

A. José – Sonata para guitarra

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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 'rit. mucho' and 'Tempo (un poquito menos movido)'. 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 triplets and a bass line with chords. A red circle highlights a specific chord in the bass line, labeled with a circled '7'. Dynamics (f) and fingerings are indicated throughout.

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 :

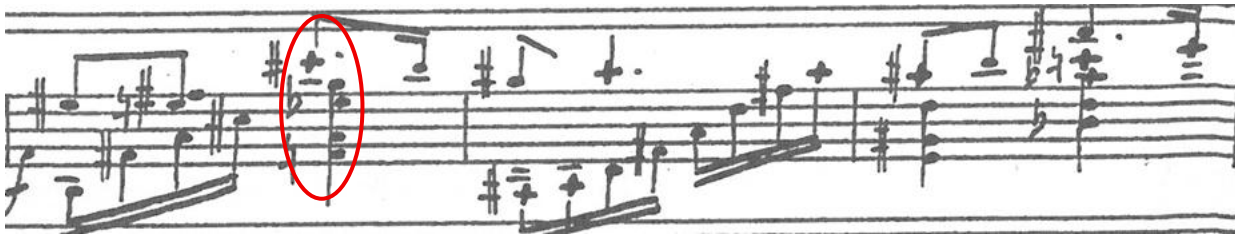
- Manuscript : The chord is unplayable as the fingers cannot stretch that far : bars 33-34
- Gilardino : He decided to re-arrange the chord and cut the D off : bars 33-34
- Iznola : He also re-arranged the chord, but only changed the order and kept the notes : bars 33-35

Tuning

7=D / 8=A

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.

- Bar 14 – 1) : The chord is playable as written but cannot be kept the whole, which kills the continuity with the chord before. By playing the G on the 8th string in position X, we can adapt the fingering and play everything as written.
- Bars 20-21 – 2) : The chords are unplayable as written, as too many notes need different fingers. With 7=D, we can play the chords in barré VI and have the Ab and the Eb in the barré, keeping the other fingers for the rest of the notes.
- Bar 24 – 3) : The low Bb is impossible to hold for the right length. With 7=D, it is now possible to play it, along with the F of the following chord, in a barré VIII, as to be able to keep it ringing.

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 42-43 – 4) : The chords are impossible to play, even with the extra strings, but we can use those strings to find a closer way. We would have to take the medium A out, but with 7=D, we can play the rest of the notes as follow : the first chord with the help of a barré III and the second with the help of a barré VII.
- Bars 49-50 – 5) : The chord is unplayable, as both A's should be played on the same string. By using the 8th string (tuned in A) to octaviate the low A down, we can now play the medium A on the 5th string and have a complete chord.

Interesting sections



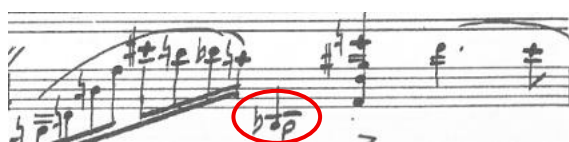
1) Bar 14

With 8=A, we can play the low G in position X to keep the chord ringing.



2) Bars 20-21

With 7=D, it's possible to play and keep the chord ringing with the low Ab in barré VI.



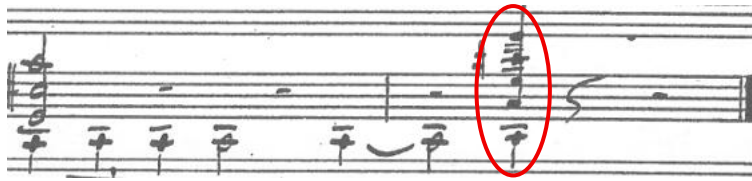
3) Bar 24

With 7=D, it's possible to play and keep the bass ringing with the low Bb in barré VIII.



4) Bars 42-43 (Alternative)

With 7=D, it's possible to play the chords, by taking out the medium A, with a barré III and then VII.



5) 49-50 (Alternative)

With 8=A, you octave the low A down and play the medium A as a harmonic on the 5th string that is now free.

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.
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- José, A. (1934). *Sonata para guitarra. Sonata para guitarra, a mi querido amigo Regino Sainz de la Maza*. Burgos, Spain.
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