

Architectural and Harmonic Language coordinates in *Sonata R6* by A. Soler

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Abstract: *We are interested in the coordinates of the formal analysis of Soler's Sonata R6 and, in this respect, in the following we are analysing its particular aspects that are related to the polyphonic exposition, with imitative entries of the voices, the originality of the tonal level and the place of the dance interlude, placed between the bridge and the idea II, as a cadence-dancing appendix of the bridge. In a shape diagram, we are showing the correspondences made at the tonal level. From the point of view of the harmonic structure, we are dwelling on the explicit and implicit developments in this sonata and the structure of the cadence. To conclude, the harpsichord manner is evident in the instrumental language used by Padre Antonio Soler in the construction of this musical piece.*

Key-words: *sonata, coordinates, harmonic, thematic, Soler*

1. Introduction

The eighteenth century represented for Spain a period of decline in all areas. The suitors at the crown of Spain (the Austrians and the French) meant a real danger to the Spanish musical tradition, introducing a new type of patronage, interested in supporting the foreign music culture, especially the Italian one. This fact affected all genres of music, but fortunately, however, the specific Spanish style did not disappear completely. The more valuable we find the creation of composers who were concerned in their creations to preserve the national tradition, the most valuable of these being Soler (Padre Antonio), known almost exclusively because of his sonatas for keyboard instruments. These are 120 (compared to Scarlatti's 555) ...” (Larousse 2000, 458). In other words, Scarlatti's influence is felt in many of his sonatas with a bipartite single-themed structure. But in the preface to the complete edition of Soler's sonatas (published in Madrid, between 1957-1972), under the care of Fr. Samuel Rubio, he draws attention to the fact that the influences of the Neapolitan composer on Soler, although indisputable, are not as

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great as is claimed. We must emphasize, however, that Soler's sonatas, being instrumental miniatures (like Scarlattian sonatas), represent „by their content /.../ true pieces of character in which rhythmic and moving elements sometimes belong to traditional dances, sometimes to folklore”, they are transfigured to blur by the artist's free fantasy! (Leahu 1966, 103).

2. Sonata no. 6 in F major (vol.I) - S. Rubio edition

We are interested in the coordinates of the formal analysis of this work through the particular aspects that are related to the polyphonic exposition, with imitative entries of the voices, the originality of the tonal level and the place of the dance interlude, placed between the bridge and the idea II, as a cadence-dancing appendix of the bridge. The bridge has a sequential-modulatory unfolding, with the transition dominants engagement - B V-I / C V-I / D V-I, with return to the starting pitch, B major. There is a lack of bridging, its modulatory office being realized by the dancing interlude (Figure 1).



Fig. 1. P. A. Soler – Sonata no. 6, bars 1-5, Soler, *Sonatas para instrumentos de tecla, vol.I*

This interlude depicts a hybrid structure, because under the aspect of a rhythmic Iberian dance song it meets transition characteristics, through the tonal instability given by the deceptive cadences (Figure 2).



Fig. 2. P. A. Soler – Sonata no. 6, bars 19-24, Soler, *Sonatas para instrumentos de tecla, vol.I*

In the shape diagram (Table 1), the correspondences made at the tonal level are shown.

Strophe I - A	Strophe II - B
<i>Exposition</i>	<i>Development and reprise</i>
Idea I (a) 8 measures F major	Dev. (a) 15 measures D ~ C major
Bridge (transition) 11 measures F ~ B	----->
Interlude 11 measures B major	Interlude 10 measures B ~ F
Idea II (b) 9 measures D minor	Idea II (b) 9 measures F minor
Codetta 11 measures D minor	Codetta 11 measures F minor

Table 1. *Shape Diagram*

Thus, the sonata starts in F major, but ends in F minor, so at the homonym. As the expressive resources of the dominant tonality (B major) have been exhausted in the dancing interlude, the tonality of idea II in the exposition will be that of the relative, D minor (Figure 3).



Fig. 3. P. A. Soler – *Sonata no. 6*, bars 31-39, Soler, *Sonatas para instrumentos de tecla, vol. I*

The return of idea II in the reprise will not be done, therefore, in the initial tonality, but at the homonym. An interesting modal inversion appears at the junction of the strophes, between the codetta (the conclusion) in D minor and the development in D major. A complete re-exposition of the theme, in C major, is carried out in the development, following a process conforming to some old patterns (see the median parts in the structure of the fugue).

3. Analysis of the harmonic structures of the thematic developments

3.1. Explicit developments

In *Sonata no. 6* of the first volume of genre works, we point out a very harmonious explicit harmonic aspect for the type of accompaniment that anticipates classical harmonic unfoldings. Starting with measure 66, during an entire period, the insistence on an accompanying formula can be noticed, which involves the repetition, at each time of the measure, of a chord consisting of three sounds, placed in the second overturning of a trison (Figure 4).

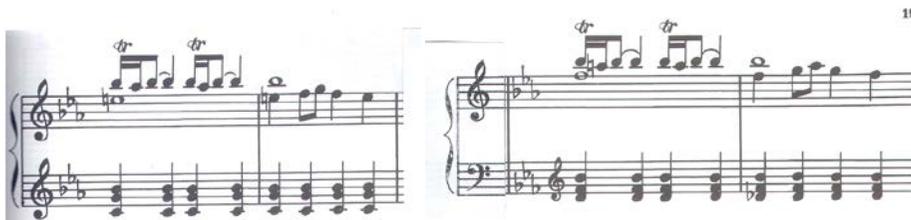


Fig. 4. P. A. Soler – *Sonata no. 6*, bars 66-69, Soler, *Sonatas para instrumentos de tecla, vol.I*

3.2. Implicit developments

The sixth sonata from the first volume of genre works, the sonata on which we stopped, also belongs to the chapter dedicated to the implicit harmonic thematic developments.

This time the tonic chord is not suggested by its essential elements but - through a melodic formula consisting only of seconds and thirds leaps - it creates the impression of an ascending progression, which leads to the assertion of the climax (Figure 5).

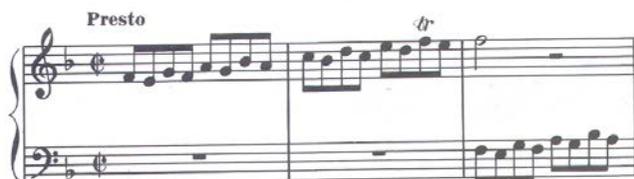


Fig. 5. P. A. Soler – *Sonata no. 6*, bars 1-3 Soler, *Sonatas para instrumentos de tecla, vol.I*

However, this initial formula evolves during the sonata so that it reaches the formulas that more explicitly show a harmonic construction (Figure 6).



Fig. 6. P. A. Soler – *Sonata no. 6*, bars 86-88 Soler, *Sonatas para instrumentos de tecla, vol. I*

During these formulas, of deeply harpsichordist inspiration, we find the association of the initial formula with the broken arpeggio of the dominant of the passage's tonality.

3.3. The harmonic structure of the cadence

The cadences are a revealing aspect in terms of the harmonic profile of a composer, so we can rely on drawing important conclusions from analyzing the final segments of the sonata sections and, especially, the final sections of the whole genre. Thus, in the sixth sonata of volume 1 we can point out the relation between the initial thematicism of the work and its final cadence, presented in such a way as to combine, on the melodic level, the initial elements (delays) with the clearer indication of some chordal elements through the figurations (Figure 7).

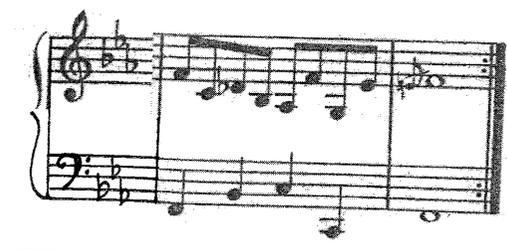


Fig. 7. P. A. Soler – *Sonata no. 6*, bars 94-95 Soler, *Sonatas para instrumentos de tecla, vol. I*

4. Conclusions

In the formal analysis of the sonata, we have noticed how the theme focuses on the tonic function of the basic tonality, a common approach by Soler in most situations. The composer does not focus on the complex relation within the tonality but on the stabilization of the functions around some essential landmarks. "The baroque period witnessed the perfection of many musical instruments - the violin of Stradivarius, the harpsichord ..." (Kerman 1976, 98), the harpsichord manner is evident in the instrumental language used by Padre Antonio Soler in the construction of the sonata, with its manifestation regarding the harmonic structure. Analyzing the harmonic structure of the sonata, we can argue that it represents the fundamental structure of any musical work, the depth layer of the sound art work that highlights subtleties that are not revealed in the observation at first sight. Soler's Spanishisms, („... music and dance are indistinguishable ... There is no Spanish that as a child does not know how to dance") (Gruber 1963, 384) are concentrated in certain rhythmic elements such as specific accents - from 4 to 4 values (measures 20-28). Thematism is often exposed by implicit harmonic discourse, with melodism strongly anchored in a conception that, without being stated as such, has harmonic coordinates.

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(English version by Gilda Cristina Marinescu)