

The Complete Sonatas of Sor, Giuliani and Diabelli

by Anthony LeRoy Glise

Part 1

(for more information, see www.anthonyglise.com)

It only takes 5 simple things to do good research:

- 1) a good idea,
- 2) an obsessive drive to do good work,
- 3) the patience of a Tibetan monk,
- 4) the curiosity of a 5 year old, *and*,
- 5) a great publisher

OK, there are a few other things that could help out as well: if you have an IQ of 180, your father is an oil magnate (and you have access to his pin number), you speak 10 languages fluently, you knew Beethoven personally, or you are the Supreme Emperor of the Universe...

However... Since these last ones are probably not too realistic, we're stuck with the five ideas listed above.

A good idea...

When I started working on the edition that eventually became *The Complete Sonatas*, (MB 95692) I was in graduate school at *New England Conservatory* (Boston), and was constantly frustrated by the lack of reliable editions of the 19th-Century masters. Virtually every edition that existed was "edited by..." "revised by..." and in other words, "changed by..." some guitarist who thought he knew more than the composer himself.

I'll admit, I have occasional fits of ego, but who do we think we are to tell Sor, Giuliani or Diabelli that they had done such a bad job that their compositions needed to be changed?

During grad school I studied with the brilliant musicologist, Dr. Julia Sutton. Julia, among other things, has written many of the entries in *The New Groves*, which is the "Bible" of music encyclopedias. She was an uncompromising slave-driver who taught me more about research than anyone I have ever known. She also, fortunately, made my life a nightmare of joyous work and without her influence, I would have never been able to carry out the research for *The Sonatas Collection*.

One of the things that Julia always stressed, was that even the smallest idea can turn into a brilliant project. One of the other things she stressed was that, no matter how good an idea is, it's going to require serious work. I mean **WORK**. For example, during our last class of first semester, the five of us who had survived Julia's research seminar, were preparing to go home for the holidays. She was *aghast* when she found out that we were going to spend the entire 3 week vacation "*on vacation!*" For her, that was time that we could – *and should* – spend digging in libraries and archives. **WORK!**

Now, many years later, I honestly think she was right and in defense of her severity, every single student that I know of who took her research seminars has gone on to a tremendous career in research, performance or education.



Classical guitarist and Composer
Anthony Glise

An obsessive drive...

So, in a cramped dorm room (aren't they all?) in Back Bay Boston, I started going through a few first editions of the sonatas that I had gathered from friends in Europe.

The idea for an Urtext edition of these sonatas quickly emerged. If you're not familiar with the word, "Urtext" is a musicological term from German. "Ur," means "original" and "text" means "text." (I bet you got that last one, didn't you?) Readers may want to check out my web page (www.anthonyglise.com), which includes an article published in *The Soundboard* (Spring, 1999) that gives many details about *The Sonatas Collection*.

To continue, the problem is, creating an Urtext means that you don't change ANYTHING from the original, but if you find even the smallest mistake, you then have to explain exactly why it's a mistake, and offer solutions based on the compositional style of the composer. It's a bit like being a detective: "Elementary my dear Watson, it appears that this French-augmented sixth chord resolves to the subtonic, which I find highly unlikely..." Or something like that...

The obsession to create "the perfect edition" of the sonatas became more and more overpowering. For example, on page 123 of *The Sonatas Collection*, one single footnote (discussing a problem I found in the *Sonata No. 1* of Sor) became an entire page long. *That's* obsessive!

For better or worse, there's no other solution. Particularly in guitar publishing, there's been too much lazy and simply bad scholarship—and even worse—too many editions that don't work on stage. You can come up with tons of great theories, but when it comes down to it, if something doesn't work on stage, in front of an audience, it's useless.

As I kept working, *The Sonatas Collection* quickly became more than I could manage from Boston, so immediately after finishing my Master's, I moved to Vienna. Both Giuliani and Diabelli lived and worked there, and the Viennese libraries held all their first editions so it was a logical place to start. I really had no choice, since to create an Urtext meant that I had to have access to the original editions, and after nearly 200 years, the only copies of the original editions were housed in European archives. Besides, this gave me a *great* excuse to move to Europe! I just didn't realize how long the project was going to take.

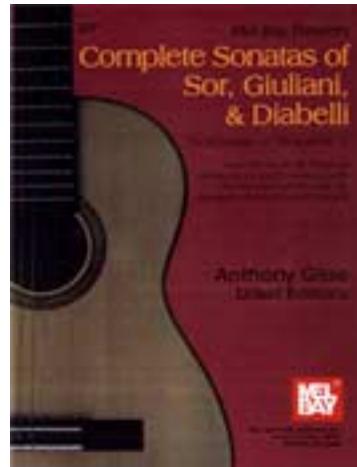
In next month's installment of this article, I'll continue our discussion of how I compiled *The Complete Sonatas of Sor, Giuliani and Diabelli*, as well as some interesting (if not insane) stories of 20 years of life in Europe.

Until then, be well.

Anthony Glise

To be continued...

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*The Complete Sonatas of Sor,
Giuliani and Diabelli*

The Complete Sonatas of Sor, Giuliani and Diabelli

by Anthony LeRoy Glise

Part 2

(for more information, see: www.anthonyglise.com)

In the first part of this article, I began the story of how my 20 years of work in Europe led to the publication of *The Complete Sonatas of Sor, Giuliani and Diabelli* (MB 95692). If you missed that installment, I suggest that you go to "Back Issues" of the "Guitar Sessions®" home page and catch up.

In brief, I mentioned that it only takes 5 main things to do good research:

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- 4) the curiosity of a 5 year old, *and*,
- 5) a great publisher

and we're up to number 3...

The patience of a Tibetan monk...

Thinking that I could do the research I needed in Vienna in one year, I jumped on a plane and landed in Vienna knowing only one person, with roughly \$150 in my pocket, and speaking no German.... Making a move like that requires a strange mixture of courage and stupidity; you just close your eyes and jump. By the way, if any readers are thinking about a similar move, *please* check out my forth-coming book from Mel Bay, *Handbook for American Musicians Overseas* (MB98285). This book explains everything that you need to know about visas, getting into a school, settling into a foreign lifestyle, *and* it includes a massive dictionary of common musical terms in English, German, French and Italian. I guarantee, it will make your transition easier!

The one person I knew in Vienna was an old schoolmate from Boston, who had arrived only 2 weeks before me, but she did at least have an apartment, so I had the luxury of sleeping on her (very) hardwood floor for a few days until I found my own place.

My place turned out to be an apartment with two medical students, Udo and Ingrid who spoke no English. I didn't quite realize the severity of my language deficiency until, on my first day, in the bathroom, I realized that there was no toilet paper... Sitting there contemplating my dilemma, I realized that *a)* I didn't know what I should yell through the door at my new flatmates in order to remedy the situation and *b)* I needed to get a handle on the language *quickly!*

Both Udo and Ingrid proved to be tremendous friends, helping out with the language, entrance forms for my post-graduate study at the Conservatory and they helped me sort through the research materials (obviously written in German) that I needed for working on the sonatas.

Udo was also a wine connoisseur, and I have fond memories (or at least unforgettable memories) of going with him to wine tastings on the outskirts of Vienna and riding back to the city in his 1950's VW, forced into a quasi fetal position because the car was so full of cases of wine.

They are still very good friends; we visit often and Ingrid (who is also a pianist) was one of the translators for the German Preface of *The Complete Sonatas*.



Classical guitarist and Composer
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Several other important friendships developed during this time, including the well-known poet, Timothy Hodor, his charming Viennese wife, Helena, and the pianist Anthony DeBedts. Anthony, through a series of incredible circumstances, had landed in Vienna at age 14. After winning the *Beethoven Prize* at the *International Beethoven Competition* (the first American-born musician to attain this honor), he has since become one of the top lecturers in piano at the *Hochschule für Musik* which is now the *Vienna University of Music*. Besides being a terrifyingly brilliant pianist *and* cook, DeBedts also helped me sort through many of the historical materials for *The Sonatas Collection*.

As I began to find more and more information for *The Sonatas Collection*, I realized that it was becoming a project that wouldn't be finished in one year... or two, or three. There were simply too many aspects that had never been addressed: besides the music itself, there was the problem of comparing different historical versions (for example, the Giuliani, Op. 15 *Sonata* was in three versions); there was the problem of ornamentation and performance practice in the period. Another major subject was that of improvisation. I had never realized that 19th-Century guitarists improvised a great deal in their performances and I needed to discuss this in the *Preface* to the collection.

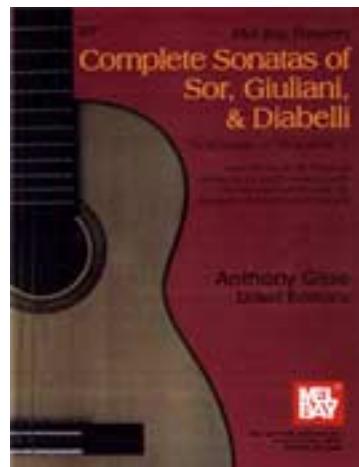


Anthony with his 1828 Johann Georg Staufer guitar

While in Vienna, I also finished a diploma in German at the *University of Vienna* (and yes, I now know what to scream through a bathroom door if I find no toilet paper!). I bounced back and forth for a few years between Vienna and the US, continued doing more and more concerts, and I began to record with the noted producer, Thomas Ransom.



Anthony with noted producer, Thomas Ransom, at United Studios



The Complete Sonatas of Sor, Giuliani and Diabelli

During that time, I was also doing many concerts and by chance, found and purchased a guitar built in 1828 by Johann Georg Staufer (the Viennese builder who taught C. F. Martin to build guitars before Martin moved to the U. S.). Pictures of this Staufer, as well as other historical guitars from my collection, are on my web page (www.anthonyglise.com). In my concert appearances, I began to perform half of the concert on the Staufer, playing 19th-Century music, and the other half on a modern instrument. This is a concert format that I still use today.

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Another stroke of luck arrived from these travels. I have a great friend, Dr. Dave Challener who is an inventor for IBM (as well as a fine guitarist). He was living in upstate New York, and while I was in Europe, I would leave my car at his house. I have a feeling that the lawn still has the outline of my car, sculptured in dead grass being parked there months on end!

During one visit, Dave mentioned that the string company, *E&O Mari – LaBella* was in the nearby town of Newburgh. On a whim, I stopped by and was met by Robert Archigian and the President, Richard Cocco. We began talking, they took me through the factory, and before the end of the day, we had signed an endorsement contract. To this day, I am indebted to them for their constant support, friendship and their unbelievable commitment to string development.

Eventually it became obvious that I had to be more settled in Europe to expand my concert work and to continue research. I decided to take a teaching job in western Austria next to the Swiss border to be closer to Paris, where I was beginning research on the Sor sonatas.

That move is where we will pick up in next month's installment.

Until then, be well.

Anthony GLISE

to be continued...

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Part 3

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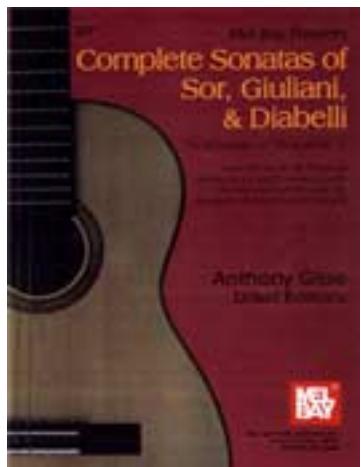
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The curiosity of a 5-year old...

One critical trait for musicians (especially when doing research) is *curiosity*. That single trait will drive you to seek out the ideas necessary for your work and it keeps you focused on doing *quality* work. It can also drive you to do things that seem somewhat irrational... In my case, that meant moving to an alpine village in Western Austria to teach, so that I could get a European visa, so that I could frequent libraries and European state archives, so that I could do research, so that I could eventually publish a major edition... In my case, that was *The Complete Sonatas of Sor, Giuliani and Diabelli*. (MB95692).



*The Complete Sonatas of Sor,
Giuliani and Diabelli*

research on Sor. It was an ideal situation: 4 days a week of teaching, great people, good food and... a dialect of German that you would not believe!



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Shortly before this move, I entered the *International Toscanini Competition* (Italy). This competition focuses on 19th-Century music, and it seemed like a good thing to do. Much to my surprise, since an American had never won the competition, I took first place by unanimous vote of the jury. A unanimous vote from the jury had also never happened before, so besides being a bit shocked, I was thrilled with the honor. The prize money was good and I was presented in concert at Carnegie Hall (New York). However, more importantly, it proved to me that I was on the right track with my ideas about 19th-Century performance practice, which I was presenting in the *Preface of The Sonatas Collection*. It also gave me the chance to teach periodically at the *Academy for the Study of 19th-Century Music* (Italy).

Based in western Austria, I was almost exactly half-way between Vienna, where I was finishing research on Giuliani and Diabelli, and Paris, where I was starting

Many stories about both European lifestyle and language are in the forth-coming book, *Handbook for American Musicians Overseas* (MB 98285) and if you are considering a move to Europe to teach or study, *please* get this book! It explains everything you need to know about visas, getting into a school, lifestyle, etc., and also includes a massive dictionary of daily musical vocabulary in English, French, German and Italian. *I promise* it will make your transition easier!

After several years in western Austria, I realized that I needed to be closer to Paris to work on the Sor sonatas. Ironically, just weeks before my contract ran out in Austria, I was offered a commission to compose an enormous ballet, entitled *Noah!* for *Pointe Station Ballet Company*. The composition was to be for full orchestra and over 100 dancers, which established it as the largest ballet written in the 20th Century. That commission gave me more than enough money to move to France for over a year and continue work in Paris on Sor's sonatas.

However, there was one slight complication... My English was great (being raised in Missouri tends to help with that!). My German had become very good, but I spoke no French. I had done it before; I could do it again. Pack the car and make another move.

In light of that move, I want to encourage anyone who is thinking of such a move and is perhaps a little nervous. *DON'T BE!!!* The only way to progress is by taking risks, and the worst that can happen is that things don't work out. On the other hand, the potential for growth and learning can only happen when you put yourself on the line and yes, it's a little scary because it's new, but NEVER let that fear dictate what you do in your life!

I had at least learned from my experience in Austria. When I landed in France, I immediately enrolled in a French class. This transition was aided by the fact that I had an old friend from Boston there who was playing with the *French National Orchestra-Lille*, and my landlady was an old friend who spoke English.

In spite of everything you hear about the French, I have found them to be incredibly friendly, especially in the North. My work there was hectic, but somehow much easier than I had expected. Ultimately, I decided to settle in Northern France, but there were still a few moves in store for me and quite a bit of time would pass before that happened. Note the three "Ecological-lawnmowers" in the foreground...

After a year in France, I had finished the ballet, all my research on Sor's sonatas, and with an eye on my bank account, I decided to take another teaching job. This time I landed in Southern



Anthony performing in Rome at Santa Maria degli Angeli



Anthony's residence in Northern France

Germany in the small Medieval village of Schwäbisch Gmünd, outside of Stuttgart. The time there would give me the chance to compile all the research materials I had gathered in Austria and France, and introduce me to the national pastime of Southern Germany, commonly known as "great beer."

In next month's installment of this article, I'll conclude our discussion of how I compiled *The Complete Sonatas of Sor, Giuliani and Diabelli*.

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