

## 14. PABLO DE SARASATE - ANDALUSIAN ROMANCE FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO

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**Abstract:** *Pablo de Sarasate was a famous violinist and composer of Spanish origin. In his creations, Sarasate highlighted to the maximum the technical and interpretative potential of the violin, composing both works for violin and orchestra (including fantasias on operatic themes) and musical miniatures for violin and piano. Sarasate's musical language is mainly inspired by Spanish folklore.*

**Key words:** *Sarasate, Andalusian romance, violin, piano, analysis*

### 1. Introduction

Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908) was a famous violinist and composer of Spanish origin. Since childhood, he established himself as a violin virtuoso recognized for his brilliant sound. In his creations, Sarasate highlighted to the maximum the technical and interpretative potential of the violin, composing both works for violin and orchestra (including fantasias on operatic themes) and musical miniatures for violin and piano. Sarasate's musical language is mainly inspired by Spanish folklore. At the end of 1877, Sarasate was hired to compose the series of *Spanish Dances for violin and piano*, which would later be published by the German publicist Fritz Simrock in four notebooks: I. *Malagueña* and *Habanera* op. 21 (1878); II. *Romanza andaluza* and *Jota navarra* op. 22 (1879); III. *Playera* and *Zapateado* op. 23 (1880); IV. No. 7 (*Vito*) and No. 8 (*Habanera*) op. 26 (1882).<sup>46</sup> In the process of composing these *Dances*, Sarasate combined and highlighted pre-existing elements of Spanish national folklore (by quoting popular songs that belonged to both famous contemporary composers and anonymous authors) with musical means of personal expression.

### 2. Discussions

The two dances that complete the second notebook (*Romanza andaluza* and *Jota navarra* op. 22) were completed by Sarasate in 1878 during his first concert tour in Scandinavia. Dedicated to the brilliant violinist of Czech origin Wilma Norman-Neruda (1833-1911), the dances are contrasting in rhythm and character. According to musicologist Nagore Ferrer<sup>47</sup>, Sarasate used as inspiration for *Romanza Andaluza* the musical collection of folk songs from Andalusia by Isodoro Hernández (1847-1888), a Spanish composer who carried out an important activity for collecting and arranging Spanish dances and songs. Hernández published several important collections (*Flores de España*, *Perlas gaditanas* and *Brisas españolas*)<sup>48</sup>,

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<sup>46</sup>[https://www.henle.de/jp/detail/?Title=Pablo+de+Sarasate+Spanish+Dances+for+Violin+and+Piano\\_1370&from=en](https://www.henle.de/jp/detail/?Title=Pablo+de+Sarasate+Spanish+Dances+for+Violin+and+Piano_1370&from=en) (accessed on 28 July 2022, 18.29)

<sup>47</sup>[https://www.academia.edu/45563594/PABLO\\_SARASATES\\_SPANISH\\_DANCES\\_A\\_CONTEXTUAL\\_STUDY\\_AND\\_FLUTE\\_TRANSCRIPTIONS\\_Thesis\\_submitted\\_in\\_fulfillment\\_of\\_the\\_Degree\\_of\\_Doctor\\_of\\_Philosophy\\_in\\_Music\\_Performance](https://www.academia.edu/45563594/PABLO_SARASATES_SPANISH_DANCES_A_CONTEXTUAL_STUDY_AND_FLUTE_TRANSCRIPTIONS_Thesis_submitted_in_fulfillment_of_the_Degree_of_Doctor_of_Philosophy_in_Music_Performance) (accessed July 26, 2022, 4:14 p.m.).

<sup>48</sup>Flowers from Spain, Pearls of Cadiz and Spanish Breezes (personal translation)

volumes from which Sarasate was inspired to compose his folkloric creations.

Sarasate's *Romanza Andaluza* is composed in the key of *C Major*, in the measure of 6/8. The piece is built by juxtaposing three different folk songs from Andalusia (compiled by Hernández) that will develop the lyrical and expressive character of the composition. From the point of view of the musical structure, *Romanza* can be structured strophic, according to the following scheme:

Stanza A			Stanza B	Stanza C		transi tion passage	Stanza D		Stanza E	Stanza F		Coda sau Bv
Introd.	A	Av	B	C	Cv		D	D <sub>1</sub>	E	F	F <sub>1</sub>	B <sub>v</sub>
4 m	10m	9 m	13 m	9 m	7 m	9 m	8 m	8 m	12 m	8 m	8 m	17m
m. 1-4	5-14	15-23	24-36	37-45	46-52	m. 53-61	62-69	70-77	78-89	90-97	98-105	106-122
C	G	G	d-D V	G	...G	c ~ G	c~g	E b ~ g	G~c	C	C	C

### 3. Results

Romance is a lyrical musical genre, [...] appeared in Spain in the Middle Ages and spread, from the 16th century, in all European countries. The emergence of romance is linked to the fight waged by the Spanish to reconquer the territories occupied by the Arabs since the 13th century (*Reconquista*). Romance has always had a very expressive, accessible, easy-to-remember melodic line and a simple accompaniment - more of a harmonic support with small interventions to emphasize some poetic meanings in the text, possibly a *ritornella*\* -, accompaniment supported by guitar, piano, harp etc.<sup>49</sup>

Although the title of the piece refers to the geographical location of Andalusia, an area located in the south of Spain, its musical character is not distinctive enough to identify the characteristics of a specific dance style representative of this area, so Sarasate seems to rather highlight only a local mood or color, rather than the particularities of a cultural object.

The first stanza (A), organized in two phrases: phrase A = 10 measures (m. 5-14) and phrase Av = 9 measures (m. 15-23), begins on the piano in a comfortable tempo (*Andantino*) in the measure of 6/8 with a rhythmic figure (marked with x) similar to the Spanish style of guitar accompaniment. This rhythm is repeated during four measures and has the role of preparing the main theme that will be presented by the violin (m. 5-36).

The main melody of the romance has a lyrical, expressive character (indicated by the author himself in the violin score by the indication *molto espressivo*) and justifies the title that Sarasate chose; theme is taken from *¡¡¡Ay!!! Serenata Andaluza*, folk song for voice and piano accompaniment that is part of the *Perlas gaditanas* collection published by Isidoro Hernández in Madrid in 1876 (for more on this topic, we recommend you research the link below)<sup>50</sup>:

<sup>49</sup> Dumitru, Bughici, Dictionary of musical forms and genres, Musical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1987, p. 286

<sup>50</sup>[https://www.academia.edu/45563594/PABLO\\_SARASATES\\_SPANISH\\_DANCES\\_A\\_CONTEXTUAL\\_STUDY\\_AND\\_FLUTE\\_TRANSCRIPTIONS\\_Thesis\\_submitted\\_in\\_fulfillment\\_of\\_the\\_Degree\\_of\\_Doctor\\_of\\_Philosophy\\_in\\_Music\\_Performance](https://www.academia.edu/45563594/PABLO_SARASATES_SPANISH_DANCES_A_CONTEXTUAL_STUDY_AND_FLUTE_TRANSCRIPTIONS_Thesis_submitted_in_fulfillment_of_the_Degree_of_Doctor_of_Philosophy_in_Music_Performance) (accessed July 27, 12:00 p.m.)

Ex. no. 1 a, Isidoro Hernández, ¡¡Ay!!! *Serenata Andaluza*, m. 33-48

Ex. no. 1 b, Sarasate, m. 1-9

Sarasate respects the original melody almost entirely, with small exceptions involving the introduction of small melodic and metrical variations (changing the 3/8 measure to 6/8). The imitative accompaniment of the guitar, an instrument closely associated with Spain, as well as the folk style of the melody, gives this composition a slightly exotic air, without necessarily portraying the specific character of the Andalusian region. The repetitive rhythmic cell in the piano score adds a playful character to the song.

The second stanza (B), developed over 13 measures (m. 24-36), organized 4 + 4 + 4 + 1, begins with a new theme in the key of *D minor*. The character of this theme is different from the previous one, more passionate and tense, supported by suggestive dynamic waves. The piano accompaniment, organized on the same rhythmic structure characteristic of the first stanza (*cell x*), supports the new character of the second stanza. The theme of Stanza B is taken almost identically from the popular song *¡¡Ay!!! Serenata andaluza*, but there are some small changes of register, rhythm and meter:

Ex. no. 2 a, Hernández, ¡¡Ay!!! *Serenata andaluza*, m. 57-63

Ex. no. 2 b, Sarasate, m. (24-27)

Sarasate prepares the next section of the *Romance* (Stanza C) through an interesting harmonic progression: *D minor - D Major (V) - G Major*. The third stanza (m. 37-52), consisting of two phrases: phrase C = 8 measures (m. 37-45) and phrase Cv = 7 measures (m. 46-52), presents a new theme based on the structure of another Spanish folk song (also collected by the composer Isodoro Hernández and published in 1878) entitled *La mandolinata de los estudiantes: serenata Española*; this was very popular among students, a community that had an important impact in the international dissemination of Spanish popular music from 1878. Sarasate also preserves the originality of the melody and the rhythm of the accompaniment; the only changes again refer to the change of the meter from 3/8 to 6/8 and the key from *E Major* to *G Major*:

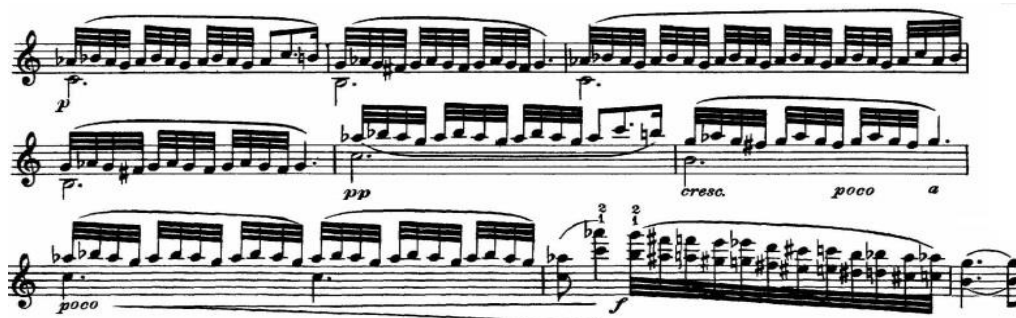
Ex. no. 3 a, Hernández, *La mandolinata de los estudiantes: serenata Española*, m. 12-23<sup>51</sup>

Ex. no. 3 b, Sarasate, m. 37-40

The second phrase of the C section (m. 46-52) is slightly dynamized rhythmically and melodically compared to the first phrase, but Sarasate does not make significant changes. Characteristically, the melody in the violin score is serene, playful.

The next section (m. 53-61) can be seen as a transitional modal passage that connects Stanza C and Stanza D. The fragment presented by the violin consists of very fast rhythmic structures on double strings (thirty-second notes), repeated by slight melodic variations and is organized on the structure 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 1:

<sup>51</sup> Idem, <https://www.academia.edu> (accessed on July 27, 12:30 p.m.).



Ex. no. 4, Sarasate, m. 53-61

This passionate section, built with notes repeated very quickly, reminds us of an Andalusian dance called *Zapateado*, characterized by lively rhythms and evoking *flamenco*<sup>52</sup> or gypsy music. The lively rhythmic-melodic structures have a rough and wild character and create a very strong impression on the audience; the obsessive repetition of the notes, enriched with numerous accidental alterations and dissonant intervals such as the augmented second, tenses the musical development in terms of dynamics (*crescendo poco a poco*) and character, and the piano supports and completes the harmony.

The melodic dramatization of the passage culminates in measure 60, when the violin presents a descending chromatic scalar cadence on minor sixth intervals. This rhythmic-melodic structure must fit into the 6/8 measure, without changing the basic *tempo* of the piece. It is recommended that these melodic and rhythmic figurations to be studied from rare to fast, both ascending and descending, in various rhythmic formulas, with different bow specialties, but also in the original final version. In the execution of the 12 descending chromatic sounds, the left hand must move compactly so that the sonority is very clear rhythmically and melodically.

Stanza D begins in the key of *C minor* and unfolds over 16 measures (m. 62-77), consisting of two phrases: phrase D = 8 measures (m. 62-69) and phrase D1 = 8 measures (m. 70-77). The characteristic theme of this fragment has no clear origins, but it resembles other themes that were collected by the same composer mentioned earlier. The first phrase should be played temperamentally and very passionately according to the character indication in the violin score (*appassionato, molto espressione*). The melody presented by the violin, developed through the sequence of several intervals in double stops, is harmonically supported by the piano accompaniment, organized on the same rhythmic-melodic cell characteristic of the initial stanza. The passionate character of this section must be sustained by a consistent sound, by an ample *vibrato*, the ribbon of hair must adhere to the string throughout its width.

The next phrase reveals a different character, totally opposite to the previous section: the tone is intimate, withdrawn (*piano*), the *tempo* is calmed by the indication *poco più lento* and the character must be very expressive. The melodic material of the violin reveals a tender theme, organized in expressive thirds, which confirms once again that this character piece is a love song, sprinkled with contrasting emotional states, with contradictory feelings. Harmonically, this section follows the following route: *C minor ~ G minor ~ E b Major ~ G minor*. The last

<sup>52</sup> Musical genre that appeared and developed in Spain, especially in the Andalusia region, characterized by a pronounced rhythmicity through the use of castanets. (cf. <https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flamenco>, accessed on August 1, 2022, 3:26 p.m.).

measure of this phrase prepares the appearance of the next stanza from an agogical (*poco rit.*), dynamic (*diminuendo*) and harmonic point of view (through a repetitive pedal on the *G* in the piano accompaniment, corresponding to the dominant function of the following tonality, *C minor*).

The characteristic theme of the E stanza begins in the initial *tempo* (*Andantino*) and is inspired by the folk song *El recluta* (*The Recruit*), which is part of the same collection previously mentioned *Perlas gaditanas*. Again, Sarasate respects the original song, including some slight variations in meter (from 3/8 to 6/8) and melody (by introducing double notes on intervals of major and minor sixths and thirds):

The image shows a musical score for 'Ex. no. 5 a, Hernández, El recluta, m. 1-13'. It consists of two systems. The first system has a vocal line (CANTO) and a piano accompaniment (PIANO). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto (m.m. 60-70)'. The lyrics are 'Ay! pro-be si-to de mi'. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment with the lyrics 'ay! pro-be si-to de mi a-y! quien con-so-la-rá mis pe-nas'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

Ex. no. 5 a, Hernández, *El recluta*, m. 1-13

The image shows a musical score for 'Ex. no. 5 b, Sarasate, m. 78-85'. It consists of two systems. The first system has a violin line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Tempo I.' and 'poco animato'. The second system continues the violin line and piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

Ex. no. 5 b, Sarasate, m. 78-85

This section runs over 12 measures (m. 78–89), structured 4 + 4 + 4. Measures 82–85 are constructed as a descending harmonic progression, similar in structure to the Andalusian cadence<sup>53</sup>. This descending modal construction (on degrees IV-III-II-I) is actually a diatonic tetrachord in the Phrygian mode on *G* (*C, B b, A b, G*) strongly imprinted by the sonority characteristic of Spanish music. To reinforce this specific sonority, Sarasate repeats the fragment identically in the next 4 measures (m. 86-89). Despite the name, the Andalusian cadence is not a real cadence, being used mainly at the end of the phrase, through *ostinato* repetition.

The last stanza (F) begins in the key of *C Major* and is organized into two phrases similar in terms of thematic construction: the phrase *F* = 8 measures (m. 90-97) and the phrase *Fv* = 8 measures (m. 98-105). The violin's melodic material is enriched with numerous changes of position in double stops and chords that can pose problems of intonational accuracy. We recommend that the study of these passages be done rare in order to become aware of the steps that the fingers of the

<sup>53</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andalusian\\_cadence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andalusian_cadence) (accessed August 2, 2022, 2:03 p.m.)

left hand have to follow to perform correctly the change of the positions. The sound should be full, sustained in terms of the amount of bow used. The last section of this piece corresponds to the Coda, which unfolds over 17 measures (m. 106-122), organized 4 + 4 + 3 + 6. The thematic material is constructed according to the model of the secondary stanza (B), in the key of *C minor*:



Ex. no. 6, Sarasate, m. 106-109

The Spanish character of this theme is highlighted by Sarasate through the play of tonalities, *harmonic C minor* (the appearance of the augmented second between degrees VI-VII) and *C Major*, a phenomenon that increases the tonal instability of this section. Both instruments support this theme dynamically (*p*, *pp*), as well as character (*tranquillo*). In the last 6 measures of the Coda (m. 117-122), Sarasate again presents elements of the characteristic theme from the initial stanza (including the rhythmic *cell x* in the accompaniment), which this time is presented by the piano. The violin supports the theme with an uninterrupted *trill* that gradually conquers the violinistic range up to the high register. The sonority is gradually diminished until the total dissolution of the sound, which is gradually extinguished on a long *crescendo*, present in the score of both protagonist instruments.

#### 4. Conclusions

In this character piece, the composer wants to capture the diversity of love feelings and the different forms it can take: light - dark, nostalgic sadness - joy, resignation - passion. The multiple facets of these feelings are also highlighted from a harmonic point of view by alternating major and minor tonalities, by accentuating tonal instability or by introducing numerous accidental alterations. Dynamic and character contrasts complete the picture of this passionate song that the violin manages to successfully melt into the hearts of the audience.

#### References

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#### Web resources

1. [http://www.sinfoniavirtual.com/revista/033/sarasate\\_flamenco.pdf](http://www.sinfoniavirtual.com/revista/033/sarasate_flamenco.pdf)
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