

Antonio
SOLER

Keyboard Sonatas Nos. 93–95

Evgenny Konnov, Piano



Antonio Soler (1729–1783) Keyboard Sonatas Nos. 93–95

Born in 1729 at Olot, Girona, Antonio Soler, like many other Catalan musicians of his and later generations, had his early musical training as a chorister at the great Benedictine monastery of Montserrat, where his teachers included the *maestro di capilla* Benito Esteve and the organist Benito Valls. Soler studied the work of earlier Spanish and Catalan composers, of Joan Cabanilles and his pupil Josep Elías, combining his abilities as an organist with those of a composer. He took an appointment as organist at the Santa Iglesia de Lérida and was also employed at the Cathedral of La Seu d'Urgell. It was there that in 1752 he met the Bishop of Urgell, former Prior of the monastery of the Escorial, Sebastián de Victoria, who was seeking someone to serve as an organist at the Escorial. Soler took this opportunity, and was ordained subdeacon by the Bishop, entering the Hieronymite Order of San Lorenzo de El Escorial and taking his vows the following year. In 1757, on the death of the previous incumbent, Soler became *maestro di capilla* and organist at the Escorial, positions he held for the rest of his life.

Soler also benefited from contact with musicians from the court. The Escorial had been built by Philip II as a royal palace and a monastery, and the court generally spent the autumn there. This brought the initial possibility for Soler of further study of the organ with the court organist and for contact with Domenico Scarlatti, a strong influence on Soler's style of writing in his addition to keyboard repertoire in some 150 surviving sonatas. Soler, in the course of his duties, wrote music for the church, but also contributed to secular repertoire for the entertainment of the court. Music received particular encouragement under Ferdinand VI, and rather less under his successor Carlos III. Soler, however, was charged with the teaching of the young princes Antonio and Gabriel, the sons of Carlos III, and received special support from the younger of the two, Don Gabriel, whose *Casita del Infante*, built in the early 1770s, was in part designed for musical performances in which Don Gabriel participated. As a theorist Soler published in 1762 a study of modulation, *Llave de la Modulación*, a treatise explaining the art of rapid modulation (*modulación agitada*), which brought correspondence with Padre Martini in Bologna, the leading Italian composer and theorist, who vainly sought a portrait of Soler to add to his gallery of leading composers. Soler was also an acknowledged expert on the construction of organs, advising on instruments for the cathedrals of Málaga and Seville, while his wider interests are exemplified in his *Combinación de monedas y cálculo manifiesto contra el libro anonimo intitulado 'Correspondencia de la Moneda de Cataluña a la de Castilla'*, a polemical study of the comparative currencies of Castille and Catalonia, dedicated to Carlos III.

The many keyboard sonatas of Soler remain his best-known achievement as a composer. Several of these were written for Don Gabriel and suggest, at least, the influence of Domenico Scarlatti, while continuing to reflect something of the changing styles of music exemplified in Vienna. The modern publication of the sonatas owes much to Father Samuel Rubio, who collected many of the sonatas in seven volumes, published between 1957 and 1962, and whose R numbering is in wide use, including sonatas subsequently added to his first listing.

While most of Soler's sonatas are undated, the six sonatas included in *Opus 4* bear the date 1779. These sonatas follow Classical procedure and are in several movements, although some of these movements had prior existence as single-movement works.

Sonata No. 93, in F major, opens with a broadly Classical *Andante amabile espressivo*. The second movement, an *Allegro ma non presto*, is similar in form and is followed by a *Minuetto* marked *Maestoso*, a relatively solemn contrast with the following C major *Allegro*, the trio section, *Minuetto II*. The repeated *Minuetto I* leads to a lively *Allegro molto* with leaping octaves and characteristic ornamentation.

Sonata No. 94, in G major, starts with a movement marked *Andantino gracioso e con moto*, music of great delicacy, with the necessary modulation. The following *Allegro non troppo* makes use of octave leaps and leads to a *Minuetto*, marked *Maestoso* making play with figuration in thirds and modulating to E minor. *Minuetto II* returns to a livelier dance in G major, before the repetition of *Minuetto I*. The sonata ends with a triple time *Allegro*.

Sonata No. 95, in A major, is in similar form, with a relatively lively first movement, its melodic interest principally in the right hand. The second movement makes use of dramatic pauses and leads to two *Minuettos*, the first marked *Maestoso* and, as before, less of a dance than its contrasting partner. The sonata ends with an *Allegro pastoril*, in 6/8 and, in its rapid progress, less of a pastoral than its tempo marking might suggest.

Keith Anderson

Maria Canals International Music Competition

The Maria Canals International Music Competition of Barcelona (www.mariacanal.cat) is the principal music competition in Spain and one of the leading events in the world following its recognition by the World Federation of International Music Competitions in 1958. It was founded in 1954 by the leading pianist and pedagogue Maria Canals, and her husband Rossend Llates. With Her Majesty Queen Sofía as President of Honour, since 1954 the competition association has organised over 120 competitions in the branches of piano, singing, violin, cello, guitar, flute, percussion and chamber music. During these years more than 8,000 entrants have taken part from a hundred countries from the five continents, and there have been more than 200 jurors from around the world. The competition holds its auditions in the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona, and offers the prize-winners important financial rewards, a tour of recitals and concerts with orchestra around the world and a recording for the Naxos label. Its winners have developed important professional careers in both performance and teaching in leading centres throughout the world.

Concurso Internacional de Música Maria Canals

El Concurso Internacional de Música Maria Canals de Barcelona (www.mariacanal.cat) es el decano de los concursos de música en España y uno de los primeros del mundo en ser aceptados por la Federación Mundial de Concursos Internacionales de Música en 1958. Fue fundado en 1954 por la prestigiosa pianista y pedagoga Maria Canals y su marido Rossend Llates. Con S.M. la Reina Sofía como Presidenta de Honor, desde 1954 la asociación del concurso ha organizado más de 120 concursos de las ramas de piano, canto, violín, violonchelo, guitarra, flauta, percusión y música de cámara. Durante estos años han participado en el mismo más de 8.000 concursantes de un centenar de países de los 5 continentes, y más de 200 jurados procedentes de todo el mundo. El Concurso celebra sus pruebas en el Palau de la Música Catalana de Barcelona, y ofrece a los premiados importantes premios económicos, una gira de recitales y conciertos con orquesta por todo el mundo y una grabación para el sello discográfico Naxos. Sus ganadores han desarrollado importantes carreras profesionales tanto en el ámbito de la interpretación como de la docencia en los centros más importantes de todo el mundo.



Evgeny Konnov

Evgeny Konnov was born in 1992 in Chirchiq, Uzbekistan. From 1999 to 2007 he studied at the Gnessin State Musical College then the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow; from 2012 to 2013 at the Robert Schumann Hochschule in Düsseldorf, under Professor G.F. Schenk; from 2013 to 2021 at the Leopold Mozart Centre of the University of Augsburg with Evgenia Rubinova; and from 2017 to 2021 with Professor Albert Mamriev at the Music Academy 'Neue Sterne' in Hannover. In 2019 he began lessons with Professor Jan Gottlieb Jiracek von Arnim at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. Konnov won First Prize and the Public Prize at the 64th Maria Canals Barcelona International Music Competition (Spain) in 2018; First Prize and the Public Prize at the 31st International Piano Competition Ettore Pozzoli in Seregno (Italy) in 2019; and First Prize at the 14th Unisa International Piano Competition in Pretoria (South Africa) in 2020. As a soloist he has played with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid, Orquesta Sinfónica de Bilbao, Jove Orquesta Nacional de Catalunya, Orquesta Ciudad de Granada, Augsburger Philharmoniker, Orchestra Sinfonica di Sanremo and the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, among others.

Photo © Alexander Yarmak

Antonio Soler is best known for his many keyboard sonatas. His training as a church musician and a post as organist at the royal palace and monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial brought him into contact with musicians such as Domenico Scarlatti from the court of Philip II. With the *Op. 4* sonatas the influence of Scarlatti mixes with new styles emerging from Vienna. Soler's Classical forms include lively dances to go along with elegant delicacy, solemnity and drama – all enhanced by his characteristic sparkling ornamentation and virtuoso technique.



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(1729–1783)



CORRALES PIANOS
1900

Keyboard Sonatas Nos. 93–95

Sonata No. 93 in F major, Op. 4, No. 3 (1779)	25:07
1 I. Andante amabile espressivo	5:58
2 II. Allegro ma non presto	3:54
3 III. Minuetto I: Maestoso – Minuetto II: Allegro	10:03
4 IV. Allegro molto	5:08
Sonata No. 94 in G major, Op. 4, No. 4 (1779)	19:43
5 I. Andante gracioso e con moto	2:43
6 II. Allegro non troppo	4:46
7 III. Minuetto I: Maestoso – Minuetto II: Allegro molto	7:29
8 IV. Allegro	4:42
Sonata No. 95 in A major, Op. 4, No. 5 (1779)	25:27
9 I. Andante grazioso con moto	4:12
10 II. Allegro espressivo non presto	8:05
11 III. Minuetto I: Maestoso – Minuetto II: Allegro	7:12
12 IV. Allegro pastoril	5:55

Evgeny Konnov, Piano

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