

CLASSICAL
GUITAR

MARCH

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Interview with:

ROLAND DYENS

CHRISTOPHER DEAN

GUIDO SANTORSOLA
AN APPRECIATION

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1995

MARCH

CLASSICAL GUITAR

VOLUME 13, No. 7

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Contributors:

Roy Brewer, Gordon Crosskey, Chris Dell, Zbigniew Dubiella, Paul Fowles, Paul Gregory, John Huber, Ivor Mairants, Marcos, Jorge Morel, Matanya Ophee, David Russell, Rico Stover, Maurice J. Summerfield, Graham Wade.

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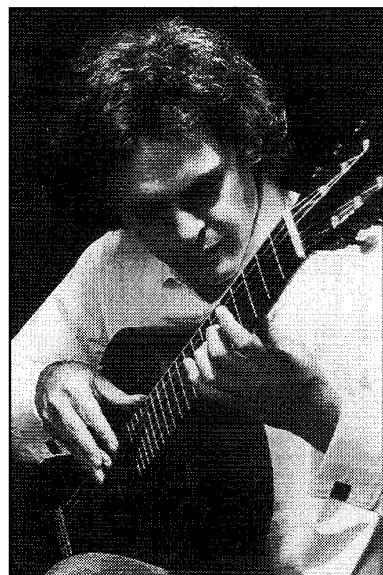
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

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Remittances must be in GB Pounds payable in the
United Kingdom or US Dollars payable in the USA.
If not remitting in Sterling or USA Dollars, please add
equivalent of £10.00 for Bank Handling charges.

UK Distribution to News-stands

Newspagets and Wholesalers by Seymour Press
Ltd.
Windsor House, 1270 London Road, Norbury
SW16 4DH. 0181 679 1899.

Typesetting · Artwork by Pre-Print

Printed by COLDEN OFFSET LIMITED

Published monthly by:

ASHLEY MARK PUBLISHING COMPANY
Olsover House, 43 Sackville Road,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 5TA.

THE SOUND AND THE SILENCE

COLIN COOPER talks to ROLAND DYENS

THERE was a moment during Roland Dyens's concert in the 5th Silesian Guitar Autumn when what he did with Fernando Sor's 'Mes Ennuis' was so magical that one could only marvel. It was the sort of playing that, if it does not defy criticism, at least challenges it, simply because it was so fresh and exciting; it revealed aspects of Sor that hitherto in my experience had only been, at the best, implied. When I asked Roland, probably impertinently — for one should be careful about questioning a magician — how he had done it, he replied, enigmatically, that he 'listened to the silence'. In other words, the space around the notes is as important as the notes themselves. Perhaps one would not play Bach in this way — did a composer ever leave less space around his notes? — but as a way of interpreting a composer such as Sor it undoubtedly shows things in a new light.

Roland Dyens was born in Tunisia, North Africa, in 1955. He won the Palestrina International Competition in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 1979, in the same year winning the Special Prize in the Alessandria Competition, Italy. He studied composition with Raymond Weber and Désiré Dondeyne, and is currently Professor of Guitar at the Conservatoire de Chaville (Hauts-de-Seine). He spends most of his year in France, but is much in demand at international guitar festivals around the world.

'My first teacher was one of these very rare teachers that came to your home. In this period, in the 60s, there were no real teachers in Paris. He was one of the last of these people, very old, coming on a motorcycle. It gave me the taste for the guitar. His name was Maison. In my records, when I have the opportunity to mention him, I do: "Roland Dyens, élève de Robert Maison et Alberto Ponce" — but nobody knows about Maison. It's a gesture to him. Everybody asks me, who is Robert Maison? It's an opportunity to explain who he was.'

Roland Dyens began to compose very early. 'When I got my first guitar, my first wish was to create something, some songs, to improvise. It was my own feeling. I don't remember when I decided to become a composer. At the same time as the interpretation and the technique, there were always the two aspects in my life. I never separated interpretation from creation. It was like a recreation. While I was studying Villa-Lobos or Pujol, sometimes there was an overdose of working, so I improvised on a phrase of Villa-Lobos or a bar of Pujol. I took it and made some re-recreation, then came back to the music.'

Sor's *Bagatelles Op.43 'Mes Ennuis'* ('My



Roland Dyens.

troubles') is a work that does not often find its way into the concert hall. Roland told me how he came to find it — for this was before the days of Brian Jeffery's Complete Facsimile Edition. It makes a nice little story:

'In Marseilles there was a very old teacher, Louis Davalle, a bit like the French Segovia, not very well known but a good teacher who had a number of students, among whom was René Bartoli. I'd heard about him, and one day I decided to meet him. I was in the south of France, and I had to do a concert near Marseilles. I got his phone number, and he invited me to his home. He was a docker who had fallen in love with the guitar one day in the 30s. I went to his house, and he told me about his life, which was rich in anecdotes and stories — you can imagine. He showed me his very old Ramirez, 1924, and pictures, incredible. And he showed me some of his favourite music, among which was *Mes Ennuis*. And he asked me to play it by sight. I played it — and fell in love. I said to him — because I love challenges — "I have my concert tomorrow and I want to play it." And I played it one day later, by heart. Six months later he died. So I had the good luck to meet him. He was very old — over 90. Every time I play this music I think of him.'

Like all free spirits, Roland Dyens has had his

share of criticism from people who would prefer that so-called 'classical' music is kept rigidly within a certain mould. He, like Sergio and Odair Assad, has never had the slightest hesitation in superimposing his own strong creative impulses. It is what great interpreters have done throughout the ages. Only recently have we become obsessed with 'what the composer wanted', as though the composer were still around and able to influence events. Such an obsession places music firmly on the shelves of a museum, rather than making it the living, breathing thing that living people love and revere. There are only two kinds of music: good and bad; and if Sor would not have been totally entranced by what Roland Dyens did with *Mes Ennus* last October in Poland, then Sor wasn't the man I take him to be.

Scholars and musicologists may shake their heads doubtfully. Roland Dyens calls these people 'integrist', the people who insist on classical music being played in what they consider the classical tradition, to be rigidly adhered to, with little or no possibility of new light being shed. Imagine Shakespeare being performed in this stifling way! The Royal Shakespeare Company would have to sack all its actresses and engage a bunch of adolescent boys. It would lose its audience overnight, and deservedly.

'They come to a concert only to look for faults and mistakes,' said Roland about his 'integrist'. 'They never have the idea of bringing something fresh. The only thing that interests me is people who today, in the guitar, bring something — a little stone, a little dust, even, but something, something new and fresh. I don't really understand the way of playing the same repertoire in the same way. What's new, pussycat? What's new? *Rien de nouveau!* That's why the Assad brothers are really the musicians I feel closest too — because we have the same chemistry.'

Now, this question of silence. Good painters often perceive not the objects in front of them but the space around them. The result is often an unsuspected freshness. Is Roland's perception of silence something of the same sort?

"The only thing that interests me is people who today, in the guitar, bring something — a little stone, a little dust, even, but something new and fresh"

"Silence is one of my favourite things in the music. It's something I learnt only quite recently. It's something that comes with age. When you speak about silence to students of 20 years old, they understand, but only with the brain, mentally. To them, music must be sound."

'For me, the silence is one of my favourite things in the music. It's something I learnt only quite recently. It's something that comes with age. When you speak about silence to students of 20 years old, they understand, but only with the brain, mentally. To them, music must be sound. What is silence? Silence is when it's finished? No! It's like the air in painting, you know. The silence between two notes. The last note you play, you can even see this note falling down. Like a tennis player hitting the ball at the very last moment. That's a great feeling.'

Roland has mastered the art of persuading an audience to listen to these perfectly timed silences. Is it something that anyone can learn?

'I'm not a demagogue about music. I think, for example, that a-rhythmical people can never be rhythmical people. Music is not an obligatory, democratic thing. To think that everybody can be an artist, or a great artist, is wrong. It's something you have. You can spend, hours, years, trying to teach this idea to some people, but it is impossible. It will remain an intellectual idea, but the most important thing about music is that it is felt in your body, in a very natural way. I may appear to be an abnormal musician, an atypical musician, but I feel normal; I'm improvising, composing and playing, I'm an interpreter, I joke with the music, I'm ready with music. What else? I'm a musician at the end of the 20th century, nothing else. An active, living musician.'

'I can't understand the divorce between composers and interpreters. I fight against that. The divorce was more or less declared in the middle of the 19th century by the first composer who wrote a cadenza. For me that's the date of the crime. It was the death of improvisation in classical music. And therefore the interpreters play what is written by the composer — and nothing else! When I play a concerto I always improvise the cadenza. I would like others to do the same. I'm not seeking loneliness on my planet, but it's a fact. And it's a pity.'

One knows exactly what he means. During the last round of

the competition in Tychy, the Giuliani Op.30 Concerto was played four times — and each time with the same cadenzas. There can't have been a musical intelligence in that hall that did not long for something different. But the players did not dare to do it, Roland said, ‘ — because they don't know how. It is assumed that the composers of the last century were always very serious people. But they were also very happy people, sometimes jokers, you know? We are making religious people out of them, very serious classical people. I think music in the classical world is getting very serious. It was the contrary at the time, I think. Because the composers who played their own music improvised. What is a prelude etymologically? It is “before playing”. What I do at the beginning of a recital is the same. I'm connected to these people — yet I'm thought of as some special guy. I feel really normal, you know. And I feel lonely — I would like others to do what I am doing.

'A journalist once wrote that I was "a classical musician in the hands, and a jazz musician in the head". For me, that is the best definition. But classical music is my house, my family. I love to travel and I love to come back. That's why I always play Sor in my concerts. I have always been in love with Sor's music, and this is my way of saying to people "I'm a classical guitarist like you". But I have *un peu de gourmandise. Je suis gourmand! J'ai beaucoup d'appétit.*

'I am a classical player visiting jazz music, re-reading jazz in his own conception. I bring it to the classical guitar. If I were a jazz player, I would have bought a Stratocaster or a Les Paul electric guitar. But I'm not a jazz player. I'm classical — and curious! I do some travelling, then I come back to my classical house. I go to the market, then return to my house, the classical guitar.

'I feel really flexible. I love every discipline of music. Everything interests me in music. Accompanying a popular singer with my guitar — for the first time — as well as playing a suite by Bach, playing in Sweden for the Arvika Festival, one of the oldest festivals. They were celebrating their jubilee. Jazz and classical guitar at the same time. Every night I played with jazz players. The Swedish school of jazz is very good. And I played in the pub every night, with the jazz musicians. And in Arvika the classical teachers told me that it had never happened before, that an invited classical guitarist had played with the jazz musicians. For me it was normal. I never felt forced to do these things. Jekyll and Hyde! During the day I'm playing classical — and at night, the jam sessions! I feel OK about it. I feel very good in each situation.'

"The most important thing about music is that it is felt in your body, in a very natural way"

The world of Roland Dyens has opened up so widely now that the possibilities seem almost infinite. Yet in his teens he was advised to make a choice: one thing or the other. 'I was 18 or so, in France, where music is very traditional, very conventional. I'd already heard this sentence: "My dear, one day you will have to choose which camp you are going to join". Classical or jazz, you had to choose. But I never made the choice. And it's too late now! But I'm happy never to have made that choice, because my public in France is so mixed. I have all the bourgeois people, with the rockers as well. And rock players do like my attitude towards the classics. My best souvenir of a masterclass is paradoxical. It was in Cannes, a class in a classical guitar festival for rockers, hard rockers. And the organiser said to me: "Roland, I've got a crazy idea. Could you come to Cannes and teach a masterclass for rock players?" I was a bit afraid, but it was incredible: I've never got such silence, such attention. I was explaining the different colours on only one string. It was amazing, when you think of their materials, the wah-wah pedal and everything, and I'm just playing in a primitive way with a wooden guitar, from the bridge to the fingerboard, and making different sounds, harpsichord sounds, lute sounds, baby sounds. It was crazy, surrealistic! He asked me because he knew I was open to this kind of thing. Someone who spoke rigidly in classical language would not have connected. They would feel themselves almost to be assaulted by him.'

His masterclasses in Tychy were given to classical students; of course, and were highly successful. Did he find it difficult to communicate in any way?

'No. I loved it. My language is more implicit than intellectual or analytical or musicological. I'm speaking so that an old man or an old woman not in the guitar world could understand what I'm saying. It's full of examples, jokes, examples from jazz, from songs, from Sor, something from what the student is playing. For example, I stop him during the third bar of Sor and say "If Charlie Parker had played this...." You know? It's really open. My masterclasses are the reverse of something rigid and boring — at least I hope so.'

Like the creative artist artist he is, Roland Dyens has any number of irons in the fire. One current 'baby' is his concerto for guitar and string orchestra, which he would like to be better known. As for the future, he says he has no premeditated ideas.

'I'm open. I don't want to plan two years in advance. You know what I mean: in two years I will do this kind of concert, and in three years maybe this kind of record. I don't have this feeling.'

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Looking from the Inside Out

By COLIN COOPER

ASKED how he got into the demanding and insecure craft of guitar making, Chris Dean surprised me by saying that it had been an accident. Intending to play the guitar, he asked his mother for a book on guitar technique. Misunderstanding him, she gave him Irving Sloane's book on guitar making technique. He put it away for a year or so, but then picked it up and thought that it might be quite fun to make a guitar.

Now, although he does play the guitar well, he has established himself as a guitar maker whose fine work is becoming more and widely known and appreciated among connoisseurs, both in Europe and in Japan, the latter country taking up to 60 per cent of his work.

A significant step was taking the course at the London College of Furniture, where for three years he learnt the elements of guitar construction with Herbert Schwarz and various other people. There was some slight dissatisfaction when he left in 1981, because although he now knew how to make guitars, he did not know how to run a business. There had been business study lessons, but even that did not seem to offer him any way in to the actual business of making and selling guitars. So he sold furniture for a while, in Britain and in New Zealand, where he stayed for a year. That was where he finally decided to turn his whole effort towards the building of guitars.

'After I'd made that decision, I had no further choice,' he says. 'I had to go head first into the commercial side of it.' He returned to England and, he admits, pestered Paul Fischer for a long time until he was taken on as an assistant. Paul had had one assistant, who then went off to become a Buddhist monk (another subsequently became a helicopter pilot), and was in two minds about taking on another. He finally agreed, and it proved a valuable experience for Chris, who stayed for about two years. During that time he learned not only the finer points of guitar construction but also the ins and outs of the trade and how difficult it is to make a living at it. 'The commercial pressures were there, but it was still enjoyable. It never became a burden — though it gets tiresome sometimes.'

Having quickly established Chris's level of skill, Paul put him at a bench and generally let him get on with it. 'Soon after that I was making the major part of his Studio model — except that he made the soundboards. That I greatly appreciated, to be able to work on my own.'

In 1985, armed with a few tools, the LCF experience and the know-how obtained through Paul Fischer, he set up as a guitar maker in the



Christopher Dean.

PHOTO: COLIN COOPER

Oxfordshire village of Churchill, but subsequently moved to his present spacious workshop in Kingham, where he turns out about 24 guitars each year.

'That suits my pace. I've tried doing lots of necks in one go — which is lovely when you come to make a guitar: you just go and pick a neck, which you've got very little work to do on. But now I work at a slower pace.'

The United States, Germany and Hong Kong are other places where his guitars have gone. He also sells to guitar centres in Britain in addition to his private sales to individuals.

Chris showed me a new guitar, just completed. The soundhole is not in its usual place but towards the top of the upper bout, in duplicate. He is, of course, not the first maker to experiment with soundhole position — for experiment it basically is. It seems to work very well. 'The idea was to increase the vibrating area of the top. Nothing much goes on in the upper bout. The soundholes are also away from their normal position under the strings. And the usual cut-off bar is moved up a centimetre or so. It's actually one of my favourite guitars. It's got a lovely sound to it.'

There is also a cutaway to facilitate high-fret fingering, making the instrument easier to play. This is a sensible innovation, opposed only by those who think that the shape of a guitar is as important as the sound and the playability.

Although he readily makes what his clients ask for, which is mainly spruce-topped guitars, he likes making cedar guitars, though there hasn't been much call for them recently — the Japanese, for instance, will not take cedar. 'Spruce is getting horribly difficult to get hold of, which is sad. I made a trip through Europe with Peter Barton to look for spruce; we found a couple of sources, which was good, but the best trees are going if not already gone. It's really quite worrying.'

Part of the problem is that trees are not being allowed to mature properly. And there are some highly indiscriminate loggers who will chop down good tonewood and sell it to be used for window frames. A horrifying thought, says Chris Dean. 'But there's plenty of good cedar available. I enjoy using it, and I will probably be using more. I haven't used Sitka spruce as yet, but I have a stock of it. But Swiss pine is really what I go for. Because I've used it for so long, it's the material I know best.'

Many of Chris's backs are in more than two pieces. This means economical use of smaller pieces of rosewood, and there is absolutely no reason why not, beyond the aesthetic. Even that is questionable: some multi-unit backs are beautiful in their own right. Some buyers are fussy, however. 'I made a 3-piece back, and they said "It's lovely, can we have some more?" So on the strength of that I bought a load of this rosewood for 3-piece backs — and now they say "Can we just have 2-piece backs?"' Chris cited a Hauser which had a back made of two unmatched pieces of wood. 'Try selling one of those to the Japanese! You'd get it back by the next flight. They're traditionalists, but I don't see why we shouldn't change the guitar. I mean, the repertoire's changing, isn't it? I don't see why the instrument shouldn't follow suit.'

This is a powerful argument. An instrument is just that: something by which music can be produced. Without music, an instrument is nothing more than a piece of wood and bits of nylon, however beautifully assembled. The argument, however, falters in the speculative context of the collectors, those people who have pushed up the 'value' (and the word must surely be put in inverted commas) of a violin by Stradivari to half a million pounds or possibly even more. The result is a considerable number of fine instruments that never, ever, get played.

It seems odd that an instrument that uses pine from Switzerland, rosewood from Brazil or East India and ebony from Africa should yet be

described as having an 'English' sound, but that is what happens. Said Chris: 'I was talking to Gilbert (Biberian) the other day, and he played one of my guitars. "This is lovely," he said, "So English." So I said, "Can you define that?" He found it hard to do so. I believe him — that it's very much an English guitar — but it's hard for me to see in exactly what sense. It's obviously not Spanish, but I don't know just how different our guitars are from, say, German or French or American or Australian guitars. There's certainly not that earthiness which I think only Spanish guitars have, but since only a limited repertoire is Spanish, I don't think that matters.'

No maker makes a masterpiece every time. The aim is to reproduce as far as possible the moments of inspiration that give rise to the very best work; to classify it and to codify it so that it

can done again and again. 'I think even the most scientific-minded makers still have this problem. There's something unique about each piece of wood, the way it's put together, the way the back and top respond together. The overall character of each guitar is

different from one to the other. It's always something of a lottery. But it's always very exciting.'

Once again the essential difference between a guitar and a concert grand piano had been encapsulated. Expert pianists will be able to spot fine differences between one Steinway and another, but try asking the average listener. It is one of the glories of the guitar that its individual timbre can vary so widely from instrument to instrument while it continues to be a classical guitar.

One of Chris's models in the workshop had metal pins instead of a wooden bridge, an idea I had first seen in John Gilbert's guitars. There were several advantages, though getting the fulcrum right without shearing the string on the edge of the metal pin could be a problem. 'If I had the time, I might do it more often. You can tune each string more accurately, by stepping back the heavier strings.' This was done more by trial-and-error than by mathematical calculation, though an electronic tuner was used to match up the harmonics on the 12th fret with the open strings. 'Then I stuck to that formula. I think it can vary from string to string. The tuning of a guitar is always a bit of a compromise, but this takes you a step nearer to perfection.'

About innovation in general, Chris Dean said that a maker still had to take note of the aesthetic appeal of a guitar. 'If you are going to do something new or something different, you have to think it through. You have to look at the proportions, the lines, and make it attractive. I always feel that a guitar has to look right; you've got to want to pick it up and play it. Then you're

"I had to go head first into the commercial side of it"

half-way there. The aesthetics are very important.'

A bandsaw is used for roughing out. Some jobs can be done better on a machine than by hand. 'For instance, cutting fret slots. I've worked out a jig and I've had a special saw made that cuts the slots accurately. Whereas I know that if I start doing that by hand, I'm depending on the width of the cut made by the handsaw being right. No matter how good you are, there's always a tendency to rock the saw slightly.' That made sense. Why insist on doing something by hand that a machine can do better?

There's also the physical side to be considered. Using the planer to rough out the necks to the required thickness can save a remarkable amount of wear and tear on the human back. The expertise of the master craftsman is better reserved for the finer points of guitar making — and there are plenty of those.

Chris Dean tunes each box very carefully when it's finished. He makes notes of every guitar: the bracing pattern, the type and quality of the woods, the weight of the top and the back, and the way the top and the back are tuned. Later he will collate all this information to see if some pattern emerges.

Once again Chris came back to the quality of the wood. It is, he maintains, the most important factor in the making of a good guitar. 'Obviously the back and sides have a part to play, but I don't consider Brazilian rosewood to be particularly superior to Indian rosewood. It gives a different character of sound, just by the way it reflects the sound. Brazilian, being denser, gives a brighter ring than most Indian rosewoods. But then Indian rosewood has its own qualities, which I find attractive. It's slightly less aggressive in its projection of sound.'

Other hardwoods are not used for backs and sides, though he has nothing against them. He remembers a guitar made from yew, and how well it worked. Then, of course, there are woods such as maple and sycamore.

'A piece of maple is very different from a same-sized piece of Brazilian rosewood. But depending on what you do with it, the thickness you take it to and the amount you brace it, maple can take on some of the qualities of the rosewood. So there is room there for getting the sound you want.' That must be good news for the few surviving rosewood trees in Brazil.

French polish is used on the tops of Dean guitars, with a lacquer — though there was a time when he used an oil varnish — on the back and sides.

What were the opportunities for a young craftsman hoping to make a living out of making guitars? 'It's tough,' said Chris. 'And it's getting

tougher. If you have the skill, it's easy to spend a lot of time making a nice instrument, but to sustain it is difficult. As I said, the first thing you need is the materials. And you need to age them, therefore you need to plan ahead for a long time. And you need to be able to fund your profession, to be able to afford to buy in materials and keep your workshop running. So, with that and the problem of getting good materials, you've got to grasp the nettle. There are big problems ahead, and if anyone does it, I admire them.'

No one should go into guitar making with the object of making a fortune. That goes without saying. It's something even to make a living, even if you have all the requisite skills. Chris Dean has those skills in abundance, and he is doing well after the sort of early difficult period that comes to all guitar makers.

How important, in his estimation, was communication between player and maker? Do players' opinions really affect the way he makes a guitar?

'Yes, they do, very much so. I try to take on board a lot of what they say, particularly about the ease of playing: the shape of the neck, and the balance of the sound. Yet you can have a lot surprises. You make a guitar that you think will suit player A, but player A will not be interested though player B will be — the person you least expect to be interested. So it works in those ways. What else I think is important is the fact that I play. I know that some great makers don't play at all, but I find it useful.'

Chris began as a guitar player, and still enjoys playing. He has also made jazz guitars in the past and, although he played well enough to be a member of a jazz band, would like to learn to play even better (on an instrument made by himself, naturally). He can no longer keep his nails in the condition required for classical guitar and has no desire to make what he calls 'music with rough edges'. Possibly, he says, he will take up another instrument altogether — the saxophone, perhaps, which no less a guitarist than Alirio Díaz once played well. Would he end up making one? No, said Chris very firmly.

Lutherie is a difficult profession at the best of times, and even more so in the current economic climate. Nevertheless, Chris had done it. 'I've surprised myself, because there was a time when I almost put myself off, seeing the problems that were there. Without being involved in it, looking ahead is that much worse. But you get spurred on by those very gratifying moments when you've met people who appreciate what you do and actually want to buy it. That's a lovely feeling. That helps to sustain the interest.'

**"Spruce is
getting horribly
difficult to get
hold of. The best
trees are going if
not already
gone"**

FUNDAMENTAL PERSPECTIVES

PART 19: BASIC RIGHT-HAND FINGERING ISSUES

By JIM FERGUSON

IT'S DIFFICULT not to notice that many editions typically include varying degrees of left-hand fingering, but skirt the issue of the right-hand altogether. Why? While there are many reasons, in part it has to do with the notion that right-hand fingering is a personal matter that each player will resolve to his or her own satisfaction. What this really means, though, is that many guitarists are essentially improvising with the righthand, using any finger that feels convenient at the time. While this might produce satisfactory results for a relatively simple piece, for more challenging material it can give cause to a number of problems, including inadvertently changing a fingering during performance (which can lead to a memory lapse, among other undesirable effects), or help ingrain a number of bad habits, such as using the same finger twice in a row.

Of course, one of the most beautiful aspects of the guitar is that it is capable of producing many musical textures. While it is not an easy instrument to write for, composers who have taken the time to familiarise themselves with its idiosyncrasies have successfully explored these areas. Pieces that are chordal in nature reflect the vertical aspects of harmony for the most part, while others exploit arpeggios, or music's horizontal harmonic dimension. Some pieces integrate horizontal harmony with scale-based passengers – often in a contrapuntal setting – while others capitalise on all of the guitar's possibilities. It is these last groups of pieces – with scale passages or a mix of scale passages and arpeggios – where right-hand fingering is implied the least and therefore must be approached with deliberation. Here are five general guidelines that will prove to be useful in developing effective right-hand fingerings.

1) Work out a right-hand fingering with the same care you give to left-hand fingering. In either case, sometimes the music (not the editorial markings) clearly suggests the fingers that should be used, while at other times, you'll need to consider several possibilities before coming to a decision.

2) Alternate your fingers. While there are times when this isn't absolutely necessary, it's a good habit to develop during the early stages of playing the guitar. Of course, there may be some situations in which you'd actually want to repeat a given finger – to ensure that a slow passage is articulated with as much uniformity as possible, for instance, but that is a fine point that is very much the exception. It's also easy to lapse into repeating a finger just because it seems convenient at the time. Indeed, at a certain level,

repeating a finger does seem easier in a lot of situations; however, it can lead to a kind of complacency that can work against you when you really need to alternate fingers.

3) Eliminate or at least minimise awkward string crossings, such as using *i* to play a note on the second-string with *m* for a note on the third string.

4) Always write your right-hand fingering in the score, so it can be scrutinised, worked on, memorised, and referred to should you forget what you originally came up with.

5) Once you can run through a piece with a given fingering, spend some time watching your righthand to see if you're actually executing it correctly. (Playing in front of a mirror can help you see what you're doing). It's very easy to think you're doing one thing when you're actually doing another.

Next month we'll illustrate the preceding guidelines by looking at some specific points. Until then, here are some relevant titbits for thought.

Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



Example 5

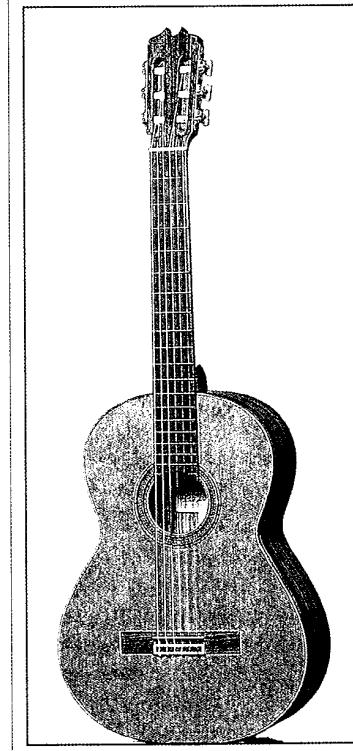


While extended scales are far and few between in solo guitar literature, they are relatively common in ensemble music. Regardless, they are one of the most direct avenues to attaining both left- and right-hand fluency. Look at Example 1, a simple first-position C major scale that begins on fifth-string C and ends on first-string G, a twelfth higher. With your right-hand thumb planted on the sixth string (you needn't always rest it on the sixth or any other string), play through it a few times. Alternate your first two fingers. Use free-strokes at first, and then try it with rest-strokes. What finger are you starting on? Many players feel more comfortable beginning scale passages with *m*. If this is true with you, keep in mind that ideally you should be able to start on *i* with equal ease.

But what about awkward string crossings? Example 2 begins the scale with *m*, while Example 3 begins with *i*. Awkward string crossings, where *i* must reach over *m* to move to the next string, are marked with brackets. While each example has two awkward crossings, Example 3 is probably better because it gets off to a good start and ends with *m*. Examples 4 and 5 show two other possibilities that incorporate fingers other than *i* and *m*. Study them carefully to see why they might have some advantages over Examples 2 and 3.

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GUIDO SANTORSOLA 1904-1994

An Appreciation by CORAZON OTERO

As chairman of Ediciones Musicales Yolotl, I got in touch with Guido Santórsola and published his Sonata No.5 and his Prelude, Aria and Finale for guitar. He was a good correspondent, and we became very good pen-friends. I did not meet him in person until 1990, when I invited him to Mexico City for the Third Manuel M. Ponce International Guitar Contest. He was thus able to be present for the premiere of his Recitativo, Fantasía and Finale, and we offered him the prestigious Coyolshauqui decoration for his musical work for the guitar. He also gave a lecture on his music. I was very lucky to be with him during the week of the Contest. Having admired him for his great talent, I now realised that his was a charming and well-ordered personality. Despite being 85 years old, he was also very strong and had a youthful ardour. It was during that week in Mexico that I promised him I would write his biography, as I had done with Ponce, Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Tansman. On returning to Montevideo, he sent me photographs and various kinds of other material, and I am now working on it.

When his widow called me with the sad news, I was deeply touched.

Corazón Otero

Guido Santórsola, who died in Montevideo on 25 September 1994, was born in Canosa, Italy, on 18 November 1904. At the early age of five he moved with his parents to São Paulo, Brazil. He began his study of solfa and music theory with his father, Enrico Santórsola, and studied the violin with Zaccaria Autuori. At the age of nine he gave his first violin concert. At the Conservatoire of Music of São Paulo he continued his violin studies with Autuori and composition with Agostino Cantú, later with Lamberto Baldi.

When the first world war began, his father, in a patriotic impulse, enrolled in the army and went to Italy, leaving his family alone. At eleven years old Guido had to take care of his mother, grandmother and three younger brothers. Lack of money was causing his mother anguish, and Guido got a job playing the violin at the Pathé Palace, a silent movie theatre. Even these earnings were not enough, and he went to work in a night-club after — owing to his extreme youth — having to obtain special permission from a judge. It was a hard period for him. From 7 to 11 pm he worked at the cinema, then he had to work from 12.30 to 5 am at the cabaret, where he played light music with his violin to accompany singers and dancers. He would arrive home at dawn, sleep till noon and then study the violin, have lunch and go to school in the



Guido Santórsola (right) with Andrés Segovia.

afternoon. Deeply moved by his predicament, his teacher Zaccaria admitted him into his house and also gave money to his mother until his father returned from the war.

In 1922 Santórsola finished his violin studies with Alfred Mitowisky, obtaining the Teachers' Diploma of Trinity College of Music, London. He received a scholarship from the Brazilian government to improve his violin studies in Naples with G. Fusella. In 1925 Autuori asked him to substitute for the viola player in a string quartet. He performed so well that he was hired as the first viola in the São Paulo Municipal Theatre Symphony Orchestra, where he stayed until July 1931. In the same city he founded the Brazilian Musical Institute and directed a chamber music masterclass.

As a first viola, he worked with Rio de Janeiro's Municipal Theatre Symphony Orchestra as well as with São Paulo's, and performed several times as viola (and viola d'amore) soloist under conductors Villa-Lobos, Kleiber, Baldi, Bush, Cooper, Respighi etc.

In Montevideo, Uruguay, he was invited to play first viola for OSSODRE, and also in the same institution's string quartet for a period of four months. The contract was renewed several times, until he moved to Montevideo and, in 1936, became a citizen of Uruguay:

I am always an Italian citizen, but because I have lived in some other countries, I am a citizen of the world.

He had never thought of composing for the guitar until 1942, when he heard of a contest for a concertino for guitar and orchestra. He won it by a unanimous decision by the judges, and his Concertino had its premiere on 4 September 1943, Santórsola conducting the SODRE

orchestra and Abel Carlevaro the soloist. It was an unqualified success. Since that beginning he composed more than one hundred works for the guitar, dedicating them to Andrés Segovia, Isaias Savio, Luise Walker, Carlos Barbosa-Lima, Oscar Cáceres, Turibio Santos, Abel Carlevaro, Alvaro Pierri, María Luisa Anido, Sergio and Eduardo Abreu, Angelo Gilardino, Sophocles Papas, Alice Artzt, David Russell and Corazón Otero, among other guitarists all over the world who play his music.

He met Andrés Segovia in Montevideo during Segovia's long stay in Uruguay. For some years Segovia's young daughter Beatriz studied piano with Guido's wife, the pianist Sarah Bourdillon; every week Segovia accompanied his daughter to her piano lessons, and in conversation Segovia would tell Guido how much he liked the second movement of his Concertino for Guitar.

Also in Uruguay he met Manuel M. Ponce. The Mexican composer had gone there to conduct his Sonata for violin and viola, which Santórsola played during the series of concerts with Ponce's music in which Segovia gave the first performance of *Concierto del Sur*. Santórsola appreciated Ponce's human qualities and admired him as a composer.

After 1970 Santórsola dedicated himself to composition and conducting, and his viola and viola d'amore fell silent. There were three stages of composition: from 1928 to 1945, from 1945 to 1962, and from 1962 till the end of his life. In the last one he used the twelve semitones of the chromatic scale, the result of which was his discovery of the complete round of twelve fifths:

During the 1982-83 period there occurred to my mind strange sounds during the night hours when I was asleep. I tried superimposing two seven (seventh diminished) chords and to listen them. For example, the two chords in sevenths, like: C sharp E flat, G, B flat and D sharp, F sharp, A, C. Unable to resist the temptation, I went downstairs to my studio, opened the piano and played them. It was a strange and great auditory pleasure. The first time I used this entity — two chords of the seventh diminished superimposed — was in the 3rd Guitar Concerto, dedicated to David Russell. Later, in 1988-898, in the Recitativo, Fantasía e Finale for strings, guitar and celesta, dedicated to Corazón Otero, I really enjoyed using these chords of the diminished seventh, so tender and passionate.

I think that the guitar is a complete instrument, so convenient for the counterpoint that I adore, and superb for arpeggios and chords. In a concert it should be treated with love and care, and should not succumb to the metal sonorities of the trombone and the tuba. It is agreeably subtle when united with other instruments such as viola, flute and harpsichord.

Thanks to Andrés Segovia, Julian Bream and other great guitarists, we can hear some incredible interpretations. I love to listen to my works when they are played by great performers, whether alone, in duets, trios or guitar quartets. Through the genius of Segovia and his great soul, the guitar has achieved the highest level of art, and today the number of great performers is a large one.

In 1984 Guido Santórsola was invited as a member of the jury for the Toronto Guitar Competition. The Guitar Society commissioned a guitar concerto from him, his third, and he was present at its premiere, when David Russell was the soloist.

In June 1986 he received the decoration of the 'Orden Palestrina' in Porto Alegre, Brazil. In 1990 he married Carmen Varela.

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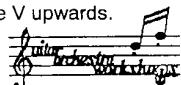
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Romantica

Andante sostenuto

Peter Nuttall

The sheet music consists of ten staves of musical notation for a single instrument, likely a guitar or mandolin, given the fingerings. The key signature is A major (two sharps). The time signature varies between common time and 6/8.

- Staff 1:** Andante sostenuto. Measure 1 starts with a single note followed by eighth-note pairs. Measure 2 shows sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 3 ends with a fermata. Measure 4 begins with a grace note. Measure 5 ends with a fermata. Measure 6 begins with a grace note. Measure 7 ends with a fermata. Measure 8 begins with a grace note. Measure 9 ends with a fermata. Measure 10 ends with a fermata.
- Staff 2:** Starts with a grace note. Measures 1-3 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 4 ends with a fermata. Measures 5-7 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 8 ends with a fermata. Measures 9-10 show eighth-note pairs.
- Staff 3:** Starts with a grace note. Measures 1-3 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 4 ends with a fermata. Measures 5-7 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 8 ends with a fermata. Measures 9-10 show eighth-note pairs.
- Staff 4:** Starts with a grace note. Measures 1-3 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 4 ends with a fermata. Measures 5-7 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 8 ends with a fermata. Measures 9-10 show eighth-note pairs.
- Staff 5:** Starts with a grace note. Measures 1-3 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 4 ends with a fermata. Measures 5-7 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 8 ends with a fermata. Measures 9-10 show eighth-note pairs.
- Staff 6:** Starts with a grace note. Measures 1-3 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 4 ends with a fermata. Measures 5-7 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 8 ends with a fermata. Measures 9-10 show eighth-note pairs.
- Staff 7:** Starts with a grace note. Measures 1-3 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 4 ends with a fermata. Measures 5-7 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 8 ends with a fermata. Measures 9-10 show eighth-note pairs.
- Staff 8:** Starts with a grace note. Measures 1-3 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 4 ends with a fermata. Measures 5-7 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 8 ends with a fermata. Measures 9-10 show eighth-note pairs.
- Staff 9:** Starts with a grace note. Measures 1-3 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 4 ends with a fermata. Measures 5-7 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 8 ends with a fermata. Measures 9-10 show eighth-note pairs.
- Staff 10:** Starts with a grace note. Measures 1-3 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 4 ends with a fermata. Measures 5-7 show eighth-note pairs. Measure 8 ends with a fermata. Measures 9-10 show eighth-note pairs.

Performance instructions include:
- Measure 1: *a tempo*
- Measure 4: *poco rall.*
- Measure 7: *a tempo*
- Measure 10: *dolce*
- Measure 12: *mf*
- Measure 15: *(rall.)*
- Measure 18: *a tempo*
- Measure 21: *rit.*
- Measure 24: *a tempo*
- Measure 27: *rallentando*
- Measure 30: *rit.*

Dance of the Dwarfs

Vojislav Ivanović
b. 1959

Moderato ($\text{♩} = 88$)

Guitar

sim.

6

11

15

20

CIV

sffz

CII

25

CI

29

dim.

al pp

sub.*f*

1a volta *f*

2a volta *p*

34 (b)

Grav. J. de Kloe

arm. XII - - - - -

Athens 1990

THE WORKS FOR SOLO GUITAR

BY ANTONIO LAURO

Analysis and Interpretation

By LUIS ZEA

PART 3: THE VALSES; A HISTORICAL OUTLINE

UNDOUBTEDLY his most popular compositions, Lauro's *valses* occupy a special place in the repertoire of the guitar. The transparency of their writing reveals the composer's natural talent to use the instrument idiomatically and to speak eloquently with relatively simple means of expression. Lively rhythms, graceful melodies and elegant harmonies combine in a highly personal manner to create delightful pieces that are performed, admired and loved by many.

I would like to refer briefly to the origins of the waltz as a dance form in Europe, and to outline the history of the *vals* in Venezuela, in order to place Lauro's compositions in a wider context and to give an idea of how the *genre* evolved in this country.

1. Origins of the waltz in Europe

In his article for the New Grove Dictionary (1980) Andrew Lamb describes the waltz (Fr. *valse*; Ger. *Walzer*) as '... the most popular ballroom dance of the 19th century', and '... the most celebrated and enduring of dance forms'. Indeed, almost every major composer of the 19th and early 20th centuries cultivated the waltz in one form or another, either as a solo, ensemble or orchestral piece, or as part of larger works such as symphonies, operas, operettas and ballets. The waltz emerged from Central Europe but its exact origins are not too clear. Some believe that the waltz finds an ancestor in the 16th century volta while others see it as a fusion of the *Deutscher* (German Dance) and the *Ländler* (a popular Austrian dance). The earliest known waltzes date from around the middle of the 18th century. However, Lamb explains that these early examples were not actually given the title of waltz but were associated with a form of dancing that was described by the German verb *walzen* (a word related to the Latin verb *volvere* that means to turn or rotate) from which the term waltz can be seen to be derived. It was only later that the word *walzen* began to be used as the name for a specific dance rather than as a descriptive verb. Although the evolution of the waltz was gradual, its popularity had increased considerably by the end of the 18th century, to the point where it started to attract the attention of major composers like Schubert, for example, whom we find writing piano pieces during the first decades of the 19th century which he gives the specific title of waltzes. The publication of Weber's *Aufforderung zum Tanz* (Invitation to Dance) in 1819 was a very significant event in the evolution

of the waltz. Lamb points out that through this work Weber helped to raise the status of the waltz to the concert hall and also foreshadowed the formal design that was to be used later by the major waltz composers, i.e. an introduction and a series of neatly-linked waltzes followed by a coda.

It was in Austria that the waltz reached its heyday, mainly through the work of Joseph Lanner (1801-1843) and particularly the Strauss, of whom Johann the son (1825-1899) and his brother Josef (1827-1870) were the most outstanding members of the family. With them, as Andrew Lamb puts it, 'the waltz achieved its peak of perfection as a combination of dance form and musical composition, and as the symbol of a gay and elegant age'.

2. The Venezuelan *Vals*⁽¹⁾: an outline of its history

The origins of the *vals* in Venezuela are rather obscure. The lack of evidence has so far prevented scholars from giving an accurate account of when and how the waltz was introduced from Europe. Consequently, their efforts are reduced to conjecture and the picture is left incomplete. The Venezuelan scholar Luis Felipe Ramón y Rivera - whom I mentioned in my introduction to the series - has suggested the years just before 1830 as the approximate time of the arrival of the European waltz in Venezuela (1976, p.11). This assumption is based mainly on: a) the earliest reference to the *vals* that he has been able to trace, which occurs in the writings of the Venezuelan *costumbrismo*-ist Daniel Mendoza (1823-1867), where the *vals* is mentioned among other dances of the time; and b) the publication of an anonymous guitar method entitled *Nuevo Método de Guitarra y Lira*, probably around 1840, in which its author (who simply calls himself *caballero*) includes several simple, unaccompanied melodies in 3/4 with the title of *valse*. These two facts are enough evidence for Rivera to believe that the Venezuelan *vals* must have existed around the time that he suggests in its incipient form, i.e. as a piece with two parts of usually 8 bars each, and a single melody whose accompaniment was improvised by the performer. Ramón y Rivera (op. cit., p.15) distinguishes two main artistic movements - or currents, as he calls them - in the development of the Venezuelan *vals*: the aristocratic and the popular. He thinks that the former must have started sometime before 1845, in the salons and aristocratic circles of Caracas and possibly of

other cities too. The exponents of this movement were well-trained and wealthy musicians with patriotic and romantic ideals who embraced the *vals* as a symbol of the national spirit. Their principal medium of expression was the piano (at the time a very expensive and luxurious domestic item, even more so than it is today, Rivera tells us) which determined the kind and quality of the movement's repertoire. References to the presence of the piano are numerous since the beginnings of the 19th century. The earliest reference known to us is given by Don Ramón de la Plaza, and it reads as follows:

Toward the end of the last century (18th) only the guitar, the harp and the bandola were known outside Caracas; the violin, the *guitarra grande*, the flute, etc, were introduced much later. The first pianos arrived in Caracas in 1767.⁽²⁾

Many of the *valses* composed by the aristocratic musicians were published in various magazines or journals in Venezuela, and some appeared in European editions which they were able to afford. Ramón y Rivera makes a distinction between what he calls *vals íntimo* ('intimate' waltz), with only two parts of 16 bars (a descendant of those 8-bar, unaccompanied

melodies to which we referred earlier), and the *vals brillante* or *valse de concierto*, with more than two sections and also more extrovert and exuberant in character. He states (op. cit, p.22) that the earliest published *vals* known by a Venezuelan composer⁽³⁾ appeared in 1845 in the magazine *El Album*, now kept in the *Biblioteca Nacional de Venezuela*. This *vals* has three parts of 16 bars, each repeated, and its accompaniment, somewhat simple in the first section, acquires a more national flavour in the second, and in the third the liveliness of the melody makes a nice contrast with the simplicity of the previous sections. Harmonically there are more interesting modulations, and the melodic treatment in thirds and sixths gives an idea of the style that was beginning to evolve. The popular movement emerged from musical gatherings in modest house, *caneys*, and the public *plaza*. The current was subdivided to produce anonymous melodies on one hand, and melodies with known authors on the other. The repertoire relied on the memory and intuition of popular musicians who would play the melodies and provide the accompaniment *por fantasía*, i.e. by ear. Civil and military bands, and small town orchestras also helped to maintain this repertoire alive. In his amusing and fascinating chronicle of the musical life of Caracas the Venezuelan scholar José Antonio Calcaño explains (1953, p.383-384) how the Venezuelan *vals* owes its identity mainly to the anonymous work of 19th century popular musicians who began to incorporate various rhythmic elements from the *joropo*, the *seis por ocho*, and from Spanish, African and native dances to create a *valse criollo* with a wealth of rhythms that was unknown in Europe. It seems to me that the most essential feature of the Venezuelan *vals* as we know it today is the pervading presence, either explicit or implicit, of the rhythm $3/4 \downarrow \downarrow \downarrow$, as opposed to the well-known pattern $3/4 \downarrow \downarrow \downarrow$ which is so typical of the European waltz. We can see this by comparing the following examples of European and Venezuelan Waltzes:

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Cover of an anonymous guitar method (1840?) containing *vals* melodies (Biblioteca Nacional de Venezuela). The cover is reproduced in R. y Rivera, 1976, p.16.

Example 1: F. Schubert, *Grätzer Walzer*, Op. 91 (D.924), No. 9 (1827).



Example 2: F. Chopin, *Waltz in F minor*, Op. 70 No. 2 (1841).





Example 3: J. Brahms, *Walzer für Klavier zu vier Händen*, Op. 39 (1865).



Example 4: J. Strauss (the son), *An der schönen blauen Donau*, Op. 314, Walzer I, (1867).



Example 5: P. I. Tchaikovsky, Waltz from *The Nutcracker*, (1891-4).



Example 6: Manuel F. Azpúrrua, *El Suspiro*, valse for piano.



Example 7: Ramón Delgado Palacios, *Gentileza*, valse for piano.



Example 8: Raul Borges, *Valse Venezolano* for guitar.



Example 9: Rogerio Caraballo, *El Ruiñor*, valse for piano.



Example 10: Antonio Lauro, *Yacambú* (Vals venezolano No. 4).



Notice that all the European waltzes show the same rhythmic background of three crotchets, while the rhythm $\text{J} \text{ J} \text{ J}$ can be perceived in the Venezuelan examples. I use the words 'explicit or implicit' presence because even when this rhythm is not conspicuously notated (as in Example 7) its presence is still *felt* as the implicit background against which the meaning of the other foreground rhythms is revealed. Another important element of the Venezuelan *vals* is the frequent superimposition and/or juxtaposition of 3/4 and 6/8, and the transformation of two bars of 3/4 into one of 3/2, which creates all kinds of cross-rhythms and hemiolas, and provides the musician with abundant possibilities for composition and improvisation.

Calcaño continues (*Ibid.*, p.384) saying that when popular musicians got together they would take a melody and not only would they improvise new rhythms or *golpes*, as they called them, but also variations on it, thus enriching and transforming the work of the composer in a way that was quite unforeseeable. He points out that this process, which must have taken place during the presidential years of the Monagas and Guzmán Blanco (1847-1887), gradually resulted in the composition of *vals* melodies *only*, something that was done even by competent musicians. At one point the *vals* became so fashionable that it seems to have been the only kind of music worth composing, playing, dancing or listening to. 'Everything was absorbed by the *vals*' J. A. Calcaño remarks (*Ibid.*, p.385), and with his characteristic wit he tells us how the *vals* also became a vehicle for the conquest of a lover:

'The young couple would dance the first part, somewhat nostalgic and poetic, to arouse idyllic emotions, very much in keeping with the emotional fashion of the day; the couple would then proceed to the vertiginous joy of the second part in which their feelings, somewhat contained during the first part, would find an outlet'.⁽⁴⁾

Everybody would compose *valses*, if only because all that one had to do was to compose a melody! It was the time of the *vals*-craze. Naturally, not all of the hundreds of melodies produced were of the same quality. Of the best ones many remained anonymous, and they might have easily been lost had it not been for the work of V. E. Sojo (1887-1974), who compiled them (not only *valse*s but also *canciones*, *aguinaldos*, *merengues*, etc), and created artistic and highly individual harmonisations of them. Among the notable *vals* composers of the 19th century mentioned in Calcaño's book are Rogerio Caraballo, Rafael Saumell, the Isazas and the Monteros, Manuel Azpírua and Idelfonso Meserón y Aranda. But the two outstanding figures are – according to Calcaño – Federico Villena (1835-1899) and Ramón Delgado Palacios (1867-1902).



Ramón Delgado Palacios (1867-1902). Despite his early death he became one of the outstanding 19th century Venezuelan composers of *valse*s.



Federico Villena (1835-1899). Prolific 19th century Venezuelan composer.

In the 20th century the Venezuelan *vals* passes through a period of neglect and almost complete decline. L. F. Ramón y Rivera (Op. cit., p.49) observes that this was mainly due to the materialism associated with the advent of the oil industry and particularly to the arrival of the gramophone machine, which replaced the

performing musician, and the gramophone disc, which introduced the *foxtrot*, the *tango*, the *rumba*, the *pasodoble*, etc, and changed the musical taste of the 1920s with the result that the *vals* was only very rarely played, heard or danced. But in spite of this the spirit of the *vals* managed to remain alive, thanks chiefly to Sebastian Diaz Peña (1844-1926) and Pedro Elias Gutierrez (1870-1954), dance orchestra and military band leaders respectively, who continued to compose and perform *valse*s and contributed to a movement of revival that is still going on today and which finds in the figure of Antonio Lauro one of its most ardent exponents.

Notes

- 1) *Vals* and *valse* are indistinctly used in Venezuela. Our use of the latter simply shows influence from the French.
- 2) This quotation appears in Ramón y Rivera, Ibid., p.21, and comes from Ramón de la Plaza's 'La Música', a chapter in *Primer Libro Venezolano de Literatura, Ciencias y Bellas Artes*, Caracas 1895. The English translation is mine.
- 3) Ramón y Rivera fails to give us his name.
- 4) The English translation is mine.

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