

FROM THE SOUNDBOARD ARCHIVE

A Rondo Allegro by François Molino

The Guitarist's Album

MATANYA OPHEE (1982)

SO HERE IS A TUNE you have never heard before. This little ditty is taken from the following:

Grande Méthode / Complète / pour la Guitare / dédiée / A Son Altesse
Royale / MADAME / Duchesse de Berry / et Composée par / FRANÇOIS
MOLINO / Professor de Violon, de Guitare attaché à la Chapelle de S.M. le
Roi, de Sardaigne. / op.46. Prix 25f. Deuxième Edition, Corrigée et Augmentée de
Nouveaux Morceaux Faciles/... / à Paris / chez L'Auteur, Rue de l'Echelle. No.8.
(Copy in my private collection. Also in LOC, Archives of the GFA, collection of
Robert Spencer.)

This version of the guitar method of François Molino can be dated to c. 1833 by reference to Hopkinson's *Dictionary of Parisian Music Publishers, 1700–1950*. An earlier version of the method was published c. 1824 and carried the opus number 33 (copies in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, and the Peabody-Mason Library at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA). A certain confusion regarding this method is occasioned by the fact that the second edition, which we use here, contains a catalogue of the works of Molino in which another opus 33 is listed. This is a short romance titled *Air favori, "Di tanti palpiti" de Rossini, avec accompagnement de guitare*. It will be remembered that this tune by Rossini was very popular and was used by many guitarists (cf. Giuliani, op. 79 and op. 87). The matter of conflicting opus numbers is not entirely unusual, since many early nineteenth-century composers, and their publishers to be sure, took the matter of opus numbers rather lightly. At any rate, the earlier edition contains this very same Rondo Allegro, in a slightly different version.

We are all familiar, alas only too well, with another version of this tune, i.e., the famous "Mozart" Variations, op. 9, of Fernando Sor. In his biography of Sor, Brian Jeffery says:

Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* was first performed in Vienna in 1791, in German, and performances in Italian took place in 1794, so that Sor's piece could date from any

time after that. But the first major production of the opera in England took place in May 1819, and I would guess that it was this production which stimulated Sor to compose his variations.

The theme which Sor used comes towards the end of act I of *Die Zauberflöte*, and the original German words are “Das klinget so herrlich”...

The tune served for many arrangements and sets of variations in the nineteenth century, among others by the flautist Drouet, by Herz, and by Glinka.¹

Undoubtedly, Sor’s version of the tune was published much before that of Molino. This fact immediately suggests that perhaps Molino simply copied Sor’s particular setting of the tune, and used, at least in the opening part of it, the same harmonic and rhythmical aspects. But before we jump on Molino and accuse him of plagiarism, we have to observe that the tune already appears in the very first version of Molino’s method.

This book is titled as follows:

Nouvelle / MÉTHODE / Complette / pour Guitar ou Lyre / dédiée à madame / la Duchesse de Dalberg / par / FRANÇOIS MOLINO. / Texte Français et Italien ... / A PARIS / Chez Gambaro, au Magasin de Musique et d’instruments, rue Croix des Petits Champs, No. 42. Pl. no. 100.

(Copies in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, and in the collections of Robert Spencer and Mary-Belle Swingle.)

Here it is:

¹ Brian Jeffery, *Fernando Sor: Composer and Guitarist* (London: Tecla, 1977), 71.

This facsimile is taken from the copy belonging to Robert Spencer, whose kind assistance is hereby gratefully acknowledged. Undoubtedly, this is not a very good setting of the tune. Apparently, even Molino himself thought so, since in the later editions of his method he modified it extensively. What is important, though, is the fact that the *Nouvelle méthode* was certainly published before April of 1817 (Hopkinson), and it predates Sor's opus 9 by at least four years. Was it then Sor himself who was guilty of plagiarism? Hardly so! A brief perusal of the 1817 issue of Whistling's *Handbuch* reveals that tunes from Mozart's *Magic Flute* were used by many composers. There are virtually hundreds of settings, which carry various titles, such as *Variations on a Theme by Mozart*, *Var. on a theme from The Magic Flute*, *Var. on a theme from Les mystères d'Isis* (another popular name for this opera), and other similar appellations in French, German, Italian, and even Spanish. These works may be related to the tune of *Das klinget so herrlich*, or they may not. However, I did find several compositions in which the name *Das klinget so herrlich* is specifically quoted (see Klauser 78, Bornhardt 239, Berger 393, Kirmair 408).² This is not by any means a conclusive list. But it does indicate to us that the tune was very popular in 1817. Undoubtedly Molino, and Sor after him, simply followed the current fashion.

One person who was very much *à la mode* in Europe at the time was the famous soprano Angelique Catalani. One of her favorite tricks of the trade was the vocalization of instrumental music, such as the famous violin variations of Rode and many other instrumental variations on popular tunes (see the Catalani article in the *New Grove*). Catalani, it is not surprising, also used *Das klinget so herrlich*, and several composers published sets of variations on tunes that were in her repertoire. One such set is opus 1 of Athenais Paulian, which I recently found at the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* in Vienna. It is titled:

Airs et Variations / chantés par Madame Catalani / arrangés pour / Guitare Seule / et dédiés à son frère / par / ATHENAIS PAULIAN. / op.1 ... / Bonn chez N. Simrock. / Propriété de l'éditeur. [Pl. no.] 2529.³

It will be remembered that Athénais Paulian was a French guitarist who was associated with Fernando Sor, who dedicated to her his opus 33, *Trois pièces de société*.⁴ Aguado in turn dedicated to her his opus 3, *Huit petites pièces*,⁵ and her brother Eugène Paulian dedicated his own opus 2, variations on *Gentil housard*,⁶ to Sophie

2 Carl Friedrich Whistling and Friedrich Hofmeister, *Handbuch der musikalischen Litteratur: oder allgemeines systematisch geordnetes Verzeichniss der bis zum Ende des Jahres 1815 gedruckten Musikalien, auch musikalischen Schriften und Abbildungen*... (Leipzig, 1817). It is clear from the above title that all material listed by Whistling in 1817 was already in print prior to the end of 1815!

3 GdM call number x. 4821/d R.

4 See Jeffery, Sor, 160. Also: *Complete Works of Sor* (Tecla).

5 Copy in LOC.

6 Copy in GdM, call number x. 49791.

Vautrin, the wife of François de Fossa. Paris in the early nineteenth century was a small place indeed!

So, here is the theme by Mozart, as sung by Madame Catalani and arranged for the guitar by Athénais Paulian:

Andante maestoso.

N° 1
Tema di Mozart.

The tunes used by Paulian, besides *Das klinget so herrlich*, are: *Tema di Rode*, *Tema Sul margine d'un rio*, and *Tema La biondina*, in that order. Interestingly enough, Mauro Giuliani also published a similar set, except that his set does not include *Sul margine d'un rio* (see Heck WoO G-3 and G-4), but it does include the other tunes, in the very same order. However, it seems that the theme by Mozart used by Giuliani does not look to the naked eye as that used by Paulian and known to us to be *Das klinget so herrlich*:

Andantino mosso

In his comments to this entry in his thematic catalogue of Giuliani, Dr. Heck says:

Although the title of the first number states that its theme is from Mozart's *Magic Flute*, I have not been able to find it in that opera. The melody in question may have been substituted into the opera at one time.⁷

7 Thomas F. Heck, "The Birth of the Classic Guitar and Its Cultivation in Vienna, Reflected in the Career and Compositions of Mauro Giuliani" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1970), 2:153.

As one who has tried, like many other guitarists before me, to find the theme of Sor's opus 9 in the original score of the opera, I can well sympathize with Dr. Heck's inability to find in it another theme altogether that is not known to most guitarists. The difficulty in recognizing *Das klinget so herrlich* as the basis for Sor's variations lies in the fact that the original does not begin with the dotted rhythm used by Sor and Molino, and certainly does not contain the complex chromaticism that they have inserted into the melodic line.

However, the similarity of the incipit quoted by Heck to the second variation in the Paulian work is immediately apparent. This is what this variation looks like:

Var: 2.

Undoubtedly this variation uses the same thematic material as the Giuliani theme as quoted by Heck. Is it then, in fact, to be found in the score of the opera *The Magic Flute* as written by Mozart?

Opera being mainly a *vocal* spectacle, one is naturally inclined to examine the contents of its *vocal* material when looking for such a tune. And indeed, repeated perusals of the score and numerous auditions of various recordings of the *Magic Flute* failed to bring about an identification of this tune in the opera, a fact that could perhaps support Dr. Heck's observation in this regard. On the other hand, it did not seem likely that two composers who most certainly did not know each other personally would quote the same tune from the *Magic Flute* without some independent source to work from.

I learned many years ago that when stumped for want of an answer there is only one thing to do, and that is to ask George Warren. If George does not know, he usually knows who does. But this time he knew: the theme used by Giuliani and quoted by Heck, and also used by Paulian in the second variation of her opus 1, is the *Magic Bells* theme that Mozart uses as an obbligato accompaniment to the very same tune of *Das klinget so herrlich!*

In other words, this tune is indeed not to be found in the *vocal* parts of *The Magic Flute*, but there is no question that it is included in the instrumental score, and a simple perusal of the Mozart score will establish that fact. George Warren is absolutely correct, and I am grateful to him for this information.

Moreover, the Giuliani work is currently in print and published by Ricordi (Ricordi, Milan, no. 132095, edited by Germano Cavazzoli). In a recent correspondence, George wrote to me:

The so-called “Theme” is the magic-bells obligato; what the arrangement calls “Variazione I” is a setting of *Das klinget so herrlich*. This actually gives the piece only three real variations instead of four. . . . The variations, in fact, are on *Das klinget*, not on the magic-bells theme which, in fact, one would have to call an introduction here rather than the theme.

Clear enough. Paulian, on the other hand, used *Das klinget so herrlich* as her theme proper and the magic-bells obligato as one of her variations. Seeing that she published her version some ten years *after* the Giuliani publication, one is tempted to suggest that perhaps she was trying to set the record straight, so to speak.

All of which brings us to the conclusion that neither Sor nor Molino needed to steal this tune from each other. They simply used a melody that was very much in vogue already in 1817. Dr. Jeffery’s guess that it was the performance of the *Magic Flute* in London in 1819 that stimulated Sor to compose his variations may be indeed correct. But I would not be much surprised if this stimulation was also based on the general popularity of *Das klinget so herrlich*.



This column was first published in *Soundboard* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 77–81. It is reproduced here as part of a collection, “From the *Soundboard* Archive,” featuring selected notes by Matanya Ophee to the *Guitarist’s Album* series. The text is unchanged except for typographical corrections and minor changes in house style.

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RONDO ALLEGRO

Edited by Matanya Ophce

François Molino
(1775? - 1847?)

The musical score is written for guitar and consists of ten staves. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 2/4. The piece begins with a *dolce* marking. The first staff contains a trill on the first measure, followed by a series of eighth-note patterns. The second staff features a *sf* (sforzando) marking. The third staff continues with eighth-note patterns and includes a *dolce* marking. The fourth staff has a trill and a *dolce* marking. The fifth staff includes a *f* (forte) marking. The sixth staff has a *dolce* marking. The seventh staff begins with a *ff* (fortissimo) marking, followed by a *Rallent. Adagio* section and a *dolce* marking. The eighth staff continues with eighth-note patterns. The ninth and tenth staves conclude the piece with eighth-note patterns and a final cadence.

dolce

f *dolce*

f *dolce*

f *dolce*

f

C III

C II

D.C. al segno e poi la Coda

Coda

Har. 12

Har. 12

Har. 12