

A. José – Sonata para guitarra

IV. Final

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 guitar, Movement I, Allegro Moderato, bars 54-56. The score is presented in two staves. The top staff has a tempo marking "Tempo (un poquito menos movido)" and a "rit. mucho" marking. It features a melodic line with triplets and a bass line with chords. The bottom staff is labeled "ossia" and shows an alternative chord construction. Roman numerals VII, VI, and IX are indicated above the staves. Dynamics include *pp*, *mf*, and *pp*. Fingerings are shown with numbers 1-4.

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 guitar, Movement I, Allegro Moderato, bars 145-147. The score is presented in two staves. The top staff has a melodic line with triplets and a bass line with chords. A red circle highlights a chord marked with a circled "7". Dynamics include *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 :

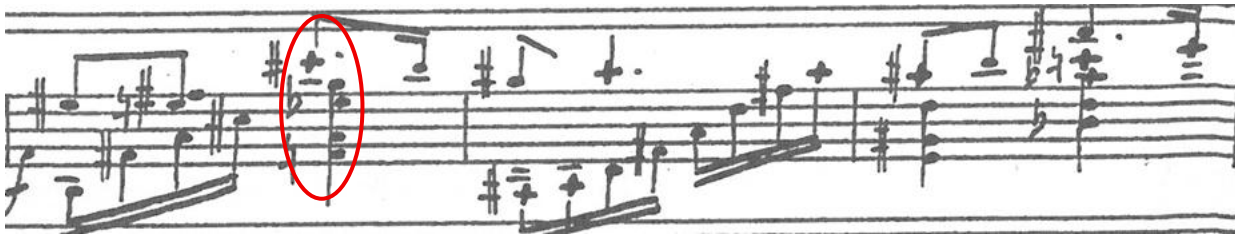
- Manuscript :The chord is unplayable as the fingers cannot stretch that far : bars 33-34
- Gilardino : He decided to re-arrange the chord and cut the D off : bars 33-34
- Iznaiola : He also re-arranged the chord, but only changed the order and kept the notes : bars 33-35

Tuning

7=D / 8=Bb

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.

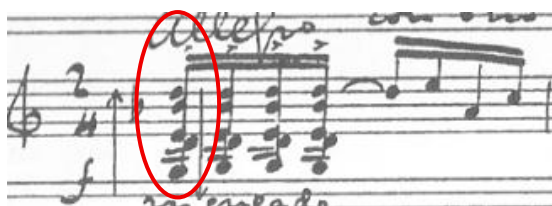
- Bar 1 – 1) : The chord cannot be played as it is, because the stretch of the finger is impossible. With 7=D, we can play a half barré III and the D open string, E on 5th string and G on 7th string and it is completely possible to play.
- Bars 169-170 – 5) : The chord is unplayable as the fingers cannot stretch between the low G and the high D. With 7=D, the performer can actually the low G, in position V. It then allows him to keep the bass ringing during the rest of the bar, as indicated.

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 98-99 – 2) : The first chord is completely unplayable as it is, even with the help of the extra strings. However, we can find a closer way to play them, with the 7th string tuned in D. By taking the medium Ab out, that is already in the bass at all times anyway and the high Eb, that is a doubleton, we can now play the rest of the chords as written, with the low Ab in position VI.
- Bars 103-104 – 3) : The chords are completely unplayable as they are, even with the help of the extra strings. However, we can find a closer way to play them, with the 7th string tuned in D. By taking the medium Ab out, that is already in the bass at all times anyway, we can now play the rest of the chords as written, with the low Ab in position VI.
- Bars 167-168 – 4) : The chord is unplayable here as all five notes require a different finger. If we play the Bb one octave lower as a harmonic in position XII of the 8th string (tuned in Bb), we can use the other fingers to play the rest of the chord, and the harmonic can be played with the nose. It could technically be possible to play the harmonic with the nose in position V, and we would get the right pitch for the Bb, but it is quite difficult to make the harmonics in position V sound, let alone with the nose, so it depends on the ambition of the performer.

Interesting sections



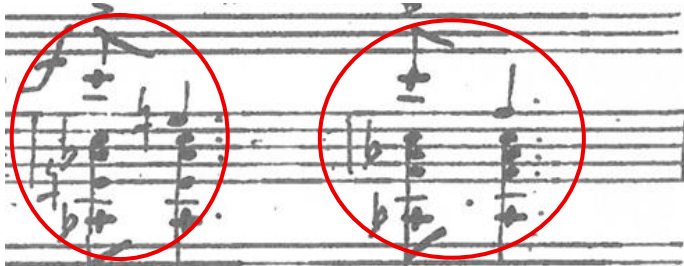
1) Bar 1

With 7=D, the chord is playable with a half barré III, open D and fingers on 5th and 7th string for the E and low G



2) Bars 98-99 (Alternative)

With 7=D, and by taking out the high Eb (first chord) and the medium Ab (both), the chords are playable in a closer way with a barré VI.



3) Bars 103-104 (Alternative)

With 7=D, and by taking out the medium Ab, the chords are playable in a closer way with the low Ab in position VI.



4) Bar 167-168 (Alternative)

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



5) Bars 169-170

With 7=D, it's possible to play and keep the low G ringing in position V.

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.