performance also was a great triumph for Sor the composer. Nonetheless, few contemporary reviews have been known; the conclusion seems mainly to be founded on the success of the ballet as a whole.⁴⁰ *Cendrillon* was, however, duly reviewed in the press although, as was the norm with ballets, the music was in most cases treated only summarily at the end.

The reviews disclose a wide range of opinions, from quite complimentary to highly critical, no doubt reflecting differences in musical taste and perhaps expertise. The *Journal de Paris* (8 March) carried a brief but generally encouraging comment:

The music of this ballet, which we owe to Mr. Sor, already known as an excellent guitarist, has shown us once more that he is a pleasing composer. One might wish for more new ideas in it, but it has grace and vivacity. (A10)

Le Moniteur Universel (12 March) was less convinced, but not all negative:

Mr. Sor, who performs wonders on the guitar, has not done so in composition; but the music is pleasing, light, and there are some [borrowed] masterpieces that he has adapted skillfully. (A11)

Le Miroir des spectacles published a brief notice on *Cendrillon* the day after the premiere and remarked that the music was “lively and graceful” (A12). However, in a comprehensive report appearing after the third performance, on 10 March, the reviewer had changed his opinion; the music had faded upon repeated hearing: “I am almost tempted to retract the praises I have given to the music of *Cendrillon*. If one makes an exception for the overture, it is uniform and mediocre” (A13).

The most extensive but also most disapproving reviews of the music appeared in the *Journal des Débats* and the *Gazette de France* (both on 10 March). In the former, Castil-Blaze wrote:⁴¹

The music of Mr. Sor, one has to admit, is far from according with what one has the right to require from an artist in the creation of a work as important as a ballet in three acts and in a theatre such as that of the Academie royale de musique; he had to struggle, moreover, against fearsome competition from the excessively light but very inventive Nicolo [Isouard], and from the composer [Gioachino Rossini] who, today, receives the plaudits of Europe.⁴² Too proud to make useful borrowings from them, too weak to carry out the equivalent, he has had to suffer by comparison. One is hard put to explain how a performing artist, who has earned for himself a well-deserved reputation as a guitarist, could suddenly have raised himself from the niceties proper to that instrument to the vast and sublime conceptions of a grand dramatic action, interesting and impassioned; for it is precisely from this angle that M. Albert has envisaged his subject. However, the weakness of the music has not at all limited the success of the work; the ears were indulgent because the eyes were fully satisfied. (A14)

The anonymous reviewer of the *Gazette de France* followed in the same footsteps:

Albert should boast all the more justifiably of success ... The scene-maker and the scene-shifter will have still more reasons to share it than the composer of the music. After an excessively noisy overture, there follows a crowd of little airs of an extreme thinness and pallor, one after the other; still, their greatest fault is not this weakness: it is that they portray nothing, call nothing to mind and that, in a word, they speak no more to the soul than to the ear. It is said that Mr. Sor is the premier man in the world for the guitar; *Cendrillon* will probably not bring him the same reputation as a composer of imitative and danceable music. (A15)

Sor was not left much honor by these two critics; his music seemed to lack originality and dramatic strength, qualities necessary to carry the weight of a full-length three-act scenic production. These are harsh judgments on someone who hoped to become an opera composer. After the generally encouraging response in London, such diatribes must have been disappointing. Yet they must be seen in the broader context of the changing aesthetics of ballet music at the time, and the fact that many writers opposed the shift toward greater use of original (rather than borrowed) music in the scores. It should also be remembered that this was right at the beginning of a Rossini craze in Paris. Since, in the opinion of Castil-Blaze, Sor's music could not compare in quality with the scores of the two most renowned composers of operas about Cinderella, Rossini and Isouard, he ought to have borrowed from their works in order to raise the musical standard of *Cendrillon*.

In the eyes of the critic of the *Gazette de France*, the greatest fault of Sor's airs was not their "extreme thinness and pallor" (in itself

a calamitous characterization), it was that they depicted nothing—that is, they lacked the necessary qualities for describing musically the story of the ballet. However, the writer alludes to music's descriptive or imitative function in broader terms. By the reference to imitative music, *musique imitative* (a term which in this context has nothing to do with imitative counterpoint), he adhered to a notion dominating much discourse on music in France at the time, and which had done so since Rousseau and the encyclopedists: instrumental music, in order to have any sense or meaning, should imitate or evoke human sentiments or natural phenomena.

Despite such biting reviews, the sheer number of performances of *Cendrillon* shows that the general public were enthusiastic—perhaps because "the ears were indulgent because the eyes were fully satisfied," but perhaps also because Sor's musical style may have resonated better with the taste of ordinary audiences. *Le Miroir des spectacles* suggested this by remarking after the premiere that "Mr. Sor, composer of the music, Mr. Cicéri creator of the sets, and Mr. Albert, composer of the ballet, were vigorously called for." (A12)

As we have seen, there was a striking contrast in the Paris reception of Sor as guitarist and composer for that instrument, and of him as composer of "real" music. A certain derogatory tone is evident in the two final *Cendrillon* reviews: it is impossible for a guitar player, even the best, to rise "from the niceties proper to that instrument." A similarly divided attitude cannot be seen in the London reports. But there Sor had been able to build his reputation through several years of activity and networking. It is interesting to note that, when *Cendrillon* was restaged in London in 1834, the review in the *Morning Post* was quite different from that of the same paper twelve years earlier, cited at the beginning of this article. This may, of course, reflect a significant change in musical taste in general and in relation to ballet music in particular, but it may likewise reflect the fact that Sor's name was now apparently unknown to the reviewer:

The music, composed by a Monsieur Sor, possesses very little that requires notice. It is exactly that sort of monotonous trifling which would never take away the admiration of the audience from the proceedings on the stage. (*The Morning Post*, 7 May 1834)

Guitar compositions and publications

During the half year Sor stayed in France, or just after, several of his guitar works were published by Meissonnier, his regular Paris publisher. They would have been opp. 16-20, the arrangement of the Marche from *Cendrillon*, and perhaps also Op. 15a. Of these, the *Cinquième Fantaisie*, Op. 16, was advertised in *Le Miroir des spectacles* on 25 February 1823, with the note "performed with success by the composer at his concert." This refers most certainly to the concert of 13 December 1822.⁴³

Sor had appeared together with the violinist Francesco Vaccari on at least one occasion in the final months of 1822. This casts new light on the origin of op. 21, *Les Adieux*, which was published in 1824 and dedicated to him. Previously it was only known that the two musicians met in London in 1815/16, and it has thus

been assumed that the work somehow originated at that time.⁴⁴ However, their reunion in Paris in 1822 makes this the most probable time of the origin.

The work exists in two distinct early editions. One was published by Meissonnier in Paris in the fall (before November) of 1824, and titled *Les Adieux*. The other had the Spanish title *La Despedida* (with the same literal meaning), and was published in Madrid by Bartolomé Wirmbms at his Establecimiento de Grabado y Estampado; it was advertised in the *Gaceta de Madrid* on 29 April 1824. It is reasonable to assume that, in Paris, Sor had given a copy of his manuscript to Vaccari, who arranged with Wirmbms to have it published when he was back in Spain for a brief period in the fall of 1823.⁴⁵ However, I disagree with Brian Jeffery that this makes the Wirmbms edition a better or more reliable source than the Meissonnier edition.⁴⁶ The Meissonnier edition is almost certainly not based on that of Wirmbms, as Jeffery claims; the divergences—although mostly minor—are too abundant and of a kind strongly suggesting that the two printed versions were prepared independently of each other, from different manuscripts. I agree with Kenneth Hartdegen that the Spanish edition has many notational details suggesting that it was edited by a violinist, doubtless Vaccari himself.⁴⁷ Thus this is not a more reliable source (in the sense that it reflects purely Sor's original text) than the edition of Meissonnier, to whom Sor would have given another copy of the music before leaving Paris. In fact, it may be less reliable.⁴⁸

Leaving Paris again

Within a month or two after the premiere of *Cendrillon*, Sor left Paris. The most apparent reason was Félicité Hullin and her alleged invitation to Moscow. However, there was in fact a more urgent cause: He was forced to leave. As observed by James Radomski, a shift in the political winds made Spanish liberals *personae non gratae* in France in 1823.⁴⁹ A civil war had broken out in Spain; King Fernando VII appealed to France for help to quell the struggle of the liberal constitutionalists. A French royalist army under the Duc d'Angoulême entered Spain in the spring of 1823.

The position of Spanish liberals in Paris became more and more delicate, and in March they were formally expelled. On 13 March, the *Journal des Débats* announced that "the Spaniards who are in Paris have received the order to leave at once," and on 27 March it reported that "the Spaniards who are in Paris are preparing to depart."⁵⁰ Manuel García headed towards London, probably in late March;⁵¹ Francesco Vaccari had crossed the Channel already in February.⁵²

The departure to Russia should be seen in this light. Having commenced a romantic relationship with Félicité Hullin, and realizing that he could not remain in Paris in any case, Sor probably felt that casting his lot with Hullin and heading east with her were good options. The last report of a concert in which he played in Paris was in mid-April. Likewise, there are no further notices in the press of Félicité after that time either,⁵³ so they probably left soon after.

Was Sor invited to Russia?

Sor may in fact have played a more decisive role in this new move than normally assumed. A newspaper notice from Warsaw, where the party halted for a week or two in October 1823, states that Sor was on his way to Moscow, "where he has been summoned to arrange and compose ballet music."⁵⁴ This indicates that he went to Russia in his own right, not merely as Félicité's consort, and that he had been invited there by virtue of his proficiency as a ballet composer.⁵⁵

Were Sor and Félicité married? We do not know with certainty; there was nothing unusual in ballerinas having affairs with older, wealthy men—"liaisons sweeten almost every ballerina biography," as Lynn Garafola has succinctly remarked.⁵⁶ The backstage of the Opéra was a privileged venue of flirtation and dalliance, often an opening for a kind of "prostitution légère."⁵⁷ On the other hand, in contemporary Russian sources and later ballet literature, Félicité Hullin is regularly named Hullin-Sor. And after their split in 1826, when Sor returned to Paris, she remained single in the sense that she did not marry until as late as 1838 or 1839 (sources differ). This seems to indicate that they indeed had been married and, if they received the Catholic sacrament of marriage, they remained so when they parted. Sor died in 1839, making it only then possible for Félicité to remarry.

Postscript

As this article was about to be printed, Gerhard Penn informed me of a most interesting notice in a Viennese journal of early 1834, there reprinted from a Berlin newspaper of about the same time:

Fernand [sic] Sor, who earlier had caused a sensation in London ... and soon had become a favorite of the ladies, found himself compelled to leave London and England all of a sudden and to hurry over to the beckoning coasts of France because of an amorous adventure involving one of the leading families, which was of consequence.⁵⁸

An amorous affair "of consequence" almost certainly alludes to Sor having fathered an illegitimate child. This, of course, may have been just a baseless rumor. However, Sor stayed for some time in Berlin on the way to Russia in 1823, and it is quite possible that this story, recounted years later by the writer of the *Berliner Figaro*, had become generally known at that time.

If Sor were involved in such a scandal, he may well have been ordered to leave England. For a woman of high society to bear a child outside marriage was, at that time in Britain, an utter disgrace. Under such circumstances, a person of influence could easily have pulled the strings to get Sor banished from British soil.

For the time being, we have no further information that can verify or refute this titillating tale. If there is some truth to it, the forthcoming opening of *Cendrillon* in Paris would have come to Sor as manna from heaven. It also supports my assumption that his romantic relationship with young Félicité Hullin would have commenced *after* he had left London—unless, of course, he had been riding two horses at the same time.

Appendix

French source documents.

Concert reviews

A1: *Journal de Paris*, 8 Oct. 1822.

M. Sor enleva tous les suffrages sur la guitare : il est impossible de donner plus de charme à un instrument aussi ingrat, c'est la *nec plus ultra* de la guitare.

A2: *Journal de Paris*, 14 Oct. 1822. M. Sor, l'Amphion de la guitare.

A3: *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 1 Dec. 1822.

... un solo de guitare exécuté par M. Sor qui a porté cet instrument au plus haut degré de perfection.

A4: *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 19 Dec. 1822.

Le concert donné ... par M. Sor, le guitariste, dans le beau local de M. Garcia, avait attiré une nombreuse et très-brillante compagnie. Ce virtuose a reçu beaucoup d'applaudissemens, et les a mérités.

A5: *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 17 Dec. 1822.

Le troisième concert de Mlle Berlot avait attiré avant-hier une assemblée nombreuse et brillante. La clarinette de M. Frédéric Duvernoy, la flûte de M. Nermel, le violon de M. Nargeot, et la voix agréable de M. Romagnési ont été vivement applaudis ; mais les bravos réitérés, les témoignages de la satisfaction la plus vive et la plus unanime ont été prodigués à Mlle Berlot ... et à M. Sor qui s'est fait entendre trois fois sur la guitare. Cet amateur a séduit tout l'auditoire par le fini, la légèreté et la méthode qu'il a déployés dans l'exécution des morceaux différens qu'il a joués. Sous les doigts de M. Sor, la guitare n'est plus un instrument borné dans ses ressources, froid dans son expression, insonore et fastidieux ; c'est une harpe, un clavier brillant, une viole harmonieuse. Comme exécutant, M. Sor n'a sans doute point d'égal ; comme compositeur de guitare, il compte peu de rivaux.

A6: *Le Réveil*, 18 Dec. 1822.

...mais les honneurs de cette soirée ont été pour M. Sor, qui a tiré les sons les plus ravissans de sa guitare.

En nous rappelant l'impression générale que le talent prodigieux de cet artiste a produite, nous ne doutons plus du succès merveilleux qu'obtiendrait le conseil que nous avons donné plus haut aux espagnols royalistes, si leurs guitares vibraient de sons aussi touchans que ceux de l'instrument de M. Sor.

A7: *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 3 Feb. 1823.

M. Baillot a été entendu plutôt avec étonnement qu'avec plaisir... M. Soor [sic], au contraire, a séduit tout le monde par les gracieux accords qu'il a tiré de sa guitare. Sous les doigts de cet amateur, la guitare n'est plus cet ingrat clavier dont quelques sons sortaient à peine avant qu'il l'eût interrogé ; c'est maintenant un instrument dont le vocabulaire est établi. Il exprime ce qu'il ne pouvait qu'indiquer autrefois ; il parle, il bégayait jadis. Qui sait si M. Soor ne sera pas appelé un jour *le Racine de la guitare* .

A8: *Journal de Paris*, 3 Feb. 1823.

La guitare est un instrument dont les moyens sont bien restreints, et qui jusqu'à présent ne servait qu'à accompagner des romances et des chansons légères. Dans les mains de M. Soor [sic], il devient l'interprète fidèle et expressif des inspirations les plus variées, et le parti qu'il sait en tirer tient vraiment du prodige. Celui qui n'a pas entendu M. Soor jouer de la guitare ne pourra jamais concevoir que cet éloge soit encore au-dessous de la vérité.

A9: *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 11 March 1823.

MM. Vogt et Soor ont obtenu, chacun sur son instrument, le succès auquel ils sont accoutumés depuis longtems. Tout le monde sait comment le premier fait parler le hautbois ; l'autre est venu à bout de faire parler la guitarrre [sic], ce qui est plus difficile. Carcassi est le seul guitariste qui puisse être comparé à M. Soor.

Reviews of Cendrillon

A10: *Journal de Paris*, 8 March 1823.

La musique de ce ballet, due à M. Sor, déjà connu comme un excellent guitariste, nous a de plus montré en lui un compositeur agréable. On pourrait y désirer plus d'idées neuves, mais elle a de la grâce et de la vivacité.

A11: *Le Moniteur Universel*, 12 March 1823.

M. Sor, qui fait des prodiges sur la guitarrre, n'en a pas fait un en composition ; mais elle est agréable, facile, et il y a des morceaux de maître habilement adaptés.

A12: *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 4 March 1823.

Une musique vive et gracieuse... M. Sor, auteur de la musique, M. Cicéri des décorations, et M. Albert, auteur du ballet, ont été vivement demandés ...

A13: *Le Miroir des spectacles*, 10 March 1823.

Je serais presque tenté de rétracter les éloges que j'avais accordés à la musique du ballet de *Cendrillon*. Si j'en excepte l'ouverture, elle est uniforme et médiocre.

A14: *Journal des Débats*, 10 March 1823.

La musique de M. Soor, il faut l'avouer, est loin de répondre à ce qu'on avoit droit d'exiger d'un artiste qui se produit dans un ouvrage aussi important qu'un ballet en trois actes et sur un théâtre tel que celui de l'Académie royale de musique : il avoit d'ailleurs à lutter contre une concurrence redoutable, avec le trop facile mais très ingénieux Nicolo, et avec le compositeur qui enlève aujourd'hui les suffrages de l'Europe : trop fier pour leur faire d'utiles emprunts, trop foible pour soutenir le parallèle, il a dû souffrir de la comparaison. On a de la peine à s'expliquer comment un artiste exécutant qui s'est fait sur la guitare une juste réputation, auroit pu s'élever tout à coup du genre d'agrémens qui sont propre à cet instrument, aux vastes et sublimes conceptions d'une action dramatique grande, intéressante et passionnée ; car c'est uniquement sous ce point de vue que M. Albert a envisagé son sujet. Cependant la foiblesse de la musique n'a point nui au succès de l'ouvrage ; les oreilles ont été indulgentes, parce que les yeux étoient pleinement satisfaits.

A15: *Gazette de France*, 10 March 1823.

Albert doit se glorifier d'autant plus légitimement du succès... Le décorateur et le machiniste auraient plus de droits encore à le partager que le compositeur de la musique. Après une ouverture excessivement bruyante, arrivent à la suite les uns des autres une foule de petits airs d'une maigreur et d'une pâleur extrêmes ; leur plus grand défaut n'est pas encore dans cette faiblesse ; c'est qu'ils ne peignent rien, ne rappellent rien, et qu'en un mot, ils ne parlent pas plus à l'esprit qu'à l'oreille. On dit que M. Sor est le premier homme du monde sur la guitare : *Cendrillon* ne lui acquerra probablement pas la même réputation comme compositeur de musique imitative et dansante.

A note on newspaper research

A great number of British and French newspapers and periodicals are cited above. They were mostly accessed via electronic databases. The British digitized sources are from the British Newspaper Archive, under the auspices of the British Library (*Examiner*, *Morning Chronicle*, *Morning Post*) and the *Hathi Trust Digital Library* (*London Literary Gazette*, *London Magazine*, *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*). The French sources can all be accessed via the *Gallica Digital Library*, under the auspices of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, with the exception of *Le Miroir des spectacles* (July-Dec. 1822) and the *Journal de Paris*, which have not yet been digitized. They were examined through microfilms at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris.

ENDNOTES

A preliminary version of this study was read at a meeting of The Consortium for Guitar Research at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, in April 2014. I am particularly grateful to Brian Jeffery for sharing with me his notes on *Gil Blas*, and to Christopher Page and Thomas Heck for their many valuable suggestions and help with the translations of the original French texts. Thanks also to Jukka Savijoki and to the two anonymous reviewers for constructive comments.

- ¹ Brian Jeffery, *Fernando Sor, Composer and Guitarist*, 2d edition (London: Tecla Editions, 1994).
- ² Wolf Moser, "Fernando Sor: The Life and Works of a Reluctant Guitarist," *Classical Guitar* 26, no. 3 (2007): 20–24, and no. 4: 20–25. Moser here presents a very different and thought-provoking perspective on Sor.
- ³ For a general study of Sor's activity and success in England, please refer to Jeffery, *Fernando Sor*, Chapter 3. See also Christopher Page, "New light on the London years of Fernando Sor, 1815–1822," *Early Music* 41, no. 4 (2013): 557–569.
- ⁴ A review from *The Times* is quoted in Sandra Noll Hammond, "Sor and the ballet of his time," in *Estudios sobre Fernando Sor*, ed. Luis Gásser (Madrid: Ediciones del ICCMU, 2003), 195, and in Michael Christoforidis and Elizabeth Kertesz, "Cendrillon, Cinderella and Spectacle: Insights into Sor's most Successful Work," in *Estudios sobre Fernando Sor*, 140.
- ⁵ The composer of this music was probably Franz Ignaz Beck (1734–1809), whose overture and incidental music to the melodrama *Pandore* were first performed in Paris in 1789.
- ⁶ It is briefly mentioned in Jeffery, *Fernando Sor*, 71.
- ⁷ The Sor songs are listed in Jeffery, *Fernando Sor*, 185. Their titles make it clear that they were from *Gil Blas*, as do the titles of the Moss compositions (copies in British Library and elsewhere). The date of their entry at Stationers' Hall, 21 Aug., shows that their publication must have been in preparation well before the premiere, which had occurred less than a week earlier.
- ⁸ The *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* (Sept. 1822, p. 397); the *London Magazine* (Sept. 1822, p. 280). Jeffery, *Fernando Sor*, 71, quotes an excerpt without the name of the newspaper in the Endhoven Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum ("tolerably pretty music by Mr. Moss and Mr. Sor").
- ⁹ *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1885–1900, vol. 30, [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Kelly,_Frances_Maria_\(DNB00\)](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Kelly,_Frances_Maria_(DNB00)).
- ¹⁰ It is generally assumed that the Sor article in Ledhuy's *Encyclopédie* to a large extent was written by Sor himself; see Jeffery, *Fernando Sor*, 106. See also the detailed discussion in Kenneth Angus Hartdegen, "Fernando Sor's Theory of Harmony Applied to the Guitar: History, Bibliography and Context," PhD diss (University of Auckland, 2011), 27–32, <https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/handle/2292/11142.html>.
- ¹¹ "Sor partit de Londres pour aller en Russie. A son passage il trouva Cendrillon en répétition au grand opéra, et avant de continuer son voyage il put jouir du succès de sa pièce." Ledhuy, *Encyclopédie*, 166.
- ¹² Jeffery, *Fernando Sor*, 71.
- ¹³ Hammond, "Sor and the ballet," 192.
- ¹⁴ Artists were normally identified by their family name only and it is not always clear if "Mlle Hullin" refers to Félicité or her elder sister, Virginie. However, in some cases, as in the list of dancers engaged for the 1819 season, announced in the *Morning Post* and the *Morning Chronicle* on 18 Jan. 1819, she is identified as "Mademoiselle F. Hullin." Her appearance in *La Cosaque* or the *Pas Russe* is reported in the press at various times in 1819 and 1820.
- ¹⁵ Various newspaper reports show that, by May 1823, Jean-Baptiste Hullin was back in London where he was put in charge of the juvenile ballet company at the Vauxhall Gardens, a position he held until 1829.
- ¹⁶ Jeffery, *Fernando Sor*, 66–7, 71.
- ¹⁷ For more on this, see John Chapman, "XXX and the Changing Ballet Aesthetic; 1828–32," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society of Dance Research* 2, no. 1 (1984): 35–47, in particular 37. See also Hammond, "Sor and the ballet," 193–4.
- ¹⁸ In Russia Félicité Hullin became a leading choreographer and dance teacher; she had a seminal influence on the development of Russian ballet.
- ¹⁹ John Ebers, the manager of the King's Theatre at the time *Cendrillon* was staged there, also made trips to Paris to hire dancers for his theatre. In his memoirs, *Seven Years of the King's Theatre* (London 1828), he stated that "the perfection acquired at these [Paris] schools is immense, and evidently un-attainable in any [other] country" (quoted in Hammond, *Sor and the Ballet*, 190).
- ²⁰ Kenneth Hartdegen, "Fernando Sor's Theory," 99 and 212–13, has suggested another possible reason for Sor's sudden departure: that of heavy debt. As a founding member of the cooperative publishing enterprise, the Regent's (later Royal) Harmonic Institution, Sor could have been involved in the disastrous building venture to renovate the Argyll Rooms in 1819, which ultimately ended with failure and great loss. Intriguing as this hypothesis may seem, it can nevertheless most probably be dismissed. Sor was not among the twenty-three active members of the Harmonic Institution listed in the February 1819 issue of the short-lived music periodical, the *English Musical Gazette*. See Leanne Langley, "A Place for Music: John Nash, Regent Street and the Philharmonic Society of London," *The Electronic British Library Journal*, 2013 [ebljarticle122013], 28–9, <http://www.bl.uk/eblj/2013articles/article12.html>.
- ²¹ Ledhuy, *Encyclopédie*, 165.
- ²² *Morning Post*, 23 April 1822. Another French dancer, Monsieur Paul, took his role in the remaining London performances of *Cendrillon* that season.
- ²³ "M. Sor, qu'on peut regarder comme le premier des guitaristes de l'époque, et duquel l'éminence du talent en ce genre fait presque oublier qu'il est aussi un compositeur distingué, est arrivé de Londres, qu'il habite, à Paris où l'on assure qu'il vient d'assister à la mise en scène d'un ouvrage dont il a composé la musique." The awkwardness of the French in this passage suggests that its author was not a native speaker (the italics are original, introduced by *Le Réveil* to highlight the grammatical errors of the source quoted). Might it have been Sor himself? Although the text actually says that "he [Sor] has just attended the production of a work" ("il vient d'assister"), this can hardly have been the case. I suspect that the writer's intention was to express that Sor had come to Paris in order to assist in a forthcoming production. Unfortunately, no copy of the *Courrier des Spectacles* of 3 Oct. 1822 is known to exist.
- ²⁴ Hammond, "Sor and the ballet," 184.

- ²⁵ Valuable background information and details about *Cendrillon* and the ballet art form in general are found in Hammond, “Sor and the ballet,” and in Christoforidis and Kertesz, “*Cendrillon*, Cinderella and Spectacle.”
- ²⁶ This illuminating essay from *Journal des Débats*, 28 Sept. 1822, is quoted in Ivor Guest, *The Romantic Ballet in Paris* (Hampshire: Dance Books, 2008), 18–20, and Chapman, “XXX and the Changing Ballet Aesthetic,” 39–41.
- ²⁷ Marian Smith, “About the House,” in *Reading Critics Reading: Opera and Ballet Criticism in France from the Revolution to 1848*, ed. Roger Parker and Mary Ann Smart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 227–31.
- ²⁸ *Le Réveil*, 10 March 1823.
- ²⁹ Jeffery, *Fernando Sor*, 76.
- ³⁰ Luis Briso de Montiano, “Fernando Sor en París camino de Rusia: Concierto de Nochebuena,” last modified March 1, 2014, <http://fernandosor.es/fernando-sor-en-paris-camino-de-rusia-concierto-de-nochebuena>
- ³¹ For more information on the *Cercle de la rue de Richelieu*, see James Radomski, *Manuel García (1775-1832): Chronicle of the Life of a bel canto Tenor at the dawn of Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 154–6.
- ³² 21 July 1816 (Jeffery, *Fernando Sor*, 46). There is also a possibility that they could have met in Madrid in the early summer of 1802, see Hartdegen, “Fernando Sor’s Theory,” 160.
- ³³ For a general survey of the hostile attitude towards the guitar from leading critics in this period, see Erik Stenstadvoll, “‘We hate the guitar’: prejudice and polemic in the music press in early nineteenth-century Europe,” *Early Music* 41 no. 4 (2013): 595–604.
- ³⁴ Most of the concerts were also announced in one or several newspapers. These announcements are only mentioned here if they contain relevant information not found in the reviews.
- ³⁵ This is probably the concert mentioned in the notice in *El Indicador* on 1 Jan. 1823; see Briso, “Fernando Sor en París.”
- ³⁶ This may have been the unspecified concert mentioned in the first part of the notice in *El Indicador* on 8 Jan. 1823; see Briso, “Fernando Sor en París.”
- ³⁷ Sor is not mentioned in the announcement in *Le Miroir des spectacles*. However, the notice in *El Indicador* on 8 Jan. 1823 (Briso, “Fernando Sor en París”) gives the impression that he participated.
- ³⁸ Sor would have known Guillou from his first period in Paris; they had played together in a concert given by Guillou on 7 January 1815. The program of this concert was detailed two days previously in *Journal des Débats*; Sor and Guillou played in a “new fantasia for guitar, flute and cello [*basse*]” by Sor, a lost work.
- ³⁹ In economic terms, *Cendrillon* may have been quite lucrative for Sor. Jean Mongrédien, *French Music from the Enlightenment to Romanticism* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1996), 71, has shown that with opera, the composer received a royalty for each performance, shared with the librettist. If similar arrangements applied to ballet, *Cendrillon* must have supplied Sor with a steady income over several years.
- ⁴⁰ Jeffery, *Fernando Sor*, 67, quotes a paragraph from Ivor Guest’s book, *Ballet in Paris*, in which the sumptuous production is described in some detail. However, that passage says nothing about the music. Jeffery’s only reference to a contemporary assessment is that of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, whose correspondent briefly summed up the ballet as “Schöne Tänze, herrliche Dekorationen und eine recht angenehme Musik” – “Beautiful dances, fine decor and quite pleasant music” (in Jeffery’s translation, “extremely pleasant music,” a slight interpretive overstatement). Among the very few who have consulted original French sources are Christoforidis and Kertesz, “*Cendrillon*, Cinderella and Spectacle,” 140–41, who discuss reviews in the *Journal des Débats* and *Le Moniteur Universel*.
- ⁴¹ It is now generally acknowledged that Castil-Blaze was the author of the anonymous musical articles, signed “XXX,” in the *Journal des Débats* in this period.
- ⁴² Nicolo Isouard (1775–1818) had an enormous success at the Opéra-Comique in 1810 with the fairy-tale opera *Cendrillon*. The work was revived regularly over the next decades. Rossini’s opera *La Cenerentola* had been staged at the Théâtre Italien less than a year before the ballet *Cendrillon* was premiered, and was still running.
- ⁴³ For a more detailed discussion of Meissonnier’s Sor editions, see my forthcoming study, “Sor and Meissonnier.”
- ⁴⁴ Jeffery, *Fernando Sor*, 41–2, 46.
- ⁴⁵ According to *Diccionario biográfico*, 665, Vaccari travelled from Paris to Madrid in October 1823.
- ⁴⁶ See Jeffery’s discussion of op. 21 in the notes to *Fernando Sor: The New Complete Works for Guitar*, 2d ed., edited by Brian Jeffery (London: Tecla Editions, 2004), vol. 3.
- ⁴⁷ Hartdegen, “Fernando Sor’s Theory,” 957ff.
- ⁴⁸ That is not to say that Vaccari’s version is without interest; on the contrary, precisely because it was edited by an experienced fellow musician, it gives us valuable insight into how freely musicians in those days would treat the music of another composer. (Another conspicuous example is Aguado’s edition of Sor’s op. 14.)
- ⁴⁹ Radomski, *Manuel García*, 157–8.
- ⁵⁰ Radomski, *Manuel García*, 158.
- ⁵¹ Radomski, *Manuel García*, 158.
- ⁵² *Diccionario biográfico del Trienio Liberal*, ed. Alberto Gil Novales (Madrid: El Museo Universal, 1991), 665.
- ⁵³ Her two sisters continued dancing at the Paris Opéra later that season; in the press advertisements they appear as “Hullin” and “Hullin 3e” (*Le Réveil*, 27 April).
- ⁵⁴ *Kurier Warszawski*, 12 Oct. 1823. Quoted in Jeffery, *Fernando Sor*, 77.
- ⁵⁵ This raises the question, Was the principal aim of the Russian envoys in Paris to secure the services of Sor the composer, rather than Hullin the dancer? If so, then who followed whom to Russia?
- ⁵⁶ Lynn Garafola, “The Travesty Dancer in Nineteenth-Century Ballet,” *Dance Research Journal* 17 no. 2 and 18 no. 1 (1985–86): 36. <http://academiccommons.columbia.edu/catalog/ac:152248.html>
- ⁵⁷ Smith, “About the House,” 217.
- ⁵⁸ “Fernand [sic] Sor, der früher in London Furore machte, ... und bald ein Liebling der Damen wurde, sah sich genöthigt, wegen eines zärtlichen Abenteuers in einem der ersten Häuser, das von Folgen war, London und England plötzlich zu verlassen und nach Frankreichs winkenden Küsten hinüber zu eilen.” *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung und Originalblatt für Kunst, Literatur, Musik, Mode und geselliges Leben*, no. 36, 19 Feb. 1834, p. 144; there it is said to be taken from a recent review of a concert of Franz Stoll in the *Berliner Figaro* (I have not had a chance to check that source). I am grateful to Gerhard Penn for allowing me to be the first to publicize this tantalizing notice.