

## SOLER'S SONATA IN C MAJOR R61

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**Abstract:** *Soler's multipartite sonatas in volume IV are substantially different in pattern from the ones in volume VI. These differences, as analysed in the Sonata in C Major, lie in the discourse development, modulation dynamics, and rhythm. The rondo also has an important role. In the second part, Allegretto, this sonata introduces us to a special, very sensitive formal pattern of the sonata genre which, with his genuine formal sense, Padre Antonio Soler aims to bring to perfection.*

**Keywords:** *Padre Soler, sonatas, sonata form, sonata genre.*

### 1. Introduction

Padre Antonio Soler is known almost exclusively through his sonatas for keyboard instruments. There are total 120 sonatas (compared to the 555 ones by Scarlatti) [2].

These sonatas were first published in Madrid (1957-1972) by P. Samuel Rubio, in 7 volumes and these can be grouped as follows:

1. Monopartite sonatas influenced by Scarlatti - volumes I, II, III, V, VII;

2. Multipartite sonatas (subject to other influences, distinct of Scarlatti's world)-volumes IV, VI, which can be subdivided:

2.1. Sonatas in three parts, on the model *da chiesa* (vol.IV almost entirely)

2.2. Sonatas in four parts, on the model *da camera* (vol.IV partially and vol.VI entirely) [1].

Although classified in the same category – multipartite sonatas, the two sonatas in four movements of volume IV reveal substantial differences compared to the sonatas of volume VI, their content following the sequence:

I. Part I – a rondo in a moderate tempo, whose theme is very close to the character of a minuet;

II. Part II – not a very fast movement – *Allegretto* – written in a sonata form;

III. Part III – an extended minuet, in a special construction, named „di rivolti”, whose take backs *da capo* make a merge with the *rondo*;

IV. The end – a rapid part – *Allegro vivo* – binary or ternary, in a sonata form.

From the first group of sonatas in four movements, we have chosen to exemplify on the Sonata no. 61 in C Major.

### 2. Analysis of the Sonata nr. 61, of volume no. IV [3].

The sonata consists of four sections, following the above mentioned pattern.

The first part, *Allegro*, is a rondo form, in which each section repeats itself. The refrain appears longer, in a first version, at the level of two periods, but then it becomes shorter.

The first occurrences of refrain A (measures 1-16) involves a theme

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composed of equal values introducing the sense of a ternary pulsation of a quarter; in this way the dancing rhythm being very elegant and with a simple shape; the phrases are clear, classic, with a precise and well articulated structure.



Fig. 1. (measures 1-4)

The two periods of the refrain are followed by the first couplet, B (measures 17-32), having an obvious modulating character, based also on the boosting of the musical discourse through the occurrence of the values of eights and sixteenths.



Fig. 2. (measures 17-20)

The discourse develops in three voices, increasing in complexity, creating the opportunity for a deeper sound expression.

The modulating inflections within the first refrain are done at a tonality close to the basic one - A minor (the relative minor tonality), followed by a return to C Major.

We notice how the rondo couplets are not tonally differentiated enough from the refrain – a phenomenon that will evolve in the music history only from the classical epoch, when couplets will get to be very diverse, both from a tonal and thematic point of view, compared to the refrain.

A characteristic of the Baroque rondo is the fact that these couplets are close to the tonal thematism of the refrain – an obvious fact within the rondo that opens the analyzed sonata.

The refrain returns in the perimeter of measures 33-40, restricted to a single period of eight measures to be repeated according to the repetition sign. It is the second part of the first occurrence of the refrain that is missing though, where Soler had introduced trill ornaments and melodic passages, elements that are eluded this time due to the appearance of couplets, quite developed.

The second couplet, C, is more developed than the first one. It is a known fact that, in the classical rondos, couplets become more and more developed and dramatic, as they detach themselves from the refrain, from the theme that is the axis of the rondo form. It is also the case of the analyzed rondo.



Fig. 3. (measures 41-42)

After having exemplified, showing the first idea of couplet C, we should mention that this couplet is conducted in A minor, the minor relative of the initial tonality (the A minor having been anticipated from the very first couplet) and has a bipartite inner form: c and c1.

Subsection c (41-48) proposes an even more dynamic discourse, a tune that is accompanied and supported by a melodic frame suggesting a latent polyphony, thus the discourse becoming a deeper polyphonic one.



Fig. 4. (measures 41-42)

Subsection c1 (49-61) retains the same character but introduces a new rhythmic procedure, making the two levels become complementary: the replacement of the first value within the group of four sixteenths with a pause.



Fig. 5. (measures 49-50)

The tonal level of couplet B evolves from minor towards the initial tonality (the onset of subsection c1), with a return to the initial tonal frame.

Refrain A returns in measure 62, also in the more restrained formulation of a single musical period of eight measures.

The third couplet, D, has again a more developed character and a more complex formulation: a tripartite structure, compared with the bipartitism noticed in the second couplet.

The three subsections of couplet D are focused on modulations leading from C minor (the homonymous of the initial tonality, the tensest moment of the whole first part of the sonata) to E flat Major, later with a return to C minor.

Subsection d (measures 70-77), followed by the central subsection d1, and is completed with the return to C minor in measure 86-93.



Fig. 6. (measures 70-73)

The last refrain appears in measure 94, also in a version restricted to a single musical period, concluding this complex deployment of a rondo that anticipates the classical form.

The second part, *Allegretto*, is structured in a sonata form, which is a special formal pattern of the sonata genre. The exposition begins in measure 102 of the genre, with a theme that exhibits a harmonic profile mounted on a complex, authentic cadence:



Fig. 7. (measures 102-105)

The theme played in C Major is mostly harmonically articulated and followed by upward diatonic motifs, passage-type, also present throughout the development.

Theme II appears in measure 138 with an auftakt, when we can discern a melodic theme based on repeated motifs, in G Major, with a featured harmonic accompaniment:



Fig. 8. (measures 138 with auftakt-139)

The conclusion of the exposition (measures 152-161) comprises the same elements as in theme II, consisting of arpeggios figuring tonic and dominant chord structures for the tonality to which was modulated at the end of the exhibition: G Major.

The development (measures 162-182) takes only the indirect elements, unexplained, from theme I: the ascending and descending passages, simple or in parallel thirds.

Unlike other developments encountered in Soler's sonata forms, this one is shorter and does not use directly any of the themes in the exposition.

The return is structured on the basis of resuming both themes, in the base tonality. Theme I appears in measure 183, in the initial formulation, but in a shorter version; theme II is repeated in measure 198, but this time in C Major, thus demonstrating a bold conception regarding the sonata, and the return within the sonata form.



Fig. 9 (measures 198 with auftakt -199)

The conclusion of the entire sonata form (measures 212-221) also uses elements from the conclusion of the exposition, with chord elements figuring the tonic and dominant chords of the base tonality.

The third part of the sonata genre, *Tempo suo*, is a minuet that oscillates between C Major and G Major. Its first section, A (measures 222-233), is carried out in C Major and has a dancing theme, slightly ornamented by trills in a direct succession, which give elegance to the theme.



Fig. 10. (measures 222 -225)

The section will be repeated, as indicated by the author.

The second inner section of the minuet, B (measures 234-241), deploys on a rhythmic dynamics, using exceptional trill rhythmic divisions, in G Major.



Fig. 11 (measures 234 - 236)

The simple pulsation is preserved, the accompaniment one, which individualizes each quarter within the ternary meter.

The discourse returns to the initial tonality but with a different theme from the one in the first section, starting with measure 242, keeping the minuet character of an accompanied tune.



Fig. 12. (measures 242 - 243)

The theme will be found again in the last occurrence of section A, so that we can consider it to be the axial theme of the minuet, being followed by more inflexions toward the tonality of the dominant. This phenomenon proves a certain tendency to develop these inner sections, especially through developments more on the tonal level and less on the structural level, on the motif level.

Following a modulation to G Major, we notice that theme A is resumed in the base tonality, in measure 270, and theme B returns in measure 298, in G Major.

This last section is repeated, with all its elements, resulting in the return of themes in a direct succession.

The fourth part, *Allegro* is a sonata form that anticipates several elements that would occur in the classical sonata: the secondary theme group, visible both in the exposition and in the return.

In the beginning, the exposition contains the first theme of the sonata form, in C

Major, a theme that is based on the arpeggios of the chords built on the tonic and on the dominant:

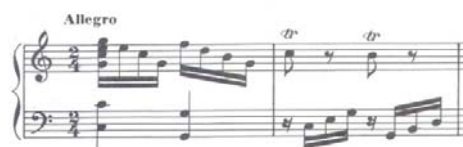


Fig. 13. (measures 314 -315)

The theme is extended to the melodic level of two octaves, being played within the second octave of the medium register and in the first octave.

The repetitive elements are among the most commonly used means of the language of the Baroque epoch.

The theme has a complementary polyphonic character, imitative, the motifs played on the shorter values being taken from the upper level to the lower one, thus ensuring the continuous flow of the musical discourse.

Theme II appears in measure 341, in the tonality of the dominant, so, it contrasts through its melodic character with the first theme: it is an accompanied tune, based on a latent polyphony, which creates the impression of several voices that meet.



Fig. 14. (measures 341 -343)

We can also notice a second secondary theme, representing T II2, in case we take into account the fact that it has a strong thematic character, being played in the same tonality, G Major, and that it will comply with all rules of occurrence within the return.



Fig. 15. (measures 355 with aufтакт - 356)

Theme T II2 has a much stronger dancing character, with its rhythmic formulas of unequal values, pointed, which are adapted to the same procedure of latent polyphony.

The conclusion of the exposition is based on several elements of diatonic passages and formulas containing ornaments, the fundamental harmonic relations being established between the tonic and the dominant.

The development, which begins in measure 381, proposes especially the deepening of theme I, by means of its modulating emancipation in the tonality of theme II, G Major. So the latent polyphony is preserved, and also the complementary motif model between the two levels of the musical discourse: the inferior and the superior one.

The return occurs when we can talk about the resurgence of theme I in the base tonality, but the phenomenon does not occur exactly, which is a fact here noticed too. When the development proposes especially the resumption of theme I – tonally modified, it is possible that theme I does not appear in the return in the same base tonality.

Theme II 1 occurs in measure 409, in C Major, and theme II 2, in measure 423 with an aufтакт, which gives us further evidence as to Soler's maturity and complexity of thinking regarding the sonata form and genre.

The conclusion of the sonata form happens starting from measure 440, so that we find again elements of the first theme, in a very sensitive pattern compensation of different musical aspects of the sonata.

### 3. Conclusions

The sonata we have approached in order to analyse it, reveals a pattern of the sonata signaling the composer's maturing style, transcending his formal sense toward perfecting the classic pattern.

Thus, we can observe several characteristics of Soler's multipartite sonatas:

- The differentiation between the sonata cycle and form; out of the four parts of the cycle, usually the first and the last one are written in a sonata form.
- The setting of the three sections of a sonata form - exposition, development, return.
- The expansion of idea I - genuine *periodic* dimensions of the main theme are reached.
- Reducing the size of the bridge sector and frequently eluding the bridge within the return.
- The exacerbation of idea I, transforming it in *theme I*, of an entirely new structure, contrasting both tonally and characteriologically.

- The double exposition (duplication) of the two themes (I and II), a phenomenon that becomes a *stilema*.

The disappearance of the ostinato interlude of a rhythmic-harmonic structure with Iberian reverberations.

(English version by Gilda Cristina Marinescu)

### References

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