

IN MEMORIAM

Carlo Barone (1955–2022)

ADRIAN WALTER

ON JULY 4, 2022, I received the sad and unexpected news that the world had lost one of its leading exponents of the nineteenth-century guitar and historical performance practice.

Carlo Barone was born in 1955 in the northern Italian town of Vigevano. The town is well known for its Piazza Ducale, dating from 1494, and the Castello Sforzesco, which was a favored residence of the Milanese Sforza family. His musical training began early, alongside a classical education that included literature, poetry, and science. He studied musicology, composition, guitar, and organ, and for many years served as a church organist. He continued his study of the guitar with Angelo Gilardino; he also noted the early influence of Leif Christensen, Eric Stenstadvold, and Thomas Heck.

To the north of Vigevano, in the foothills of the Alps, is Lago Maggiore, which was to become the base of the regular International Summer Specialization Courses that Carlo directed in the towns of Stresa and later Brezzo di Bedero. It was in Brezzo that I first met him, when I joined his summer course in 1993. After reading an interview with him in *Classical Guitar* magazine, I realized there was someone who shared my love of the nineteenth-century guitar—someone, indeed, who had already achieved a significant amount in this space, even setting up an academy for research and teaching, the Accademia “l’Ottocento” (Academy of Nineteenth-Century Music).

This was in a period before the internet became ubiquitous, so it was out with pen and paper and a wait of some weeks before a letter reached me in Darwin. I was immediately impressed by the breadth of the activities that were involved in the summer course—masterclasses, introductory classes, lectures, and many performances.

I duly attended the summer course in 1993 and met a gifted teacher, performer, and passionate advocate for the nineteenth-century guitar. The major auditorium used for the summer course was lined with guitars from the Academy’s collection: they included instruments by Carlo and Gaetano Guadagnini, Soriot, Garganese, Lacote, and Panormo, among others. Carlo performed on these guitars himself and made them available for attendees to play and perform on. I was fortunate to play on a wonderful Spanish-style Panormo from the 1820s and Carlo’s much-loved Gaetano Guadagnini from 1828—a revelatory experience.



Carlo Barone at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts in 2019, playing a guitar by Pierre René Lacôte, c. 1825. Photo by Adrian Walter.

Another resource that the academy made available was the notable collection of the *Archivo Generale Italiano delle Fonti Musicali* (AGIF), which includes little-known repertoire and, significantly, many original tutor methods from the period. Whether for researchers or performers, it was a treasure trove of source material. Building this archive was a major part of Carlo's life work, one that took him to libraries across Italy. It includes seminal methods for other instruments and voice from the first half of the nineteenth century, by such great virtuosi and teachers as Hummel, Spohr, Garcia, and Delle Sedie.

In his summer courses, Carlo also showed his skill as a conductor, regularly directing the Academy's orchestra. In these performances he explored the Italian influences on familiar repertoire by such composers as Mozart, Schubert, and Mendelssohn, while bringing to light new works for guitar and orchestra by Mauro Giuliani, Matteo Barbi, and Francesco Caliari. Performances of these works were also significant in their exploration of new interpretive practices and their expression through an orchestral medium.

Inspired by Carlo's work, I asked him to establish a similar course in Australia as part of the Darwin International Guitar Festival at the Northern Territory University. This course became a core element of the festival, running from 1995 until 2007. During this period, students and leading players from around the world were introduced to the nineteenth-century guitar. Carlo passed on his passion to major festival artists who engaged in his many performances and workshops, and in the highly informative debates that they generated. Names that come to mind include John Williams, Karin

Schaupp, Pavel Steidl, Duo Maccari-Pugliese, Brian Jeffery, and Tom Heck, to name a few. Of particular note was the recording that John Williams made of Giuliani's First Concerto, op. 30, with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, played on a Gaetano Guadagnini guitar made in 1814.

Carlo's work was to resonate around the world. Those with whom he worked passed on their newly acquired knowledge to their own students and concert audiences. During my time as director of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Carlo also ran a summer course in Hong Kong and China as part of the Hong Kong Altamira International Guitar Festival. This continued Carlo's mission to expand interest in the nineteenth-century guitar and its repertoire to large new communities of guitarists. Fluent in English and French, he participated in conferences in Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, and China, presenting concerts and masterclasses. In the last weeks of his life I was discussing with him a new master's program specializing in the nineteenth-century guitar, which he was planning with support from the European Union. He was truly an indomitable force.

His recordings and research have been made available through two series: *I quaderni dell'accademia* [The Notebooks of the Academy] (Milan: Rugginenti) and *La chitarra nell'800* [The Guitar in the Nineteenth Century] (Padua: Zanibon).

In the early 1990s it was rare to find musicians who were actively researching and performing on the nineteenth-century guitar. In 2022, a quick search on the internet will reveal many fine performances by a new generation of players who have embraced this instrument and its musical and interpretive world. Carlo Barone played an important part in laying the groundwork for this musical renaissance, from which we all now benefit.

Thank you, Carlo Barone!



About the Author

ADRIAN WALTER specializes in performance on the nineteenth-century guitar. An emeritus director and emeritus professor of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, he previously held positions at the Schools of Music and Creative Arts and Industries, Charles Darwin University, and the Australian National University. From 1993 to 2007, he directed the Darwin International Guitar Festival.

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