

MASTER SONATAS FOR GUITAR
(Works by José, Vargas, Sierra and Bogdanović)
by
Gonzalo Arias Contreras
(Under the Direction of Daniel Bolshoy)

Abstract

The four composers on this recording are Antonio José (Spain, 1902-1936), Darwin Vargas (Chile, 1925-1988), Roberto Sierra (Puerto Rico and United States, born in 1953), and Dušan Bogdanović (Serbia and United States, born in 1955). Each of their works for solo guitar presents a unique character and language. Antonio José is one of the greatest Spanish composers of the 20th century, Darwin Vargas is one of the greatest Chilean composers (but his sonata for guitar has not been recorded until now), and Roberto Sierra is an outstanding American-Puerto Rican composer who is recognized for symphonic works. The recording concludes with the third sonata by Dušan Bogdanović, which draws inspiration from musical exoticism such as jazz and Renaissance traditions.

The pieces depict different styles, such as impressionism combined with Spanish nationalistic character, Latin American rhythms seen in Vargas and Sierra, leading to Bogdanović, whose mixture of popular and classical idioms ends this CD. This project aims to study these pioneering works and inspire guitarists to perform them. I will study the works movement by movement using musical analysis with numerous musical examples combined with biographical and historical information.

Antonio José, Darwin Vargas, Roberto Sierra, Dušan Bogdanović

INDEX WORDS: guitar music, sonatas for guitar, music analysis, Latin American composers,

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by

Gonzalo Arias Contreras

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by

GONZALO ARIAS CONTRERAS

Major Professor: Daniel Bolshoy
Committee: David Haas
Milton Masciadri

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

This is the first time these masterworks have been presented side by side and is the world premiere recording of one of the sonatas. Each sonata has a peculiar imprint. Antonio José's sonata is unique because of its colorful harmonic language, such as the Tristan chords in the development section of the first movement and the quartal chords used in the last movement. The sonata also pays homage to older musical dances such as the minuet and pavane. Roberto Sierra makes effective use of African American rhythms. Vargas combines liturgical music with folk music. Lastly Dušan Bogdanović is the only composer who combines jazz idioms and improvisation within a Renaissance form such as *ricercar*.

In chapter 2, I briefly describe José's studies, music influences, and works, and provide a short summary of the end of his life. I then present some important characteristics of his *Sonata para guitarra* (1933) with music examples. In chapter 3, I turn to Darwin Vargas Wallis, his formation as a musician, his most outstanding works, and his close relationship with Doctor Claudio Rojas Zegers. I analyze his *Sonata de Septiembre para Maria Ester* and how it was linked to his friendship with Claudio Rojas, followed with illustrations of some music cells and percussive passages similar to the national dance of Chile, the "cueca."

In chapters 4 and 5, I describe music written in the first decade of the 21st century by two composers that are still alive. The first sonata is by Roberto Sierra which is dedicated to my ex-professor Manuel Barrueco. I describe Sierra's most important influences in his works, his academic background, his most remarkable compositions, followed by a description of his *Sonata para guitarra* (2007-2010) with some music examples. Lastly, I discuss the *Sonata 3*

(2010) of Dušan Bogdanović, possibly one of the top three most prolific guitar composers still alive.

CHAPTER 2

ANTONIO JOSÉ

Biography

Antonio José Martínez Palacios (known as Antonio José) was born in the town of Burgos in Northern Spain in 1902. José's early musical studies were with the organist of his native city, Jose Maria Beobide, who taught him piano and organ, as well as harmony and counterpoint. In 1920 at the age of eighteen, he moved to Madrid to continue his music studies, having won a grant from the city of Burgos. During his stay in Madrid, he visited Café Regina where he met the guitarist Regino Sainz de la Maza and other artists from Burgos. It was there that he met important artists from the Generation of 1927, among them being Pablo Picasso, Manuel de Falla, José Ortega y Gasset, Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, and Salvador Dalí.¹

In 1925, he moved to Paris to study the works of the great French Impressionists, with particular emphasis on Ravel and Debussy. According to Antonio José, those years in Paris were the most important of his life.²

Having completed his studies in France, José returned to Spain. In 1926 he accepted the post of professor at the San Estanislao College in Málaga. In 1929, he returned to his native Burgos to take over the direction of the Orfeon Burgales and stayed in Burgos until his death in 1936.

He wrote approximately 50 works for orchestra, chamber music, and solo instruments. José achieved early success with the *Sinfonia Castellana* (1924); followed by *Tres Evocaciones* for piano in 1929; *Suite Ingenua* for piano and string orchestra in 1929; and the opera *El Mozo de*

¹ Corey E. Whitehead, "Antonio José Martínez Palacios' Sonata para guitarra (1933), an Analysis, Performer's Guide, and New Performance Edition" (DMA, The University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, 2002), 20.

² Ibid., 10.

Mulas, based on an episode from *Don Quixote* in 1927. In 1932 he received the National Music Award. Other representative compositions are *Prelude and Popular Dance*, premiered by the Madrid Symphony Orchestra in 1934, and the Sonata for guitar, dedicated to Regino Sáinz de la Maza (1933) and premiered on November 23rd, 1934.

Around 1933, Burgos was the nationalistic capital of Spain. Franco took over in 1936 sparking the Spanish Civil War.³ Antonio José was arrested on August 7, 1936, during the Spanish Civil War, accused of being part of the Popular Party.⁴ He was executed by firing squad, without prior trial, in the town of Estepar near Burgos.⁵ It was not possible until 1980 to edit and present the music of José. Iván Gil Valdez writes that the songbook was promised by the City Council as a tribute to “his memory, humanity and artistic values.”⁶

The *Sonata para guitarra* was dedicated to Regino Sainz de la Maza and was premiered by him on November 23, 1934 at the main theatre of Burgos. However, after the death of José, the publication and interpretation of all his works was prohibited. The famous guitarist Ricardo Iznaola received this work through his teacher Regino Sainz de la Maza. Iznaola was the first guitarist to record this sonata in 1990 on *The Dream of Icarus* CD.⁷

Sonata para guitarra

José’s only sonata for guitar is one of the most substantial contributions to the genre. Each of its four movements is based on an established form from the pre-20th-century European

³ Ramón Puche Macia, "La guerra civil española." <http://www.guerracivil1936.galeon.com>. 2008, www.guerracivil1936.galeon.com. Accessed 22 Apr. 2021.

⁴ Iván Gil Valdez, “Antonio José: Un talento burgalés,” *Oviedo* (2006): 48. Monografía. Conservatorio Superior de Música “Eduardo Martínez Torner.”

⁵ José Prieto Marugan, “Viva la música.” Homenaje a Antonio José. *Melómanodigital*. <http://www.orfeoed.com/especiales/antoniojose.asp>. Accessed March 28. 2021.

⁶ Valdez, “Antonio José,” 56.

⁷ Ricardo Iznaola, *The Dream of Icarus*, 1990, CD.

classical tradition. However, like other neoclassical works of the early twentieth century, each movement also contains a diversity of musical styles, textures, and techniques. The dance styles include Renaissance pavane, 18th-century minuet, and regional folk dance. In each case, the historical styles are mixed with Impressionistic and other harmonic languages of the early twentieth century. The composer's fascination with guitar textures is evident in the interesting variety of accompaniments and the many challenging polyphonic passages spread out over various ranges.

I. Allegro Moderato

The first movement begins with a sonata form exposition based on two highly contrasting sets of material. The first group is based on a series of rapid sixteenth note themes while the second theme group is based on a pair of chords in short-long rhythm.

This movement presents most of the elements used in the later movements. An important feature occurs in the first theme which is repeated in the second and fourth movements: a high note (in this case F#) with a *forte* dynamic followed by a descending pentatonic scale, as seen in m. 19 in Example 1. This F# might be depicted as the climax of the first theme but more importantly, José uses this descending scale motive to give unity to the sonata. It returns in the *Minueto* in m. 49, 59, and José persists with it in m. 63-68. It is also found in m. 17-18 of the last movement *Final*.



Example 1. José, *Sonata para guitarra, Allegro Moderato*, mm. 19-20.

Another highlight of this sonata is the second theme, specifically the short-long rhythm in Bb (see Example 2). In the first movement, the short-long rhythmic pattern is used intensively in the bass from mm. 6-10 producing an important lyrical phrase. It is also found in the development at m. 77, the transition to the recapitulation in m. 122-127, and in later movements to give unity to the work. In the third movement, it is used as an ostinato which switches from being contemplative to being fierce. José gives this motive different characteristics each time it appears.



Example 2. José, *Sonata para guitarra, Allegro Moderato*, mm. 47-49.

In the coda of the development section we see unpredictable rhythms, chromatic lines, and augmented sixth chords, used in an Impressionistic manner shown in Example 3. In measure 67 and 72, we see an Italian augmented sixth which resolves to the Vi half diminished instead of the dominant. All these features create a sense of harmonic instability.



Example 3. José, *Sonata para guitarra, Allegro Moderato*, mm. 66-76.

This practice of contrasting two strong ideas is echoed in later movements. The succession of sixteenth notes helps the music to flow while the short-long section is charming and palatable to the ears.

II. Minueto

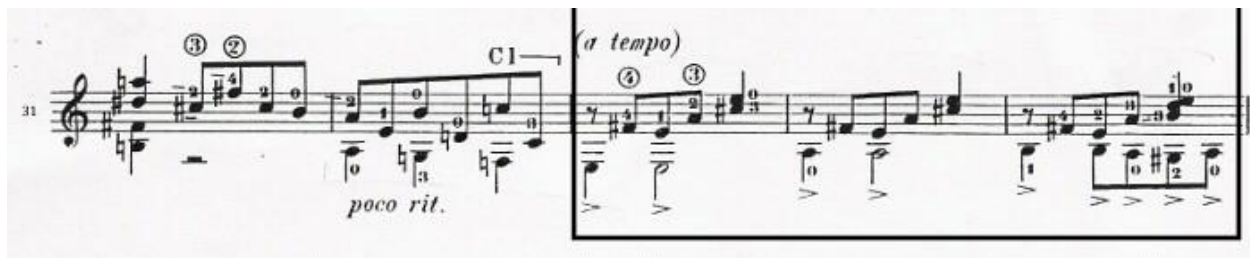
The second movement, *Minueto*, preserves the feel of the minuet characterized by its elegance and majesty. However, its themes are harmonized with a mixture of triads and non-triadic Impressionist chords representative of the harmonic language of José's time. At the beginning, José creates a deceptive effect by not resolving the dominants into the tonic. Despite being a minuet, the character can be interpreted as a sarabande, due to its accentuation on the second beat.⁸ The thematic content is related to the short-long element seen in the second theme of the first movement. The resulting short-long rhythm effectively reverses the traditional harmonic rhythm often seen in minuets (in which a harmonic change occurs on the third beat). In Example 4 we see a short-long rhythm which is presented throughout the movement.



Example 4. José, *Sonata para guitarra, Minueto*, mm. 1-3.

Example 5 shows measures 33-35 in which the short-long rhythm is accented in the bass voice.

⁸ Whitehead, "Antonio José Martínez Palacios' *Sonata para guitarra* (1933)": 34.



Example 5. José, *Sonata para guitarra, Minueto*, mm. 33-38.

By employing the short-long motive, José manages to compose a perfectly convincing minuet while effectively subverting our expectations of a traditional minuet, thus infusing the old dance with a new rhythmic character.

III. Pavana triste

This is a hauntingly beautiful piece, in which a single melody is continually transformed. This simple melody, based on the short-long rhythm (now reversed, as long-short), is presented in various dynamics and varying textures. The theme first appears in mm. 2-5 in a two-voice texture (see on Example 6).

José's ingenuity is on display in Example 7, which shows the theme's return in mm. 28-30: The melody is presented in the upper voice of what is effectively a three-voice texture, while the theme's rhythm is clearly stated by the lower voice, which provides a new counterpoint. The three-voice texture is filled out with the harmonic falling thirds (second and third notes in each four-note group). José's ingenuity serves a practical purpose here: not being a guitarist himself, José manages to suggest a rich harmonic texture with spare means, respecting the guitar's limitations without compromising compositional and textural variety. The dynamic climax of the

piece comes with the theme's return in m. 33-36 (see on Example 8), where it is stated in *ff* over bold strummed chords.



Example 6. José, *Sonata para guitarra, Pavana triste*, mm. 1-6.



Example 7. José, *Sonata para guitarra, Pavana triste*, mm. 28-30.



Example 8. José, *Sonata para guitarra, Pavana triste*, mm. 31-36.

A respite from the theme is offered in the striking middle section (mm. 15-23) in which each measure is followed by a rest. The composer indicates a small rest after each measure (“like a breath” see Example 9). This unusual effect, combined with the static harmony (four measures over a pedal F, followed by four measures over a pedal Ab), creates a hushed atmosphere. The dramatic return of the theme at *forte* in measure 24 builds towards the climax of the piece in mm. 33-36.

Example 9. José, *Sonata para guitarra, Pavana triste*, mm. 14-21.

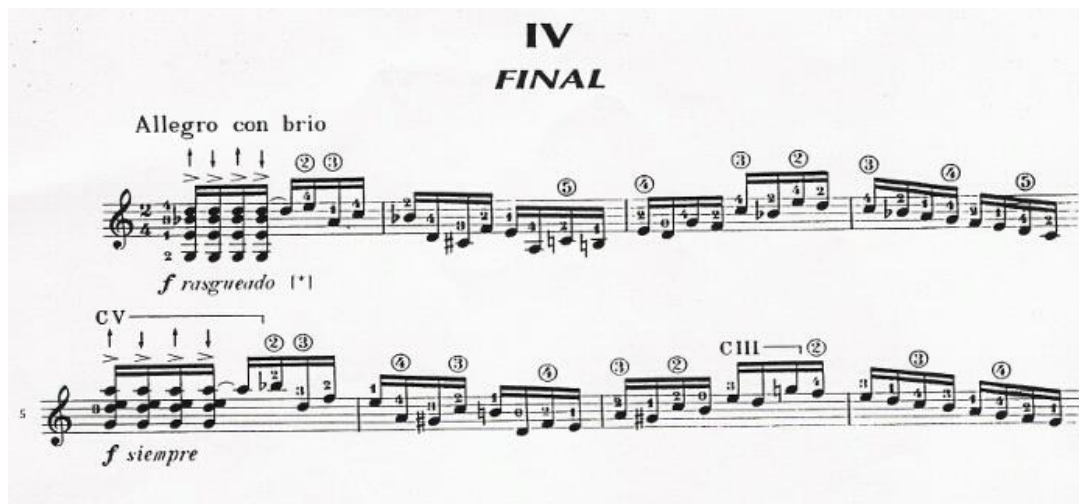
This expressive and nostalgic movement recalls ancient times (the pavane being a Renaissance dance). The movement ends almost inaudibly on a high A major chord, which sounds like it belongs in another world than the passionate first movement or the following frenetic finale.

IV. Final

This cyclical movement in rondo form is flashy due to the fusion of strums and scales. It also contains unconventional chords such as quartal and quintal. José takes us to another sound

world whenever he presents the main rondo theme or when he borrows materials from the first movement (such as the short-long theme). Example 10 shows the “*rasgueado*” (strummed) and how José connects it with the scale having only one sixteenth note that allows us to shift from one element to another. The blending of these unconventional chords with strumming results in an extravagant and virtuosic effect.

Section A is made up of strummed chords (typical of Spanish music) followed by passages on fast scales, while sections B, C, and D use thematic material presented in the first movement. Section A has two periods, one binary and the other ternary. Then there is a transition section followed by section B which literally repeats bars 92 to 112 of first movement. Section C repeats verbatim mm. 84-122 of the first movement, followed by the reappearance of section A. Section D is taken, likewise, from the first movement, mm. 11-37. The last A section is followed by a modulation to E major where the work ends.



Example 10. José, *Sonata para guitarra, Final*, mm. 1-8.

In Example 11, we see a G Dorian scale used as a bridge to the coda. This section is like a bee buzzing around until it finds its flower, which is a E major final chord. Here José uses E as a pedal motive, prominent throughout the movement.

Example 11. José, *Sonata para guitarra, Final*, mm. 196-208.

José's sonata represents an expansion of the guitar repertoire during the first decades of the 20th century in Spain. By combining virtuosic elements with emotional depth, José composed a guitar masterpiece that is harmonically substantial and emotionally engaging.

CHAPTER 3

DARWIN VARGAS WALLIS

Biography

Chilean composer Darwin Vargas Wallis was born in 1925 in Talagante, southern Chile. He was one of the most important Chilean composers of the 20th century. Vargas studied with the Chilean composers Juan Orrego Salas and Carlos Blondel at Universidad de Chile. Vargas taught music harmony at the old music school of the Catholic University in Valparaíso, Chile. Since he was young, he admired the music of Paul Hindemith, Marcel Dupré, Gabriel Fauré, and Paul Dukas.

Vargas wrote more than 70 works, among them *Misa de la Dedicación del Templo Votivo de Maipú* written in 1973 and premiered by the Chilean Symphony Orchestra; *Rhapsody for Days of Mourning and Hope* for guitar and orchestra, premiered by Arturo González Quintana and the Chilean Symphony in 1962. This work was an homage to the victims of the 1960 earthquake in Valdivia, Chile, the largest earthquake ever registered.

Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester was dedicated to María Ester Goldsack Jarpa, the wife of the Chilean guitarist Dr. Jorge Rojas Zegers. Dr. Rojas and Darwin Vargas started a friendship in 1972 when Dr. Rojas graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree. On March 1, 1974, Dr. Rojas married his medical colleague María Ester Goldsack Jarpa. His friend Vargas and Father Gabriel Guarda, a Benedictine monk, wrote an unedited piece for wind quintet and organ as part of Dr. Rojas's wedding ceremony. Later Father Gabriel and the Chilean Episcopal Conference requested Vargas create a symphonic mass for the dedication of the Basilica-Templo Votivo de Maipú, a choral symphonic work, of which Dr. Rojas kept the manuscripts.

Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester

This is the world premiere recording of the *Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester* by Darwin Vargas. Vargas creates a portrait of his native land at a specific time of the year (September, springtime in Chile). In Chile, there are many festivals in honor of Vargas but very few recordings of his music. This nationalistic work draws inspiration from Chile's national dance, the *cueca*, as well as from Chilean religious life. The first movement has two contrasting themes, the first being *Alegremente* which consists of an ascending perfect fifth in eighth notes and a descending major second in quarter notes. This short motive is repeated three times during the exposition and four times in the recapitulation. The second theme is based on the Gregorian thanksgiving chant *Te Deum*, as celebrated in Santiago on September 18th each year. Vargas took the section "E deum laudamus," or "To you, oh God, we praise you." and set it as a three-voice chorale. The second movement *Oracion* (Prayer) is based on a three-voice counterpoint Baroque chorale. The third movement *Festivo* is a stylized version of Chile's national dance, the *cueca*. The performer is asked to use the guitar as a percussion instrument for a short drumming section ten measures in length, during which the characteristic rhythms of the *cueca* and *tonada* are performed. Usually in the introduction of the *cueca*, the guitar improvises (*punteo*) in triple or compound meter. Here Vargas emulates the improvisation through percussive effects.

I. En Alegría

The first movement is at once compositionally rigorous and spiritually rooted in Chilean religious traditions. Vargas uses a motivic cell to create the first theme shown in Example 12. This motive is an ascending perfect fifth, followed by a descending semitone in a dotted quarter note. The opening section is *Veloz*, or fast, and consists of an arpeggiated passage of triplets. The

dynamic style of the first theme is complemented by a spiritual second theme, based on a Gregorian chant. Later, Vargas contrasts this passage with a short section named *Lentamente* followed with the exposition cell of the first theme. In the recapitulation of the second theme, the same motive is presented in the same key three more times.



Example 12. Vargas, *Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester, En Alegría*, m. 6.

The second theme of the first movement is based on a Gregorian thanksgiving chant *Te Deum*, as celebrated in Santiago on September 18th each year during the Chilean anniversary Mass. While the second movement is titled *Oración* (“Prayer”) it is the second theme of the first movement that is actually inspired by liturgical music.

Example 13 shows the motive Vargas presents as the second theme and in Example 14, we see the Roman version of *Te Deum*. The chant and Vargas’s cell are both in Aeolian mode, especially the “Laudamus.” Both also share an ascending stepwise motion.



Example 13. Vargas, *Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester, En Alegría*, mm. 30-31.



Example 14. Roman version. *Te Deum Laudamus*, mm. 1-2.

The use of the *Te Deum* chant underscores Vargas's desire to infuse his compositional virtuosity with the spirituality of ancient Catholic traditions.

II. Oración

The second movement *Oración* ("Prayer") is all original music inspired by J. S. Bach, and uses some of his compositional techniques. It is dedicated to the Catholic wedding of Dr. Rojas and Maria Ester of Rojas. Through this slow and meditative movement, Vargas offers a prayer for the success of this marriage. Here Vargas treats the subject in the style of J. S. Bach's chorales and develops it using inversions. Vargas presents the subject, shown in Example 15. In m. 10 (see Example 16) Vargas places the main motive one octave lower.



Example 15. Vargas, *Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester, Oración*, mm. 1-2.

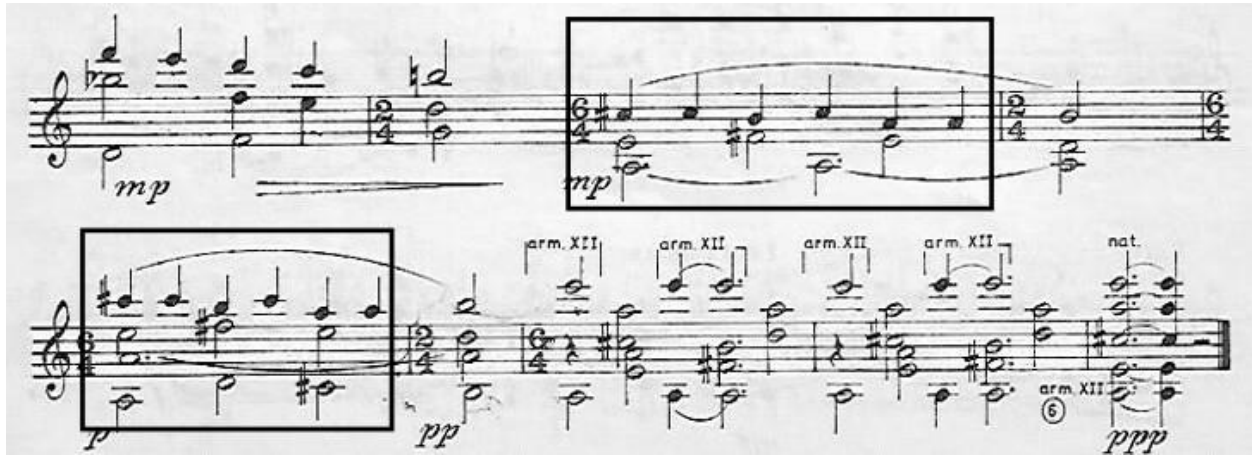


Example 16. Vargas, *Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester, Oración*, mm. 4-10.

In m. 12 and m. 15, Vargas intensifies this prayer in higher keys, keeping the motive first on E minor then on F# minor. The second subject is shown in Example 17. This melodic pattern is presented in the bass in m. 25 at the end. The first subject projects an imploring effect while the second subject has a feeling of resignation due to its descending stepwise motion and soft dynamics shown in Example 18.



Example 17. Vargas, *Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester, Oración*, mm. 8-9.



Example 18. Vargas, *Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester, Oración*, mm. 24-30.

This spiritual movement take us to profound, reflective places due its progressions, simple melody, movement of its voices, and its legato articulation. The simple polyphony ends on a plagal cadence over an A pedal suggesting the traditional “Amen.”

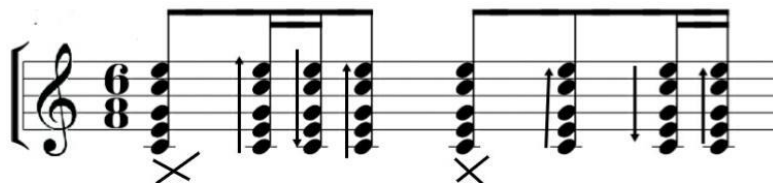
III. Festivo

The third movement *Festivo* is cyclical and is a synthesis of material from the two previous movements. A bright and happy festive atmosphere created every year in Chile is blended with rigorous contrapuntal writing. A prominent pattern can be seen at the beginning of this movement in a compound meter with syncopation at the end of each measure (see Example 19). This characteristic can be seen in the Chilean dance *cueca*. Its rhythms consist of guitar *rasgueados* while the audience does the syncopated rhythms.



Example 19. Vargas, *Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester*, *Festivo*, mm. 1-7.

In Example 20 we see the *cueca* rhythm. The strings must be muted with a closed fist in the right hand, as indicated by the X's, in order to produce the percussive effect. The arrows indicate in which directions the strumming should go. In Example 21 we see the syncopated rhythm clapped by the dancers of the *cueca* represented in Example 19.

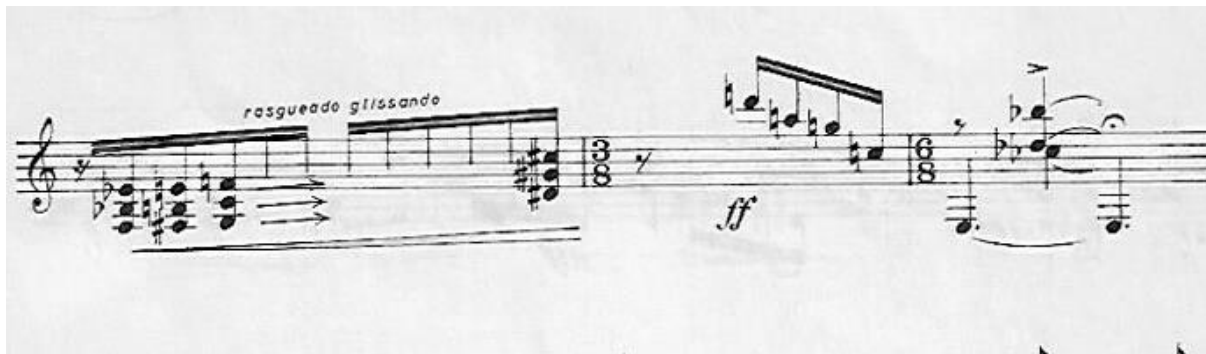


Example 20. *Cueca* rhythm.



Example 21. *Cueca* rhythm.

An important feature that sticks out in this movement is the *rasgueado* glissando effect (see Example 22). Later, in Example 23, the performer must knock on the top of the guitar with the knuckle of their finger to create a drum-like sonority.



Example 22. Vargas, *Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester, Festivo*, mm. 70-72.



Example 23. Vargas, *Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester, Festivo*, mm. 73-78.

In Example 24, we see a return of the subject of the second movement *Oración* inserted into the last movement in m. 114 along with a descending A major scale. This material gives the piece serenity after an extensive dance groove accompanied with percussion effects. Here Vargas presents the subject in the bass accompanied by a descending scalar motion in the upper voice.



Example 24. Vargas, *Sonata de Septiembre para María Ester, Festivo*, mm. 114-116.

Vargas's sonata is a musical synopsis of life in Chile. By juxtaposing elements of academic, religious, and popular musical expressions, Vargas manages to compose a guitar masterpiece that is intellectually stimulating and musically exciting. Most importantly, this music has an unmistakable Chilean identity.

CHAPTER 4

ROBERTO SIERRA

Biography

Roberto Sierra (1953-) was born in Vega Baja, a small town in Puerto Rico. He studied at the National Conservatory of San Juan, the University of Puerto Rico, the Royal College of Music, the University of London, the Utrecht Institute of Sonology in the Netherlands, and the Musikhochschule in Hamburg, where he was a student of György Ligeti⁹ for three years.

Upon his return to Puerto Rico, he took the position of administrator of the Conservatory. His first success as a composer was achieved in 1987 when his orchestral work *Jubilee* was performed at Carnegie Hall in New York by the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Sierra was a composer-in-residence with the Milwaukee Symphony (1989-1992), then with the Philadelphia Orchestra (2000-2001). He then took up the position of Professor of Composition at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

Sierra wrote over twenty symphonic works, as well as concertos for soloist and orchestra, among them: *Symphony No. 1* (2002); *Symphony No. 2* (Gran Passacaglia) (2004); *Symphony No. 3* (La Salsa) (2005); *Missa Latina* (2006); and *Danzas Concertantes* for guitar and orchestra premiered in May 2007 by legendary Cuban-American guitarist Manuel Barrueco. Sierra and Barrueco share a special affection for Caribbean music.

⁹ Richard Toop, *György Ligeti* (London, England: Phaidon Press Limited, 1999), 185.

Sierra's music is a combination of folk and popular genres from the Americas, such as jazz, as well as popular Latin forms always in conversation with rigorous formal composition.¹⁰ Sierra makes good use of synthetic modes seen in his violin, cello, and piano trios, for instance *Trío tropical* (1991).¹¹ Sierra's music emphasizes tonal centrality, mostly avoiding an explicit use of bimodal tonality.

Sonata para guitarra

This sonata presents the structure of modern classical music coloured with Afro-Caribbean music. The first movement, *Con Pasión*, is in sonata form. The first theme displays conspicuous strumming tritone chords contrasted with accented octatonic scales. The second theme is slow and meditative. The theme of the second movement, *Expresivo, casi religioso*, is five measures long and repeats six times. It is in the form of a passacaglia. Each appearance exhibits an increasingly complex texture. This movement continuously builds energy, starting with a single-line statement of the theme. The movement's climax is on the fifth statement of the theme, a highly ornate and virtuosic setting featuring extended arpeggios and long scalar runs. After this climax, the movement ends quietly. The third, playful movement, *Scherzando* is in 6/8 meter, but Sierra accents the first, fourth, and sixth beats resulting in a three plus two rhythm. This rhythmic characteristic is followed by six interruptions based on fast arpeggios and scales. The last movement *Salseado* brings out the rhythms derived from the Caribbean dance "salsa." Sierra establishes a dance-like Caribbean groove in a single voice and later expands the texture by using

¹⁰ "Roberto Sierra," Composers Biography, <http://www.schirmer.com/composers/sierra/bio.html>, 2018. Accessed April 3rd, 2021.

¹¹ Laurie Shulman, "Sierra, Roberto," *Grove Music Online*. 2001; Accessed 10 Jul. 2021. <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000042553>.

two contrapuntal voices, each with different accents. By superimposing these competing accentuation patterns, Sierra successfully marries the classical and popular idioms.

I. Con Pasión

The exciting opening movement, *Con Pasión*, has the virtuosity one might expect to find in a finale, while maintaining the intellectual rigour of a first movement Sonata-Allegro. It follows the traditional structure of exposition-development-recapitulation. The juxtaposition of quintuplets and triplets (see Example 25) gives a sense of a constant struggle, an ongoing rhythmic conflict. This movement displays great energy from the onset, enhanced by the *forte* dynamic over dissonant chords (also shown in Example 25). The accents that Sierra uses are symmetrical, especially in the triplets, where the last eighth note of each triplet is accented, giving the music a forward momentum. The frequent use of octatonic scales (see m. 21 in Example 26) recalls the music of French composer Olivier Messiaen.



Example 25. Sierra, *Sonata para guitarra*, *Con Pasión*, mm. 1-6.

The serene second theme, marked *Un poco más lento*, contrasts with the turbulent first theme, giving the listener an opportunity to appreciate the lower register and the softest dynamics of the entire piece. Example 26 shows the whisper-like arpeggios in m. 27.



Example 26. Sierra, *Sonata para guitarra, Con Pasion*, mm. 21-27.

The whispering arpeggios make a return at the end of the recapitulation, ushering in the codetta (mm. 78-81) that concludes this dynamically varied movement.

II. Expresivo, casi religioso

Sierra has a strong affinity for composing passacaglias (both Symphonies no. 1 and 2 feature a passacaglia as their respective second movement), and the second movement of this sonata can be seen as an example. This movement consists of a series of variations on the theme first heard in mm. 1-6 (see Example 27). The rhythm is continually intensified by increasing the level of rhythmic subdivisions. This movement starts with a statement in the alto voice, seen in Example 28. The melody moves to the basses and is repeated twice.

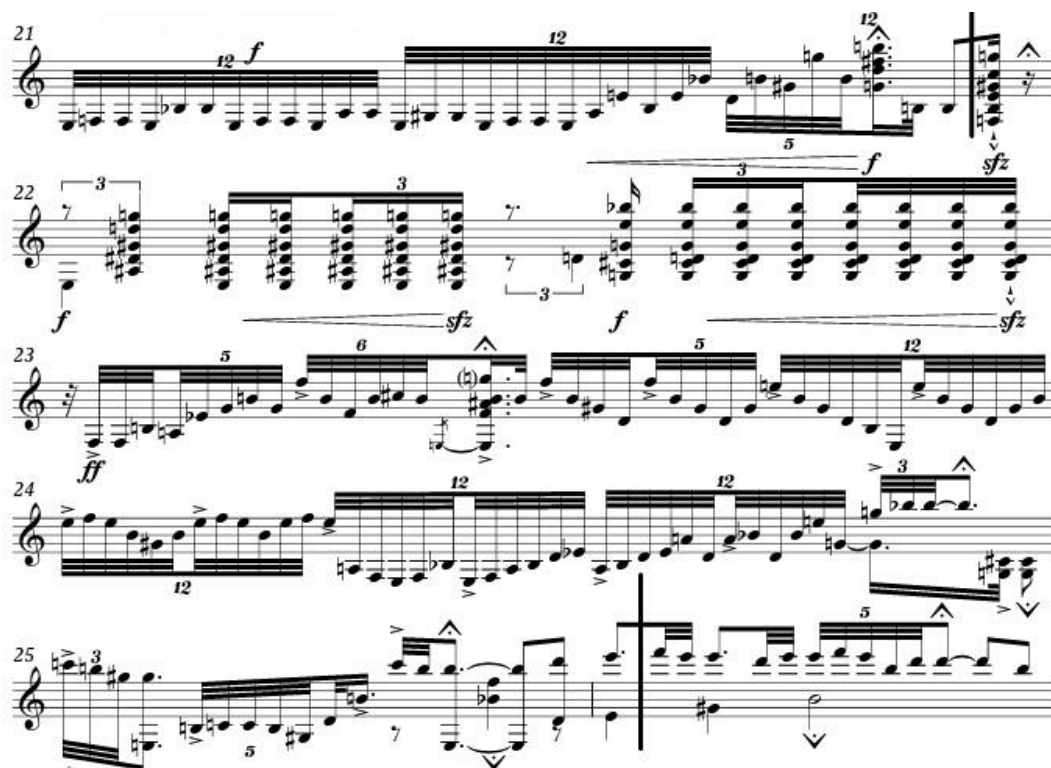


Example 27. Sierra, *Sonata para guitarra, Expresivo, casi religioso*, subject mm. 1-6.



Example 28. Sierra, *Sonata para guitarra, Expresivo, casi religioso*, subject mm. 1-10.

This beautiful melodic line then turns more dissonant until the marking *cada vez con más intensidad* (m. 15). The subdivisions and dissonant arpeggios seem to blur the melody, yet within this chaotic texture one can still detect the passacaglia theme. The movement grows in intensity until it reaches its climax with the fifth statement of the theme (mm. 21-26, see Example 29).



Example 29. Sierra, *Sonata para guitarra*, Expresivo, casi religioso, mm. 21-26.

The sixth, and final statement of the theme brings the movement to a close on a very soft (*ppp*) arpeggiated quartal chord completing a journey through a wide range of dynamics.

III. Scherzando

The third movement, *Scherzando*, is playful and rhythmic. Although the time signature is 3/8, the music is accented in a 5/8 pattern (3+2) as shown in Example 30. This accentuation pattern can also be found in the *Scherzando* movement of Sierra's *Concierto Evocativo*.



Example 30. Sierra, *Sonata para guitarra, Scherzando*, mm. 1-23.

Sierra intersperses the *libremente* fragments within the steady flow of the 5/8 pattern (Example 30). In effect, Sierra asks the performer to be aware of two distinct musical characters with contrasting textures (two-note chords in eighth notes versus a single-line stream of sixteenth notes) and separates these two elements by using dramatically different dynamics throughout.

IV. *Salseado*

The last movement *Salseado* is a Caribbean celebration of Sierra's homeland. This movement might be the most challenging technically, due to its varying accents and its lack of a contrasting slow section. The movement is relentless from the opening gesture in triplets to the climactic *rasgueado* chords in measure 123. The final moments of the sonata establish the popular salsa rhythm, concluding the piece in a popular vein. This movement has two recurring rhythmic patterns. The first pattern is seen in Example 31. Example 32 shows the other prominent pattern of the movement, which consists of a rhythmic grouping of 3+3+2, known as the *clave* rhythm.



Example 31. Sierra, *Sonata para guitarra, Salseado*, mm. 1-4.



Example 32. *Clave* rhythm.

This four-movement sonata celebrates the marriage of popular music and more formal compositional traditions. Sierra takes as his inspiration the popular or folk roots of the passacaglia and its transformation into a traditional compositional form and seeks to achieve the same with the popular music forms of the Caribbean such as the salsa. The sonata opens with a more abstract texture featuring octatonic scales and dissonant chords and it concludes triumphantly with the dancing rhythms of the salsa.

Chapter 5

DUŠAN BOGDANOVIĆ

Biography

The guitarist and composer Dušan Bogdanović was born in 1955 in what is now Serbia. He studied with the Argentinean composer Alberto Ginastera at Geneva University. He has taught at the University of Southern California, the Haute école de musique de Geneve, and the San Francisco Conservatory.

His music theory works span from polyrhythmic and polymetric studies to counterpoint and Renaissance improvisation. He has explored musical languages which are reflected in his style today, such as a synthesis of classical, jazz, and ethnic music. He has also collaborated on multi-disciplinary projects involving music, psychology, philosophy, and fine arts. He wrote music for renowned guitarists such as Eduardo Isaac, Scott Tennant, Alvaro Pierri, and William Kanengiser, among others.

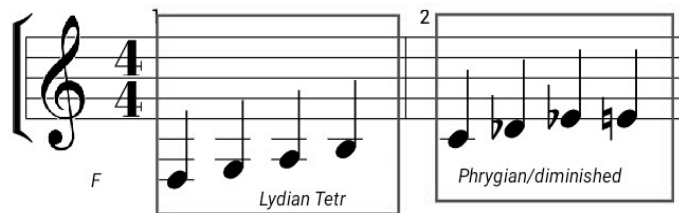
He wrote more than 60 works, among them: *Sonata no. 1 for guitar* (1978); *Jazz Sonata for guitar* (1982); *Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue for the Golden Flower* for guitar (1985); *Sonata no. 2, for guitar* (1985); *Polyrhythmic and Polymetric Studies* for guitar (1990); *Six Balkan Miniatures* for guitar (1991). He has also composed chamber music with guitar: *Sonata Fantasia*, for two guitars (1990–91); *No Feathers on This Frog*, for two guitars (1990); *Five Songs on Poetry by Gabriela Mistral*, for voice and guitar (1991) and *Concerto for Guitar and String Orchestra* (1979).

Sonata 3

This idiomatically written sonata combines influences from jazz, and formal compositional styles in a virtuosic and engaging setting. Bogdanović originally planned to make this sonata an homage to the music of Francesco Canova da Milano, one of the greatest Italian lutenists of the Renaissance. The original title of the piece would have been *Sonata Ricercata*, however, Bogdanović abandoned this idea when the piece took its final shape, which was more structured than that title would suggest. The first movement juxtaposes two contrasting themes, the first of which is based on a mode which mixes Lydian and Phrygian tetrachords (Bogdanović presents this original scale on F and transposes it to A and C# as well). The second theme is based on a chromatic motive. This movement does not follow conventional sonata form since each theme is developed immediately following its first appearance. A meditative *Lento Rubato* movement follows, which is divided into three sections: *Lento-Adagio-Lento*. The *Adagio* section consists of a syncopated ostinato in the top voice over a lyrical bass. The composer asks for string bends (which raise the pitch) to create a distorted sound effect suggesting a jazz influence. Later in the same movement, he switches the ostinato to the bass while the top voice reiterates the first and second themes from the first movement. The composer suggests an *accelerando* by presenting the theme first in eighth note triplets, then in groups of four sixteenth notes, then in quintuplet sixteenths, and lastly in a sextuplet figure. The third movement contrasts with the peacefulness of the second movement by the use of fast whole-tone scale passages, quick string bends, and an improvisation over a suggested rhythmic pitch cell. The last movement is vertiginous and virtuosic, and displays strummed chords, octatonic scales, and pentatonic scales. In the middle section, Bogdanović recalls materials from the *Adagio* of the second movement. The piece concludes with striking staccato strummed chords blended with chromatic scales in between.

I. Moderato Appassionato

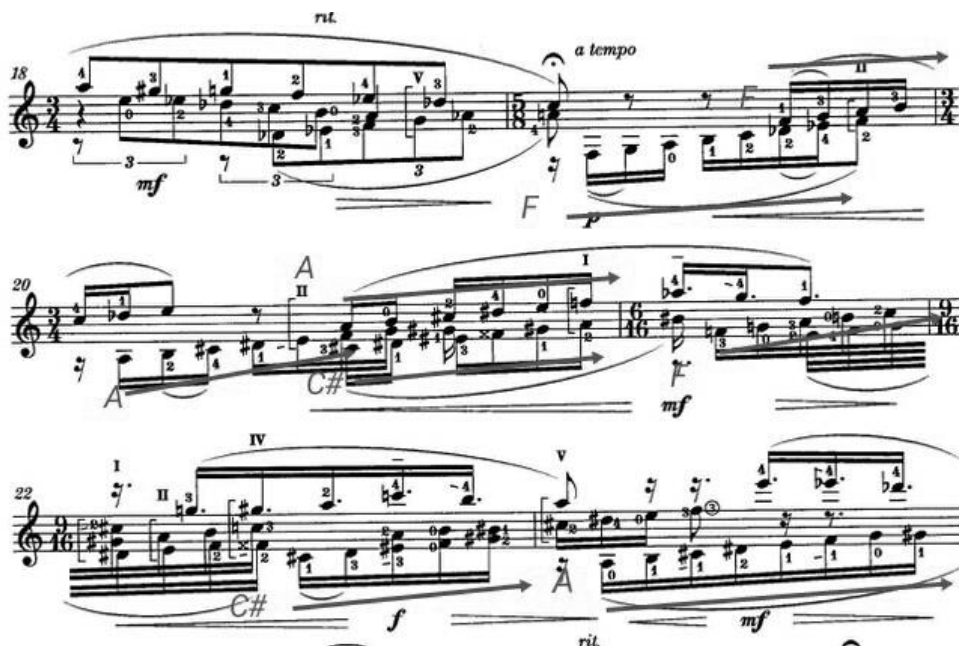
The first movement begins with a sonata form exposition based on two similar sets of material. The first theme group opens with voices of ascending and descending modes while the second theme group consists of rubato eighth notes. The sixth string of the guitar must be tuned up from E to F and functions as a pedal tone throughout the sonata. This movement opens with ascending and descending tetrachords that sound fluid despite the constantly changing tempo. Here, Bogdanović mixes the Lydian mode and the Phrygian mode divided into two tetrachords, seen in Example 33. Later, he transposes this blended scale to start on the pitch A as well as C#. ¹² Suddenly in m. 19, the rhythmic animation is doubled with rapid notes pointing in all directions shown in Example 34.



Example 33. The Lydian tetrachord and the Phrygian tetrachord.

Bogdanović presents this motive in the three keys previously mentioned and develops the first theme into sixteenth notes. Example 34 shows the two tetrachords in the three keys in an ascending motion.

¹² Dusan Bogdanovic, “Dusan Bogdanovic- Sonata No 3” Vimeo, April 20, 2017. Vimeo 00:46 <https://vimeo.com/tonebase/review/292955869/b3cd7926ce>



Example 34. Dušan Bogdanović, *Sonata 3, Moderato Appassionato*, mm. 19-23.

The movement ends with a codetta featuring a *tambora* and “clarinet effect.” The *tambora* is a slap with the thumb near the bridge over a cluster chord. The “clarinet effect” is a color effect where the right hand plays *sul tasto* (closer to the fretboard) an octave above, producing a mellow sound.

II. Lento Rubato

The second movement has a lyrical and melodic character, a flexible rhythmic figuration in the melodies, a dramatic development, and a climax. There is a tense atmosphere created with colors (*ponticello*, *tasto*) and harmonics. This section also has an African rhythmic groove in the second half of the movement. Common in this movement is the syncopated pedal on the top line with the melody moving in the bass, seen in Example 35. We also start to see the pitch being raised by bending the string, a common effect in jazz music.



Example 35. Bogdanović, *Sonata 3*, *Lento Rubato*, mm. 45-49.

Later the music develops into an impressive *fortissimo*, over a F pedal in the bass which takes us to the climax. This polyrhythmic passage increases in tempo with rhythmic subdivisions in the treble, giving a rubato effect, while the steady bass thunders on like it doesn't care what the top line is doing.

IV. Allegretto

The third movement *Allegretto* sounds like scherzo, with its complex rhythmic changes. It contains a complicated polyrhythmic section followed by some minimalistic stylings and improvisation in the last section of the movement. A prominent feature is the use of whole tone scales, seen in Example 36, with bending effects.



Example 36. Bogdanović, *Sonata 3*, *Allegretto*, mm. 26-35.

This frenetic movement made primarily of wild strummed chords, and chromatic and whole tone scales give us the sense we are driving without stopping. In the middle section, a single melody appears on mm. 25-30 while the bass displays arpeggios with rapid, unstable rhythms. The movement culminates with a pizzicato articulation recalling the cell used in the minimalistic section.

IV. *Allegro Brillante*

The fourth movement is written in sonata form. It is cyclical and eclectic with its use of sweeping arpeggios, jazz techniques, and violent rhythms. The most difficult technical challenge is the rapid pulse of the movement, its demanding speed. The contrasting middle section, a flashback of the second movement, links the whole piece and unifies it formally. Example 37 presents arpeggiated descending and ascending quintuplets which are similar to the arpeggios used in the cadenza of Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*.



Example 37. Bogdanović, *Sonata 3, Allegretto Brillante*, mm. 64-69.

This astonishing and eclectic sonata gives a new idiom to the guitar repertoire. Bogdanovic introduces innovative guitar effects throughout, with complex rhythmic patterns, and ends with a series of fortissimo lines and violent chords. Lastly, a heavy F pedal in the bass is reminiscent of rock passages played on electrical guitar.

CONCLUSION

This recording presents four monumental sonatas that leave the listener with distinct impressions. These virtuosic masterworks employ the use of idiomatic guitar techniques such as rhythmic strummed chords (*rasgueados*), rapidly contrasting textures, and percussive effects. They utilize popular dances from centuries past such as the minuet and the pavane, and Latin American popular dances such as the *cueca* and the salsa. Another characteristic they have in common is a contrasting second theme that projects a spiritual connection by using an expressive, lyrical voice.

This document contains theoretical analysis with music examples of various characteristics such as: themes, developments, recapitulations, accents, rhythms, patterns, cells, chords, and effects. I also give solutions to potential challenges that these pieces present to the performer.

This project deeply studies these masterpieces to inspire artists to perform them on different stages. The four compositions span different styles ranging from Impressionism blended with Spanish music, liturgical chant mixed with Chilean folk music, African American rhythms, as well as jazz music. Lastly, each of these works employ an intricate formal musical structure.

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