



Deux-Elles

AFFECTUOSO

Virtuoso Guitar Music from the Eighteenth Century

Taro Takeuchi *Baroque guitar and English guitars*

with Judy Tarling *violin* • Terence Charlston *harpsichord*

Straube Merchi Handel Geminiani J.C. Bach

Affectuoso: Virtuoso Guitar Music from the Eighteenth Century

In eighteenth-century England there were two types of instrument called 'guitar', quite different from each other. The Baroque guitar, with a long neck, shallow waists, a flat or slightly curved back, and five courses or pairs of gut strings, was extremely popular during the Restoration period, played by Charles II, James II and many members of the aristocracy. Along with other hand-plucked instruments, it lost ground to the harpsichord in the early eighteenth century, though there was a revival of interest in the middle of the century, part of a contemporary craze for unusual or exotic instruments of all kinds. It was promoted largely by Italian professional players such as Gabriele Leoni and Giacomo Merchi, who played in London concerts, taught amateurs, and published tutors and music for it.

Merchi came from Brescia, settled in Paris in 1753, and worked in London in the 1760s.

Merchi's virtuoso set of thirty variations on 'La folia', the traditional chord sequence with an associated melody popularized by Corelli's violin sonata op. 5, no. 12, comes from his *Guide des écoliers de guitarre* (Paris, 1761). This collection requires the traditional five-course instrument but uses staff notation instead of tablature, notating the music in the treble clef to be read an octave lower, as with later guitar music. The other piece played on the Baroque guitar on this CD is a famous minuet by Francesco Geminiani, originally published as the last movement of his *Concerto Grosso* in C minor, op. 2, no. 2 (1732), and arranged with keyboard variations by the composer in his *Pièces de clavecin* (1743). It was very popular in England and France: it was arranged

for various instruments and was turned into a song several times. The setting recorded here was published by the Abbé Joseph Carpentier in his third *Recueil de menuets, allemandes, et contredanses* (Paris, 1771).

Carpentier intended his collection for the 'cythre, ou guitthare allemande', but stated that it could also be played on the 'mandore' and the Spanish (i.e. gut-strung) guitar. By 'cythre' he seems to have meant an instrument related to the other type popular in eighteenth-century England. 'English guitar' is a confusing name for it since the instrument is derived from the cittern rather than the guitar; it usually has a small, almost circular body, a flat back, and six courses of metal strings; it too was normally provided with staff-notation music in the treble clef. The English guitar became suddenly popular in the middle of the 1750s, and there is considerable evidence that it was

imported from Germany. Most of the early makers were German, it is similar to instruments such as the Hamburg bell-cittern or cithrinchen and various types of cittern from Saxony and Thuringia, and there seems to be no connection with the seventeenth-century English cittern. One of the most prominent German makers in London, John Frederick Hintz (1711-72), even claimed to have invented it – which probably meant that he adapted it from the German types and popularized it in England.

The English guitar quickly became very popular, particularly among upper-class women. It was easy to play (most of its music was in C major), easy to tune (many instruments were equipped with metal levers rather than pegs, adjusted with a watch key), and made the player look elegant and graceful. Ann Ford, who published a treatise on it around 1761, wrote that 'the Attitude this

Instrument most naturally throws the Performer in, is very graceful', forming the sinuous 'Line of Beauty' described in William Hogarth's Analysis of Beauty – an attitude well illustrated by Thomas Gainsborough's famous portrait of her. Not surprisingly, those making and teaching other instruments became alarmed. The Essex parson John Brown wrote in 1758 that the guitar, a 'trifling' instrument 'generally now taught in the most ignorant and trifling manner', had replaced the 'noblest' instruments, the lute and theorbo, and was even threatening the harpsichord. Charles Burney told a story of how the harpsichord maker Jacob Kirckman safeguarded his livelihood by giving English guitars to 'girls in milliners' shops, and to ballad singers, in the streets' and taught them to play it, 'which soon made the ladies ashamed of their frivolous and vulgar taste, and return to the harpsichord'.

However, not all English guitar music was 'trifling'. Rudolf Straube, a German lutenist and harpsichordist who had studied with J. S. Bach in Leipzig and came to England around 1758, published some elaborate and difficult English guitar pieces in his *Three Sonatas for the Guittar* (London, 1768), some of which have a continuo part for harpsichord or violoncello; he presumably taught the instrument in London. His three-movement *Sonata with continuo*, no. 1 of the 1768 collection begins with a mellifluous *Largo* containing some florid Italianate ornamentation. Then follows an *Allegro Moderato* poised between the musical world of J. S. Bach, with contrapuntal entries at the beginning of the sections, but with passage-work for the guitar outlining the simple chords of the galant style. The concluding set of variations, based on a tuneful air, mostly explores one type of decoration per variation, but throws in a few surprise

harmonic inflections from time to time. The first of the three pieces for solo guitar is a miniature version of the keyboard fantasias of C. P. E. Bach, with sudden melodic and harmonic contrasts; Straube even uses Bach's symbol for clavichord bebung to indicate vibrato. The *Tempo di Minuet* starts as an innocuous dance but develops into a substantial movement in the second section, with some elaborate passage-work. The *Largo* returns us to the singing and soulful world of C. P. E. Bach.

Much of the important English guitar repertory has a continuo part, but the violin was an alternative accompaniment instrument. One of the most substantial works for this scoring is J. C. Bach's Sonata in C major, published as *A Sonata for the Guitar with an Accompaniment for a Violin* (London, c.1775). It is not known for whom it was written, though Straube is a possibility as a member of

London's German musical community; Bach would have known him from his childhood in Leipzig. As the publication's title indicates, the guitar takes the leading role, following the example of Bach's sonatas for obbligato keyboard and violin, though there are passages where the two instruments engage in equal dialogue or play in sixths and thirds. The last movement is a lively gigue. Much of the English guitar repertory consists of simple arrangements of popular tunes, and a good example is the version of the famous minuet from Handel's *Water Music* published in John Preston's *Complete Instruction for the Guitar* (London, c.1780); an anonymous minuet serves as a trio. Preston was an important maker of English guitars, and claimed to have invented the watch-key mechanism – a claim also made by Hintz.

- Peter Holman

Rediscovering the music and the instruments

It has been quite a while since I issued my first solo CD “*FOLIAS! Virtuoso guitar music from the 17th-century*” on the Deux-Elles label. I am extremely pleased I can now release this recording of 18th-century guitar music with the same company.

There are roughly two types of guitars extant in the second half of the 18th century. One is the gut-strung Spanish guitar and the other is a metal-strung English guitar that I shall call guittar, or English guitar, in these notes. I have been playing both types of guitar since I was a music college student.

I spent many hours in the British Museum researching original guitar tutors and music from the Georgian period. These sources were mostly published in London and Paris. Although guitar pieces from

this era were mainly for domestic use, several outstanding composers wrote very high-quality pieces – some of them are technically quite demanding. On this CD you will hear some of the best guitar music from this specific epoch.

On this recording I present five important composers, all of whom were active in 18th-century Britain.

Rudolf Straube may well be the most outstanding exponent for the English guitar. In his 1768 collection of works for guittar, Straube carefully distinguished his own compositions from those of others. One can immediately see that his pieces are of a higher standard; his writing is idiomatic and very evocative. I have chosen three solo pieces by him.

I also include his *Sonata for guittar with harpsichord accompaniment*, where the two metal strung instruments blend sonorously together. The final movement

of this sonata reminds me of the last variation of the Goldberg Variations Quodlibet by J. S. Bach. We were fortunate to be able to record with an original 1766 Jacob Kirckman harpsichord owned by Christopher Hogwood. This harpsichord yields a very colourful tone and we were able to draw the most out of it.

Perhaps Giacomo Merchi figured largest in the late 18th century guitar scene as both virtuoso performer and prolific composer. For this recording, I chose his long *Folia* variations for Spanish guitar. Unlike many earlier baroque guitar versions of the *Folia* (you can listen to some examples on my *FOLIAS!* CD), this one has no battente rasgueado (strumming), but rather many patterns of batterie (broken chord/arpeggio).

Francesco Geminiani published his excellent English guitar book *The Art of Playing Guitar or Cetra* in 1760. However, I did not include his guittar

pieces on this CD as I wish to make a recording of it. Instead, I recorded his *Menuet Affectuoso* on Spanish guitar. I found this Menuet in Joseph Carpentier's book for Cythre (the French version of an English guitar). The title page suggests one can also play these pieces on Spanish guitar. As the French cittern is normally tuned to A major (unlike the common English one), all pieces can be comfortably played on the Spanish guitar because of the tuning similarity. This *Menuet* in A minor possesses a deep melancholic character.

Quite a few opera arias and orchestral works by G. F. Handel were transcribed for the guittar in the 18th century. Here I perform a well-known *Menuet* from his *Water Music* and add another *Menuet* by an anonymous composer for the trio. This anonymous Menuet is found in many sources. For instance its title varies as *Menuet Allemand*, *French Minuet* and *The Stadholders Minuet*.

Among many surviving ensemble pieces for guittar, the *Sonata for Guittar and Violin* by J. C. Bach stands on its own for its charm and intimacy. The composition reveals a natural, idiomatic understanding of the English guitar.

In addition to my research, I examined many original 18th-century guitars in several museums, including the Victoria & Albert, the Ashmolean and the Horniman. Also, I have collected a good number of them over the years, including five-course Spanish guitars by Lambert, Cousineau, Mast, Marchal, and English guitars by Preston, Perry, Zumpe, Hoffman and Gibson. They are all lovely instruments, each with its own special character.

On this recording I played a Spanish guitar by Lambert, and English guitars by Preston and by Perry from my own collection. The Lambert guitar is

beautifully decorated with tortoiseshell and various kinds of timbers. I used gut and wound-on silk strings, following historical practice. This Spanish guitar has a deep, warm sound and much clarity. I tuned it to A-387 as I believe guitars were still often tuned to a lower pitch in the latter part of the 18th century. Although some guitarists of the era started to use single stringing, I chose double stringing except for the first course. Also I used octave stringing on the fourth and fifth courses. The low pitch and double courses on this guitar sounded best to my ear.

The Preston instrument has the most typical English guitar shape and size with a short string length of 43cm, and is tuned to C major (A-415). I used it for the ensemble pieces and the *Menuet* by Handel. This guittar is very pretty with a tortoiseshell fingerboard and a brass watch key tuning mechanism. The sound may be a little modest but it captures the

inimitable charming character of a young Georgian lady.

The Perry guittar on which I played the solo pieces by Straube is bigger than the Preston, with a string length of 47cm. I tuned it a third lower to A major. It has one of the earliest historical worm gear tuning machines, and an ivory fingerboard. The sound is both sonorous and crystal-like. I feel very lucky to own this guittar, as Perry was an excellent craftsman. He worked for the Royal Court in Dublin and only a few of his instruments survive. On both guittars I performed with historical metal strings by Malcolm Rose.

I would like to thank Patrick Naylor of Deux-Elles, my musical colleagues Judy and Terry, fantastic producer John Taylor, guitar restorers Sasha Batov and Chris Egerton, and Dr. Holman for the liner notes. Finally, I would like to dedicate

this recording to the memory of James Tyler, a great performer and scholar of the early guitar who passed away just a few months after this recording was made. I have been inspired by his playing, and guided by his research.

- Taro Takeuchi

Instruments

English guitar (Guittar) by Thomas Perry, Dublin, c.1760 (tracks 1-3)

English guitar (Guittar) by John Preston, London. c.1770 (tracks 5-11)

Baroque guitar by Jean Nicolas Lambert workshop, Paris, c.1765 (tracks 4, 12)

Violin by Benoit Fleury, Paris, 1759 (tracks 5-7)

Harpsichord by Jacob Kirckman. London, 1766 (tracks 9-11)

Biography

Taro Takeuchi was born in Kyoto, Japan. After completing his degrees in law and music in Tokyo, he came to England to study lute and early guitar with Nigel North at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Since leaving college, he has been in great demand as a soloist and ensemble player, and has toured most European countries, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, USA and Japan. As a continuo player he has worked with The Parley of Instruments, The English concert, The Royal Opera House, The Orchestra of Age of Enlightenment, Berliner Philharmonic, as well as Sir Simon Rattle, Rachel Podger and Nigel Kennedy. He has made numerous recordings for Deux-Elles, EMI, Hyperion, Harmonia Mundi, BBC and others. Taro Takeuchi plays all types of lutes and early guitars, and specializes particularly in double strung early guitars, including 5-course Baroque guitar, English guitar (guittar) and 6-course Spanish guitar. His solo recordings *FOLIAS!* and *The Century*

that Shaped the Guitar were received with critical acclaim and high praise. Taro presently lives in London, where he has an excellent collection of original early guitars as well as authentic traverse flutes, which he enjoys playing as a hobby.

"...As to Taro Takeuchi, Baroque guitar playing doesn't come better than this in any respect..." — Gramophone

"...the music takes wings and flies. There is real urge to clap at the end..." — Early Music News



<http://www.crane.gr.jp/~tarolute/english.htm>

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Rudolf Straube (1717 – 178?)

Suite for Guittar

1 Moderato (Fantasie) 3:34

2 Tempo di Minuet 6:35

3 Largo 4:27

Three Sonatas for the Guittar, London 1768

Giacomo Merchi (1730 – after 1789)

4 La Folia di Spagna con Variationi 15:49

Le Guide des Ecoliers de Guitarre, Paris, 1761

Johann Christian Bach (1735 – 1782)

Sonata for Guittar and Violin Accompaniment

5 Allegro 6:16

6 Andante 4:19

7 Gigue 2:26

A Sonata for the Guitar with an Accompaniment for a Violin, London, c.1775

George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759)

8 Menuet 3:16

Complete Instruction for the Guitar, John Preston, London c.1770

Rudolf Straube

Sonata I for Guittar and Harpsichord

Accompaniment

9 Largo 4:49

10 Allegro Moderato 3:56

11 Allegretto con Varia 9:16

Three Sonatas for the Guittar, London 1768

Francesco Geminiani (1687 – 1762)

12 Menuet Affectuoso 6:10

Joseph Carpentier: Illeme Recueil de Menuets, Allemandes, et Contredanses, Paris 1771

Recording Producer

John Taylor

Booklet Notes

Peter Holman, Taro Takeuchi

Design - Frank Parker, A Creative Experience

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