

Van Vliet concludes that Coste was the most significant of those he considers the three great guitarist/composers in the age of Romanticism—Coste, Mertz, and Zani de Ferranti.<sup>4</sup> Gleaning consistently favorable reviews well into the *Belle époque*, Coste enjoyed a career that kept the concert guitar alive (or at least visible) well into the age of large symphony orchestras, grand pianos, and opera. Coste is certainly worthy of re-evaluation and serious scholarly study, but while his works deserve to be heard more often in recitals, they were never entirely forgotten. Several of his works have remained almost constantly in print (the *Études*, the *Livre d'or*) and others have entered the standard repertory without always giving him credit (his equal-guitar arrangements of Sor duos and his revisions of Sor *Studies* that were published by Segovia).

The Coste revival began in the 1980s when Simon Wynberg edited the nine-volume *Guitar Works of Napoléon Coste* (Monaco: Éditions Chanterelle S. A., 1981–83). David Russell and others soon added several pieces to their concert repertoires, and recordings followed. A brief search of the internet reveals five CDs of Coste's works in a Naxos *Guitar Works* series, performed by Jeffery MacFadden, Marc Teicholz, Pavel Steidl, and Frédéric Zigante. (Full disclosure: I wrote the sleeve notes to these, which Van Vliet's work has now rendered obsolete.) There are also notable Coste recordings by Marco Riboni, Philippe Villa, Raphaëlla Smits, Jean Vallières, Flávio Apro, and John Schneiderman. The CD accompanying Van Vliet's book joins this list with a well-considered selection of the composer's most significant and characteristic works,<sup>5</sup> performed by the author on a Bernhard Kresse copy of Coste's seven-string Lacôte guitar. One of these pieces is an overdue first recording of the *Fantaisie symphonique* that Coste composed for the Makaroff competition in 1856.

Ari Van Vliet has produced a major work of scholarship that will not soon be superseded. It is set in a readable sans-serif typeface, printed on high-quality A4 paper, and sturdily bound with attractive glossy hard covers. It is not perfect, of course. The narrative makes frequent excursions into the historical present tense; perhaps this works better in the original Dutch but it seems idiosyncratic in English. The translation is occasionally awkwardly unidiomatic (“third guitar” instead of “terz guitar”) and the typos and proofreading errors are also numerous (e.g., Sor and Coste did not play a concert together in 1938). But dwelling on such details seem petty when balanced against a book that is so meticulously researched, imaginatively organized, judiciously reasoned, and richly illustrated. It is the magisterial modern biography that Napoléon Coste and the guitar have deserved.

—RICHARD LONG

<sup>1</sup> I did not include William Gray Sasser's earlier dissertation on Sor (1960) because it is more a study of his works than a biography. Likewise, Josef Zuth's *Simon Molitor und die wiener Gitarristik (um 1800)* (Vienna: Anton Goll, n.d. but 1920) actually contains only a scant ten pages of biography, which Zuth used as a key to unlock the phenomenon of the guitar in Vienna at the turn of the 19th century. Thomas Heck adopted a similar effective strategy in his 1970 Giuliani dissertation, as does Van Vliet with Paris in the work reviewed here.

<sup>2</sup> In the 1980s, biographical studies of Joseph Küffner (1985), Ferdinando Carulli (1988), Marco Aurelio Zani de Ferranti (1989), and Caspar Joseph Mertz (1989) were completed by Mathias Henke, Mario Torta, Simon Wynberg, and Astrid Stempnik respectively. (Unfortunately, the Carulli biographical profile in Torta's 1988 dissertation was not included in the subsequently published thematic catalogue of 1993.) The trend continued in the new millennium with studies of Dionisio Aguado by Pompeyo Pérez Díaz (2003), Anton Diabelli by Jukka Savijoki (2004), Zani de Ferranti by Marcus Van de Cruys (2005), Adam Darr by Joseph Costello (2005), A. T. Huerta by Javier Suárez-Pájeares and Robert Coldwell (2006), Mauro Giuliani by Marco Riboni (2011), Francesco Molino by Mario Dell'Ara (2014), and Luigi Legnani by Sergio Monaldini (2015). A brief but useful biography of Coste published in his hometown for his bicentenary is worth mentioning here: Noël Roncet, *Napoléon Coste: Compositeur, 1805–1883* (Amondans, 2005; reprinted by Tecla in 2008).

<sup>3</sup> *Napoléon Coste: componist en gitarist in het muziekleven van het 19e-eeuwse Parijs—Biografie, Thematische Catalogus ... (with a Summary in English) ...*, (Utrecht, 2015). <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/311446>

<sup>4</sup> I agree with this assessment, but must note that his list is debatable. Zani wrote some works of stunning virtuosity that are mostly unknown today because they require open–E major *scordatura*. Also (earlier, on page 183), Van Vliet appears to be unaware of some important works by Regondi, notably the *Ten Études*, first published in 1990, and several recent manuscript discoveries.

<sup>5</sup> The CD contains the complete *Souvenirs: Sept morceaux épisodiques* (Opp. 17–23), *Le Passage des Alpes* (Opp. 27, 28, and 40), as well as the *Fantaisie symphonique*, Op. 28b.

**Boccherini, Luigi. *Sinfonia concertante* (G. 523). Edited by Matanya Ophee. Ohio: Columbus, Ohio: Editions Orphée, 2016.**

Luigi Boccherini's *Sinfonia concertante* for orchestra with guitar obbligato, G. 523 (1799), was one of several arrangements the composer made from his Concerto in C, Op. 7, G. 491, completed three decades earlier. Another adaptation was his String Quintet, Op. 10, No. 4, G. 268 (1771), which in turn inspired a string quartet arrangement attributed to Haydn. The *Sinfonia* survives in an autograph manuscript in the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra in Paris; the title page stipulates that it was composed for the Marquis de Benavent and scored for “due Violini principali, due di ripieni, Oboe, Chitarra, Viola, Corni, Fagotto, Violoncello obbligati e Basso.” The Marquis de Benavent was a wealthy amateur who commissioned at least some of the composer's guitar quintets at about the same time.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the guitar's long struggle to gain recognition as a concert instrument with a credible repertory, it is remarkable that a performing edition of a significant work with an obbligato guitar part—especially one written by a famous composer—has remained unpublished until now. It is appropriate that this edition of the piece has ultimately been published by Matanya Ophee, who has championed guitar chamber music for decades

## REVIEWS: (cont.)

and who has unearthed much new information about the provenance of Boccherini's Guitar Quintets.<sup>2</sup>

Ophee's exemplary and detailed Preface summarizes the modern history of the manuscript: discovered among other Boccherini manuscripts in the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra in 1929 by Charles Bouvet and listed in his inventory of the collection; recorded in 1957 and again in 1962 by Italian orchestras;<sup>3</sup> printed for the first time (in score form only) in a scholarly "monument" edition in 1962; and cited in the Yves Gérard catalogue in 1969. Not mentioned in Ophee's Preface is his early attempt to put the work in print in association with the fledgling Guitar Foundation of America. Ophee first learned of the piece in 1975 from the Gérard catalogue; he obtained microfilm from the Paris library and began to prepare an edition. The GFA, only a few years old at the time, had formed a relationship with Belwin-Mills to publish a "GFA Critical Editions" series of guitar music; the *Sinfonia* was proposed, accepted, and scheduled for publication, but the project was cancelled the following year. I suspect the size of the score—24 minutes of music for 13 instruments, much larger than any other title in the GFA series—was deemed too expensive at the time. Given the difference between the guitar music marketplace of the 1970s and the present, the decision was probably sensible strictly from the economic perspective; the ultimate Orphée publication has a sixty-page score plus a folder of parts totaling another 116 pages. These events helped convince Ophee to establish his own publishing firm, Éditions Orphée, for which the guitar world can be grateful, but because of all this the publication of a performing edition of the *Sinfonia* was unfortunately delayed for almost four decades.

Boccherini was, of course, a major composer, a seminal figure in the 18th-century transition to the classical style, a cello virtuoso, and an international celebrity. There is no question that the *Sinfonia* (in the usual three movements) is charming, melodious, and well-crafted, a splendid example of 18th-century chamber music, and an important addition to the guitar's repertory. The guitar part has been unjustly maligned as "for a not very skilled amateur," when in fact the part requires at least intermediate competence and is no easier than the other orchestral parts, which it often echoes. This is not a concerto, and the Romantic era penchant for technical pyrotechnics for their own sake was just emerging in 1799. The guitar part blends well with the orchestral instruments, assuming an equal and integral role while still getting its share of little solos—far more solos than, for

example, in the majority of Viennese chamber works with guitar in the following decade. Virtuosi who choose music solely to demonstrate their technique might want to look elsewhere, but any competent musician who enjoys making good music with others will welcome this publication.

Unlike the manuscript scores of the Guitar Quintets, the original *Sinfonia* manuscript is autograph, so those complex debates over the identity and reliability of the guitar quintet arrangers/copyists are not relevant here. The score calls for a guitar with at least thirteen frets and with six strings (or courses)—an increasingly common configuration in 1799—and is idiomatic to the instrument,

indicating that Boccherini, like many musicians of his age, had a more than rudimentary knowledge of the guitar. Nevertheless, this edition is not Urtext. Ophee deemed it necessary to make "many... changes" to the score. He invites those concerned about this to consult the original manuscript, which is now available online as a PDF file from Gallica ([www.gallica.bnf.fr](http://www.gallica.bnf.fr)). A more convenient solution might have been to provide an Urtext score along with the edited parts, but most will find such comparisons unnecessary; Ophee is an experienced and trustworthy editor. The engraving is clear and readable, and the presentation exemplary. Boccherini's Guitar Quintets, once greeted by traditionalists as of dubious attribution and minor importance, have become—driven by the popularity of the guitar—the composer's most performed and recorded works. The *Sinfonia* is a unique and long-overdue addition to the guitar repertory, and should join the Quintets in popularity.

—RICHARD M. LONG



*The statue of Boccherini by the sculptor Daphné du Barry (b. 1950), in front of the Istituto Superiore di Studi Musicali "Luigi Boccherini" in the Piazza del Suffragio, Lucca. Photo by Richard M. Long.*

<sup>1</sup> See Josep Maria Mangado Artigas, "Il Marchese di Benavent (1768–1849): ricerca biografica sul chitarrista che commissionò a Luigi Boccherini i quintetti con chitarra," *il 'Fronimo'* 30, No. 118 (April, 2002), 13–20 and No. 119 (July, 2002), 34–46.

<sup>2</sup> Matanya Ophee, *Luigi Boccherini's Guitar Quintets: New Evidence* (Boston: Editions Orphée, 1981). This book also served to introduce many contemporary guitarists to the guitarist-composer-arranger François de Fossa. The first three chapters, revised, were published as Matanya Ophee, "Boccherini Guitar Quintets — New Evidence," in Ophee, *Essays on Guitar History Compiled and Updated* (Columbus, Ohio: Editions Orphée, 2016), 45–74. Also see "A New Light on the Provenance of the Guitar Quintets by Luigi Boccherini," *Ibid.*, 74–83.

<sup>3</sup> The 1957 recording, with Newell Jenkins conducting the Orchestra Accademia dell'Orso, was distributed widely by the Musical Heritage Society. The 1962 recording featured Umberto Cattini conducting the Orchestre de l'Angelicum de Milan, with the guitarist Elena Padovani. Another early recording, dating to 1980, with Jiří Stárek conducting the RIAS-Sinfonietta Berlin and with guitarist Sonja Prunnbauer, is still available on CD. A more recent recording, with Monica Huggett conducting the Portland Baroque Orchestra and with Richard Savino as the guitar soloist, dates to about 2001.