

ANDRÉS SEGOVIA
1950s American Recordings
Volume 3



Francisco Tárrega • Isaac Albéniz • Julián Aguirre
Manuel Ponce • Joaquín Malats • Oscar Esplá



Great Guitarists • Andrés Segovia (1893-1987)

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Andrés Segovia was born in Linares, Jaén, in the region of Spain known as Andalusia, on 21st February 1893. From early childhood Segovia was deeply responsive to the sound of the guitar, an instrument which was part of everyday life in southern Spain. At the age of ten he moved from Linares in order to attend school in Granada. Here he acquired his first guitar. Despite the absence of any competent teachers, Segovia soon gained a prodigious mastery of the instrument and discovered the existence of many fine compositions surpassing the limitations of Andalusia's folkloric guitar styles.

By 1909 Segovia was ready to offer his public début at the Centro Artístico in Granada. Concerts in Cordoba and Seville followed and later he went to Madrid, where in 1912 he gave a recital at the Ateneo and was presented with a concert guitar of superlative quality by the luthier, Manuel Ramírez. Segovia's first international tour was to South America in the early 1920s while his European reputation was established by a resoundingly successful concert in Paris in 1924 attended by many distinguished musicians.

From this period of his life onwards Segovia not only enriched the range of the guitar repertoire by transcribing and performing works by great composers of the past, but also persuaded his contemporaries to write new pieces. Composers such as Moreno Torroba, Turina and Manén (Spain), Ponce (Mexico), Castelnuovo-Tedesco (Italy), Villa-Lobos (Brazil), Roussel (France), and Tansman (Poland), wrote significant repertoire for him during this crucial period of his early concert career. Following the Second World War, other composers contributed to his musical treasury including Rodrigo, Mompou, Asencio (Spain), Duarte (England), and Haug (Switzerland). Since Segovia's death, further compositions by Vicente Arregui, Lennox Berkeley, Henri Collet, Cyril Scott, Gaspar Cassadó, Raymond Petit, and others, have been discovered among his private papers.

Armed with an expanding repertoire, Segovia's international esteem rapidly increased, especially after

his initial commercial recordings in 1927. In 1926 he performed in Russia and Britain, in 1927 in Scandinavia, in 1928 came his first tour of the United States, and in 1929 Segovia made his début in Japan. From then on Segovia's guitar was heard in almost every country in the world. He continued touring until the age of 94, his last concert taking place in Miami, Florida on 4th April 1987. Andrés Segovia died at his home in Madrid two months later on 2nd June 1987.

These recordings present Segovia's performances of the music by Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909), the great nineteenth-century pioneer of the guitar, and Manuel Ponce (1882-1948), founding father of twentieth-century Mexican music and a close friend of Segovia. Pieces by Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909), Julián Aguirre (1868-1924), Joaquín Malats (1872-1912), and Oscar Esplá (1886-1976) are also featured. With such composers (four Spanish and two from Latin-America), Segovia was in his element, expressing cultural affinities which matched the natural idioms of the Spanish guitar.

Historically Francisco Tárrega is of immense significance in the development of the guitar over the last two centuries, in terms of both technical innovations and compositions. His advocacy of the new concepts of guitar construction embodied in the work of Antonio de Torres (1817-1892), the great Spanish luthier, has proved influential right up to the present day. Working with the Torres type of instrument (with its enhanced tonal qualities, fan strutting, and a 650 millimetre string length), Tárrega established teaching methods including the most practical way of holding the guitar (using a footstool to raise the left leg), principles of left and right hand techniques, and studies to develop a player's skills.

Furthermore, Tárrega composed some superb music for the instrument, meticulously indicating the precise placing of notes on the fingerboard to produce the most expressive effects. In these little masterpieces, often influenced by Chopin, he established a Spanish romantic voice for the guitar which has enchanted

public and players ever since. Though he did not write a guitar tutor, his methods were propagated through his many students. Among these, Emilio Pujol (1886-1980) and Pascual Roch (1860-1921) wrote down his principles of pedagogy in volumes still in use today. Tárrega was also the first great arranger for guitar, transcribing works from composers such as J.S. Bach, Beethoven, Berlioz, Chopin, Grieg, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, and Wagner, as well as pieces from Albéniz and Malats and other Spanish contemporaries.

The recordings begin with a piece often believed to have been composed by Tárrega himself but that is actually an arrangement of a violin study (No. 2, from *Ten Artistic Studies for Violin, Op. 19*), written by Jean-Delphin Alard (1815-1888), the eminent French violinist and composer. Alard was professor at the Paris Conservatoire (1843-1875), where his most famous pupil was Sarasate. His compositions include many studies (as well as *Caprices, Op. 41*, in all keys), two violin concertos, opera fantasias, and two *symphonies concertantes*. He also wrote a *School of Violin: a Complete Progressive Method*.

Alard's *Study in A* (known among guitarists as *Estudio Brillante*), marked *Andante con espressione (poco marcato la melodia)*, is prescribed in the original version for the cultivation of 'absolute equality in the value of the notes'. The student is instructed to 'place the bow broadly on the string and endeavour to obtain perfect smoothness in going from one string to the other'. In Tárrega's transcription for guitar the piece metamorphoses from *Andante con espressione* towards *Allegro moderato*, becoming a fast arpeggio study which (with discreetly added harmonies), is very technically demanding. Tárrega's arrangement shortens the original study yet remains structurally coherent.

Marieta (Mazurka) is one of Tárrega's Chopin-inspired miniatures, a Polish dance with Spanish overtones, first published by Antich y Tena of Valencia in 1903. The piece, though dedicated 'to my most dear friend, D. Santiago Gisbert', is a portrait of his daughter, Marieta, born in 1885. This *Mazurka* exemplifies the composer's use of guitar colours, his ornamentation and *glissandi*, as well as his individual

mastery of the instrument's harmonic resonances.

Preludio No. 5, dedicated to 'the illustrious Dr. Walter Leckie', and *Preludio No. 2* (inscribed 'for my most dear student Miguel Llobet'), are both from a set of fifteen preludes of progressive difficulty written around 1900. The Austrian guitarist and editor, Karl Scheit, commented in his 1961 edition of the *Complete Preludes*: 'The compositions and teachings of Francisco Tárrega represent a milestone in the development of guitar technique. The present preludes are among his most characteristic works. Strictly speaking, they are musical sketches whose purpose is to bring the player into closer relationship with his guitar by means of ingenious fingering and compositional simplicity. They are therefore invaluable instructional material.'

María (Gavota) (published in Barcelona in 1907 and dedicated to the 'eminent mandolinist, D. Baldomero Cateura), portrays Tárrega's wife, María, whom he married in 1881. Within this short but memorable composition, Tárrega injects his own distinctive expressive vitality.

Mazurka in G, dedicated to the 'eminent optician, Dr. Santiago Albitos', is a further example of Tárrega's debt to Chopin. Once again the tonal resources of the guitar are subtly exploited, the melodic line occasionally appearing on the bass strings complete with treble accompaniment. The composer's love of embellishment of his own unique kind is a particular feature of this piece. This is followed by *Adelita*, one of his most inspired and popular mazurkas. In the hands of Segovia it becomes a superb lyric poem, perfect on the instrument for which it was conceived.

Two of the composer's more extended acknowledged masterpieces conclude the selection. *Capricho árabe* (Arab Caprice), dedicated to 'the eminent maestro, D. Tomás Breton', is a tribute to the Moorish heritage of southern Spain. Its opening recalls the *oud*, the Arabic lute, while the steady rhythm which follows evokes the sensuous *Danza mora*, the traditional dance. Segovia mentions in his autobiography how during his youth this piece was 'the *pièce de résistance* of my repertoire and one especially suited to reach the sensitive chords of a feminine heart'.

Recuerdos de la Alhambra (Remembrances of the Alhambra), dedicated to Alfred Cottin, is Tárrega's immortal *tremolo* study, the technical effect by which through rapidly repeated notes a continuous melodic line (reminiscent of a mandolin or a singer), becomes possible on the guitar. Emilio Pujol, Tárrega's first biographer, describes the inspiration of this piece as an evening walk at twilight in the gardens of the Alhambra Palace, Granada. Of all the many recordings by dozens of leading guitarists over the years, Segovia's interpretation remains central to any consideration of the majesty of this remarkable work.

In his autobiography Segovia relates how around 1918 'I was retranscribing *Leyenda* by Albéniz, which hereto has been played from the transcription made by that hack, Don Severino García'. Under the title of *Asturias (Leyenda)*, from *Suite española, Op. 47* this is one of the most idiomatic of all the various guitar arrangements from Albéniz's piano music. In ternary form, it begins as an arpeggiated episode with percussive flamenco-like chords. This is contrasted against a more subdued middle section evoking both the singer and the dance. After the full reprise of the first section, a short nostalgic coda echoes into silence.

Canción by Julián Aguirre (1868-1924) was originally a 'song for piano', and is transcribed here for guitar by Segovia in the spirit of its Peruvian folk style.

Joaquín Malats (1872-1912), the Catalan composer and virtuoso pianist, studied in Barcelona and Paris, and made many international tours, sometimes appearing in concerts with Granados and Albéniz. Segovia's transcription of his *Serenata española* was based on an earlier arrangement by Francisco Tárrega. The composition, originally for piano in the key of F minor, finds its way naturally to E minor when played on plucked strings. Through Segovia's advocacy, *Serenata española* has become a perennially popular encore item among recitalists. Its ebullient melodies, energetic rhythms and Spanish atmosphere are ideally suited to the guitar, though the work has regrettably remained neglected by concert pianists.

Segovia commented on the guitar output of Manuel Ponce: 'From the time I first became acquainted with Ponce in Mexico in 1923...he composed more than

eighty works for the guitar; large or small, they are, all of them, pure and beautiful'. Carlos Chavea (1899-1978) described him as the artist 'who created a real consciousness of the richness of Mexican folk music'. Ponce's output included dramatic works, orchestral scores, chamber music, songs and many piano pieces. Among the guitar works are a concerto, several sonatas, sets of variations, suites, and individual movements. Worldwide, he is celebrated as the composer of *Estrellita*, one of the most beautiful songs of the twentieth century.

Ponce's *Preludes*, begun in the late 1920s, have recently been published as a complete set of 24, covering all keys. In 1930 twelve *Preludes* were edited by Segovia and published by Schott in two albums. Of these, Segovia recorded six, encompassing variety of pace and mood.

The numbering of the *Preludes* here refers in the first instance to the Segovia edition while the figure in brackets shows the placing of each piece within the complete set. Thus Segovia begins with *Prelude No VI* (18) written with a key signature of D minor but ending in A major, subtitled *Chanson populaire espagnol* (Spanish Folksong). Next comes *Prelude VII* (1) in C major, founded on scales and gentle broken chords. *Prelude IX* (9) follows in E major, marked *Allegretto vivo*. *Prelude I* (8) in F sharp minor is a tranquil and resonant work full of fascinating harmonic shifts. The final two are *Prelude III* (13), *Andante*, a meditative piece, and *Prelude IV* (11), a virtuosic vivacious movement selected as a dashing finale.

Mexican Folk Song No. 3 (from *Tres canciones populares mexicanas*) was published by Schott in 1928. The song on which the arrangement is based is *Valentina*, one of the popular songs from the Mexican Revolution which includes the words 'If I have to die tomorrow, better to die today...But only if I can see you.'

Thème varié et Finale (Theme, Variations and Finale), represents another aspect of Ponce's guitar music, reflective and highly innovative. According to Miguel Alcázar, editor of Ponce's *Complete Works for Guitar*, Ponce put the finishing touches to this work in June 1926. Segovia's subsequent edition (published

1928) shortened the composition by removing three sections, as well as changing the order of some of the variations.

After a subtly mysterious opening theme, the first variation consists of repeated chords, marked *Allegro appassionato*. Variations of different moods follow, three of them fast and agitated and the other two pensive and inward with intricate chromaticism. The *Finale*, in three-eight time marked *Vivo scherzando*, is an exuberant demonstration of the guitar's versatility, with rapid scale passages linked by slurs, *glissando* chords moving between frets, and prolific melodic and harmonic inventiveness throughout.

Ponce's contribution to the guitar includes several *Sonatas*, a development Segovia earnestly desired in order to offer substantial recital material. *Sonata III* fulfilled the guitarist's purposes completely for Segovia described it in a letter of 20th July 1927 as 'quite beautiful and an important work for the guitar, the artist and the musician'. The first movement, *Allegro moderato*, opens in D minor with a jaunty chordal theme breaking into arpeggio patterns after the first eight bars. An equilibrium between chords and arpeggio statements steadily evolves, the music marked at crucial moments with *tranquillo*, *passionato*, *più tranquillo ed espressivo*, and *scherzando*. The development, which is not extended, begins with animated triplet figurations, moving towards contrapuntal passages and weighty chords before the recapitulation, followed by a brief coda.

The slow movement, *Chanson*, begins with a theme reminiscent of a folk-song. Then a short section, marked *Vivo*, introduces a brief contrast followed by a reprise of the melody. The third movement, *Allegro non troppo*, is in rondo form, the intermediate sections including chordal episodes and *tremolo* among the guitaristic effects.

Mazurka and *Valse* are from a set of *Four Pieces* written between 1932 and 1933, though for many years only the *Valse* was published (1937), the rest later attracting other editors. One of these editors, Oscar Ghiglia, a student of Segovia, comments on the 'changing and explosive forward motion of the *Mazurka*', and 'the varied, graceful and aristocratic

Valse'. The *Mazurka*, unlike those of Tárrega, owes little to any precedents by Chopin. Its staccato chords contrast with melodic sections and surprising harmonic progressions, making this a distinctly twentieth-century statement. Similarly the *Valse* is no ballroom evocation, being a kind of parody of the conventional dance. A central lyrical section moves the piece from D major towards G minor in a swirl of drifting harmonies. Notes from a recording of the 1950s by Laurindo Almeida, the great Brazilian guitarist, observed that this 'is a somewhat curious little piece in that it makes use of the drone bass and the modal scale with the raised fourth, neither of which has any background at all in Mexican folk-music'.

Oscar Esplá (1886-1976), born in Alicante, in south eastern Spain, studied composition with Saint-Saëns in Paris (1912-13), and in 1932 became professor at the Madrid Conservatoire. After voluntary exile in Belgium after the Spanish Civil War, he returned home in 1960 to teach at the Oscar Esplá Conservatory, Alicante. His compositions include operas and ballets, choral works, and a wide variety of instrumental pieces. *Levantine Impressions*, Nos 2 and 5, are transcriptions from *Levante*, written for piano in 1931. No. 2, after an introductory melody in the key of D, modulates over a drone bass in evocative fragments of song reminiscent of improvisation before the recapitulation of the original theme. No. 5, in binary form, opens with a plaintive tune in A minor before progressing to the second part in A major. Esplá's *Levantine Impressions* are elegant miniatures, short and intense, presenting, in the manner of folk-songs, catchy melodies characterized by strong rhythmic patterns.

Graham Wade

Author of *A New Look at Segovia, His Life, His Music, Vols 1 & II* (with Gerard Garno), *Segovia – A Celebration of the Man and His Music*, and *Maestro Segovia*

JEAN-DELPHIN ALARD (1815-1888):			MANUEL PONCE (1882-1948): Preludes		
Ten Artistic Studies for Violin, Op. 19			[13]	No. VI	1:31
[1]	No. 2: Study in A (arr. Tárrega)	2:05	[14]	No. VII	1:20
	Decca DL 9794, mx MG 4044; March 1955		[15]	No. IX	0:40
FRANCISCO TÁRREGA (1852-1909):			[16]	No. I	1:17
[2]	Marieta (Mazurka)	2:21	[17]	No. III	1:41
	Decca DL 9794, mx MG 4044; February 1955		[18]	No. IV	0:55
[3]	Preludio No. 5	1:47	Tres canciones populares mexicanas		
[4]	Preludio No. 2	2:08	[19]	Mexican Folksong No. 3: La Valentina	1:30
[5]	María (Gavota)	1:28		Decca DL 9734, mx MG 3685; May 1954	
[6]	Mazurka in G	1:59	[20]	Thème varié et Finale	7:56
[7]	Adelita (Mazurka)	1:18		Decca DL 9734, mx MG 3686; May 1954	
[8]	Capricho árabe	5:28	Sonata III		
[9]	Recuerdos de la Alhambra	5:13	[21]	Allegro moderato	6:43
	Decca DL 9794, mx MG 4044; 4th March 1955		[22]	Chanson, Andante	3:09
ISAAC ALBÉNIZ (1860-1909):			[23]	Allegro non troppo	5:18
Suite española, Op. 47				Decca DL 9795, mx MG 4045; February 1955	
[10]	No. 5: Asturias (Leyenda)	6:24	from Four Pieces		
	Decca DL 9633, mx MG 2672; April 1952		[24]	Mazurka	3:50
JULIÁN AGUIRRE (1868-1924):			[25]	Valse	3:09
[11]	Canción	1:08		Decca DL 9795, mx MG 4046 & 4045;	
	Decca DL 9734, mx MG 3686; April 1954			February 1955	
JOAQUÍN MALATS (1872-1912):			OSCAR ESPLÁ (1886-1976):		
[12]	Serenata española	3:43	[26]	Levantine Impressions, Nos 2 & 5	3:30
	Decca DL 9734, mx MG 3686; April 1954			Decca DL 9931, mx MG 5324; April 1956	
All selections recorded in New York					

All arrangements by Andrés Segovia

Playing
Time
77:33

ANDRÉS SEGOVIA (1893-1987)

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1	JEAN-DELPHIN ALARD (1815-1888): Ten Artistic Studies for Violin, Op. 19 No. 2: Study in A (arr. Tárrega)	2:05
2	FRANCISCO TÁRREGA (1852-1909): Marieta (Mazurka)	2:21
3	Preludio No. 5	1:47
4	Preludio No. 2	2:08
5	Maria (Gavota)	1:28
6	Mazurka in G	1:59
7	Adelita (Mazurka)	1:58
8	Capricho árabe	5:28
9	Recuerdos de la Alhambra	5:13
10	ISAAC ALBÉNIZ (1860-1909): Suite española, Op. 47 No. 5: Asturias (Leyenda)	6:24
11	JULIÁN AGUIRRE (1868-1924): Canción	1:08
12	JOAQUÍN MALATS (1872-1912): Serenata española	3:43
13	MANUEL PONCE (1882-1948): Preludes No. VI	1:31
14	No. VII	1:20
15	No. IX	0:40
16	No. I	1:17
17	No. III	1:41
18	No. IV	0:55
19	Tres canciones populares mexicanas Mexican Folksong No. 3: La Valentina	1:30
20	Thème varié et Finale	7:56
21	Sonata III	6:43
22	Allegro moderato	3:09
23	Chanson, Andante	5:18
24	Allegro non troppo	5:18
25	from Four Pieces Mazurka	3:50
26	Valse	3:09
27	OSCAR ESPLÁ (1886-1976): Levantine Impressions, Nos 2 & 5	3:30

Volume 3 of Segovia's 1950s American recordings focuses on music by Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909), the great nineteenth-century pioneer of the guitar, as well as a noted composer and arranger, and Manuel Ponce (1882-1948), founding father of twentieth-century Mexican music and a close friend of Segovia. The great guitarist himself commented: 'From the time I first became acquainted with Ponce in Mexico in 1923... he composed more than eighty works for the guitar; large or small, they are, all of them, pure and beautiful.' Pieces by Albéniz, Aguirre, Malats and Esplá are also included. With such composers (four Spanish and two from Latin-America), Segovia was in his element, expressing cultural affinities which matched the natural idioms of the Spanish guitar.

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