

CHAPTER 3  
GUITAR IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY:  
A FRENCH-SPANISH CONNECTION

The guitar has a long and substantial history in Paris: Pierre Attaignant (c. 1494-1552) published lute tablature; Adrian Le Roy (c.1520-1598) was a successful publisher and musician who produced several volumes of lute, guitar and cittern music; Robert de Visée (c.1655-1732), a composer of lute and guitar music, was a court musician to King Louis XIV; Classical era guitarists Fernando Carulli (1770-1841), Dionisio Aguado (1784-1849), Matteo Carcassi (1792-1853) and Fernando Sor (1778-1839) worked in Paris for a portion of their careers; Rene Lacôte (1785-1855), an important luthier, was based in Paris; Napoléon Coste (1805-1883) was a premiere guitarist in Paris during the nineteenth century; and Cataloneon guitarist Jacques Bosch (1826-1895) moved to Paris and was involved in the artistic circles of painter Edouard Manet (1832-1883).<sup>1</sup> Societies like *Les Amis de la Guitare*, led by Andre Verdier, continued the tradition of classical guitar in Paris during the twentieth century.

Born in a suburb of Paris during the years between the two world wars, Presti's musical career emerged during an exciting and turbulent time in history and an especially significant era for the classical guitar. The quantity of literary, visual and musical artists who lived or worked in Paris during the 1920's and 30's is phenomenal and the subject of

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Jeffery, "Jaime Bosch (1826-1895) and the Guitar in Paris at the End of the 19th Century," (paper presented at the annual conference of the European Guitar Teacher's Association, Cambridge, England, June 1995), Tecla Editions, <http://www.tecla.com/extras/0001/0321/0321egta.htm> (accessed October 3, 2012).

many studies. Gertrude Stein (1874-1946), Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Coco Chanel (1883-1971), Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) and Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) are just a few of the figures famously associated with the city during this time. Evidence of the awareness of the guitar in the artistic circles of Paris is additionally imparted through the visual art of Picasso, Amadeo Modigliani (1884-1920), Juan Gris (1887-1927) and George Braques (1882-1963).

The guitar gained an unprecedented acceptance in the broader classical concert world during the early twentieth century. This is shown through premiere inclusions on programs in famous recital halls and the creation of significant new repertoire and recordings. "With the approach of the twentieth century, the second and the greatest golden age of the classical guitar was beginning to dawn."<sup>2</sup> Various phenomena contributed to this guitar awakening. Great performers like Segovia, Miguel Llobet (1878-1938), Regina Sanz de la Maza (1896-1981), Agustin Barrios Mangore (1885-1944), Luise Walker (1910-1998) and Maria Luisa Anido (1907-1996) engaged in a variety of activities that helped disseminate awareness of the guitar as a classical instrument. They toured, taught and recorded. They also commissioned, transcribed, composed and inspired new repertoire. The neoclassicist movement and research of musicologists such as Felipe Pedrell (1841-1922) and Emilio Pujol (1886-1980) encouraged the performance of historical repertoire and attested to the guitar's significance. In addition, works for guitar written by orchestral composers promoted the guitar to wider audiences.

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<sup>2</sup> Maurice Summerfield, *The Classical Guitar: Its Evolution, Players, and Personalities Since 1800* (United Kingdom: Ashley Mark Publishing Co., 1996), 17.

Underpinning these developments was the connection between the guitar and the current of Spanish nationalism that was strong in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many musicians who were Spanish nationalists lived or worked in Paris during the early twentieth century including Llobet, Pujol, Rodrigo, Enrique Granados (1867-1916), Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909), Ricardo Viñes (1875-1943), Joaquín Turina (1882-1949) and Manuel de Falla (1876-1946). Each of these Spanish musicians were connected to the guitar— Llobet and Pujol were performers; Rodrigo, Turina and Falla composed works for guitar; compositions by Albéniz and Granados were transcribed for guitar and have become celebrated repertoire; and Viñes presented Llobet's debut concert in Paris.<sup>3</sup> These musicians were immersed in the artistic circles of Paris and associated with composers such as Ravel, Claude Debussy (1862-1918) and Paul Dukas (1865-1935). Turina stated, "Such an intense musical life in the big city, the clash of the diverse tendencies and ideals, such great figures of different fields, Fauré and d'Indy, Debussy and Ravel, and the Spanish campaign of Albéniz, all these made up a musical atmosphere of an enormous attraction, of great power."<sup>4</sup>

Although the guitar's history is geographically widespread, the inclusion of guitar in the works of Spanish artists and composers had a profound nationalistic and neo-classical significance, as the guitar had long been associated with both folk and classical music traditions in Spain. In their paper "Modernist Representations of the Guitar and the Instrument's Classical Revival in the 1920's," presented during the October 2009

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<sup>3</sup> Ronald C. Purcell, "Llobet Soles, Miguel," In *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/16816> (accessed October 4, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Fundación Juan March, "Biography," Joaquín Turina, <http://www.Joaquinturina.com/biography.html> (accessed October 3, 2012).

Conference on Interdisciplinary Musicology, Michael Christoforidis and Ruth Piquer-Sanclemente discuss the interest in guitar as representative of the broader neo-classicist movement. "The historicist recuperation of Spain's musical past through musicological research fomented the theoretical and aesthetic revival of the country's musical tradition from a modernist perspective. An especially important result of this was the recovery of the repertory for vihuela<sup>5</sup>—and to some extent the baroque guitar—and ideas about reviving the guitar as a classical instrument."<sup>6</sup>

Music scholar Felipe Pedrell was devoted to cultivating Spanish music and edited many early works for keyboard and organ as well as church and stage music.<sup>7</sup> His work created a foundation for Spanish musicology and he influenced Pujol, Falla, Albéniz and Granados.<sup>8</sup> Pujol, who worked in Paris for a portion of his career, contributed the entries about guitar in the *Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*. This encyclopedia was started in 1913 by Alfred Lavignac (1846-1916) and, after his death, was continued by Lionel de La Laurencie (1861-1933). Pujol entries are included on pages 1997-2035. A lengthy excerpt was printed in the December 1998 issue of *Classical*

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<sup>5</sup> In Spain during the sixteenth century, the vihuela was a favored plucked-string instrument. It co-existed in history with the lute and small 4-course guitar. The shape of the vihuela was very different from the lute and more closely resembled the shape of modern guitars. It had an elongated body shape and the sides curved inward slightly. The Spanish Inquisition and the European lute's visual similarity to the Arabic oud may account for the use of the vihuela in Spain during an era when the lute was immensely popular throughout other areas of Europe. The Spanish preference for the vihuela, an instrument that looks more like the modern guitar than a lute, further emphasized the guitar as a long symbol of Spanish music.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Christoforidis and Ruth Piquer-Sanclemente, "Modernist Representations of the Guitar and the Instrument's Classical Revival in the 1920s," Conference on Interdisciplinary Musicology, October 26-29, 2009, [http://cim09.lam.jussieu.fr/CIM09-en/Proceedings\\_files/64A-PiquerChristoforidis%232.pdf](http://cim09.lam.jussieu.fr/CIM09-en/Proceedings_files/64A-PiquerChristoforidis%232.pdf) (accessed October 3, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Felipe Pedrell," <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/448578/Felipe-Pedrell> (accessed August 5, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

*Guitar* magazine as part of a series of articles written by Allan Clive Jones titled "The Judgement of Paris."<sup>9</sup> Pujol's entries provide historical information as well as insights regarding guitarists and composers contemporaneous to his career.<sup>10</sup> Some of the twentieth-century guitarists Pujol named included Llobet, Segovia, Sainz de la Maza, Anido, Daniel Fortea (1878-1953), Josefina Robledo (1892-1972), Doming Prat (1886-1944), Julio Sagreras (1879-1942), Pepita Roca (c.1897-1956) and Maria-Rita Brondi (1889-1941). Guitarists whom Pujol identified as being active in France during the early twentieth century include Llobet, Madeleine Cottin (before 1890-after 1909),<sup>11</sup> Alfred Cottin (1869-1923), Lucian Gélas (1873-after 1927)<sup>12</sup> and Mathilda Cuervas (c.1900-1956).<sup>13</sup> Pujol's discussion of composers of guitar music includes Henri Collet (1885-1951), the French composer and music critic who is remembered for using the title *Les Six* to refer to the group of composers that included Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983), Francis Poulenc (1899-1963), Arthur Honneger (1892-1955), Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), Georges Auric (1899-1983) and Louis Durey (1888-1979). Through Pujol's entries, a unique concurrent perspective of early twentieth-century guitar activity is conveyed and it is apparent that Presti was born into an era of growth for the guitar.

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<sup>9</sup> Allan Clive Jones, "The Judgement of Paris Part 5: Pujol's article in Lavignac's *Encyclopédie*," *Classical Guitar*, December 1998, 24-28.

<sup>10</sup> Jones states that Pujol's entries were published in 1927.

<sup>11</sup> When determining a possible date of death, it was considered that Madeleine Cottin wrote a method for mandolin that was published in 1909.

<sup>12</sup> When determining a possible date of death, it was considered that an article written in 1927 by Lucian Gélas is cited as a resource in Thomas Heck, *The birth of the classic guitar and its cultivation in Vienna, reflected in the career and compositions of Mauro Giuliani: Volume I* (Connecticut: Yale, 1970), [http://books.google.com/books?id=ALywAAAIAAJ&q=lucian+gelas+guitar&dq=lucian+gelas+guitar&source=bl&ots=gW3PtYqPaK&sig=MKNOYnCXnb-eBWTmj1A1wz3ao\\_U&hl=en&sa=X&ei=xsJ1UI33NaXu0gHbgIGYAg&ved=0CFUQ6AEwBw](http://books.google.com/books?id=ALywAAAIAAJ&q=lucian+gelas+guitar&dq=lucian+gelas+guitar&source=bl&ots=gW3PtYqPaK&sig=MKNOYnCXnb-eBWTmj1A1wz3ao_U&hl=en&sa=X&ei=xsJ1UI33NaXu0gHbgIGYAg&ved=0CFUQ6AEwBw) (accessed October 10, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Mathilda Cuervas married Emilio Pujol in 1923.

Pujol's musicological research influenced his concert programs. He performed early vihuela repertoire and he discovered an ancient vihuela in a museum in Paris. He commissioned a replica of this instrument and used it in concert. A review of a vihuela concert given by Pujol was published in the French music journal *La Revue Musicale* in 1938. The reviewer, Raymond Petit (1893-1976), recounts Pujol's historical discovery:

Until a short time ago, no example was known of this ancient instrument, ancestor of the guitar. And the way one of them was rediscovered quite recently is almost worthy of a novel. Emilio Pujol, an equally profound musician whether as an executant on the guitar or as a scholar (his article on his instrument, in the *Encyclopédie Lavignac* is a model of the genre) had vainly scoured all Europe in search of a vihuela and it was almost by chance that he discovered a very beautiful one...in our Parisian Musée Jacquemart Andréé!<sup>14</sup>

Pujol's historical concert repertoire included works by Luis Milan (c.1500-1561), Enríquez de Valderrábano (c.1500-after 1557) and Alonso Mudarra (c. 1508-1580). In collaboration with the publishing house of Max Eschig, Pujol prepared an edition of Renaissance era pavaues by Luis Milan and these pavaues have become popular repertoire for classical guitarists. Christoforidis and Piquer-Sanclemente state, "By the early 1920's guitar programmes [sic] in Spain were dominated by vihuela repertory, 17th- and 18th-century pieces, and the music of Bach."<sup>15</sup> Segovia's Parisian concert debut in 1924 featured transcriptions of works by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) and, by 1930, Segovia, Llobet and Anido had recorded works by Bach. Segovia's early recordings also feature Baroque era works by De Visée.

In addition to Pujol, the longstanding influences of guitarists Llobet and Segovia are especially significant. Llobet toured throughout Europe, the United States and South

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<sup>14</sup> Raymond Petit as cited by Allan Clive Jones, "The Judgement of Paris Part 4: A night at the opera," *Classical Guitar*, November 1998, 20.

<sup>15</sup> Adolfo Salazar, "Sainz de la Maza," *El Sol*, March 11 1920, quoted by Christoforidis and Piquer-Sanclemente.

America. He was an active transcriber and arranger and one of the first guitarists to record using a microphone.<sup>16</sup> His recordings for Parlophone and Decca, made between 1925 and 1929, include works by Coste, Sor, Bach and Manuel Ponce (1882-1948) as well as his own arrangements of traditional melodies. During the same years, he also recorded duets with Anido.

Segovia, about twenty years younger than Llobet, became one of the greatest icons and relentless promoters of the classical guitar. He toured throughout the world and recorded at least thirty albums for the Decca label. Summerfield described Segovia as "the most important guitarist the world has ever known."<sup>17</sup> Segovia summarized and listed his life goals in an interview at the age of 75 saying:

First, to redeem my guitar from the flamenco and all those other things. Second, to create a repertory...almost all the good composers of our time have written works for the guitar through me and even for my pupils. Third, I wanted to create a public for the guitar. Now, I fill the biggest halls in all the countries, and at least a third of the audience is young - I am very glad to steal them from the Beatles. Fourth, I was determined to win the guitar a respected place in the great music schools along with the piano, the violin and other concert instruments.<sup>18</sup>

Composers were inspired and commissioned by Segovia to write works for the guitar, thus greatly expanding the instrument's repertoire. In 2001, Edizioni Musicali Bèrben published a series of works from the Andrés Segovia Archive. The series includes previously unpublished works written for Segovia. Included in the collection are works by Presti, Frederico Moreno-Torroba (1891-1982), Alexandre Tansman (1897-1986), Lennox Berkeley (1903-1989) and Frederico Mompou (1893-1987).

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<sup>16</sup> Summerfield, 181.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>18</sup> Donal Henahan, "Andres Segovie [sic] Is Dead at 94; His Crusade Elevated Guitar," Obituary, *New York Times*, June 4, 1987, <http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0221.html> (accessed October 3, 2011).

Although Segovia sought to put the guitar in great concert halls and to "redeem [the] guitar from the flamenco and all those other things," the use of guitar in flamenco and folk music also contributed to the guitar revival and was inspirational to Spanish nationalist composers. Albéniz, Falla and Rodrigo imitated the sound of the Spanish guitar in orchestral and piano works and brought an awareness of the guitar to a broader audience of listeners. Wade says "this strange irony of guitar history occurred during the 1920's in Segovia's efforts to establish a repertoire. His countrymen found themselves unable to do much with the classical guitar except to mirror the passions of the people's guitar."<sup>19</sup> Their imitations reconciled the guitar's folk role with classical idioms, if not the actual genre of classical guitar music: "In 1917, Falla wrote of the guitar as an example of reconciliation between the popular and high art traditions united in a stylized revival of the past, which had been anticipated by Pedrell's nationalist theories and realized in his union of old musics with popular traditions."<sup>20</sup>

A pinnacle of the commingling of Spanish and French musicians and styles during the early twentieth century came to fruition through requests from Llobet and a representative of the French journal *La Revue Musicale*. Llobet asked Falla to compose a work for guitar and *La Revue Musicale* invited Falla to write a work in homage to Debussy. *Homage a Debussy* for solo guitar, published in December of 1920, fulfilled both requests. Wade discusses this work as being a significant departure from the guitar contributions of other Spanish composers like Torroba and Turina in that it "looks away from Spain towards France" and "does not imitate the flamenco guitar but assumes a

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<sup>19</sup> Wade, *Traditions of the Classical Guitar*, 162.

<sup>20</sup> Christoforidis and Piquer-Sanclemente.



voice characteristically its own."<sup>21</sup> The merging of Spanish and French ideas in this work is multifaceted. It was written at the request of a Spanish guitarist and a French journal. The work is based upon a habanera dance, which has a multicultural history. The practice of writing a *tombeau* or *homage* in the style of a deceased composer is a French tradition revived, in part, by Ravel. The composition also exemplifies the connection between the guitar and the inner artistic circles of Paris during the era.

The early twentieth century was a period of growth for the classical guitar genre. Many great performers emerged and were active as touring and recording artists. The international super-stardom of Segovia excited a public interest in the guitar as a classical instrument worthy of performance in the world's important recital halls. Repertoire significantly expanded through commissions and dedications of new music as well as the rediscovery of sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century music. These advancements laid the foundation for Presti's career as a concert artist and influenced her education, repertoire and compositions.

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<sup>21</sup> Wade, *Traditions of the Classical Guitar*, 162.