

# A word to the Wise

## Original 19th Century Guitar Manuscripts in the Public Domain.

When was the last time you bought 19th Century Guitar Works for a huge sum, claiming to have been arranged by a guitarist from our time? Ever felt the need to go back to the original when studying a work from the 19th Century? If so, keep reading, as this article is a must for anyone playing 19th Century repertoire.

The Royal Library in Copenhagen Denmark has an enormous amount of PDF-files of original 19th century facsimiles available. These facsimiles are in the public domain and are available to the public to view, print or download. There are many files scanned in from the original, dating back to the 19th Century. A lot of these works have been donated to the Library, among these people were students of Napoleon Coste.



Many composers can be found; Fernando Sor, Mauro Giuliani, Johan Kaspar Mertz, you name them, most of them come up. You can find solos, duets and guitar with other instruments, the list is endless. Unlike a lot of modern editions, there are no photocopy rights because all the works are in the public domain. The works print very well, however some works are a bit faded (still not bad for manuscripts over 150 years old). Most manuscripts hardly contain fingerings, better still, for obvious reasons there is nothing in these manuscripts that hasn't been written in by the composer himself. It is a must for every guitarist to examine the original manuscript from the period even if one is not using the manuscripts to play from.

Now here is the address and some instructions:

Go to: <http://rex.kb.dk> Click the English icon and go to "The Royal Library". Click on "Music Databases", then select "Printed Music" and search for the composer or piece you're after. Some works are under copyright - these are the "new" arrangements or editions of the works. The year of copyright is written in the column after the work and the works in the public domain will have "s.a" written after them or a date from the 19th Century. Once the work you have selected comes up, most works will say "Se noden / View the music" (if not, then there is no PDF-file available). Once you have clicked on "View Music", the file will open Acrobat Reader and you can view, print or save the work to your computer!

Good luck!

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