

Thank You, Richard—and Yes, She Did!

BRIAN JEFFERY

IN *SOUNDBOARD SCHOLAR*, NO. 7, Richard Long did me the honor of reviewing the 2020 edition of my book *Fernando Sor: Composer and Guitarist*, as well as the three volumes of *Fernando Sor* by Josep Maria Mangado, which are on my website, www.tecla.com.¹ Richard has reviewed my work before, and his reviews are always fair and correct. So thank you, Richard!

In his review of Josep's *Fernando Sor*, volume 3, Richard wrote about Sor's pupil Natalie Houzé that "the reviewer . . . 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." But now there is some new news: she did! Patrik Kleemola has discovered a previously unknown newspaper review from 1832: it reports that she and Sor performed a concert together, in which they played duets; the reviewer has the highest praise for Natalie Houzé. Here is what that reviewer wrote in the journal *La France nouvelle* of March 1, 1832:

M. Sor a donné hier, dans les salons de M. Dietz, un concert qui avait attiré plusieurs amateurs. On a entendu avec plaisir Mlle Houzé, élève de ce célèbre guitariste. Le jeu pur et le doigté élégant de cette jeune personne témoignent en faveur de l'excellente méthode de son maître. On a dit jusqu'à présent que M. Sor n'écrivait que pour lui, mais Mlle Houzé a donné une preuve du contraire. Dans les deux duos exécutés par elle et son professeur, Mlle Houzé s'est montrée aussi bonne musicienne que brillante exécutante, et les auditeurs ont pu se convaincre que la musique de M. Sor était remplie de charme.²

- 1 Richard Long, "The Catalan Guitar, Part 1: Four New E-books by Brian Jeffery and Josep Maria Mangado," *Soundboard Scholar*, no. 7 (2021), <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/sbs/vol7/iss1/17>.
- 2 See <https://tinyurl.com/bdzxtnx7>. I am grateful to Patrik Kleemola for telling me about this review. Natalie Houzé had previously been a pupil of Francesco Molino but then seems to have transferred to Sor, as Jan Burgers sets out in his new book about Molino, *Francesco Molino (1768–1847), Guitarist and Violinist: Life and Works* (Kalundborg: Bergmann, 2021), <https://bergmann-edition.com/collections/educational/products/burgers-francesco-molino-life-and-works>.

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La France nouvelle, March 1, 1832, p. 4.

(M. Sor gave a concert yesterday in the salons of M. Dietz which attracted the presence of a good many lovers of music. It was a pleasure to hear Mlle Houzé, a pupil of this famous guitarist. The pure playing and elegant fingering of this young lady bore witness to the excellent method of her teacher. Until now people have said that M. Sor only writes for himself, but Mlle Houzé has proved that that is not so. In the two duets played by her and her teacher, Mlle Houzé showed herself to be as good a musician as she is a brilliant player, and the audience could be convinced that M. Sor's music is full of charm.)

The reviewer does not say which duets the two played, but it was specifically for Natalie Houzé that Sor composed his *Fantaisie*, op. 54 bis, which is of this period and which has a movement “dans le genre espagnol,” full of Spanish flavor. It may well be that they played that.



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