

DLA Thesis Abstract

András Csáki

The work of Andrés Segovia from a 21st century aspect

Consultant: Sándor SzilvÁgyi

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The antecedents of the research

Andrés Segovia is one of the most familiar figures in modern guitar history. The efforts he made in order to achieve the renaissance of modern guitar music are widely known, however, researchers interested in his work do not have an easy task since there is no available literature in Hungarian on the shelves of Hungarian libraries that could provide a reliable and authentic source on this topic. Comparing the writings on this topic – published essentially in English and Spanish – the contradictions of different sources are conspicuous. Rather than resolving these contradictions study of the interviews and writings of the master raises further questions. His autobiography – which describes the first twenty-seven years of his life – was written six decades after the events and it can be regarded as a picaresque novel rather than the starting point of research on his oeuvre.

After his death writings of an increasingly critical tone were published, the master's transcriptions and the pieces written for him were suddenly discredited. When Angelo Gilardino, the Italian master of the guitar and director of the Segovia foundation and museum finds the manuscripts of several pieces – which are significantly different from the Segovia editions – the repertory recommended for him undergoes a substantial transformation. As a result of this significant event, the professors of excellent academies start to prohibit the Schott scores that were used earlier and – slighting critical analysis – they declare that the new manuscripts shall be considered as the basic, authentic and acceptable source of performing his pieces.

As an active teacher and performer I find it of utmost importance to become acquainted with the story of the manuscripts, with particular focus on the relationship that exists between the composer and the performer. In the case of the guitar the examination of the above process is very important because due to the fact that the technique of playing the guitar is very complex, a non-guitarist composer is especially exposed to the instrument player during the composing procedure. The composers – in order to come up with playable pieces – have to frequently amend, modify and review their original composition ideas. In my thesis I am going to present the cooperation of Joaquin Turina, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Manuel Maria Ponce and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco with Segovia. The composers reacted to Segovia's often significant changes differently. Some of them rejected these, others were more cooperative and accepted the proposals of the ground-breaking guitarist. By analysing the relations existing between composer and performer I intend to provide support for those

who hesitate between different publications since in many cases it is not at all certain that the so-called original version – which is often physically unplayable and requires serious compromise – is the only way to learn a piece.

II. Sources

During my work I regarded the analysis of Segovia's correspondence as a primary source. The letters written to Ponce were first published in 1989 by Matanya Opee. With regard to the fact that the correspondence between the Mexican composer and the Spanish guitarist was rather confidential and colloquial, their correspondence often concerns other composers' activity, moreover, it describes the birth of the new pieces written for Segovia and the related problems. Therefore, studying and analysing the correspondence served as a solid and reliable starting point during my work.

The indispensable "*A New Look at Segovia*" by Graham Wade and Gerard Garno comprising of two volumes, was the basis for my dissertation. The first half of the two-part treatise per volume – which presents the details of the master's life – helped me to acquaint myself with the topic generally while the references supporting the statements of the work provided a further platform from which to research topics that I was personally interested in or in finding further sources which examined them from a different aspect.

One of the authors of the book, Graham Wade has visited Hungary on several occasions and given lectures, on one occasion I had the honour of contributing to his work as a translator at the seminar held by him at the Esztergom Guitar Festival.

For my score examples I used the critical publications from the first years of the new millennium of which I would like to highlight the importance of Frédéric Zigante's publication that was issued in 2011 and can be considered as a breakthrough piece in the field of research on Villa-Lobos' guitar studies. In the prologue of the critical publications I often found relevant information. A good example of this is a portion of the essay standing before Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Sonata published in the new "*The Andrés Segovia Archive*" series. In that study we can read a letter written by Tedesco to Segovia which is not available anywhere else and which provides important information for the analysis.

Besides using English literature I read several independent dissertations dealing with special areas of the topic. During my postgraduate studies at the *University of Southern*

California the senior lecturer and professor teaching history of the guitar, Brian Head drew my attention to some of these works.

Following his advice I studied all the editions of the *Soundboard* journal (established in 1974) that were available in the university's library and made notes of the writings dealing with the topics that were relevant for my thesis. Besides the articles from the American guitar journal, I also used articles from the British *Classical Guitar* journal during my work.

III. Methods

Based on my experience, familiarity with the history of the guitar does not form a part of basic music education, despite this I considered it important to provide a brief overview at the beginning of my thesis. This overview helps the reader to acquaint themselves with the antecedents and the context of the golden era taking place in the first half of the 20th century – which is a unique phase in the history of the instrument to this day – and it places Segovia's innovative efforts in a new historical context. The close interconnection between the history of the guitar and the genre of flamenco at the end of the 19th century makes it indispensable in describing the influencing impact of this phenomenon upon the history of the guitar.

The central chapters of my thesis describe the process of creating literature on the modern age history of the guitar, its difficulties and impacts felt up to the present day. My objective is to study the basis of the often contradictory legends surrounding the pieces recommended for Segovia. During this process I tried to read all the relevant literature, written mainly in English. In several cases I contrasted different sources and with the help of the Castelnuovo-Tedesco Sonata I highlighted the dilemmas and doubts related to modern publications. In each and every chapter I intended to use primary sources – which were the published correspondence in my case – and I integrated the important statements of similar articles. In the case of the Segovia-Ponce correspondence the documents can be read both in English and Spanish, in the 1989 publication of Matanya Ophee. In these cases my translations will be based upon the English version.

I will conclude my work with a brief evaluation in which I summarize the impacts that the Segovia phenomenon had on the guitar music of our times. All the citations indicated in my thesis are my own translations, defining the sources with the corresponding footnotes.

IV. Results

The objective of my thesis is to provide assistance to those who intend to interpret the Segovia repertoire in Hungary and wish to find a way through the maze of contradictory information surrounding the master's oeuvre. By summarizing and systematizing the significant amount of literature and presenting the results of the most recent research and expressing my own opinion on the subject I hope to contribute to making the impression of Segovia more modulated for the new generation of musicians. My thesis will provide support for finding the right way through the maze of different Segovia images: he was adored, admired and honoured to the extent of a cult figure before his death and entirely rejected and excluded after his death. My thesis provides help for each and every musician interested in the topic to understand the impact Segovia had upon modern guitar music. At the same time, it presents the elements of the personality and activity of the last century's prominent master of the guitar which contributed to critical attitudes towards his work.

With my critical analysis on the Castelnuovo-Tedesco Sonata I would like to encourage the guitarists of our time not to stick to the Segovia transcriptions or manuscripts but to try and gather all the available information concerning the creation of a piece and to understand why Segovia changed the composers' original ideas.

At the time of writing my thesis I experienced the lack of available Hungarian literature in this area and I believe it would be an unrealistic idea to think that my work could substitute for this hiatus. Nevertheless, I hope that my colleagues interested in the topic will find reliable, useful and relevant information in my thesis which they can use – perhaps supplemented with new research results to be published in the future – for making their body of knowledge more sophisticated.

During my work I tried to use the most recent and up-to-date sources that were available to me. Following Segovia's death, several essays – denying the clichés that were the subject of common talk among guitarists – were written concerning the details of the creation of guitar repertoire born during the 1920s and 1930s which were mainly published in professional journals of English speaking countries. These articles are relatively difficult to access in Hungary; therefore, I considered it very important to study the rich collection of journals at the musical library of the *University of Southern California* during my postgraduate studies. The knowledge I acquired during the guitar history classes and the personal opinion of professors lecturing at the university had a great impact on my work.

Their assistance greatly contributed to my research, I managed to acquaint myself with several publications and opinions on Segovia that I had not been familiar with before which I would like to pass on to the contemporary generation of guitarists and musicians in Hungary.

V. Documentation of activities related to the subject of the thesis

CD recording:

Andras Csaki Guitar Recital (Related work: Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Sonata op. 77, Omaggio a Boccherini) Naxos 8.572630, 2010.

Concerts:

(Following the time and place of the concerts I mentioned the related works)

19th October 2013 Almeria (Spain) Centro cultural de Cajamar;

M. Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Sonata op. 77, Omaggio a Boccherini

15th August 2013 Tirgu Mures (Romania) Cultural Palace;

M. Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Sonata op. 77, Omaggio a Boccherini and F.

Tárrega: Variaciones sul „Carnevale di Venezia”

17th April 2013 Žilina (Slovakia) 23rd Central European Music Festival;

I. Albeniz: Sevilla op.47 and F. Tárrega: Variaciones sul „Carnevale di Venezia”

29th January 2013 Los Angeles (USA) University of Southern California Macdonald Recital Hall – University Orchestra, Conductor: Michael Powers;

J. Rodrigo: Fantasia para un Gentilhombre

14th May 2012 Budapest, Hungarian Radio; Budapest Chamber Symphony, conductor: Simone Fontanelli;

J. Rodrigo: Fantasia para un Gentilhombre

- 14th May 2011 Budapest, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest Chamber Symphony, Conductor: Péter, Csaba; J. Rodrigo: Fantasia para un Gentilhombre
- 9th April 2011 Szeged, Fricsay Hall;
F. Moreno Torroba: Sonatina
- 23rd December 2010 Tbilisi (Georgia) Saradishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire;
M. Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Sonata op. 77, Omaggio a Boccherini
- 30th April 2010 Cervia (Italy) Teatro Comunale di Cervia;
M. Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Sonata op. 77, Omaggio a Boccherini
- 11th April 2010 Genova (Italy) Paganini Festival – Palazzo del Principe;
M. Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Sonata op. 77, Omaggio a Boccherini
- 21st November 2009 Tokyo (Japan) Bunka Kaikan;
M. Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Sonata op. 77, Omaggio a Boccherini
- 21st June 2008 International Guitar Festival Balatonfüred Anna Grand Hotel Ball Room (Manuel Maria Ponce tribute concert), Sinfonietta Hungarica, Conductor: Zoltán, Bolyki;
M. M. Ponce: Sonata III, Sonatina Meridional, Thème varié et Finale; Concierto del Sur