

Tárrega's Transcriptions of Chopin
for Guitar, and their Influence on
his own Compositions

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Abstract

Francisco Tárrega is considered one of the most important figures in the history of the guitar, his compositions retaining their place in the repertoire over 100 years since his death. These compositions mark a new style in guitar composition, differing vastly from the works of the masters of the guitar before his time.

Tárrega's musical training is discussed in a brief biography, which had a significant role in the development of his own, unique style of guitar composition. His method of transcription for the guitar, in which he arranged works by composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert, and specifically Chopin, is discussed, as is his ability to arrange these works for the guitar in a simple, yet often effective way. His transcriptions of Chopin's Mazurka, Op.33 no.1, and Prelude, Op. 28 no.7, are discussed, and the effective transfer of these pieces to the guitar, using comparisons between a transposed version of the piano score and the guitar arrangement.

The influence of this musical education and transcriptions are discussed in Chapter III. This discussion is limited specifically to the influence of Chopin, considered to have had the most significant influence on Tárrega, who composed waltzes, polkas, and mazurkas in his own unique style, while still showing influence from Chopin's use of these dance forms. The comparison is shown through connections between the mazurkas of both composers. Tárrega's mazurka *Marieta* is discussed, along with *Sueño*, 'Mazurka in G' and *Adelita*.

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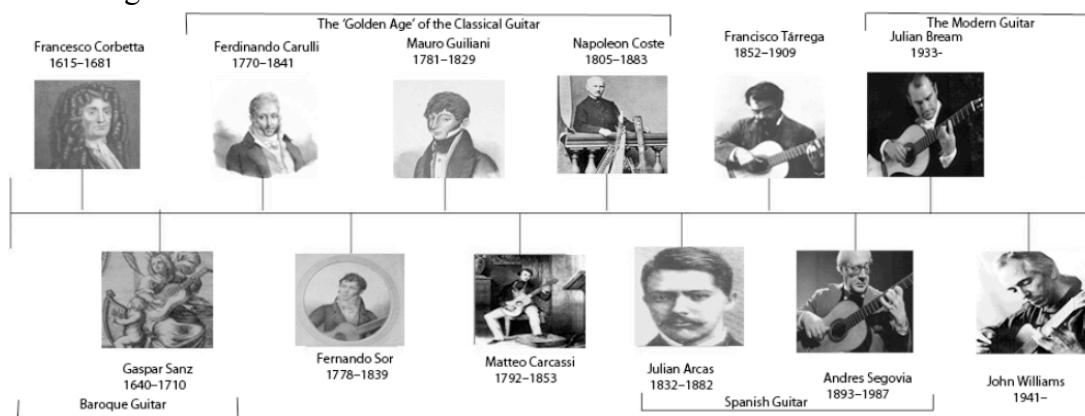
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Introduction

Francisco Tárrega, often called the ‘father of the modern classical guitar,’¹ had a large influence on the pedagogy and repertoire of the instrument, although the extent of this importance has often been debated. He is often credited with keeping the instrument alive in his native Spain, following a decline in popularity of the instrument in Europe in the 1850s.²

Example 1.1: A brief timeline showing important figures in the history of the classical guitar



¹ Tony Skinner, Raymond Burley and Amanda Cook, *London College of Music-Classical Guitar Grade 8* (Sussex: Registry Publications, 2008), 11.

² This decline in popularity was a result of a number of factors. Along with the deaths of Sor and Giuliani, composers of the time felt the instrument unable to deal with the increasing chromaticism in music. ‘Central to the issue of the instrument’s decline was the nature of music itself which became ever more chromatic, harmonically experimental and increasingly difficult for all but the most accomplished guitarists to exploit, as opposed to a pianist of even average ability.’ (Simon Wynberg, *Marco Aurelio Zani De Ferranti, Guitarist (1801–1878)*, (Heidelberg: Chanterelle, 1989), 61.) The weak sonority of the instrument was also an important factor in this decline. This was taken up by Berlioz in his treatise on orchestration: ‘Its feeble amount of sonorousness, which does not admit of its being united instruments, or with many voices possessed but of ordinary brilliancy, is doubtless the cause of this.’ (Hector Berlioz, *Grand Traité D’instrumentation Et D’orchestration Modernes*, Hugh Macdonald (ed. and trans.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 66–67.) Luthiers such as Torres and Ramírez addressed this problem during the 20th Century.

A complete history of the classical guitar is beyond the scope of this dissertation. For an introduction see – Graham Wade, *A Concise History of the Classic Guitar* (Pacific: Mel Bay, 2001).

Along with his transcriptions, Tárrega wrote over 100 compositions, encompassing a series of préludes and études, several works based on dance forms such as waltzes, mazurkas, polkas, minuets, gavottes, and some larger scale works such as his *Gran Jota*, the famous tremolo work *Recuerdos de Alhambra*, his *Gran Vals* (from which the Nokia tune originates) and *Capricho árabe*. His development of a unique melodic style on the instrument has several points of influence: mainly that of the guitar he played, created by luthier Antonio de Torres, and the influence of the piano music of the 19th century, specifically that of Frédéric Chopin.

Tárrega's musical education, beginning at an early age, played a great role in the shaping of his compositions, which in turn have influenced guitarists since his death. In a short biographical summary, significant points during the guitarist's life, specifically those which concern themselves with his development as a musician, such as his eyesight problems, his early teachers, his training in piano and at the Conservatoire in Madrid, as well his acquisition of his first Torres guitar, have been highlighted.³ It was this musical education that resulted in Tárrega's transcriptions for the guitar, arranging works by composers such as Chopin, Schumann, Beethoven, Bach, Mozart and many others. These transcriptions and his exposure to the music of these composers bore a significant influence on Tárrega's own compositions.⁴ It was undoubtedly the music of Frédéric Chopin that was most influential, with Tárrega composing in forms similar to those used by Chopin, along with developing a melodic style on the guitar that draws influence from the melodies and style of ornamentation used by Chopin at the piano.

³ For further reading on the life of Tárrega, see Emilio Pujol, *Tárrega–Ensayo Biográfico*, Patrick Burns (ed.), Jessica Burns, (trans.), Kindle edn (Chiliones Music Publishing, 2009), and Adrian Rius, *Francisco Tárrega 1852–1909 Biography*, Liuguisticos, Dixon Servicios (trans.) (Valencia: PILES, Editorial de Música S.A., 2006).

⁴ Graham Wade, *Francisco Tárrega His Life and Music* (DVD, Pacific: Mel Bay, 2008).

Chapter I

A Short Biography of Francisco Tárrega

Tárrega was born on Sunday, November 21st, 1852, in the Spanish town of Villarreal. His father, also named Francisco, worked as a caretaker in the town, for which he earned a small salary. His mother, Antonia, helped to support the home by serving as an errand-runner for the nuns at San Pascual's convent. Because of her job, she had to hire a nursemaid to look after the young boy, nicknamed Quiquet (the Spanish for Frank).⁵ It was under the care of this nursemaid that Tárrega contracted a severe infection in his eyes.⁶ The incident caused a strange ailment to settle on his eyelids, and he had to undergo repeated surgery throughout his life, without ever finding any relief or cure.⁷ This, combined with his nearsightedness, resulted in Tárrega having extremely limited eyesight throughout his life. As a result, his father, who was also nearly blind, encouraged a musical education in the young Tárrega, which he saw as a possible method of survival, should his son's eyesight worsen.⁸

Francisco the elder gave his son basic lessons in guitar and music theory, and hoped his son would later study the piano or the violin (seen then in Spain, and still in most countries, as more elevated instruments).⁹ Once Tárrega had surpassed his father, he was enrolled in classes with the blind pianist, El Ciego Ruiz, who taught

⁵ Emilio Pujol, *The Biography of Francisco Tárrega*, Burns, Locations 209–25.

⁶ Adrian Rius, *Francisco Tárrega 1852–1909 Biography*, Liuguisticos, Dixon Servicios (trans.) (Valencia: PILES, Editorial de Música S.A., 2006), 18.

⁷ Emilio Pujol, *The Biography of Francisco Tárrega*, Locations 209–25.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Locations 278–97.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Locations 278–97.

sol-fa and piano.¹⁰ He also continued guitar lessons under a local musician, reportedly the best guitarist in Castellón, but it did not take long for Tárrega to outgrow his new teacher. He was also taught briefly by the renowned guitarist, Julian Arcas, who agreed to tutor Tárrega after hearing him play, following a concert in Castellón.¹¹

As Tárrega grew older, he began to support his family through a series of concerts, performing at local cafés, casinos, and private residences.¹² He also worked for a time as a pianist in the casino of Burriana, the sister city of Villarreal. Emilio Pujol, in his biography of his former teacher, states that Tárrega would freely play the studies of Aguado, along with the works of Arcas on the piano during this time.¹³ His fame as a gifted guitarist and pianist soon began to spread, and resulted in a circle of friends and admirers surrounding the 17 year-old Tárrega, resulting in his meeting with his first patron, Don Antonio Cánesa Mendayas.¹⁴ It was Cánesa who embarked on the trip with Tárrega to the legendary guitar maker, Antonio de Torres, after hearing Julian Arcas perform on one of his instruments. Pujol describes the meeting of the luthier and the young maestro in his essay:

These unknown callers didn't look to Torres like anyone who would be interested in a high-priced guitar and he consequently showed them one that was just fair. Tárrega began by examining the instrument and proceeded to play a series of chords and passages to prove the guitar's quality. Torres, besides being a luthier, was also a guitarist of recognised ability and fine musical perception, and he was soon aware that this was an exceptional guitarist before him. His surprise and admiration grew until he said: 'Wait; this guitar is not for you.' He went back to the back of the shop and a few minutes later returned with a beautiful instrument, which he had made with an artist's love for his own use. Putting it into Tárrega's hands he said: 'This is the guitar you deserve.'¹⁵

¹⁰ Adrian Rius, *Francisco Tárrega 1852–1909 Biography*, 20.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹² *Ibid.*, 29.

¹³ Emilio Pujol, *The Biography of Francisco Tárrega*, Locations 571–88.

¹⁴ Adrian Rius, *Francisco Tárrega 1852–1909 Biography*, 30–31.

¹⁵ Emilio Pujol, *The Biography of Francisco Tárrega*, Locations 606–22.

This was the guitar played by Tárrega until 1889, when he switched to a newer Torres instrument, which he played until his death in 1909. The Torres guitar should be considered a significant influence on Tárrega's performance style and compositions. Under the suggestion of Arcas, Torres had experimented with new methods of guitar construction, varying bracing patterns and enlarged bodies, resulting in an instrument of greater volume and resonance.¹⁶ These prototypes eventually resulted in the classical guitar as it is known today, and allowed players and composers to push the boundaries of the instrument both technically and expressively.¹⁷ In his foreword to José Romanillos's book on Torres, Julian Bream states that, while Tárrega was a considerable artist who played a revolutionary role in the development of the instrument, 'his contribution without the Torres guitar would have been minimal.'¹⁸

After a short time in the Spanish Military, Tárrega entered the Madrid conservatory in 1874, and remained there for a year, where he took courses in sol-fa, piano and harmony.¹⁹ The director of the conservatory, Emilio Arrieta, invited him to perform for the other professors in a private concert. While Tárrega impressed Arrieta, even improvising on themes suggested by his audience, it was recommended that someone of such talent should apply themselves to the piano, as it would surely bring more distinction.²⁰ However, Arrieta changed his mind upon his attendance at a concert in the Alhambra theatre, where Tárrega performed alongside other great

¹⁶ John Managan, 'Chopin for the Guitar: A Newly Discovered Transcription by Francisco Tárrega,' *Guitar Review*/109 (1997): 2–11, 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸ Julian Bream, 'Foreword' in *Antonio De Torres: Guitar Maker—His Life and Work*, José L. Romanillos (Longmead, Shaftesbury and Dorset: Element Books Ltd., 1987), vii–ix.

¹⁹ Emilio Pujol, *The Biography of Francisco Tárrega*, Locations 745–60.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Locations 761–78.

artists such as Albéniz, Chueca and Chapí.²¹ Following a standing ovation, Arietta praised him, stating: ‘The guitar needs you; you were born for it.’²² While the piano had been imposed on him for musical training, Tárrega at this point chose to dedicate his life to the guitar, a new medium of expression to convey his sensibility.²³ However, it was his training in the piano and harmony which allowed him to begin his transcriptions for the guitar, along with influencing his own compositions.²⁴

Tárrega made several trips outside of Spain during his lifetime, mainly to France, but also ventured as far as Italy and England. He never wished to travel further, despite the invitations, and even returned to Spain early from his trip to England. He was a man in love with his homeland, much preferring to sit in his room and play for his family or visitors, than travel and play to large halls or kings in distant lands. Apelles Mestres, the Spanish writer and poet, remarked that:

Tárrega deserved to be called the ‘king of the guitar’ all over the world. And why wasn’t he? Because he cared nothing for public acclaim nor fame, and even less for money he could get. It could be said that he never left home, and hardly went anywhere.²⁵

Despite a stroke in 1906, Tárrega recovered to give some small intimate concerts before his death in 1909.

²¹ Adrian Rius, *Francisco Tárrega 1852–1909 Biography*, 42.

²² Emilio Pujol, *The Biography of Francisco Tárrega*, Locations 857–75.

²³ Adrian Rius, *Francisco Tárrega 1852–1909 Biography*, 42.

²⁴ The high regard for Tárrega as a musician, not just as a guitarist, can be seen from several accounts. At one stage he was offered the position of orchestra leader in the Recreos Matritenses Theatre – see Emilio Pujol, *The Biography of Francisco Tárrega*, Locations 1224–42. He also started a string quartet with his brother, Vincenzo, which, under his direction, were very successful in several cities across Spain – see Emilio Pujol, *The Biography of Francisco Tárrega*, Locations 1243–59.

²⁵ Emilio Pujol, *The Biography of Francisco Tárrega*, Locations 1329–49.

Chapter II

Tárrega's Transcriptions

The process of transcription for guitar, while not started by Tárrega,²⁶ was almost certainly popularised by him. This programme, presented by Tárrega at the *Círculo de la Union Mercantile* on July 13th, 1889, can begin to show the range of transcriptions undertaken by the guitarist:

Example 2.1: Programme from 13th July 1889.²⁷

First Half

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. <i>Melodía de las Visperas Sicilanas</i> | Verdi |
| 2. <i>Miscelánea de Marina</i> | Arrieta |
| 3. <i>Fantasia Espanola</i> | Tárrega |
| 4. <i>Aria de bajo de la Sonámbula*</i> | Bellini |
| 5. <i>Romanza sin Palabras</i> | Mendelssohn |
| 6. <i>Marcha Fúnebre</i> | Thalberg |
| 7. <i>Les Noces de Figaro**</i> | Mozart |

Second Half

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. <i>Aria de Don Carlo*</i> | Verdi |
| 2. <i>Gran Trémolo</i> | Gottschalk |
| 3. <i>Variaciones del Carnival de Venecia</i> | Tárrega |
| 4. <i>La Tradita, Melodía Dramática**</i> | Goula, Sr. |
| 5. <i>Estudio de Concierto</i> | Tárrega |
| 6. <i>Aires Nacionales</i> | Tárrega |
| 7. | |

*(*Senor Planas, accompanied by Senor Giménez on the piano*)

**(*Senor Mata, accompanied by Senor Goula, Jr. on the piano*)

²⁶ Records of transcriptions by Carulli and Bobrowicz exist from the early 1800's—Bobrowicz transcribed Chopin's *Mazurka's* Op.6 and 7, apparently with the composers blessing. See Matanya Ophee, 'The Promotion of Francisco Tárrega: A Case History Part 1,' *Soundboard* 8/3 (1981): 152–58.

²⁷ Adrian Rius, *Francisco Tárrega 1852–1909 Biography*, 77.

While praise must be given for Tárrega's transcriptions and his ability to present such a vast array of works on the guitar, it must be noted that he did not include works from previous generations of non-Spanish composers for the classical guitar, such as Carcassi, Carulli and Giuliani, in his programmes. He was either unfamiliar with the works of these composers, or, more likely; he simply chose to ignore them. Another example of a concert programme is shown in example 2.2, this time from a concert given on the 10th of May 1888, followed by example 2.3, a concert programme given in Madrid in 1904:

Example 2.2: Programme from 10th May 1888.²⁸

First Part

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. <i>Melodia de las Visperas Sicilianas</i> | Verdi |
| 2. <i>Fantasia de Marina</i> | Arrieta |
| 3. <i>Gran Tremolo</i> | Gottschalk |
| 4. <i>Frantasia Espanola</i> | Tárrega |

Second Part

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| 1. <i>Celebre Gavota</i> | Arditi |
| 2. <i>Polonesa de Concierto</i> | Arcas |
| 3. <i>Carnaval de Venecia</i> | Tárrega |

Third Part

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| 1. <i>Motivos Heterogeneos</i> | Tárrega |
| 2. <i>Scherzo y Minuetto</i> | Prudent |
| 3. <i>Gran Marcha Funebre</i> | Thalberg |
| 4. <i>Aires Nacionales</i> | Tárrega |

²⁸ Thomas F. Heck, 'Historical Notes to a Tárrega Recital of 1888,' *Guitar News* cvii/No. 107 (1970): 24–27.

Example 2.3: Programme from Madrid, 1904.²⁹

	<u><i>First Half</i></u>	
1. <i>Melodia</i>		Mendelssohn
2. <i>Romanza</i>		Mendelssohn
3. <i>Serenata 'Granada'</i>		Albéniz
4. <i>Barcarola</i>		Schumann
5. <i>Estudio</i>		Tárrega
6. <i>Fantasia Espanola</i>		Tárrega
	<u><i>Second Half</i></u>	
1. <i>Serenata 'Espanola'</i>		Albeníz
2. <i>Minuetto de la Fantasia</i>		Schubert
3. <i>Minuetto</i>		Mozart
4. <i>Gran Mazurka</i>		Chopin
5. <i>Nocturno</i>		Chopin
6. <i>Reverie</i>		Schumann
7. <i>Scherzo</i>		Mozart
8. <i>Pastoral</i>		Mozart
9. <i>Motivos de Paganini</i>		Tárrega

As seen, a typical Tárrega recital would include mostly transcriptions of famous works, interspersed with some of his original compositions. Tárrega transcribed works by Albéniz, Bizet, Chopin, Beethoven, Schumann, Mozart, Thalberg, Wagner, Bach, Greig, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Verdi, Haydn and Strauss (along with works of lesser known composers).³⁰ The influence of these transcriptions undoubtedly had an effect on Tárrega's own compositions, most notably his transcriptions and work with the music of Chopin.

Tárrega would have been instantly drawn to the 'salon music' style of Chopin. The majority of the guitarist's own compositions fall into this category, and we know that he preferred to perform these in intimate surroundings, in a small room surrounded by friends, as opposed to the stage in the concert hall. This reclusive nature, and an unwillingness to perform in public or fulfil the demands placed upon

²⁹ Adrian Rius, *Francisco Tárrega 1852–1909 Biography*, 157.

³⁰ Wolf Moser, *Francisco Tárrega – Werden Und Wirkung, Die Gitarre in Spanien Zwischen* (Berlin: Edition Saint-George, 1990), List of Transcriptions: 463–470.

them by their almost celebrity status was a dominant feature in the personalities of both composers. Each also identified a personal musical inspiration on their chosen instrument.³¹ However, the comparison to Chopin is not, as Wolf Moser says, ‘intended to add yet another image to the gallery of crooked pictures, in which a guitar master such as Fernando Sor was described as the “Mozart” or “Beethoven of the guitar”’.³² Tárrega lacked Chopin’s ‘diverse artistic method of expression, nor comparable breadth, depth or passion as a creator.’³³

Chopin’s melodic style can also be heard echoing in most of Tárrega’s compositions. It is impossible to know the exact number of Chopin’s pieces transcribed by Tárrega, as a considerable portion of his work remains in the hands of private collectors, with even more lost. However, transcriptions by Tárrega are available for the following:

Préludes: Op. 28. Nos. 4, 6, 7, 11, 15 and 20.

Mazurkas: Op. 33 Nos.1 and 4

Op. 67 No.4

Waltzes: Op. 34 No. 2

Op. 64 no. 2

Nocturnes: Op. 9 no.2 (with Tárrega’s own cadenza)³⁴

Op. 32 no.1

Tárrega’s transcription of Op. 33 No. 1 was completed on the 23rd June 1909, a little less than five months before his death. While Managan reproduces the original manuscript in his article (see Appendix 1),³⁵ his typeset is not without errors

³¹ Emilio Pujol, *The Biography of Francisco Tárrega*, Locations 3267–87.

³² Wolf Moser, *Francisco Tárrega – Werden Und Wirkung, Die Gitarre in Spanien Zwischen*, excerpt translated by Sean Reed, 145.

³³ *Ibid.*, 145

³⁴ Rius mentions the praise of Camile Saint-Saens for this transcription, especially for its challenging final cadenza composed by Tárrega—see Adrian Rius, *Francisco Tárrega 1852–1909 Biography*, 111.

³⁵ John Managan, 'Chopin for the Guitar: A Newly Discovered Transcription by Francisco Tárrega,' 8.

(although these are limited to wrong finger indications and bar numbers). The score was also published in a posthumous collection in Spain, reproduced in *Francisco Tárrega–The Complete Early Spanish Editions*.³⁶ This score also has several major issues concerning fingering and notation. Due to these issues, I have produced my own copy of the score against a transposed version of the original piano score for comparison (see example 2.4—the full score is reproduced in Appendix 2). The major difference between Managan’s version (and the handwritten score) and the posthumous edition is the exclusion of bars 28–35 from the handwritten score (indicated by a double bar line). These bars are simply a repeat of an earlier section, and it is quite possible Tárrega omitted them accidentally (he was in quite ill health at the time). Despite the original publication of the transcription taking place after the death of Tárrega, he most likely produced more than one version of the transcription, and the source used for the published edition could possibly have included the omitted section.

Example 2.4: A comparison of a transposed version of Chopin’s Op.33 no.1, and Tárrega’s transcription for the guitar

³⁶ Francisco Tárrega, *The Complete Early Spanish Editions in Reprints of the Originals*, Michael Macmeeken (ed.), Rafael Andía (Commentary) (Heidelberg: Chanterelle, 2009), 212.

The relatively thin texture of this mazurka allows it to be easily transposed to the guitar without any major alterations in melody, requiring only a transposition and re-voicing of several chords. The original, in the guitar-unfriendly key of G sharp minor, was transposed down a major second (example 2.4 is shown up a minor seventh on the piano—this is purely for convenience as the guitar sounds an octave below written), thus keeping the melody extremely close to its original register.³⁷ The level of detail that Tárrega undertook here, and in all of his transcriptions, is astonishing. The string on which to play most notes (especially the melody) is indicated, as well as fingering. These choices are not made arbitrarily, with Tárrega choosing the positions on the fret board, usually in the higher register, from which to obtain maximum volume and resonance from his Torres guitar. This resulted in a much more legato style of playing, and while still difficult due the frequent position changes, was made available to the skilled player. The choice of positions also allowed for the effective use of vibrato. For example, in bars 2–3, he uses the second string for the beginning of the ascending melodic line, beginning in the fourth position, as opposed to playing it all on the first string, which, while adding depth to the first three notes, also adds variety of colour. The rasgueados of bars 13–15 are taken in the seventh position, but could just as easily be played in the third. The first and second strings are alternated for added effect for the antiphonal treatment of melody at bars 16–20. It is simple touches like these that allowed this piano music to be successfully transcribed to the guitar, displaying the craft of the arranger.

Tárrega has also placed his own unique *glissandi* at various points in the piece to add colour to the melody. This technique was not common with guitar players before Tárrega, and was used as part of his attempt to emulate the *cantabile*

³⁷ John Managan, 'Chopin for the Guitar: A Newly Discovered Transcription by Francisco Tárrega,' 3.

style of Chopin. This transferred directly into his original compositions, and has been emulated by almost all classical guitarists since.³⁸ It is this *cantabile* style of melody writing that defines the majority of Tárrega's compositions, which are often quite simple in terms of harmony and form, so as not to detract from the melody.

Tárrega transcribed six movements from Chopin's Op. 28, and chose his transcriptions of Nos. 6, 7 and 20 to open the second publication of his work (there where only two publications of Tárrega's work during his lifetime), followed by his own Third, Fourth and Fifth Préludes. A full comparison for Tárrega's transcription of Chopin's Prelude No.7, written in the style of a mazurka, can be found in appendix 3, with an extract shown in example 2.5. The piece has been transposed down a perfect fifth (the piano score is shown up a perfect fourth for convenience) and similarly to Op.33 no.1, the melody has been kept entirely intact.

Example 2.5: A comparison of Chopin's Prelude no.7, and Tárrega's transcription for the guitar

The image displays a musical score for Example 2.5, comparing Chopin's Prelude no. 7 and Tárrega's transcription for guitar. The score is in 3/4 time, key of D major. The top staff shows the piano score with dynamics 'p' and 'dolce'. The bottom staff shows the guitar transcription with fingerings, a capo (CV) on the 4th fret, and a 6th string tuned to D. The transcription includes specific fingering numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) and a 'p' dynamic marking.

The position of the melody on the fingerboard has again been given in great detail, with Tárrega looking for a specific 'song like' tone from the instrument. As before,

³⁸ John Managan, 'Chopin for the Guitar: A Newly Discovered Transcription by Francisco Tárrega,' 4.

he has also included his own *glissandi*. The transcription works extremely well, and only requires the respelling of some chords to fit the range of the guitar, and the occasional omission of a note from a chord (for example the A notes from the left hand of bar 3). While Tárrega's transcription process may seem quite simple, there is an art to be found in this simplicity, with great care and attention to detail being taken here.

Chapter III

Tárrega's Compositions

Tárrega's original compositions are mostly small works based on dances, composing mazurkas, waltzes and polkas during his lifetime (his choice of these dance forms comes almost certainly from Chopin). He also composed in more traditional dance forms, such as the Minuet and the Gavotte, showing the influence of Bach, Handel and Haydn, along with some larger works such as *Capricho árabe*, *Gran Jota* and his famous tremolo study, *Recuerdos de Alhambra*. He also composed a series of préludes in a similar style to that of Chopin, from which obvious influence was drawn, along with a collection of études.

His composition *Marieta*, while having the subtitle 'Mazurka for Guitar,' is not a mazurka in a direct emulation of Chopin, but is rather inspired by these compositions, and has its own unique Spanish sound. However, the work does follow certain characteristics of a traditional mazurka. The piece, with its opening chromatic melody, features quite simple accompanying harmony, so as not detract from its beauty and lyrical nature. The tempo is marked as Lento, something not seen in traditional mazurkas, which are normally fast, lively pieces. This slow tempo is to allow the lyrical, song-like melody of the piece space to sing, and is placed appropriately on the fret board, allowing for a greater resonance from the instrument. The piece begins with an anacrusis and a typical Tárrega *glissando* (something which should not be ignored in modern performances, as is the tendency to do so).

Example 3.1: *Marieta*, bars 1–5

The syncopation of the melody occurring in the first bar, with the F not resolving to the E until the end of the second beat, is the driving force behind the A section of this mazurka, with the idea repeating throughout this section. The dotted rhythm is also a defining characteristic, with this rhythm, in a typical mazurka fashion, displacing the accent during the bar, causing, for example in the first measure, a greater accent on the third beat. The written accent, placed on the first beat of each of the first two bars (see example 3.1), emphasizes the syncopation of the melody. The chromatic introduction of the melody, descending from F–E–D# and finally resolving upwards to E (emphasizing the dominant note—see example 3.2), is followed by ascending leap of a minor sixth.

Example 3.2 : *Marieta*, melody of bars 1–2

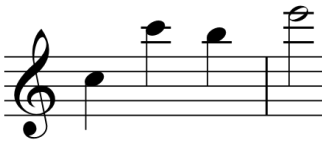
Example 3.3: *Marieta*, melody of bars 2–4



This chromatic phrase is answered by a compressed version of itself, in this higher register, as shown in example 3.3, before finally ascending a perfect fourth to E.

Overall this phrase, without its chromatic ornamentation, can be reduced to E–C–B–E, as shown in example 3.4, a very simple, but melodic sequence.

Example 3.4: *Marieta*, Simplified Melody of bars 1–4



Following this, the melody descends by a perfect fifth, to A, as shown in bar 4 of example 3.1, and the chromatic phrase repeats again, compressing itself even more, with the lower auxiliary note (this time a G#) confined to very quick ornamentation. Finally, the melody descends by a *glissando* and a minor sixth³⁹ (at the end of bar 5) and drops the chromatic motion in favor of simple diatonic movement, before finishing on its stepwise closing phrase. Throughout, the melody is ornamented by both Tárrega's own unique *glissandi* and using techniques borrowed from the piano, aside from the chromatic embellishment of the melody. Bars 2 and 5 both feature

³⁹ The descending minor sixth leap could be seen as an answer to the ascending minor sixth found at the end of bar 2.

slightly faster tempo and major key, feels much more ‘mazurka like’ than the previous passage. The shifting of the accent to the third beat of the bar, shown in example 3.7, is also in a much more traditional mazurka style.⁴⁰ The B section also features a significant amount of ornamentation, with slurs between notes and upper mordents, again written out fully to indicate fingering.

Example 3.7: *Marieta*, Bars 17–19

A direct link between the works of Tárrega and Chopin can be found in Tárrega’s mazurka, *Sueño*, which takes its opening bars from Chopin’s mazurka, Op. 7, no.1.⁴¹ The opening ascending melodic pattern of *Sueño*, shown in example 3.8, along with its rhythm, has been taken directly from the Chopin mazurka, shown in example 3.9. However, Tárrega has introduced a chromatic passing note between the G and the A. It is quite possible that Tárrega began a transcription of this mazurka and then deemed the rest of the piece unsuitable, but chose to use the opening measure in a piece of his own.

The piece can be considered one of Tárrega’s weaker compositions, the work pieced together in a seemingly fragmentary manner.⁴² The use of a *glissando* in the third bar to reach the climax of the phrase results in parallel fifths between the two

⁴⁰ Stephen Downes ‘Mazurka,’ in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), 2nd edn, vol. 16 (London: Macmillan, 2001), 188–190 (189).

⁴¹ Wolf Moser, *Francisco Tárrega – Werden Und Wirkung, Die Gitarre in Spanien Zwischen*, 461.

⁴² Wolf Moser, *Francisco Tárrega – Werden Und Wirkung, Die Gitarre in Spanien Zwischen*, excerpt translated by Sean Reed, 177.

upper voices. Both mazurkas also follow this ascending motion with descending motions of increasing value. However, Tárrega begins with a perfect fourth and expands this to an octave and then a minor ninth, while Chopin begins with a minor sixth, expanding to a minor seventh and finally repeats this. According to Wolf Moser, Tárrega used this manuscript as a gift for a host, its creation nothing more than a simple gift for an amateur musician.⁴³ This could account for the abrupt changes in dynamics and tempo towards the end of the piece, along with the puzzling indication ‘misterioso,’⁴⁴ (see full score in Appendix 5) at bar 19.

Example 3.8: *Sueño*, bars 1–8

Example 3.9: Chopin’s Mazurka Op.7 no.1, bars 1–10

⁴³ Wolf Moser, *Francisco Tárrega – Werden Und Wirkung, Die Gitarre in Spanien Zwischen*, excerpt translated by Sean Reed, 177.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 177.

Tárrega's 'Mazurka in G' also uses the opening melody from Chopin's Op. 7 No.1 in its opening bar, with the added chromatic passing note, shown in example 3.10. However, he places the melody in the middle voice, giving the guitarist the unusual and difficult task of emphasizing the inner voice of the piece.

Example 3.10: Mazurka in G, bars 1–2

It is not until a repeat of the opening material at bar 9 that the melodic line is transferred into the upper register. This mazurka also features the characteristic dotted rhythm of the dance, appearing on the first beat of bar 1, and the second beat of bar 2. This causes a displacement of the accent, from the second beat in bar 1 to the third beat in bar 2, another characteristic of the mazurka. Tárrega also makes use of this displacement in his mazurka, *Adelita*. The opening bars, shown in example 3.11, accent the second beat of the bar. Similar to *Marieta*, this mazurka is marked *Lento*, and although retains certain features of a traditional mazurka such as this rhythmic displacement, it has its own unique 'Spanish' sounding melody, in Tárrega's own style.

Example 3.11: Adelita, bars 1–3

Conclusion

Tárrega is often treated as revered figure in guitar history, a man who brought new life into the instrument at the beginning of the 20th century, and whose teaching was passed on by his pupils, mainly Emilio Pujol and Miguel Llobet. The style of his compositions, as demonstrated here, clearly bore significant influence from the leading European composers of the 17th and 18th centuries, the most influential being Chopin. The exposure of Tárrega to this music through his study of the piano and at the conservatoire in Spain resulted in his transcriptions, thus explaining his use of dance forms, classical harmony, and ornamentation in the style of these composers in his own compositions. The ‘salon music’ of Chopin, specifically his dance styles, such as the mazurka and waltz, along with his *préludes*, had a significant influence on Tárrega, as did his melodic style and use of ornamentation.

Tárrega was an extremely conservative man, and his musical tastes reflected this. These preferences also passed onto the pupils and followers of Tárrega, who are sometimes referred to as the ‘Tárrega School.’ Andres Segovia, who brought the guitar firmly into the 20th century, took up this method of transcription after the death of Tárrega, transcribing works of mainly Spanish composers such as Albéniz and Granados. He also encouraged composers to write for the instrument, and commissioned many works during his life. However, the conservative tastes of Tárrega and his followers clearly influenced Segovia, who had a hatred of the emerging dissonant styles and the avant-garde.⁴⁵ As a result he would approach more conservative composers, Spaniards such as Torroba, Turina and Rodrigo, as well as

⁴⁵ Graham Wade, *A Concise History of the Classic Guitar*, 110.

non-Spaniards such as Tansman, Samazeuilh and Villa-Lobos.⁴⁶ Segovia's dominant nature resulted in the guitar not participating in the new music composed during the early part of the century. Segovia's refusal of Schoenberg's offer to write for him could be seen as the epitome of this.⁴⁷

Thus, Tárrega's influence, that is the influence of his compositions, transcriptions and methods of teaching, and those of his pupils and followers, have been seen by some (specifically Matanya Ophee⁴⁸) as having an overall negative impact on the development of the instrument. While Tárrega certainly, although not intentionally, hindered this development in the 20th century, praise must be given for his desire to bring the wider world of European classical music to the guitar, and for introducing his own unique, melodic style of composition to the repertoire of the instrument.

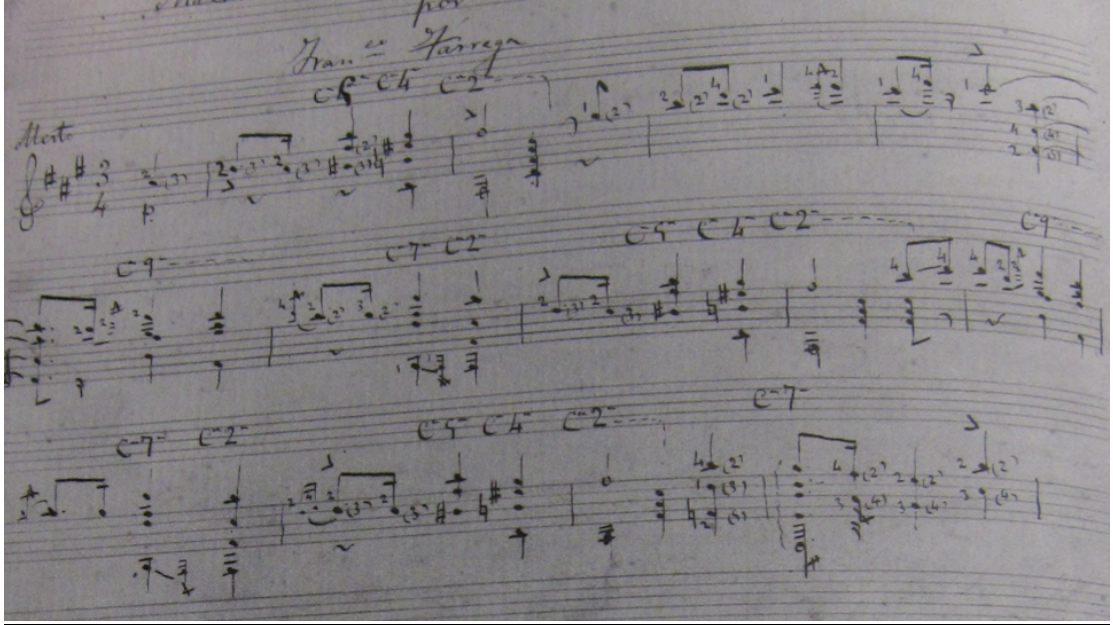
⁴⁶ Graham Wade, *A Concise History of the Classic Guitar*, 110.

⁴⁷ David Tanenbaum, 'The Classical Guitar in the Twentieth Century', *Cambridge Companion to the Guitar*, Victor Anand Coelho (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 182–206.

⁴⁸ M. Ophee, 'The Promotion of Francisco Tárrega: A Case History,' *Soundboard* 8–3/4 (1981): 152–58, 256–61.

Appendix

1: Tárrega's handwritten transcription of Chopin's Mazurka, Op. 33 no.1.⁴⁹



⁴⁹ John Managan, 'Chopin for the Guitar: A Newly Discovered Transcription by Francisco Tárrega,' *Guitar Review*/109 (1997): 1–12.

2: A comparison score between a transposed version of the original piano piece, and Tárrega's transcription for guitar.

Mazurka Op. 33 No.1

Transcription: Francisco Tárrega
Typeset: Robert Kearns

Frédéric Chopin

The image displays a comparison score for Frédéric Chopin's Mazurka Op. 33 No. 1. It consists of two systems of music, each with a piano transcription on top and a guitar transcription on the bottom.

System 1:

- Piano Transcription (top):** Shows the original piano piece in 3/4 time, key of A major. It features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.
- Guitar Transcription (bottom):** Shows the guitar version of the piece. It includes fingering numbers (1-4) and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). Chord diagrams are indicated by letters: CV, CIV, CII--1, and CIX--1.

System 2:

- Piano Transcription (top):** Continues the piano transcription from measure 6.
- Guitar Transcription (bottom):** Continues the guitar transcription. It includes fingering numbers and chord diagrams: CVII CII, CV CIVCII---1, CIX--1, and CVII CII.

11

Musical score for measures 11-15. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music consists of chords and melodic lines in both hands.

CV CIV CII----1 CVII CVII

Fingerings for measures 11-15. The top staff shows fingerings for the right hand, and the bottom staff shows fingerings for the left hand. Circled numbers indicate specific fingerings for notes.

16

Musical score for measures 16-20. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music features chords and melodic lines with some slurs and accents.

Fingerings for measures 16-20. The top staff shows fingerings for the right hand, and the bottom staff shows fingerings for the left hand. Circled numbers indicate specific fingerings for notes. Dynamics markings 'p' are present.

20

f

CVII

(appassionato)

f

25

p

dim.

Riten.

a tempo

29

f

f

CVII

f

33

p

p

Riten.

VII

dim.

arm. p

a tempo

37

CV CIV CII --| CIX --|

42

CVII CII CV CIV CII -----|

45

CIX -----+ CVII CII CV CIV

3: A comparison of Tárrega's transcription of Chopin's Prelude Op. 24. no.7.

Prelude no.7

Arrangement: Francisco Tárrega
Typeset: Robert Kearns

Frédéric Chopin

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a guitar-specific staff below. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *dolce* marking. The guitar arrangement includes several techniques: *CV* (circular vibrato) at measure 4, *CII* (circular harmonic) at measure 8, and *CVII* (circular vibrato with harmonic) at measure 13. The score concludes with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking at the end of the final measure.

4: Marieta

Marieta

Lento Francisco Tárrega

CV

p

CIV

6 *ar. 12*

rit. *a tempo*

9 CV

12

(Fin)

15 *Piu Mosso* CV *ar.* CH

2

18 CV-----1 3 > 3 3 3 3

ritar. 3

21 CV-----1 3 > CV-----1 3 > 3 3 3 3

a tempo *p* ritar.

a tempo *p* ritar.

24 CII-----4 CV-----1 3 > CV-----1 3 >

a tempo

a tempo

27 CV-----1 3 > 3 3 3 3 CV-----1 3 >

ritar. 3 *a tempo*

ritar. 3 *a tempo*

30 CV-----1 3 > 3 3 3 3 D.S al fin

p ritar. *a tempo*

p ritar. *a tempo*

5: Sueño

Sueno

Francisco Tárrega

un poco cresc

rit.

FIN.

rit. a tempo

rit.

D.C. al Fin

p misterioso

6: 'Mazurka in G'

Mazurka in G

Francisco Tárrega

The musical score for 'Mazurka in G' by Francisco Tárrega is presented in a single system with six staves of music. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various performance markings and fingering instructions:

- Staff 1:** Measures 1-4. Includes a CIII fingering instruction above the staff.
- Staff 2:** Measures 5-8. Includes a CVIII fingering instruction above the staff, a *Ritard* marking below the staff, and an *A Tempo* marking below the staff.
- Staff 3:** Measures 9-12. Includes a CV fingering instruction above the staff and a CIII fingering instruction above the staff.
- Staff 4:** Measures 13-16. Includes a CII fingering instruction above the staff and a CIII fingering instruction above the staff. An *ar.* (arpeggio) marking is present below the staff.
- Staff 5:** Measures 17-20. Includes a CIII fingering instruction above the staff and a CVIII fingering instruction above the staff. A *Ritard* marking is below the staff.
- Staff 6:** Measures 21-24. Includes a CIII fingering instruction above the staff. An *A Tempo* marking is below the staff.

The score features numerous fingering numbers (1-4) and circled numbers (1-4) indicating specific fingerings for notes. It also includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *ar.* (arpeggio).

33 CIII-----| CVIII-----| 3

36 CIII-----|

38 CV-----| CIII-----| CII-----| CIII-----| ar.

41 CIII-----| CVIII-----| Ritard-----

44 CIII-----| A Tempo

46 CIII-----|

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