

NAXOS

Regino  
**SÁINZ DE LA MAZA**

**Guitar Music**

**Zapateado • El Vito • Seguidilla-Sevillana**

**Franz Halász, Guitar**



## Regino Sáinz de la Maza (1891-1981)

### Guitar Music

Regino Sáinz de la Maza y Ruiz was born in Burgos, Spain, the eldest son of Serafín Sáinz de la Maza, proprietor of a food shop. One of his younger brothers, Eduardo (1903-1982), often overshadowed by Regino, also became internationally acknowledged as a leading Spanish composer of exquisite guitar works.

Regino began playing the guitar at the age of ten, also taking lessons in piano and composition. When the family moved to San Sebastián in 1910, he continued musical studies at the local Academy of Fine Arts. Later, in Barcelona, he studied with Daniel Fortea, pupil of the great Tárrega, and was deeply influenced by Miguel Llobet, perhaps the most eminent of all Tárrega's pupils.

In 1916 Sáinz de la Maza made his concert début in Bilbao, performing at the Teatro Arriaga. This was followed by his first Madrid recital on 2nd March, 1920, at the Teatro Lara. Also that year, possibly in Granada, Sáinz de la Maza met Falla who inscribed a photo for him with the words, '*To Regino Sáinz de la Maza, with all my admiration for the friend and the artist, Manuel de Falla.*' On 20th May he played in Granada, receiving an eloquent comment from the great poet, Federico García Lorca, with whom the guitarist formed a close friendship: '*On Thursday the 20th, one of the most interesting artists of Spanish youth presented himself before the Granada public... Like Llobet and Segovia, he is a knight errant who, with his guitar over his shoulder, travels through country after country, absorbing everything and leaving the places through which he passes full of ancient melancholy music.*'

During the 1920s, Lorca and Sáinz de la Maza corresponded frequently and the poet dedicated two poems to him in 1923. The guitarist also became a good friend of Salvador Dalí, the brilliant exponent of Surrealism. While staying with the painter in Cadaqués, Catalonia, he performed impromptu concerts. Tárrega's *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* being one of the favourite pieces offered.

In 1921 Sáinz de la Maza made his first South American tour. In 1926 his Paris début took place in the

Salle Pleyel, with subsequent recitals in Germany (1927) and concerts in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil (1929). On 19th December, 1929, in the Royal Basilica of the Monastery of El Escorial, Sáinz de la Maza married Josefina de la Serna y Espina, the daughter of the esteemed novelist, Concha Espina, after whom a major *avenida* in Madrid is named. In 1934 the first movement of *Sonata para guitarra* by Antonio José (1902-1936), dedicated to Regino Sáinz de la Maza, was played by the guitarist in Burgos. This work would eventually become renowned as one of the guitar's finest sonatas.

In 1935, Sáinz de la Maza became professor of guitar at the Royal Conservatory of Madrid, a post he retained until his retirement in 1969. Throughout these decades he taught many distinguished guitarists, the most notable being Alirio Díaz and Ricardo Iznaola. Between 1939 and 1952 Sáinz de la Maza was music critic for the Spanish daily newspaper, *ABC*. His significance in guitar history, however, was intensified by his part in the creation of Joaquín Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*. Rodrigo, Sáinz de la Maza, and the Marqués of Bolarque, met together for a meal in September, 1938, in San Sebastián. During the dinner, either Bolarque or Sáinz de la Maza (there are two versions of the story), suggested that the composer should write a guitar concerto. A few months later the famous *Aranjuez* was down on paper. Its première, performed by Sáinz de la Maza, took place on 9th November, 1940, at the Palacio de Música, Barcelona. The first recording, with Regino performing with the Orquesta Nacional de España, conducted by Ataúlfo Argenta, followed in 1948.

Sáinz de la Maza's connections at the top of Spanish cultural society, also extended to the political world. During the Spanish Civil War the guitarist joined Franco's Propaganda Unit in Burgos among a group of intellectuals which included the poet Dionisio Ridruejo, the scholar Antonio Tovar, the sculptor Emilio Aladrén, and the novelist Juan Antonio de Zunzunegui. Ridruejo's autobiography, *Casi unas memorias* (Editorial Planeta,

1976), comments on how Sáinz de la Maza's 'sensitive and erudite guitar frequently resonated during our meetings'. Though she makes no mention of the Burgos connection, his daughter's biography, *Regino Sáinz de la Maza, Semblanza de mi padre* by Paloma Sáinz de la Maza, includes photos of the artist playing for wounded soldiers in 1938 and giving a recital in the Palacio de Oriente for Generalissimo Franco, Head of State, and the King of Thailand.

In the post-war period Sáinz de la Maza continued to give recitals in Spain and abroad and embarked on both scholarly and creative work. A series of publications with Union Musical Española introduced transcriptions of works by Milán, Sanz, de Visée, Weiss, Bach, and others, and original solos by Mompou, Pitaluga, Pahissa, and other composers. He prepared an edition of Aguado's *Metodo de Guitarra* and edited the standard pedagogic repertoire of Sor, Giuliani, and Carcassi. At the same time his compositions began to be published.

Sáinz de la Maza was the recipient of many honours including membership of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, the Medal of the City of Burgos, and The Gold Medal of Merit in Work. His daughter, Paloma, received a further posthumous Gold Medal from King Juan Carlos in June 1982.

The compositions of Regino Sáinz de la Maza reflect his background, experience, and Spanish identity. His student, Ricardo Iznaola, commented: 'As a composer, he wrote exclusively for the guitar in a stylized idiom that drew heavily on Castilian and Andalusian folksong'.

*Zapateado* (publ. 1962), has become one of the composer's most admired pieces. The flamenco dance is famed for its skilful footwork. This composition moves from lively patterns in the bass to elegant figurations in the upper register. A middle section provides a change of mood with one of Sáinz de la Maza's most inspired melodic lines.

*Meditación* (publ. 1963), from four pieces for a film entitled *La Frontera de Dios* (1965), is a quiet chordal work with a serene melody.

*Rondeña* (publ.1962), a flamenco form derived from the *fandango*, takes its title from Ronda, the picturesque Andalusian town surrounded by limestone hills. The

flamenco virtuoso, Ramón Montoya, created a new *Rondeña*, with different guitar tunings and characteristic themes. Here Sáinz de la Maza provides his own contribution to the genre, rhythmic passages being interspersed with melodic episodes.

The original *Petenera* (publ. 1964) was probably named after Patenera de Rivera, a singer from Cádiz, though its origins may lie in the music of the synagogue. Often the form is superstitiously associated with bad luck. The composer here provides a classical distillation of the style, blending moments of rhythmic impetus with melodic inventiveness.

*Albada y Paisaje* (Dawn and Landscape) (publ. 1963) is a further movement from *La Frontera de Dios*. It begins with repeated notes and animated rhythms before bringing in a slow chordal episode marked *lento y triste* (slow and sad), but this mood gives way to a more ebullient mood with a lively melody over marching chords.

*Baile de Muñecas* (Dance of Dolls) (publ. 1923), an early work, is a delightful miniature in the style of Tárrega. A sweet tune provides the atmosphere, and bell-like harmonics give a magical distance to the music.

Many versions exist of the Andalusian song *El Vito* (publ. 1962). The title refers to the illness once called St Vitus's Dance (now known as *Sydenham's chorea*), characterised by uncontrolled movements of face, hands and feet. The original words of the song begin:

*Con el vito vito viene  
con el vito vito va*

(With El Vito vito come  
With El Vito vito go)

*Idilio (Idyll)*, from *La Frontera de Dios*, encapsulates the style of many traditional studies for guitar, a plaintive melody accompanied by flowing chords.

With *Soleá* (publ. 1976), Sáinz de la Maza returns to the flamenco mainstream the *soleá* or *soleares* (from *soledad*, meaning 'solitude'), being one of the basic forms of the art. The rhythmic structure of the *soleá* is a repeating cycle of twelve beats, accented on beats 3, 6, 8, 10, and 12. In the hands of a classical composer, such a

work does not of course sound quite like an authentic flamenco solo, but presents instead a personal tribute to the concept of the *soleá*.

*Romancillo de María Belén* (The Ballad of María in the Nativity), from *La Frontera de Dios*, is an arrangement of a folk-song of Burgos. In similar vein is the collection of *Canciones Castellanas* comprising several traditional Castilian Songs harmonised by Sáinz de la Maza.

*Sacrificio*, from *La Frontera de Dios*, presents an expressive melody over a beguiling chord progression, before moving into *tremolo*, the device by which plucked strings can deliver a continuous melodic flow.

The *soleáres* flamenco form is closely related in rhythmic structure to the *Alegrías*. The main difference is mood, for whereas the latter is 'joyful', the *soleares* imparts a dark sense of deep feeling.

*Recuerdo* (Remembrance), subtitled *Romanza*, published in 1923 in the suite *Cuatro obras originales* (Four Original Works) with *Baile de Muñecas*, *Meditación*, and *Minueto*, shows the influence of Tárrega's *Preludes* in being melodic with poignant harmonies, and the colourful Spanish guitar sonorities well displayed.

*Estudio en La Menor* (Study in A minor) offers a well articulated melody accompanied by expressive chords. Yet it is a poetic piece which perhaps deserved a less austere title.

This early *Seguidilla-Sevillana* (publ. 1933) presents strongly evocative Spanish themes and a sense of profundity entirely in keeping with the original inspiration for the work.

*Meditación-Estudio* (publ. 1923) was intended as an exercise for the co-ordination of right-hand thumb and fingers. But the composer always makes his studies worth playing as pleasant compositions in their own right.

The minuet was originally a French dance popular from the mid-seventeenth to the late eighteenth century. Yet the early nineteenth-century guitarist Sor wrote an abundance of minuets, Tárrega composed *Estudio en forma de Minueto* and another simply titled *Minueto*, while Agustín Barrios Mangoré wrote several. Thus Sáinz de la Maza is following a guitar tradition in doing homage to a noble dance.

*Cantilena* is a term used for a sustained or lyrical vocal line and in Italian refers to a lullaby, but formerly it was also a Latin word for 'song' or 'melody'. Sáinz de la Maza's *Cantilena* (publ. 1926) explores a plaintive theme supported by moving chordal patterns. It is an optimistic composition and the mood is ideally suited to the *cantabile* qualities of the guitar.

**Graham Wade**

## Franz Halász



The German guitarist Franz Halász began his international career in 1993, when he was awarded first prize in the Andrés Segovia Competition in Spain and in the same year first prize in the Japan Seto-Ohashi Competition. In 2000 he won an award from the Munich Ministry for Science and Culture and in 2007 took the Bavarian Culture Prize. His many recordings for BIS include the complete guitar music of Joaquín Turina and Toru Takemitsu, and for Naxos the complete guitar compositions of Hans Werner Henze (8.557344 and 8.557345), and the works of Ferdinando Carulli for guitar and piano (8.570587 and 8.570588). A guest performer at major festivals and events throughout the world, he has worked together with colleagues of high distinction. He is a professor at the Munich University of Music and Performing Arts, and also offers master-classes at Institutes all over the world including the Manhattan School of Music in New York, the Royal Academy Stockholm, the Academy of Music in Oslo, the Salzburg Mozarteum, São Paulo University, Esmuc in Barcelona and Musikene San Sebastián.

Regino Sáinz de la Maza was a leading guitarist, composer and teacher who earned a place in history as the first soloist to perform Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*. His compositions are deeply rooted in his Spanish identity, drawing heavily on Castilian and Andalusian folksong. Award-winning guitarist Franz Halász has selected the finest examples of Sáinz de la Maza's creativity, including the admired *Zapateado*, atmospheric pieces from the film *La Frontera de Dios* (tracks 2, 8, 10 and 12), and the profoundly evocative *Seguidilla-Sevillana*.

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**SÁINZ DE LA MAZA**  
(1896-1981)



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**Guitar Music**

<b>1 Zapateado</b>	<b>2:47</b>	<b>11 Canciones Castellanas</b>	<b>5:26</b>
<b>2 Meditación</b>	<b>1:39</b>	<b>12 Sacrificio</b>	<b>3:10</b>
<b>3 Rondeña</b>	<b>4:04</b>	<b>13 Alegrías</b>	<b>4:05</b>
<b>4 Petenera</b>	<b>2:49</b>	<b>14 Recuerdo</b>	<b>1:19</b>
<b>5 Albada y Paisaje</b>	<b>2:19</b>	<b>15 Estudio en La Menor</b>	<b>1:10</b>
<b>6 Baile de Muñecas</b>	<b>1:47</b>	<b>16 Seguidilla-Sevillana</b>	<b>1:50</b>
<b>7 El Vito</b>	<b>1:44</b>	<b>17 Meditación-Estudio</b>	<b>1:17</b>
<b>8 Idilio</b>	<b>1:37</b>	<b>18 Minueto</b>	<b>1:27</b>
<b>9 Soleá</b>	<b>3:16</b>	<b>19 Cantilena</b>	<b>1:58</b>
<b>10 Romancillo de María Belén</b>	<b>1:54</b>		

**Franz Halász, Guitar**

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