

A. José – Sonata para guitarra

II. Minuetto

Notes

The *Sonata* of Antonio José, the most famous piece of the few he wrote for guitar, was only discovered a few decades ago. Since its discovery, there was some discussions around the performance of the piece as two manuscripts existed. The two of them were used by guitarist Ricardo Iznaola, former pupil of Regino Sainz de la Maza, the dedicatee of the piece. He had played it for years after the passing of his master in 1981, and made a *premiere* recording in 1990. However, he only published the edition later, as well as a comparative analysis of the two manuscripts (Iznaola, 1996). Angelo Gilardino started to look into this piece exactly around 1990, but with only one manuscript in hand, and offered *his* edition of the *Sonata* (José, Sonata para guitarra, 1990). After publishing it, he was made aware of the existence of Iznaola's work, contacted him, and ultimately could gather both manuscripts and create an edition with his *Edizioni Musicali Berbén* that corrected the playing issues in the score and that would show the impossibilities of the manuscript and suggested solutions. This edition is contained in a book where the 'final' manuscript (José, Sonata para guitarra, 1934) is included, and some insight and context, as well as the history and life of the composer, is shared (Gilardino, 1990).

The image shows a musical score for bars 54-56 of Movement I. The top staff is marked 'Tempo (un poquito menos movido)' and 'rit. mucho'. It contains a melodic line with triplets and a bass line with chords. The bottom staff is labeled 'ossia' and shows an alternative chord construction. Fingerings and dynamics (pp, mf) are indicated throughout.

Movement I – Allegro Moderato : In Iznaola's comparative study, we can see he suggests two possibilities, as the chords construction varied on the two different manuscripts : bars 54-56

The image shows a musical score for bars 145-147 of Movement I. It features a melodic line with a circled '7' in a red circle, indicating a suggested cut-off point for a chord. The score includes fingerings and a dynamic marking 'f'.

Movement I – Allegro Moderato : Here, again in Iznaola's study, we can see that José's desired length of the chord isn't really possible, but Iznaola's still included the original idea, and then suggested that it should actually be cut sooner in order to play the rest : bars 145-147



Movement I – Allegro Moderato :

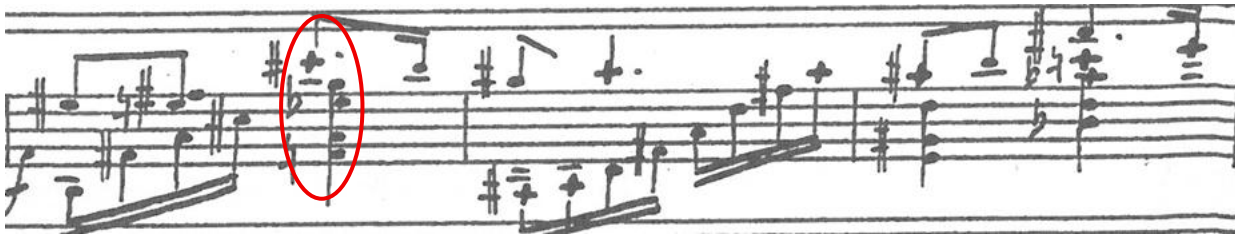
- Manuscript : The chord is unplayable as the fingers cannot stretch that far : bars 33-34
- Gilardino : He decided to re-arrange the chord and cut the D off : bars 33-34
- Iznola : He also re-arranged the chord, but only changed the order and kept the notes : bars 33-35

Tuning

7=C / 8=Ab

Non solvable issues

Very often in the *Sonata*, the main problems are in the chord constructions, where José wrote either too many notes or notes in an order that makes it impossible to play. Unfortunately, most of these problems cannot be solved, as they are in medium or high range, and the extra basses cannot help in any way.



Movement I – Allegro Moderato : Here, there are five different notes, and they should all be played by a different finger. Unfortunately, we only have 4 available fingers on the left hand, and the notes are all in medium/high range, so we cannot use the extra basses : bars 29-31

Possible improvements

In this piece, as we mentioned above, most of the problems are in the chord construction, and often we cannot solve them. Luckily, it is still sometimes possible to play what's written with the help of the 8-string guitar, where it would have been impossible on 6 strings.

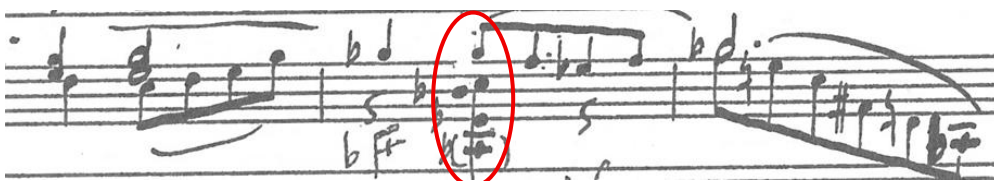
- Bars 10-12 – 1) : The chord is technically unplayable here as there are too many notes demanding a different finger and the stretch is too big, and that’s probably why José himself suggested an alternative solution, placing the low Ab in the beat before. If we desire to play that Ab in the chord anyway, it is possible to do so by playing it as a harmonic with the nose in position XII on the 8th string (tuned in Ab).

Alternatives

Some alternatives can also be found, where we cannot exactly play what is written but, with the help of the 8-string guitar, we can offer new ideas to find a closer way to the original score. These possibilities are of course a suggestion, as every artist could have a different opinion on these artistic choices.

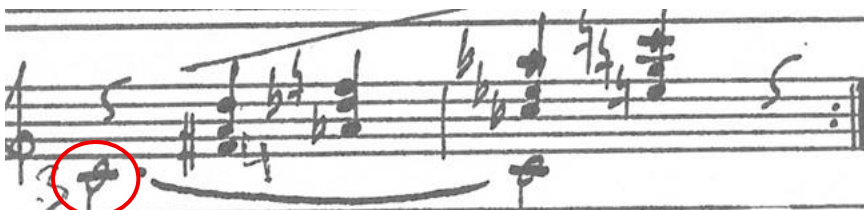
- Bars 15-16 – 2) : It’s impossible here to keep the C ringing throughout the two bars as written, as the fingers will need to move to higher positions. With 7=C, we can however offer two alternative solutions : either we octave the C down to the 7th (open) string, or we play it as a harmonic at the right pitch in position XII on the 7th string. It will be the performer’s choice that will determine the solution.
- Bars 55-56 – 3) : It’s impossible here to keep the Ab ringing throughout the two bars as written, as the fingers will need to move to higher positions. With 8=Ab, we can however offer two alternative solutions : either we octave the Ab down to the 8th (open) string, or we play it as a harmonic at the right pitch in position XII on the 8th string. It will be the performer’s choice that will determine the solution.

Interesting sections



1) Bars 10-12

With 8=Ab, we can play the low Ab as a harmonic in position XII with the nose.



2) Bars 15-16 (Alternative)

With 7=C, it’s possible to play and keep the C ringing, played as a harmonic in position XII.



3) Bars 55-56 (Alternative)

With $8=A^b$, it's possible to play and keep the A^b ringing, played as a harmonic in position XII.

Works Cited

- Gilardino, A. (1990). *Antonio José - Sonata para guitarra : nuova edizione a cura di Angelo Gilardino e Ricardo Iznaola*. Ancona, Italy: Edizioni Musicali Bèrben.
- Iznaola, R. (1996). A problem in musical heuristics : the guitar works of Antonio José. *Guitar Journal*.
- José, A. (1934). *Sonata para guitarra. Sonata para guitarra, a mi querido amigo Regino Sainz de la Maza*. Burgos, Spain.
- José, A. (1990). *Sonata para guitarra. Sonata para guitarra*. Edizioni Bèrben, Ancona, Italy.