

## THE GUITARIST BEHIND LA GUITAROMANIE: Charles de Marescot

By *Damián Martín*

Figure 1

Almost all classical guitar enthusiasts and scholars are familiar with the amusing, satirical lithograph entitled *Discussion entre les Carulistes et les Molinistes* (Figure 1). It is one of the six illustrations published in *La Guitaromanie*, a small book of simple guitar pieces (rondos, waltzes, etc.) brought out in 1829 by Charles de Marescot.<sup>1</sup>

Until recently little was known about the life of this admittedly obscure composer, mainly because none of the music dictionaries of the time took note of him.<sup>2</sup> The first reference to Marescot in print seems to be in the *Revue et Gazette musicale* No. 40 (1842), where Henri Blanchard,

in his article “Les Guitaristes,” includes Marescot in his list of the most famous guitarists of the period:

Among those who have written a lot for the guitar, who have published methods or who have only made accompaniments, we must mention Ferdinand Carulli, Molino, Gatayes, Joly, Porro, the two Meissonniers, Marescot, Pastou, but especially Juliani [sic], Legnani and Luis de Call, who have written a great many works for this instrument, that is, concerts, serenades, duets, trios, quartets, quintets, sextets, etc., etc., etc.<sup>3</sup>

The *Diccionario de Guitarristas* by Domingo Prat (Buenos Aires, 1934) appears to be the first reference book to include Marescot. As fate would have it, his last name is misspelled (Marecot) and his given name is not mentioned at all. Prat cites as his source an article titled “La Guitarra,” published in 1843 in the *Anfión Matritense*, a Madrid-based music magazine, where Marescot was mentioned in the company of some other notable guitarists.

In addition, Marescot is mentioned several times in connection with his famous *Discussion* lithograph in *La*

<sup>1</sup> The full title is *LA GUITAROMANIE, Recueil de Rondeaux, Valses, Contredanses, Chasse, Fanfare, Polonaise, Marches, Bolero, Sonatine, Air varié et Préludes d'une exécution brillante, Composés par C. de MARESCOT* (Paris: chez l'auteur, s.d.). This and other selected Figures from this article are copublished as PDFs, in color when possible, at [www.guitarfoundation.org/page/SbS04](http://www.guitarfoundation.org/page/SbS04). A complete copy of *LA GUITAROMANIE*, assumed to be in the public domain, is available through the Petrucci Music Library at [http://imslp.org/wiki/La\\_Guitaromanie\\_\(Marescot%2C\\_Charles\\_de\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/La_Guitaromanie_(Marescot%2C_Charles_de)).

<sup>2</sup> Marescot is not mentioned by F. J. Fétis in his *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens et Bibliographie Générale de la Musique* (Brussels, 1833-1844), where the best known guitarists of the period appear. Nor is he mentioned in more recent guitar reference books such as P. J. Bone, *The Guitar and Mandolin: Biographies of Celebrated Players and Composers for These Instruments* (London, 1914; Reprint edition, 1972) or in J. Zuth's *Handbuch der Laute und Gitarre* (Vienna, 1926 R/1972).

<sup>3</sup> “Au nombre de ceux qui ont beaucoup écrit pour la guitare, qui ont publié des méthodes ou qui n'ont fait que des accompagnements, il faut citer Ferdinand Carulli,

Molino, Gatayes, Joly, Porro, les deux Meissonnier, Marescot, Pastou, mais surtout Juliani [sic], Legnani, et Louis de Call, qui ont énormément écrit pour cet instrument, c'est-à-dire concertos, sérénades, duos, trios, quatuors, quintettes, sextuors, etc., etc., etc.”

<sup>4</sup> Mario dell' Ara, “Luigi, Valentino e Francesco Molino,” *il Fronimo*, No. 50 (1985): 14–43. This topic is also treated briefly by Matanya Ophee in an article published online, “A Short History of the use of the left-hand thumb” (2008) <http://www.guitarandluteissues.com/LH-Thumb/lh-thumb.htm> (accessed February 18, 2016). There is also some information in Richard Long's sleeve notes of the CD *Carulli-Molino. Guitar Concertos*, Philips CD 426 263-2, ©1990, The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields with Pepe Romero (Guitar).

<sup>5</sup> Erik Stenstadvdold, *An Annotated Bibliography of Guitar Methods, 1760-1860* (Hillsdale, NY and London: Pendragon Press, 2010).



*Guitaromanie*,<sup>4</sup> his methods,<sup>5</sup> some of the techniques he exhibits in his *Méthode de Guitare* (1825),<sup>6</sup> and his activity as a music publisher in Paris,<sup>7</sup> but no serious study on the life and musical production of the author exists.

The essential piece of evidence which helps us to trace the family background of this unknown guitarist appears on the title page of his *Traité analytique des principes de la musique*, Op. 6a (Paris, 1822), dedicated to Lieutenant General Count of Marescot “par son Neveu” (by his nephew) Charles de Marescot (see **Figure 2**).<sup>8</sup> This shows that our guitarist was related to one of the most important military officers in France at the time, *Comte Armand Samuel de Marescot* (1758-1832).<sup>9</sup>

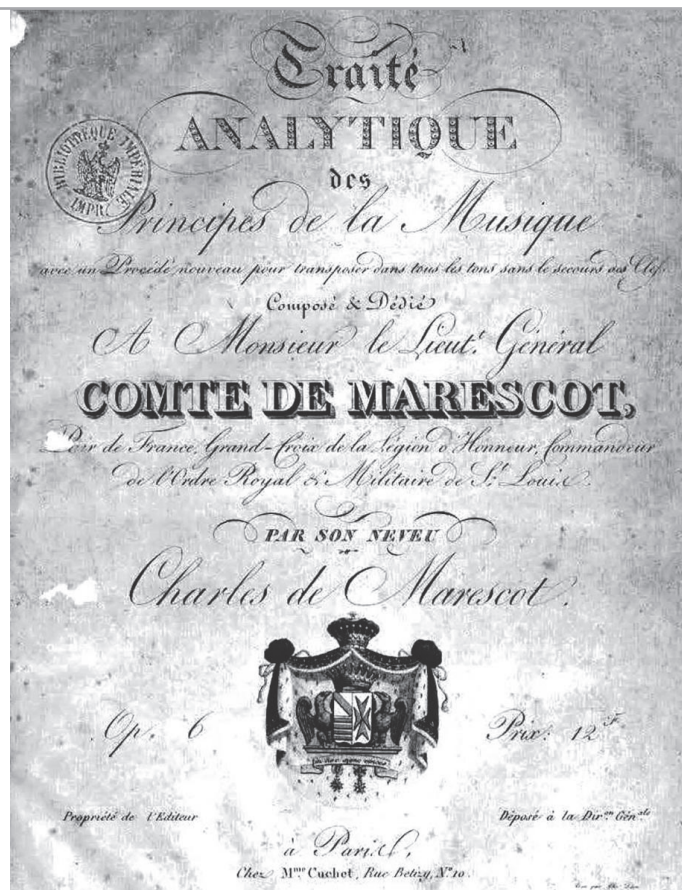
This fact enables us to reconstruct some of the chapters in Marescot’s life and to sketch a first biography, albeit with many lacunae, of the author of *La Guitaromanie*.

## 1790, birth

Charles de Marescot was born in early December 1790 in the small town of Douai in the far north of France.<sup>10</sup> His parents, Charles Honoré Victor Marescot (born 1760) and Bonne Augustine Joseph Denis (born 1770), were not married at the time, but in their marriage certificate of 21 December 1792 they acknowledged having a son who had been baptized two years earlier, on 11 December 1790, under the full name of Augustin Charles Joseph. However, our guitarist would later refer to this as the date of his birth, so it is not clear whether this actually was the date of his birth or of his baptism.

The marriage act gives the father’s profession as “officier au Corps du génie” (officer of the engineering corps). However, only a year later, in 1793, his father died, leaving a widowed young mother and two children: Charles and his sister, Anne Julienne, born in this same year.

We know next to nothing about Marescot’s childhood and youth, but many years later the death certificate of his wife Julienne Henriette informs us that she was “veuve de Charles-Augustin de Marescot, ancien officier du génie” (widow of Charles-Augustin de Marescot, former engineering officer), as shown in **Figure 3**.<sup>11</sup> So it seems that Marescot was initially trained in the same profession as his



**Figure 2:** Reduced title page of *Traité Analytique*. . . (Paris: Mme. Cuchet, 1822). A larger reproduction in color is copublished at [www.guitarfoundation.org/page/Sb504](http://www.guitarfoundation.org/page/Sb504).



**Figure 3:** Detail of the death certificate of Julienne Henriette Bathilde Boutault de Russy la Seignerie at the Côtes-d'Armor Archives (Dinan, December 20, 1873).

father and his famous uncle, Armand Samuel.

It is possible that the family of Marescot somehow took care of the widowed mother and her children and that Bonne Augustine moved to Vendôme (Loir-et-Cher) to stay there with her in-laws; the Marescot family belonged to the upper classes of society so they would have had the

<sup>6</sup> Danielle Ribouillault, *La Technique de Guitare en France dans la Première Moitié du 19e Siècle*. Ph.D. diss. (Paris: Université de Paris Sorbonne, 1980). There is also some information in Pascal Valois, *Les Guitaristes Français entre 1770 et 1830. Pratiques d'Exécution et Catalogue des Méthodes*. Ph.D. diss. (Québec: Université Laval, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> There is a brief entry on Marescot in Cecil Hopkinson, *A Dictionary of Parisian Music Publishers, 1700-1950* (New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1954/R 1979), but curiously the standard treatise on music publishers in France during the period here studied, *Dictionnaire des Éditeurs de Musique Français* (Paris: Minkoff, 1979-1988) by Anik Devriès and François Lesure, has no reference to him.

<sup>8</sup> *Traité analytique des principes de la musique avec un procédé nouveau pour transposer dans tous les tons sans le secours des clefs, Composé & dédié à Monsieur le Lieutt. Général Comte de Marescot Pair de France, Grand-Croix de la Légion d'Honneur, Commandeur*

*de l'Ordre Royal & Militaire de St. Louis par son Neveu Charles de Marescot.*

<sup>9</sup> See the online biography of Count Armand de Marescot at <https://www.frenchempire.net/biographies/marescot/>

<sup>10</sup> For more information on the family background of Marescot, see Etienne Pattou, “Famille(s) de Marescot” <http://racineshistoire.free.fr/LGN/PDF/Marescot.pdf> (accessed January 10, 2018), which presents the family tree of Marescot from 1565 to 1830 approximately.

<sup>11</sup> She died in Dinan (France) on 19 December 1873, at the age of 72. In the death certificate she is listed as having been 75 years old, but clearly this is an approximate age, perhaps because she died alone.

## CHARLES DE MARESCOT: (cont.)

economic means to support them. In any case it is quite clear that Charles de Marescot was connected to Vendôme and to his family there in several ways. After all, his own marriage and the birth of his son took place in that town.

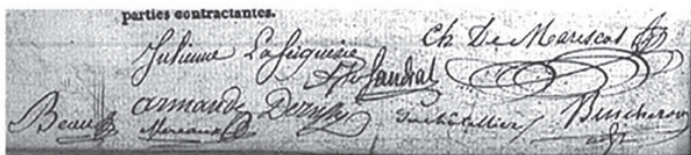
### 1816, Marriage.

At the age of twenty-five, on 1 February 1816, Charles de Marescot married Julienne Henriette Bathilde Boutault de Russy la Seignerie in Vendôme. His young wife was just a teenager, born on 30 January 1801 in Limoges (Haute-Vienne). The marriage took place just two days after she reached the legal age for marriage, which at that time was 15 years, and their first child was born exactly 8 months and 27 days after the wedding. It is not clear what the social status of this girl was; curiously, her father is not referenced in the marriage certificate, which may raise questions as to her legitimacy.

In this document Marescot claims to be born on December 11, 1790, in Douai. It is significant that the spaces for profession and place of residence have been left blank, so we cannot know what he was doing at the moment or if he actually lived in Vendôme. It is also interesting that when filling in the data Marescot explicitly claimed that he was the *filz majeur* (eldest son) of his father, indicating that he had at least one brother or sister.

Four people were listed as witnesses: Jean Sandral de Beauregard, 68 years old, chevalier of the royal and military order of *Saint Louis*, friend of the husband; Charles Eléonore Pierre de Salmon, 59-year-old former cavalry officer, friend of the husband; Louis Pierre Paul Mereaux, notary, 59 years old, friend of the wife, and Claude [...], illegible] Beau, teacher of 49 years, friend of the wife, all of whom were residents of Vendôme (see **Figure 4**).

The fact that the two witnesses for the husband lived in Vendôme and were linked to the army may imply that Marescot was also living in that town and also working as an engineering officer, as previously suggested.



**Figure 4:** Extract, showing the signatories of the marriage certificate of Charles de Marescot and Julienne Henriette Bathilde Boutault de Russy La Seignerie. Loir-et-Cher Archives (Vendôme, February 1, 1816).

If indeed Marescot grew up in Vendôme, it is possible that he would have received lessons or at least had some contact with one or more of the Vendôme residents whose names appear in the list of subscribers of the *Nouvelle Méthode Complète [sic] pour Guitare or Lyre* by Francesco Molino (Paris, 1817), of whom the majority were military officers of the *Cuirassiers d'Angouleme*, a cavalry unit of the French army. The subscribers M. Biot, M. de Guissac, M. Demeroua, M. de Bouefiua and M. Regues are listed as being of this unit, while a certain M. Deffacey is listed as a *chevalier*, and a M. Rivaud as an *amateur*.

Marescot had at least one son, Charles Henri Ernest Honoré de Marescot, born on October 28, 1816, in Vendôme.<sup>12</sup> There is also a report of a child with the exact same name born in Paris on March 16, 1818, which might indicate that either the first son died and the second child was named after him (something quite unlikely), or, more likely, that there had been an error in the listing and that this is the actual date of death of the first son.<sup>13</sup> It may be significant that on the birth certificate of his first son, Marescot is mentioned as “demeurant en cette ville” (residing in this town) while this space was left blank in his marriage certificate.<sup>14</sup>

### 1817-1834, Paris.

As seen earlier, it is not clear where Marescot was residing during his childhood and adolescence. He could have been anywhere, coming back to Vendôme for the wedding and the baptism of his child. But from 1818 on, entries about Marescot began to appear in the *Bibliographie de la France* (hereafter abbreviated *BF*), which suggests that he had settled in Paris sometime before that, perhaps by 1817, in order to have time to launch his publishing business. All his compositions and editions during this period are linked to the French capital. During his time in Paris, Marescot operated from several addresses:

#### *Rue du Cherche-Midi, No. 24 (1818-ca. 1821).*

This is the first known address where he conducted business. It was listed for the first time in *BF* on 9 May 1818 in reference to his Op. 2a, *Fantaisies, Allemandes, Polonaises, suivies d'une Valse avec Douze Variations d'un Doigté facile et brillant pour Guitare*. Here Marescot is credited with being the publisher.

#### *Rue des Grands-Augustins, No. 19 (ca. 1821-1823).*

It is not clear when Marescot moved to this new address, but his Op. 5, *Deux Rondeaux et une Sonate Concertante pour*

<sup>12</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Stevan Bellette at the *Archives départementales d'Eure-et-Loir* for finding the birth certificate and complete name of the son of Marescot.

<sup>13</sup> Société Filae SA, *Cercle familial de Augustin Charles Joseph de Marescot*, <http://www.filae.com> (accessed February 12, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Mme. Nathalie Pfister from the Patrimonial Service of the *Bibliothèque Municipale* in Lille for helping me decipher some of the words in the birth certificate.



*Guitare*, published by Mme. Cuchet, states that the piece might be had “chez l’auteur prof. de guitare et de chant, rue des gds augustins N° 19.” Since his Op. 6a was listed in *BF* in April 1822, this work could have been printed that same year or in 1821. Although there are some entries for him as a publisher, it seems that from 1818 until 1823 Marescot devoted himself mainly to composing music for other publishers. He tried his luck with Montgery (*Douze valse pour guitare*, Op. 3), Hentz Jouve (*Ouverture de la Caravanne, la Valse de la Reine de Prusse, la Tyrolienne, la Hongroise, etc.*, Op. 4), Carli (*Fantaisies allemandes polonaises*, Op. 2b), and with the aforementioned Mme. Cuchet.

### **Rue Saint-Jacques, No. 70 (1823-1825)<sup>15</sup>**

In July of 1823 entries began to appear in *BF* with Marescot at this address. It seems to have been a brief period of about a year and a half, and not very prolific. One can find two opus numbers and a dozen or so songs. Some pieces with this address describe Marescot as an “Éditeur de Musique, professeur de chant et de Guitare.”

### **Rue Saint-Jacques, No. 42 (1825-1828)**

The *Journal Général d’Annonces*<sup>16</sup> of 2 September 1825 cites Marescot as a publisher at this address. This is possibly the period of the composer’s greatest production. He published here his Opp. 9 to 46, including the *Vingt-quatre exercices [sic] pour guitare arrangés pour former la main droite à une exécution [sic] brillante*, Op. 13, the *Méthode de guitare divisée en deux parties*, Op. 15, and the *Solfège facile progressif avec des leçons à deux parties*, Op. 17. The famous *La Guitaromanie* was also prepared during this period (the address on its title is *Rue Saint-Jacques*, No. 42), although it is first announced in *BF* in 1829 with his next address, *Rue du Cimetière-St-André*, No. 13, possibly indicating that the book was put together in 1828 but for some reason not issued until the year after. I have located around fifteen songs from this period. We also find, beside his activity as a publisher, announcements of him being “professeur de chant et de Guitare” and also “professeur de Musique.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Rue du Cimetière-St-André, No. 13 (1828-1830)**

The first entry in *BF* with this address occurs on 25 October 1828. During his residence in this street it seems that Marescot was mainly dedicated to publishing music of other composers; the *Méthode de Guitare* by Hustache is one example.

Something strange occurs in this period. On 28 February 1829, in an advertisement in the *Revue Musicale*, Marescot is cited as the publisher of some works by Louis Spohr, but with a different address from all the previous ones: *Passage du Grand-Cerf*, No. 27. There is no good explanation for this, for later that year Marescot’s address continues to be listed as *Rue du Cimetière-St-André*.

During the year 1830 I have found only one reference to Marescot living at *Cimetière-St-André*, No. 13, where he is reported to be teaching guitar and voice.<sup>18</sup>

### **Rue Marie-Stuart, No. 8 (1831-1833)**

Marescot is listed on this street in 1831, again teaching guitar and singing,<sup>19</sup> but for some reason we have no record of his activity as a publisher in Paris. As of 1830 there is not a single entry in *BF* for Marescot. *The Almanach du Commerce de Paris* of 1833, in the chapter *Professeurs de Musique*, also refers to him at this address, but with no mention of his activity as publisher.

### **Rue des Grès St. Jacques (1835)**

Hopkinson (*op. cit.*) reports that Marescot lived in this street in 1835. I have not been able to corroborate this and it seems a bit implausible that the author was still in Paris at that time, as we shall soon see.

### **1834-1842, London**

Henri Herz (1803-1888), the famous pianist and piano professor at the *Conservatoire de Musique* in Paris, composed a piano piece based on some motifs by Marescot under the title *Allegro et variations faciles composés d’après des motifs de C. de Marexcot [sic]*, Op. 3/5. This work, which was published in Bonn by Simrock (*ca.* 1827) and then by Pennauer in Vienna (*ca.* 1827-1831), was later published several times in London by different English publishers of the time: Birchall & Co (*ca.* 1829), S. Chappell (*ca.* 1830), Metzler & Son (*ca.* 1830-1833), and B. Williams (*ca.* 1835). Judging by the number of reprints this composition must have been quite popular in London. It went far in making the name Marescot known in the English capital.

Marescot made a first attempt to obtain success in London around 1829, perhaps taking advantage of the publication there of the work by Herz. That year a piece by Marescot appeared with the title *La Chasse au Renard*,

<sup>15</sup> None of these first three addresses is listed in the entry on Marescot in Hopkinson *op. cit.* The number 71 in *Rue Saint-Jacques* can also be seen on some compositions by Marescot of this period.

<sup>16</sup> *Journal Général d’annonces des œuvres de musique, gravures, lithographies, publiés en France et à l’étranger*, Paris 1825-1827.

<sup>17</sup> *Répertoire du Commerce de Paris, ou Almanach des Commerçants, Banquiers, Négocians [sic], Manufacturiers, Fabricans [sic] et Artistes de la Capitale* (Paris, 1828). Thanks to Erik Stenstadvold for providing me with this information.

<sup>18</sup> François Lesure, *La Musique à Paris en 1830-1831* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1983), 232.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

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BOOK /

Vingt quatre Valses  
POUR GUITARE  
Composées  
Par  
C. MARESCOT

Ent. Sta. Hall. OP. 9. Price 2/6

London Published by MORI & LAVENU, 28, New Bond Street.

Where may be had by the same Composer.

HERZ'S ALLEGRO & VARIATIONS, Arranged for the GUITAR	2	6
THE FRENCH RETREAT	Do	2 6
TWO SETS OF QUADRILLES & VALSES	Do	each 2 -
GRANDE VALSE	Do	1 -
THE BLACKBIRD VALSE	Do	1 -
AIR ALLEMAND	Do	1 6
SIX CHARACTERISTIC RONDOES	Do	3 -
TWENTY-FOUR EXERCISES for the RIGHT HAND	Do	3 -

KEITH, PROWSE & Co. 48, Cheapside

Figure 5: Charles de Marescot, *Vingt-quatre Valses pour Guitare... Op. 9, Book 1* (London: Mori & Lavenu, 1839).

*A Characteristic Fantasy for the Guitar*,<sup>20</sup> published by Mori & Lavenu. However, it is not until 1834 that we find references that seem to confirm Marescot's presence in England.

<sup>20</sup> The dating of the work is based on the address of the publishers Mori & Lavenu that appears on the title page, "No. 28 New Bond Street," and on the plate number of the composition, "2387." Following the manual of English publishers by Neighbour, O.W., and Tyson, Alan. *English Music Publishers' Plate Numbers in the first half of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 34–35.

<sup>21</sup> Thanks to Erik Stenstadvold for providing this information.

As we have seen before, Hopkinson (*op. cit.*) places Marescot in Paris at *Rue des Grès St. Jacques* in 1835, but already the previous year, on 28 July 1834, Mori & Lavenu in London announced in the *Morning Post* (and again on August 25), that they had published "Twelve New Pieces for the Guitar and Voice, including the Fox Chase, by C. Marescot."<sup>21</sup>

It seems like too much activity to be handled just from Paris. My Checklist of Compositions (*infra*) shows that Marescot issued some twenty works with London publishers in the second half of the 1830s and until his death in 1842—with major publishers such as Mori & Lavenu, Metzler & Co., Johanning & Co., Falkner, T. Prowse, or George Peachey. Mori & Lavenu, who ran one of the most important publishing houses in London at that time, were particularly supportive, issuing about a dozen pieces by Marescot (see Figure 5).

Marescot also published with H. Falkner an English translation of his *Méthode de Guitare* under the title *Instructions for the Guitar, in which all the Rules are Explained in a Clear and Concise Manner rendering the Performance on the Instrument easy to be attained by every Learner in a few Lessons*. Although the precise dating of this edition is uncertain,<sup>22</sup> a brief review of it appeared in the magazine *Musical World* on 11 June 1840, implying that the method was relatively new to the English market at the time. It simply stated, "This is an excellent book of its kind. Its precepts are clear and simple, and its exercises remarkably copious and well adapted to their object."

In 1840 Marescot appears in a list of subscribers to a work by the guitarist Ferdinand Pelzer published that year, *One hundred and fifty exercises for acquiring a facility of performance upon the Spanish guitar*.<sup>23</sup> It

shows that Marescot was residing at 13 Poultry, in the City of London, close to St. Paul's Cathedral.

<sup>22</sup> Stenstadvold *op. cit.* dates it between 1825 and 1837 based on the fact that it includes an arrangement of "God Save the King," the title of which suggests that the method was published before the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837.

<sup>23</sup> Thanks to Kathryn Adamson at the Royal Academy of Music Library for identifying this work and providing me with the subscribers list.



## 1842, death

Charles de Marescot died on 11 March 1842, at St. Thomas hospital (district of Southwark St. Olave on the south bank of the Thames) in London, at the age of 52. The cause of death was *phthisis* (tuberculosis). In his death certificate (Figure 6), his profession is given as professor of music, indicating that he indeed had been active as such in London.

A woman by the name Ann or Anne (not clear) Morris was present at the time of his death; we do not know if she was just a nurse at the hospital or a woman with a close personal connection to Marescot. Whatever the case, it may indicate that Marescot and his wife Julienne Henriette were not together in London at that time. He was buried in the parish of St. John Horslydown on 19 March 1842, eight days after his death.<sup>24</sup>

No.	When Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
92	11th March 1842 at St. Thomas Hospital	Charles Marescot	Male	52 years of Age	Professor of Music	Phthisis	Ann Morris present at death St. Thomas Hospital 1842	16th March 1842	J. Morris Registrar

Figure 6: Death certificate of Charles de Marescot (London, 11 March 1842), from St. Olave Southwark District Death Registry.

## Marescot and Berlioz

In his youth, the composer Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) had some connection with Marescot, who is mentioned in some letters by the French symphonist as well as in his book *Les Soirées de l'Orchestre*. These two sources, the letters and the *Soirées*, provide us with some first-hand observations about the commercial activity of our guitarist.

There are six letters in which Berlioz mentions Marescot—all addressed to Jean Jacques Humbert Ferrand (1805-1868), a lawyer and close friend of Berlioz. The correspondence between the two was translated into English by H. Mainwaring Dunstan and published in *Life and Letters of Berlioz* (London, 1882). I quote here just those parts of the letters where the guitarist is mentioned:<sup>25</sup>

## 18 February 1829

*As for the Stabat business, it stands thus: I mentioned it to Marescot, who had just returned to Paris, and he undertook to print it, on condition of a guaranteed sale of at least fifteen copies. The market price of the work will be four francs and a half, and the fifteen copies will be sold at two francs.*

*After what you told me of the number of people who were inquiring about it from M. Dupart, I did not hesitate to guarantee the disposal of the fifteen copies, and Marescot came for the manuscript yesterday. It will be published before Holy Week, so that it can be sung from the copies which I will send you.*

## 3 June 1829

*I send you Faust together with the copies of the Stabat without any title-*

*page; you have not acknowledged their receipt, and I am at a loss to understand it. ...*

*I did not send you the title-pages of the Stabat; Marescot has left for the provinces and I do not know where to lay hand on him.*

## 15 June 1829

*As I received your letter the printer sent me a copy of the title page of Stabat, without a dedication. Marescot had apparently ordered it before his departure, but since he hadn't yet returned, he could not have been informed of Mr Dupart's wishes with regard to the Archbishop. He marked each copy at 4f50c. I do not remember the price I gave you or the number of copies I sent you for Bellay, as you had asked me to do. In any case, I know that the total sum should not be much more than thirty francs, and I do not know when Marescot will come back or how to force him to be content with half the marked price, as I had warned you it would be, before he capriciously raised it. So write to me about this...<sup>26</sup>*

<sup>24</sup> Register of burials in 1842 at the Parish of St. John Horslydown, entry No. 69. Information generously provided by Kathryn Adamson.

<sup>25</sup> In Dunstan's translation, Marescot's name is incorrectly written *Maresco* in some of the letters. It is, however, always correctly spelt in the original French version of this book, *Lettres intimes* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1882), and also in all the original Berlioz letters I have been able to see; I have therefore tacitly corrected the name here.

<sup>26</sup> "Comme je recevais votre lettre l'imprimeur m'a envoyé un exemplaire du titre du *Stabat*, sans dédicace. Marescot l'avait apparemment commandé avant son départ depuis lors n'étant pas revenu il n'a pu être informé du désir de Mr Dupart relativement à l'archevêque. Il a marqué chaque exemplaire 4f 50c. Je ne me souviens plus du prix que je vous avait indiqué ni du nombre d'exemplaires que je vous ai envoyé à Bellay

d'après ce que vous m'aviez dit. Dans tous le cas je sais bien que la somme totale ne devait pas dépasser de beaucoup une trentaine de francs, et je ne sais fort quand Marescot reviendra de le forcer à se contenter de la moitié du prix marqué tel que je vous avais prévenu qu'il serait, avant que la fantaisie lui soit venue de le hausser. Ainsi écrivez moi là-dessus." Although this letter appears in the Lévy edition (*op. cit.*) and in Dunstan's translation (*op. cit.*) for some reason this part of the letter was not included. The letter can be consulted at [http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bw1b53031029b.r=berlioz%20lettre%20juin%201829;rk=300430;4](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bw1b53031029b.r=berlioz%20lettre%20juin%201829;rk=300430;4http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bw1b53031029b.r=berlioz%20lettre%20juin%201829;rk=300430;4) (accessed 25 January 2018).

## CHARLES DE MARESCOT: (cont.)

**29 June 1829**

*Marescot has come back. He asked me for the money for the copies that I had lowered to two francs each in spite of his intention to raise the price. So I need to know how many copies of the ones I sent you were intended for the composer at no cost and how many were to be paid. I think there were only 15 to be paid for—you will tell me that in your next letter.*<sup>27</sup>

**2 January 1830**

*I should have sent Marescot the thirty-five francs which M. Dupart owes him long ago, but the fact is, that since I have been having my music stereotyped, I've never had any available surplus. ... I wrote you three times after my concert, and informed you, I believe in my second letter, that I had not received Marescot's money; to-day I hear from you that you are aware of that, but you did not get the information from me; consequently, that letter has also been ... lost.*

*My dear friend, there is something extraordinary about all this, which it behoves us to clear up. Marescot has set out for the provinces; I met him at my printer's, and he told me that he was going to write M. Dupart for his money. Even if he were here, I would be unable to let him have it, seeing that at this moment I have only twenty francs, and my allowance has been paid.*

**6 February 1830**

*My dear friend, your letter and the thirty-five francs in it have reached me this time. Marescot is not in Paris; as soon as he returns I will give them to him.*

From the contents of these letters we can establish that there was a business relationship between Berlioz and Marescot. The *Stabat* mentioned several times appears to be a *Stabat Mater* by Charles Dupart, a composer whom Berlioz refers to also in other writings. It appears that Dupart owed Marescot money for printing this work and that Berlioz acted as their go-between. It seems as though Berlioz might have intentionally withheld the money he had been given to deliver to Marescot, for reasons that are unclear.

It is difficult to establish much information about the life of Marescot with these few details, but there are two concepts that become clear: one, that Berlioz and Marescot

knew each other quite well; and two, that Marescot spent time away from Paris in 1829 and 1830, perhaps in Vendôme with his family; or maybe this trip was covert, and Marescot actually went to London since, as we have seen, he published at least one work during those years in the English capital.

### Les Soirées de l'Orchestre (1852)

This partly autobiographical work of Berlioz gives his highly personal opinion of Marescot's work as a composer and businessman. It provides a very jaundiced perspective on the author and publisher of *La Guitaromanie*. The information about Marescot is found in a chapter titled: "Fourth Evening" with the subtitles: "A début in *Le Freyschutz*"<sup>28</sup> - A Necrological tale - Marescot - Study of a Knacker."<sup>29</sup> Berlioz must have held a deep and enduring grudge towards Marescot since, some twenty-five years after the events took place and ten years after Marescot's death (which Berlioz may not have been aware of), he decided to head a subsection of his book with the guitarist's name and speak of him in less than flattering ways.<sup>30</sup>

Berlioz uses a variety of deprecating terms and phrases to describe Marescot: Regarding his work as a composer, Marescot "killed and skinned the works of celebrated composers," taking advantage of the impunity granted by French law; "his trade was to *arrange* all kinds of music for two flutes, or a guitar, or especially for two flageolets, and then publish it." In relation to his looks, he says: "his appearance was quite wretched and his clothing decidedly ragged." Berlioz also mentions a meeting with Marescot in which the guitarist tells him how he was able to circumvent French copyright and publish without words *The prayer of Agathe* from the third act of Weber's *Freyschutz*, explaining that he sells "not by hundreds, but by thousands this publication and its sale increases daily," and that this business has yielded more profits to him than the whole opera ever did to that "blockhead of a Weber." Berlioz closes this chapter with another detail:

I may add that I have kept for a long while a copy of Weber's prayer thus transfigured by the idea, so as to make the fortune, of M. Marescot, French publisher of music, professor of the flute and guitar, in business in the rue Saint-Jacques, at the corner of the rue des Mathurins, in Paris.

<sup>27</sup> "Marescot est revenu, il m'a demandé l'argent des exemplaires que j'ai fait remettre à deux francs malgré son intention de hausser, ainsi il s'agit de savoir combien d'exemplaires sur le nombre que je vous ai envoyé sont destinés gratis à l'auteur et combien sont payans, je crois qu'il n'y a que 15 payans vous me direz, cela dans votre prochaine lettre." This letter is not included in Dunstan *op. cit.* It can be consulted at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530309908.r=berlioz%20juin%201829%20lettre?rk=193134;0> (accessed 25 January 2018).

<sup>28</sup> *Der Freyschütz*, by Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826), was premiered with the title *Robin des bois* in Paris on 7 December 1824 at the *Théâtre de l'Odéon*.

<sup>29</sup> The French sub-sections of this *soirée* are taken from *Hector Berlioz, Les Soirées de*

*l'Orchestre*, 2nd edition (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, etc., 1854), 57: "UN DÉBUT DANS LE FREYSCHUTZ—Nouvelle nécrologique—MARESCOT—Étude d'équarisseur." The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (Paris, 1835) defines the final term, "équarisseur" (with two r's), as "Celui qui fait métier de tuer et d'écorcher les bêtes de somme ou de trait." This gruesome-sounding profession might be rendered in English as "One whose job is to kill and skin draught animals." The English equivalent term, "knacker," is seldom used today.

<sup>30</sup> In this section I have drawn freely upon the English translation of *Les Soirées de l'Orchestre* by Charles E. Roche, under the title *Evenings in the Orchestra* (New York and London: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929).



Although this is the only place where I have found Marescot mentioned as a flute teacher, it is not strange that he indeed was teaching this instrument as well. Some of his compositions were for flute, such as the *Valses, tyroliennes, rondeaux, airs connus, arrangées pour flûte* (ca. 1818) or the *Valses de Mozart et autres arrangées sur des motifs du même auteur pour flûte*, Op. 24 (ca. 1828).

Marescot arranged music from *Le Freyschutz* several times. Examples of this are the *Longtemps voilé par un nuage; Romance imitée de Robin des Bois*, with lyrics by Mr. Briznez and guitar accompaniment (ca. 1825); or the famous “Hunter’s Chorus,” *Chœur des chasseurs de Robin des Bois* (ca. 1825-1829). He also named his Op. 27 as *Airs choisis de Robin des bois arrangés et variés* (for guitar, ca. 1825-28).

Therefore, through the eyes of Berlioz—if we can believe his recollections—we see in Marescot a man without much by way of scruples, who would do whatever was possible to make money.

## Conclusion

Admittedly Charles de Marescot has suffered and continues to suffer “bad press,” another instance of which is provided by Matanya Ophee in his final self-published anthology, *Essays on Guitar History* (Editions Orphée, 2016), 324: “He was a well-known scoundrel that even drew the ire of a critic like Hector Berlioz.”

I wonder if Marescot really deserves to go down in history as a “scoundrel,” or indeed even as a “knacker of masterpieces” as Hector Berlioz described him. Were his merits really as questionable as Ophee has suggested? Transcribing, arranging music, and publishing simple versions that the general public could play, especially from the popular operas of the time, was a very common practice in the first half of the 19th century—and not only by guitar composers.

Marescot, a man who lost his father at the age of three, who lost his own son during the course of his life—a man who composed simple music, catering to an audience that demanded it—tried to make a living with and through the guitar, and he certainly did. He composed around 70 works for solo guitar, a thorough guitar method, a method of solfeggio and another on music principles. He left us some 50 songs with guitar accompaniment, and he published music by other composers. Charles de Marescot was without any doubt a man of his era—a guitarist who made his mark during the topsy-turvy decades of *La Guitaromanie*.

*I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to Erik Stenstadvold for his invaluable help and encouragement during my work on this article.*

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