



FANDANGO!

MUSIC FOR SOLO GUITAR
AND STRING QUARTET

JOHAN LÖFVING
CONSONE QUARTET

Fandango!

Works for Solo Guitar & String Quartet

Johan Löfving *guitar*
Consone Quartet
Nanako Aramaki *castanets*

Dionisio Aguado (1784–1849) 1. Fandango Variado, Op. 16 (Adagio – Allegro vivace – Allegro)	[9:07]
Mauro Giuliani (1781–1829) Sonata Brillante, Op. 15 2. Allegro spirito 3. Adagio con grand espressione 4. Finale: Allegro vivace	[9:11] [6:00] [5:47]
Napoléon Coste (1805–1883) 5. Les Soirées d'Auteuil, Op. 23 (Andantino – Scherzo)	[7:52]
Fernando Sor (1778–1839) 6. Étude Op. 31, No. 10 (Cantabile)	[1:52]
Giulio Regondi (1822–1872) 7. Introduction et Caprice, Op. 23 (Adagio – Allegretto scherzando)	[11:35]
Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805) Guitar Quintet No. 4 in D Major, G. 448 8. Pastorale 9. Allegro maestoso 10. Grave assai – Fandango	[4:59] [7:33] [8:41]
Total playing time	[72:43]



Fandango!

‘There is found the expression of love from its beginning to its end, from the sigh of desire to the ecstasy of possession.’
Giacomo Casanova (1725–1798)

Following the French Revolution, the newly developed six-stringed guitar would enjoy a renaissance as a symbol of liberty comparable to that of the age of rock ‘n roll in the 1960s. The guitar represented a new ideal, far from the stiff status quo of ornate harpsichords and the old aristocracy. The instrument and its composers would flourish in musical capitals like Paris and Vienna until the piano eventually took over both the concert halls and salons in the age of Chopin and Liszt.

Nevertheless, a large number of guitarists still emerged from its old strongholds in the south and Dionisio Aguado (1784–1849) was no exception. As one of the leading Spanish guitarists of the age he spent several years in Paris before returning to Spain in the late 1830s. His **Fandango Variado Op. 16** is a unique work in the early romantic guitar repertoire as it is one of the few compositions directly influenced by Spanish folk music, an idiom so intimately connected with the instrument.

The theme of the fandango, which appears after an evocative introduction, was initially passed on to Aguado by his first guitar teacher, the monk Padre Basilio. The contradiction of a monk avidly performing a dance forbidden by the church for its sinful nature is not only entertaining but also illustrates how guitar playing among Spaniards had become an important part of their national identity. Even though Aguado’s version also includes mainstream musical idioms from Central Europe, the piece owes its existence to a long tradition of ‘strumming and drumming’ by the guitarists of Spain.

In complete contrast to this, the **Sonata Brillante Op. 15** by Mauro Giuliani (1781–1829) is a product of Viennese classicism at its height. As a young man Giuliani had arrived in Vienna and quickly established himself as a leading guitar virtuoso, enjoying the company of Schubert, Beethoven and Hummel. Before being forced to leave Vienna in 1819 due to heavy debts, he had enjoyed the patronage of none less than Empress Marie Louise. The sonata presented here is one of the most extraordinary guitar compositions of the era, combining the melodic heritage of Italian opera with solid and creative classical form.

Napoléon Coste (1805–1883) was the only leading Parisian guitarist of the time with a genuinely French background. Having established himself in Paris, initially as a student of Fernando Sor, he developed a close friendship with many of the leading artists of the day including Berlioz, himself an accomplished guitarist. The **Soirées d’Auteuil Op. 23** is typical of the romantic salon; sweeping melodies combined with a dance-like virtuosity. Coste preferred playing on a seven-stringed instrument and additional strings were common practice among many virtuosos in the middle of the century.

Fernando Sor (1778–1839) is often referred to as the greatest of all the nineteenth century guitar composers. He was indeed unique in that his output also included operas, ballets and symphonies in addition to guitar music requiring the highest artistic abilities. As a teacher, Sor’s enormous range of studies and didactic pieces was not only central to his income but has also given him a legacy among guitar teachers lasting to this day. The **Étude Op. 31 No. 10** is a true gem, showing us that even etudes can possess transcendental beauty.

As the Victorian ideal of ever-increasing

productivity and prosperity came to dominate in the middle of the century, the subtle sounds of the guitar fell increasingly out of favour. Giulio Regondi (1822–1872) spent most of his adult life on the British Isles where he also developed skilful mastery of the newly invented concertina. Regondi’s youth was spent touring across Europe as a child prodigy under the influence of a step-father who eventually abandoned the young boy in London and escaped with all his money. The fact that they later reconciled says a lot about the artist’s good nature. Since the rediscovery of Regondi’s music during recent decades, his **Introduction et Caprice Op. 23** has become one of his most frequently performed works. Despite being a virtuosic showpiece, it contains several gorgeous themes, dance-like interludes, and a truly impressive four-part opening section.

The Italian cello virtuoso Luigi Boccherini spent much of his career in Spain, enjoying the patronage of several aristocrats and royals. His quintets for guitar and string quartet have been performed with increasing regularity but none as much as the one recorded here, the **Quintet G. 448 in D major**, which includes the fiery fandango. This fandango is, to a great extent, the

same original piece that Aguado learnt from Padre Basilio, with added strings and castanets!

On Interpretation

‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that’s all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know’
John Keats (1795–1821)

I have been drawn to the nineteenth century repertoire since I was very young. Part of my interest came from the music itself but even more from the cultural environment in which it was born. Despite this instinctive fascination, I quickly became aware of the guitarist’s limited repertoire and it would take me many years to realise the full potential of the many wonderful compositions we have available.

For this recording, I did not intend to chose pieces that are rarely performed or neglected. Instead, my aim was to present some of the pieces that mean the most to me personally. Due to the rhetorical nature of this repertoire, artistic freedom and creativity is not only permitted but, in my view, required. Ornamentation, flexibility of tempo, varying sound colours and occasional strumming is, for me, at the very heart of this early romantic style.

A statement like this is of course highly personal and there are many ways to approach historical repertoire and the use of original instruments. However, I maintain that true authenticity can only be found through one’s own individual relationship with the music. My interest in the nineteenth century and its repertoire does not mean I wish to merely recreate how I think the music might have sounded at the time. Rather, I wish to unite my historical awareness with my own musical experience and imagination. Hopefully, the result is an ever changing, alive musical creature.

I would like to give a special thanks to the Consone Quartet whose genuine and spontaneous artistry made this project such a joy. Making real chamber music in a recording session can be daunting but they supported my subtle guitar lines with elegance and playfulness throughout. Additionally, I would like to thank John Taylor for his mastery in capturing the intimate sounds of the romantic guitar, Nanako Aramaki for her splendid castanet playing and Yu-Wei Hu for all her support before, during and after this recording.

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Johan Löfving (guitar)

Since being a prize winner in the prestigious London International Guitar Competition, Swedish Johan Löfving has distinguished himself as both guitar and theorbo player throughout UK and abroad. His performances have taken him to some of the world's finest concert halls such as Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, The Sage Gateshead, Wiener Saal Salzburg and Konzerthaus der Wiener Sängerknaben MuTh in Vienna. Additionally, he has appeared in major festivals including Brighton Early Music Festival, London Festival of Baroque Music, Bath Guitar Festival, Saxå Chamber Music Festival and Carinthian Summer, as well as numerous appearances on BBC Radio 3.

His debut album *A Salon Opera* (Resonus RES10233) together with flautist Yu-Wei Hu (Flauguissimo Duo) was released on Resonus Classics 2019. Their celebration of early romantic chamber music received great critical acclaim and was launched in collaboration with Brighton Early Music Festival.

Apart from his long-term work with

Flauguissimo and Improviso, he has worked with some of the finest musicians, such as baritone Thomas Guthrie, tenor Rob Murray, Barokksolistene and pianist David Owen Norris who invited him to take part in the 'Playlist Series' on BBC Radio 4.

Johan graduated with First Class Honours from the Royal College of Music (RCM) in London where he studied guitar with Gary Ryan and theorbo with Jakob Lindberg. At the RCM he was awarded both the Guitar Prize and the Hilda Anderson Dean Prize. Later, he completed his studies with Professor Robert Wolff and Professor Hans Brüderl at the Mozarteum Salzburg, supported by the Swedish Royal Academy of Music.

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Consone Quartet

Current BBC New Generation Artists, the Consone Quartet was formed at the Royal College of Music in London with the aim to explore Classical and Early Romantic repertoire on period instruments. Winners of the 2016 Royal Over-Seas League Ensemble Prize in London, Consone were also awarded two prizes at the 2015 York Early Music International Young Artists Competition, including the EUBO Development Trust Prize and a place on the 'EEEmerging' Emerging European Ensembles Scheme associated with the Ambronay Festival in France.

Performing highlights have included acclaimed concerts at London's Wigmore Hall and Kings Place, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Cheltenham, Lammermuir, Buxton and King's Lynn Festivals. The Consone Quartet is rapidly gaining international recognition performing in France, Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland. Outside Europe the group has given recitals in Bolivia and Peru, and soon in Japan and the US.

The quartet's debut disc, featuring music by Haydn and Mendelssohn, was

released in 2018 on the Ambronay Label and it has received a number of glowing reviews.

Nanako Aramaki (castanets)

Nanako Aramaki is a Japanese-Canadian flamenco dancer, instructor, and choreographer based in London, UK. She is part of the Flamenco Rosario Dance Company in Canada and has several groups that she performs with in Germany and the UK. She recently presented her contemporary show 'Obliqueffect' at the 2019 London Flamenco Festival. Her dance career thus far has led her to teach in Canada, Germany, England, Scotland, Denmark and Kenya, and perform on four continents.

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