

ANTONIO SOLER'S
KEYBOARD SONATAS

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by

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INTRODUCTION

It came as a pleasant surprise when I was informed that my *alma mater*, the University of South Africa, had selected my first graduate dissertation for publication. The printing of a musicological work is much more costly than that of many another deserving but less technical dissertation, and I had, in fact, ceased to hope for a South African publication of *Antonio Soler's Keyboard Sonatas*. I wish to thank the authorities of the University of South Africa for having undertaken this publication in spite of the obvious difficulties. My appreciation is all the warmer because their generosity helps to foster the tender plant of musicology, which in this country is even younger than it is elsewhere.

Pleasures, however, are seldom without pangs. Nearly four years have passed since I submitted this dissertation, and, meanwhile, neither the subject matter nor the enquirer's attitudes and techniques have ceased to grow.

This raised the question of additions and revisions, particularly where they concern sources and terminology. As regards the latter, I decided against it: an attempt to project a new or improved terminology on the hegemony of an existing research paper is like opening Pandora's box, and had better be left alone. As regards sources, however, I resolved to discuss the two most important developments in this Introduction.

The first is that Antonio Soler's own book, the *Llave de la Modulaci3n* of 1762, which I have discussed at length in Chapter Ten of my dissertation, has now become available as a facsimile reprint at Broude Brothers, New York.

The second is less pleasurable, and concerns the puzzling fate of Father Samuel Rubio's edition of Soler's keyboard sonatas.¹ In his Foreword to the first of these volumes, Father Rubio made it clear that he expected to publish "about a hundred and thirty sonatas for harpsichord". Rubio's publication, however, came to a sudden stop, at volume VI, with the sonata No. 99. My letter of enquiry into this situation was answered on the 18th of January, 1966, by Messrs Union Musical Espa~ola with the statement that "the full collection is already published".

1. *P. Antonio Soler, Sonatas para Instrumentos de Tecla*, vols. I-VI, Union Musical Espa~ola, Madrid, 1957-62.

The first implication of this is that the reader of this dissertation must discount all the references – painstakingly made throughout this work – to the fact that my assessment of Soler's sonatas is based only on part of the Rubio-edition. That is no longer true: my dissertation covers all the Soler sonatas published by Father Rubio, up to and including No. 99, at which point the edition was discontinued, leaving some thirty sonatas by Soler unaccounted for.

The second implication is more serious, namely that yet another complication has been added to the already great confusion which surrounds the source study of Soler's keyboard music. There does not seem to be any way to determine, under these circumstances, just how many sonatas by Soler are still extant. Since Father Rubio's sources no longer seem to be accessible, one is more than ever dependent on surmises in this matter.

The researcher who would like to follow this up ought to be aware that Frederick Marvin, who started an independent edition of Soler's keyboard sonatas² in the same year as Father Rubio, mentioned to have "collected over one hundred and eighty sonatas in manuscript". It is not certain whether the twenty-two sonatas of the Birchall print are excluded here – the term "in manuscript" seems to point to the fact that they are – and in that case one would have to assume that there are two hundred and two extant sonatas by Soler. Father Rubio mentioned only one hundred and thirty sonatas which demonstrably include those of the Birchall print. This discrepancy is too great even to allow for the possibility that Marvin counted as independent sonatas those movements which in seventeen cases of the Rubio-edition were presented as part of the sonatas in three and four movements. The discrepancy becomes greater still if one takes into account that Nos. 41, 42, 45 and 60 of the Rubio-edition are duplications of movements in the sonatas 96, 94 and 99, and that a fifth sonata, No. 54, is a duplicate by transposition of No. 92.

All this means that the assessment of Soler's keyboard music, and the remarkable style shift therein, remains an open subject until such time as the last manuscript copy of his sonatas has been verified and published. It is my hope that, when this time comes, the present book can serve as the basis for further research.

Port Elizabeth

K.F.H.

March 1969

2. *Antonio Soler: Sonatas for Piano*, Mills Music, New York and London, as from 1957.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This book contains one hundred and seventy-one music examples. One hundred and sixty-five of these are examples of Soler's keyboard music and are reproduced here by kind permission of the publishers of *P. Antonio Soler, Sonatas para Instrumentos de Tecla*, namely Messrs. Union Musical Espagnol, Madrid, who have agreed that this acknowledgement be made in this form.

The other six music examples are accompanied by the usual acknowledgement below the text.

FOREWORD

The name of an 18th century Spanish composer on the title page of a South African treatise is, perhaps, sufficiently unusual to call for a word of explanation.

My interest in Antonio Soler was first aroused by a string of unlikely coincidences: considering the fact that, in South Africa, Soler's name is not usually regarded as being of ringing importance in the history of music, it is truly unlikely that his name should have impressed itself on me on no less than four different occasions during a journey lasting no longer than six days. Just prior to my boarding the train in Port Elizabeth, a colleague conversationally mentioned Soler – we were talking about the vast amount of consistently ignored but excellent music by composers of “secondary magnitude” – and, on my intermittent stop in Johannesburg, I actually found two carefully hand-copied Soler-sonatas on the piano of my respected friend Anna Bender, who had recently received these copies as a present from an overseas visitor at the South African Broadcasting Corporation. I was charmed by the easy grace and “pianistic” subtleness of those two sonatas, and I was even more charmed when – the next day, in Pretoria, browsing along one of the shelves in the library of the University of South Africa – I chanced upon fourteen Soler-sonatas edited by J. Nín. On the following morning, still in Pretoria, a bookshop attendant showed me a copy of W.S. Newman's *Sonata in the Classic Era*, which had just then become available, and when I opened it, I found myself in the middle of a quite substantial critical article on Antonio Soler ...

All this happened in November, 1963. Since then, my interest has been sustained and intensified by Soler's music itself: soon after the experiences related above, I was able to obtain as much of Father Rubio's progressing collective edition of the keyboard sonatas as had already appeared in print, and the lively, often frivolous sparkle of Soler's musical inventiveness made me spend many enjoyable hours exploring and practising.

However, the fact that Soler's sonatas are well worth performing and ought to be repertoire-pieces of their period, is in itself no motivation for an academic treatise. What made me plan such a treatise was, indeed, a number of striking stylistic aspects of these sonatas, such as their evolution of form, their general style shift from Galant to Classic principles, their peculiarities of phrasing. Other and by no means lesser reasons were the obvious need for a methodical summary of the up to

now rather scattered Soler-research, and the urgency of acknowledging Soler's status, which prior to the revealing and most meritorious edition of his sonatas by Father Rubio just could not be correctly assessed. An additional incentive was of course that, to my knowledge, no sizable study of Soler's sonatas has been published so far.

The months spent in compiling and formulating the chapters of this treatise were made pleasant not only by the consistent attraction of their subject matter, but by a developing friendship – by correspondence – with an honoured colleague who, although belonging to the empire of Charles V by personal inclination and linguistic ability, is nevertheless at present a most active musicologist on the Iberian Peninsula: I am speaking of Prof. M.S. Kastner, who was willing and most able to answer questions on details of Soler's Spanish background and the socio-musical situation of that period in general. As such details would otherwise have remained inaccessible to a South African writer, I am most indebted to Professor Kastner, particularly for the trouble he took in supplying me with microfilms of old and even ancient Spanish manuscripts and publications.

The ready and even eager co-operation I received from all sides while writing this treatise is, I feel, indicative of the academic climate here in South Africa, and it is for this reason that I decided to mention such co-operation in my Foreword rather than to acknowledge it in a perfunctory manner under a separate heading.

My first debt of gratitude is to the Council of the University of South Africa, Pretoria, by whom I was awarded a *University Exhibition* which covered most of the expenses involved in producing this treatise; and to Professor Dr. J.J.A. van der Walt, my appointed supervisor of studies, whose patience with an out-of-the-way subject and whose knowledge of 18th century performance-practices I greatly admire.

The Chief Librarians of the University of South Africa, Mr H.O. Zastrau and Mr J. Willemse, were most helpful, even indulgent, in allowing me to use – and misuse – their facilities and their staff to trace and to obtain the bibliographic material for this treatise, and among the library staff it was particularly Mrs I. van Niekerk whose immediate insight and prompt service helped me to avoid much delay.

With special gratitude I wish to mention here the assistance of Dr A. Steyn who, like a true Samaritan, voluntarily took over some of the less inspiring of my academic duties in order to save me time; and of Mr R. Cherry, who allowed me to misuse him as a "sounding board" for my problems and ideas, to which function his impeccable taste in matters

of music made him eminently suitable. He also gave me very valuable hints in connection with the six fugues in Soler's multi-movement sonatas.

Such whole-hearted assistance was by no means confined to my immediate professional surroundings, and it is my particular pleasure to mention here the names of Mr A. Kirsipuu and Mr J. Dos Santos, who sacrificed much of their own time to acquaint me with the content of certain Portuguese and Catalan texts.

In conclusion, I must draw attention to a few technical matters: throughout this treatise, Soler's keyboard sonatas are referred to – without further description – by their numbers in Father Samuel Rubio's *P. Antonio Soler, Sonatas para Instrumentos de Tecla* (vols. I-VI, Union Musical Espagnola, Madrid, 1957-1962). For instance, when writing no more than "sonata No. 56", the full implication is "sonata by P. Antonio Soler, presented as No. 56 in Father Rubio's collective edition of the keyboard sonatas". No. 91 II, accordingly, indicates the second movement of that multi-movement sonata, which Rubio presented as No. 92 in his edition mentioned above.

Where sonatas by D. Scarlatti are quoted, I have used Roman numerals – for instance, Sonata CCV – and in each case indicated the exact source in a footnote.

In the numerous Examples, the same method of identification is applied, such identification normally appearing in brackets just behind the number of the Example – for instance: Ex. 103 (sonata No. 15, bar 104) – unless, of course, these details were given in the text immediately preceding the Example. The Examples are accompanied by the original tempo indications; where no such indication appears, it is also missing from the work quoted.

Klaus F. Heimes

Pretoria.
October, 1965.

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

The principal characteristic of Antonio Soler's personal circumstances is that of comparative inaccessibility: his humble birth, his education in and his eventual retirement to monastic surroundings not only effectively screen the more intimate details of his life from view, but even caused important landmarks of his musical development and career to be left unrecorded.

Of his early youth little more is known than that he was born at Olot de Porrera (Province Gerona)¹ and baptised there as Antoni Francesc X. Josep Soler on the 3rd of December, 1729; that his parents were Mateu Soler (born 1685) and Teresa Ramos (born 1702); and that his father had been a musician in the military band of the Numancia Regiment.²

Meagre as these facts are, they do make an historical orientation possible: Soler's father was born in the same year as J.S. Bach, Handel and D. Scarlatti, and Antonio Soler himself was but two years older than Christian Cannabich of Mannheim fame, three years older than Joseph Haydn, six years older than the "London" Bach (J.C.), and ten years older than Dittersdorf. Soler's lifespan also overlapped with that of Friedemann Bach, C.P.E. Bach, Wagenseil, and Boccherini.

From this orientation it must not be deduced, however, that Soler was familiar with the work of all the composers mentioned above. He certainly knew Scarlatti's keyboard sonatas intimately,³ and it is most likely that he also knew some of Boccherini's works, because Boccherini stayed in Madrid as the favourite of the king's brother from 1769 to 1785.⁴ For the rest, one cannot be sure because, far from receiving a cosmopolitan education in music by way of extensive travels — as had been Handel's and was to be Mozart's privilege —, Soler was taught in the Spanish tradition at the monastery of Montserrat, his principal

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1. Kastner, M.S., article on Soler for *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, kindly made available by the author prior to publication.
 2. Anglès, H., "Introduccio e estudi bibliografic" to Robert Gerhard's *Antonio Soler: Sis Quintets*, Institut d'Estudis Catalan, Biblioteca da Catalunya, Barcelona, 1933, p. VI.
 3. Soler actually pointed to harmonic practices of Scarlatti when defending his *Llave de la Modulacion* (Cf. Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, p. VIII).
 4. *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, fifth edition, London, 1954, vol. I, p. 778.

tutor there being José Elías who, in turn, had been a pupil of Juan Cabanilles.⁵

Just how Soler's education and career developed is summarised – and certainly no more than that – in vol. II of the *Memorias Sepulcrales* in the Escorial, the original text of which was quoted at length by H. Anglès.⁶ We shall attempt here to reproduce this text in English:⁷

“20th December, 1783. In this grave (No. 35) Father Fr. Antonio Soler is buried. He was born at Olot de Porrera, in the diocese of the Archbishop of Gerona. When six years old, he went to the famous monastery of Montserrat where he studied music, particularly organ and composition. He left so advanced that he could qualify as *Magisterio de Capilla* in two cathedrals and could take up such a position in the *Santa Iglesia de Lérida*. It was there that D. Fr. Sebastian de Victoria, bishop of Urgel, who had been the Parish Priest of the royal monastery of *San Lorenzo*, ordained him with the *epístola*⁸ and asked him if he knew of any young man who was able to play the organ and who wished to become a monk in the Escorial. Fr. Antonio Soler said that he himself would like to take the vows and retire from the world. In fact, on the 25th of September, 1752, Fr. Antonio Soler took the vows. He passed his years of probation to the great satisfaction of all those in the fraternity. They gave him the rank of musician, taking into consideration his behaviour and his grasp of the technique of organ playing and composition. At these he worked tirelessly, going nowhere, because for him nothing but his music existed. Because of his ability he was held in high esteem all over Europe, where his compositions for spinet⁹ and organ were highly appreciated. He was also appointed to give keyboard lessons to His Majesty the *Infante* Don Gabriel every time the Royal Court came to the Escorial. He composed a great variety of special music for His Majesty which had to be checked by a special court of high

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5. Kastner, M.S., article cited in footnote (1). That Soler studied the works of Elías and other masters of the Montserrat School is shown by H. Anglès in the work cited in footnote (2), p. VIII.
 6. Anglès, H., *loc. cit.*
 7. We are indebted to Mr J. Dos Santos for this translation.
 8. Being ordained with the *epístola* means to gain the lowest of the three successive stages that lead to priesthood: the subdeacon is entitled only to read the epistle during Mass, hence the Spanish formulation of being ordained with the *epístola* – Soler's full ordination took place in the Escorial, in 1753 (cf. Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, p. VII).
 9. See Chapter V of this treatise.

experts. The amount of 25 doubloons was paid to him yearly by His Majesty the *Infante* for his religious expenses. He was always in his cell and no one could see him outside it except during his religious services. Even then, he was always in a hurry because, in his own words, 'he was out of his surroundings', and he used to add that his time was always too short, and that he was surprised to see those who were always talking and who seemed to do nothing at all. He slept too little, going to bed at midnight or one o'clock, and getting up at four or five in the morning to say Mass. Flattery and malicious talk angered him, and whenever he felt that he had exceeded himself he used to ask forgiveness. Every day he prayed to Our Lady, to whom he was particularly devoted. He was a monk for 31 years and gained great respect because of his studious life during both the day and the night. He even took along all the necessary equipment to work when he went to the farm. I am witness to the fact that he wrote some works about the dead [Requiems?], and those were not the worst he composed. Without doubt (in my personal opinion) these were his best works, for he had a great ability for serious composition.

Wishing to please His Majesty more and more, he started to work on a small, square, stringed keyboard instrument, which he called 'Afinador o Templante'. The Italians, French and English had tried to make such an instrument more than once, but always without success, because its object was to demonstrate exactly the interval of the small semitone, bigger than the interval of a tone,¹⁰ dividing it in twenty parts, giving to each its precise corresponding pitch,

10. M.S. Kastner suggested (private information 4th October, 1965) the following translation: "... to demonstrate exactly the interval of the small semitone, of the major semitone, and the interval of the tone ..." which makes more sense, but is not exactly what the original says. Kastner went on to describe this as an "... obskuren Text ...". Soler's instrument seems to have been aimed at producing Just Intonation in all keys and throughout the whole range of modulation, making available as active intervals the minor and major tones, the diesis, etc. M.H. Eslava merely recorded that Soler divided the diapason (here: octave) into twelve equal parts on that instrument (cf. Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, p. XI) — i.e., merely illustrating Equal Temperament —, but that would in no way account for the necessity of building a special instrument, nor for our chronicler's "imperceptible" pitches. H. Eimert has proved, for instance, that fourteen divisions of the tone are clearly discernible even without the help of beats (cf. Eimert, H., "Einführung", DGG, LP 16132, Hi-Fi).

even though imperceptible to our ears. This is because, dividing the tone into nine parts, there is no ear sensitive enough to tune it, nor to distinguish it. For this reason it was even impossible for the high experts to play the instrument. However, with his great ability and research he was able to accomplish it. He left two originals, one for the Prince and the other for His Excellency, the Duke of Alba.

He died on the 20th December, 1783."

While it is certain that without these *Memorias Sepulcrales* Soler's life would have remained a blank to posterity, it is also obvious that this obituary summary treats Soler's pre-Escorial days in a very perfunctory manner which, though understandable, is nevertheless regrettable. How long did Soler attend the choir-school at Montserrat? How long was the interval, if any, between his leaving Montserrat and his appointment at Lérida, and what musical influences came to bear upon him during that time? Was he, in fact, ever organist at Lérida Cathedral? The records at Lérida do not confirm this statement in the *Memorias Sepulcrales*.¹¹ What exactly caused the bishop of Urgel to recruit Soler for the Escorial? In view of the fact that the Benedictines at Montserrat surely had a first claim on Soler,¹² and that the Escorial then belonged to quite a different order, namely that of St Jerome,¹³ the whole affair is nothing short of extraordinary and seems to justify Kastner's

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11. Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, p. VII. There is no doubt, however, about the authenticity of the *Memorias Sepulcrales*.
 12. The order of St Benedict concentrates on contemplation and liturgy (private information Dr W. Kühner, 14th August 1965). Montserrat in particular has gained fame for its liturgical music, and there cannot be any doubt that Soler would have been most welcome in the fraternity there, precisely on account of his ecclesiastical music (see Chapter II of this treatise).
 13. The order of St Jerome (hermits) is related to that of St Augustinus and concentrates on ministerial work and scientific research. While the monasteries of the order of St Benedict are autonomous, the monasteries of the order of St Jerome are all ruled by one *Prior Generalis*. The order of St Jerome was suppressed in 1835 (cf. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, ed. Herder, Freiburg, 1960, vol. V, pp. 325-326). The Escorial now belongs to the order of St Augustinus.

description of it as a "geistlicher Kuhhandel".¹⁴ It is a permissible assumption, however, that this whole situation would not have arisen, if Soler had not even then gained a high reputation as a composer but, there again, vital biographical information is lacking.

In fact, up to Soler's twenty-third year — that is, until 1752, when he entered the Escorial — the few available details about his life do not allow us so much as a glimpse of his personal and musical character, and when the chronicler in the Escorial at last gives him a face, so to speak, we find Soler to be an exemplary cleric of obvious obedience and eagerness, and of impressive singleness of purpose. From the chronicler's description of Soler's tireless work at his music even at the cost of sleep, of his voluntary confinement to his cell, of his surprise at the leisure of others, it is clear that Soler was a recluse even within the Escorial, a hermit of perhaps greater severity than required by the order.

But this picture of Soler's character, drawn so lovingly and respectfully by the nameless chronicler, is incomplete: Soler's self-disciplinary severity, thus described, makes one expect his music to have similar characteristics but, if his keyboard sonatas — subject of this treatise — are any indication,¹⁵ nothing could be less descriptive of Soler's music than scholarly severity. Quite on the contrary, his sonatas have the untroubled charm of spontaneous musicianship, and their stylistic characteristics range from courtly grace — even frivolity — to Andalusian folklore,¹⁶ but exclude any ostentatious erudition.¹⁷

A true picture of Soler's character can only emerge when the evidence of the chronicler and the evidence of Soler's music are combined, and such a combination seems to point to the fact that to Soler personal discipline was the means to inner calmness and smiling serenity. As no state of mind could fit his vocation and his monastic surroundings

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14. Kastner, M.S., private information, 24th May, 1965. — Soler, however, did keep in contact with Montserrat by regularly sending copies of his keyboard compositions to that monastery. What happened to them there is unclear, because one source says that few of this type of composition were kept, and another that several copies were made again in Montserrat (cf. Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, pp. IX and XI). However, see Chapter III, Table I, of this treatise.
15. Soler's ecclesiastic compositions have not been available to us for critical study, and we shall refrain from basing any conclusions as to their nature on the texture of Soler's keyboard fugues. (See Chapter VIII, section II (d), of this treatise.)
16. See Chapter XI of this treatise.
17. The "erudition" of the six fugues in the keyboard sonatas is everything but ostentatious (cf. Chapter VIII, section II (d), of this treatise).

better, it is reasonable to suppose that Soler lived a balanced life of fulfilment, and that, too, is expressed in his music, which in spite of all its "worldliness" never seems to reflect either depression or undue exultation.¹⁸

He must have been a most likable man: the chronicler in the Escorial made it quite plain that Soler enjoyed a much more than merely local reputation among musicians, and being chosen to teach Don Gabriel¹⁹ – and probably also Don Antonio –²⁰ was certainly a coveted distinction, but in spite of all this Soler remained humble, in fact, the chronicler established that flattery actually angered Soler.

We do not have to take the chronicler's word for it that Soler was, indeed, extremely modest: Soler's letters to Padre Martini²¹ demonstrate this virtue in a most touching manner. Presenting to Martini the harmonic treatise *Llave de la Modulaci3n*²² which, after all, had been tested and approved by the "high experts",²³ and which he had himself so masterly defended against learned criticism,²⁴ Soler actually

18. It might be carrying musical psychology a bit far, but we feel it is worth pointing out here that – quite in accordance with the picture we have formed of the composer's personality – his music does not strive towards development or climax, as is the case with other composers of that period, and that even in his ternary sonatas the development section is usually the least elaborate part of the work (cf. Chapters VIII and IX of this treatise).
19. See Chapter VII of this treatise.
20. Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, p. IX.
21. Kastner, M.S., "Algunas cartas del P. Antonio Soler dirigidas al P. Giambattista Martini", Separata del vol. XII del *Anuario Musical* del Instituto Espaol de Musicología del C.S.I.C., Barcelona, 1957.
22. Published in 1762 (cf. Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, p. VII). – See also Chapter X, footnote (1). – The first of the seven extant letters to P. Martini was written in or after 1765 (cf. Kastner, M.S., work cited in footnote (21), p. 236).
23. One of the members of this panel of high experts had been José de Nebra, teacher of Don Gabriel in Madrid who, for a time, also taught Soler. – After the examination by the high experts, Soler's treatise was – at the request of the General Father of the Order – further examined and approved by Casellas (cf. Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, p. VII).
24. The criticism was raised by Antonio Roel del Rio, Master of the Chapel of Mondonedo, in a work entitled *Reparos músicos precisos a la Llave de la Modulaci3n* (published 1764), to which Soler replied, in 1765, with his *Satisfacci3n a los Reparos precisos echos por Don Antonio Roel del Rio a la "Llave de la Modulaci3n"* (cf. Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, p. VIII). Another attack on Soler's *Llave* was made by Gregori Diaz, to which Soler replied in a *Carta escrita a un amigo* (Madrid, 1766) (cf. Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, p. IX).

wrote: "...I shall have the great honour of submitting to your correction these my weaknesses..."²⁵

Soler's letters are full of such sincere humble phrases – compare, for instance, letters two and three, in which he hopes to get Martini's judgment, correction, and approval for a treatise on the *Canto Ecclesiastico* then in progress –²⁶ but surely the most striking evidence of Soler's modesty is found in the true story related by M.H. Eslava in the *Gaceta Musical*:²⁷ in spite of repeated attempts at persuasion, Soler could not be made to sit for the portrait which Padre Martini so urgently wanted to have for his private museum.

A suspicion that these traits of humility were merely attributes of a nature inclined towards submissiveness or servility is quite unfounded, because Soler's hard and fast retaliations when publicly attacked on account of his theoretical writings²⁸, quite exclude the possibility of meekness.

So far, then, the somewhat sketchy picture of Soler's personality and character, which one may – with some daring – draw from the very limited sources available at present.

The few remaining details about Soler's life and activities add little to this over-all impression. Santiago Kastner tells us²⁹ that Soler's duties as Chapel Master at the Escorial entailed the composition of music for the organ and of ecclesiastical vocal music, accompanied or *a capella*, and also the composition of interludes to the yearly theatrical performances staged by the pupils of the monastery. From the *Actes Capitulares* of the Escorial it is clear that Soler received an income for his services; an entry made on the 16th March, 1754, states: "On this day, with the wholehearted agreement of this fraternity, Father Antonio Soler was given a life pension of 100 ducats yearly, for his needs and for his ability, well known by all."³⁰ That Don Gabriel paid for the tuition he received from Soler was already mentioned in the *Memorias Sepulcrales*, and it is possible that Soler was also rewarded for occasional services in an advisory capacity: H. Anglès described an instance where Soler was called in to defend the professional honour of an organ builder from Sevilla – one Josep Casas – whose instruments were claimed to

25. This is as close a translation as Soler's very broken Italian will permit.

26. Kastner, M.S., work cited in footnote (21), p. 238.

27. Madrid, 6th January, 1856, p. 4.

28. Cf. footnote (24) and Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, p. IX.

29. Article cited in footnote (1).

30. Cf. Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, p. VIII.

have been built by someone else.³¹ In 1771, Soler wrote a patriotic book – apparently again a retaliation, this time against an anonymous author – about the relative value of Catalanian and Castilian money.³²

These somewhat tedious details do nothing to relieve the painful lack of particulars about Soler's musical development. We know nothing about the momentous meeting and association of Soler and Scarlatti, except that it took place. We know that Lord Fitzwilliam visited Soler in the Escorial,³⁴ but we have no record of the information Soler gleaned from this meeting as regards the situation of music and the development of styles outside Spain. It is quite likely that Soler came into contact with other important personalities and composers, about which nothing is recorded, and which makes an assessment of contemporary influences on Soler's music extremely difficult. So we presume – as has already been mentioned – that Soler knew some of Boccherini's works, but we cannot be sure.

These gaps in the available information are so particularly irritating because of the style shift in Soler's music, to which we shall have occasion to refer throughout this treatise, and for which proof of external motivation would be of some historical importance. We do know that the Escorial had extremely well-stocked music archives in Soler's time,³⁵ and we also know that Soler made conscientious use of them in his studies – he quoted Morales and Palestrina as models in his *Satisfaccion* – but as his style shift obviously was not based on his knowledge of 16th century music, nor on his familiarity with Scarlatti's works, his assimilation of the then “modern” mid-European keyboard style remains enigmatic for want of a known catalytic agent.

31. *Ibid.*, p. IX.

32. *Ibid.*, p. X.

33. See Chapter II of this treatise.

34. See chapter III of this treatise.

35. Anglès, H., *op. cit.*, p. VIII.

CHAPTER II

STATUS

The available biographical details of Soler's life are rather sparse, as we have seen and, such as they are, would hardly warrant a sustained interest, were it not for Soler's exceptional stature as a composer. Even from the quantitative point of view Soler's creative output is impressive, if one keeps in mind that he could only devote such time to writing and composition as could be spared from his many religious duties:¹ apart from the theoretical treatises mentioned in the previous chapter, he wrote no less than five hundred vocal works,² six concertos for two organs, six quintets for organ and strings, music for plays and interludes by Spanish dramatists, among others those of Caldéron,³ and "...about a hundred and thirty 'sonatas' for harpsichord".⁴ As regards the content and quality of these works Father Samuel Rubio, the editor of ninety-four keyboard-sonatas by Soler, remarks the following: "In this aspect he runs parallel to his contemporary — and perhaps his master — Domenico Scarlatti both in his prolificness and in his inspiration".⁵

Not always has Soler been given such high credit as a composer: when Father Rubio in the remark quoted above elevated him to the same rank as D. Scarlatti, he was rather less conservative than other writers: W. Georgii pointed out that the sonatas of Spanish composers during that period often resemble those of Scarlatti "...wie ein Ei dem anderen...", and that particularly the aspects of formal structure and keyboard technique in Soler's sonatas are subject to such description.⁶ G. Chase saw in Soler's sonatas "...on every page..." not only a structural resemblance to Scarlatti's keyboard works, but also a discipleship in

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1. Rubio, S., Foreword (unnumbered) to: *P. Antonio Soler, Sonatas para Instrumentos de Tecla*, vol. I, Union Musical Espagnola, Madrid, 1957.
 2. *Loc. cit.*
 3. *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, fifth edition, London, 1954, vol. VII, p. 873. Also: Chase, G., *The Music of Spain*, Dover Publications, New York, 1959, pp. 114-115.
 4. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, Foreword, vol. I.
 5. *Loc. cit.* There are six vols. so far, containing 99 sonatas, four of which however, are ~~du~~ duplicates, and a fifth a duplicate by transposition.
 6. Georgii, W., *Klaviermusik*, Atlantis-Verlag AG, Zürich, 1950, pp. 76-77.

spirit,⁷ and J.Nín – writing about the 27 sonatas of the London publication⁸ – stated that “En ces vingt sept sonates l’influence scarlattienne apparaît indéniable et presque exclusive”.⁹ To R. Hill Soler was just a “...minor talent...”.¹⁰

In spite of such summary assessments, some of these writers were quick to add that Soler nevertheless was a composer in his own right: W. Georgii hastened to say that it would be unjust to conceal the fact that Soler’s music is always stimulating by variety of invention,¹¹ and G. Chase agreed that it has a “...charm and wit...” of its own.¹²

From their evaluations of Soler, which as it were gave with the one hand what they took with the other, it is clear that they regarded him as a secondary figure to D. Scarlatti, thus essentially differing from Father Rubio’s assessment. One of the reasons for this discrepancy in evaluation we find in the fact that some of the similarities in the sonatas of the two composers explain themselves from their use of an identical ethnic idiom, i.e. Spanish folklore and guitar tradition,¹³ which Scarlatti incorporated in his keyboard style,¹⁴ and which Soler “...en bon droit, reprenait à son tour”.¹⁵ For this reason it is on the one hand extremely difficult to decide what exactly Soler got from Scarlatti and how much precisely came to him from his own national sources, and on the other very easy to see Soler in a shadow which in reality may exist in a far lesser degree than is often supposed.¹⁶

There is, however, another reason why Soler has always been re-

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7. Chase, G., *The Music of Spain*, Dover Publications, New York, 1959, p. 115. Prof. Chase, with his excellent assessment of Soler’s position in Spanish Music History, would probably be the first to agree to Rubio’s opinion. At his time of writing, Soler’s sonatas in four movements were not yet available.
 8. *XXVII Sonatas para Clave, Por el Padre Fray Antonio Soler. Que ha impreso Roberto Birchall* (copy in British Museum).
 9. Nín, J., *Classiques Espagnols du Piano, Seize Sonates Anciennes d’Auteurs Espagnols*, Max Eschig, Paris, 1925, vol. I, p. IV.
 10. Hill, R.S., “Antonio Soler”, *Notes*, vol. 16, 1958-1959, p. 157.
 11. Georgii, W., *op. cit.*, p. 77.
 12. Chase, G., *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.
 13. Keller, H., *Domenico Scarlatti*, Peters, Leipzig, 1957, pp. 64-65. See also: Kastner, M.S., essay on Soler for *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (private information prior to publication). Also: Chase, G., *op. cit.*, p. 112. – Cf. Chapter IX of this treatise.
 14. Kirkpatrick, R., *Domenico Scarlatti*, Princeton U.P., 1953, pp. 114f, 168f.
 15. Nín, J., *op. cit.*, p. V. – See also Chapters IX and XI of this treatise.
 16. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, Foreword, vol. I.

garded as being of secondary importance, namely because he had actually been a pupil of D. Scarlatti for a number of years. Although Father Rubio in his Foreword to Soler's *Sonatas para Instrumentos de Tecla*¹⁷ is very careful in saying that Scarlatti was "perhaps" Soler's master,¹⁸ there cannot be much doubt that such a teacher-pupil-relationship existed. Scarlatti's entrance into the service of the Spanish Court happened to coincide with Soler's year of birth,¹⁹ and since Scarlatti was still in the same position when, in 1752, Soler began his service as organist and choir master of the monastery at the Escorial,²⁰ it was inevitable that the two musicians should come into close contact, and that the young monk, aged twenty-three, should become a pupil of the then sixty-seven year old Italian master. Apart from all surmising, there is the testimony to this effect by Lord Fitzwilliam,²¹ and the title-page of the twelve sonatas in the Paris collection, which reads: *XII Toccate per cembalo composte dal Padre Antonio Soler discepolo de Domenico Scarlatti*.²² Hermann Keller accepted these points of evidence at face value,²³ even though it is quite evident that the Paris collection is not an original, as its seal would make it appear.²⁴ Since Santiago Kastner's remarkable discovery of the autographs of seven letters written by Father Soler to Father Giambattista Martini, we have certainty in this matter: in the very first letter Soler described himself as "...lo 'scolare dil S^r Scarlati..."²⁵

But accepting the fact that Soler was, indeed, Scarlatti's pupil, does not mean that one should overrate the latter's influence on the former

17. *Loc. cit.*

18. Father Rubio, in his original Spanish foreword, uses the word "maestro", whose meaning – like the French "maître" – is as ambiguous as the term "master" used in the English translation of his Foreword: the original meaning is "tutor" or "teacher".

19. Nín, J., *op. cit.*, p. III.

20. *Grove's Dictionary, op. cit.*, p. 873.

21. *Loc. cit.*

22. Nín, J., *op. cit.*, p. IV.

23. Keller, H., *op. cit.*, p. 22.

24. Nín, J., *op. cit.*, p. IV. It is particularly the orthographical mistakes in these sonatas which point to a rather inferior copyist, and make them extremely unlikely as Soler-autographs. Further to this question compare Chapter III, footnote (3).

25. "Algunas Cartas del P. Antonio Soler dirigidas al P. Giambattista Martini", Separata del vol. XII del *Anuario Musical* del Instituto Español de Musicología del C.S.I.C., Barcelona, 1957, p. 3. The single "t" in "Scarlati" is Soler's original.

because, firstly, the direct contact cannot have lasted longer than five years (Scarlatti died in 1757) and, secondly, because the "Italian Style" had become prominent in Spanish music long before Scarlatti ever set foot on the Iberian Peninsula.²⁶ At the halfway mark of the 18th century the Italian musical idiom was not only firmly established on a truly international basis, but had even earlier become an accepted tradition particularly in Spain.²⁷ It must be remembered here that Naples and Sicily had belonged to the Spanish crown since 1503,²⁸ that ever since a lively exchange of music and musicians had taken place across the Mediterranean,²⁹ and that by the end of the 17th century – when Spanish keyboard music fell into temporary decadence³⁰ and royal whim in both Portugal and Spain ever increasingly demanded to be entertained by Italian artists³¹ – the influx of Italian music into Spain had become overwhelming. If Santiago Kastner in his essay on the keyboard style of Cabanilles,³² who was the tutor of Soler's teacher José Elias,³³ could prove the influence of Fasolo, Strozzi, Pasquini, A. Scarlatti, and Corelli on the music of that Spanish master,³⁴ it must be accepted that the Italian musical idiom had been introduced into Spain long before Soler's birth, that it was not left to be popularised there by Domenico Scarlatti, and that Soler in moulding his style on an already existing tradition did so independently of Scarlatti, merely sharing with him the same point of departure.

We may regard this overlapping of mutual preoccupations – Scarlatti's with the Iberian folklore and Soler's with Italian keyboard technique – as an indication why Soler's independence as a composer has in the past only been partially acknowledged. An added handicap to the assessment of Soler's keyboard music was, of course, the fact that only a minority of his sonatas were available to earlier writers. J. Nín knew only sixty-five of Soler's sonatas, and of these sixty-five he owned only forty-two.³⁵ W. Georgii apparently knew only those fourteen

26. Kastner, M.S., "Randbemerkungen zu Cabanilles, Claviersatz", Separata del *Anuario Musical*, vol. XVII, Barcelona, 1962, p. 84.

27. *Ibid.*; pp. 85, 88-89. Also: Chase, G., *op. cit.*, p. 106.

28. Keller, H., *op. cit.*, p. 10.

29. Kastner, M.S., *op. cit.*, p. 82.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

31. Keller, H., *op. cit.*, p. 19.

32. "Randbemerkungen zu Cabanilles, Claviersatz" is the original title, see (27).

33. Newman, W.S., *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, North Carolina U.P., 1963, p. 279.

34. Kastner, M.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 83, 85-86.

35. Nín, J., *op. cit.*, p. IV.

which Nín had published in his *Sonates Anciennes d'Auteurs Espagnols*.³⁶ G. Chase mentioned seventy-five extant harpsichord sonatas.³⁷ It is only now that Father Samuel Rubio has published ninety-four of the one hundred and thirty Soler sonatas which he mentions in the Foreword to his edition – i.e. three quarters of the total number –³⁸ that there is enough material available to make it possible to proceed from the negative comparative approach, which concerns itself merely with the *similarities* between Soler and Scarlatti, to the positive comparative approach, which can measure Soler's *individual characteristics*.

For this reason then, if it comes to an assessment of Soler's status in the history of music as a composer, it seems best – at least as a point of departure – to rely on the opinion of those whose specialized study and geographical position has enabled them to become intimately acquainted not only with his works but also with the national tradition from which these works sprang.³⁹

Accordingly, when Santiago Kastner writes – contrary to conclusions of other writers who saw in Soler not much more than a plagiarist of Scarlatti – “Notwithstanding all his Italianisms, the musical language of Soler is profoundly Spanish”⁴⁰ and “I consider all music of Soler very Spanish, he surely owns a ‘Nationale Eigenschaft’, and I do not know any composers, who wrote in the same idiom”,⁴¹ this opinion should be regarded as the status quo, along with Father Rubio's statement that Soler “...must be considered the most distinguished musician

36. Georgii, W., *op. cit.*, p. 76.

37. Chase, G., *op. cit.*, p. 114. Prof. Chase was probably no more than referring to the number of Soler sonatas mentioned in J. Nín's “The Bi-Centenary of Antonio Soler”, in *The Chesterian*, vol. XI, No. 84, London, 1930, p. 99.

38. Soler, A., *Sonatas para Instrumentos de Tecla*, Union Musical Española, Madrid, 1957-1962. The “complete” edition by Father Rubio is not finished as of this writing – only six volumes are at hand.

39. Father Samuel Rubio has for many years been librarian of the Escorial, where Soler also had worked; Santiago Kastner, since 1947 professor at the State Academy of Lisbon and also active associate of the Musicological Institute of Barcelona, specialized in keyboard music of the 16th to the 18th century, particularly that of Portuguese and Spanish composers.

40. Kastner, M.S., *2 x 2 Sonatas*, Foreword, Schott, Mainz, 1956. See also: Newman, W.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 280-281.

41. Kastner, M.S., private information, 7th February, 1965.

of 18th century Spain".⁴² This status quo is confirmed by W.S. Newman in his excellent critical summary of Soler's position as a composer of sonatas.⁴³

With this appreciation of Father Soler's status as the *raison d'être* of this treatise, a discussion of his keyboard sonatas will have to begin with an enquiry into their sources, the question of chronology, the question of the instrument, and the title 'sonata'. Thereafter, the sonatas themselves shall be viewed in their diversity of technical facets.

42. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, Foreword, vol. I.

43. Newman, W.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 279-285.

CHAPTER III

SOURCES, AND THEIR REDISCOVERY

As in the case of Scarlatti's keyboard works, none of Soler's sonatas have been preserved in their author's handwriting.¹ Apart from four examples of the identical printed volume of twenty-seven sonatas — which are held by the British Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum, the Hamburg Library, and the Library of the Conservatoire at Brussels, respectively —² the sources consist only of manuscript copies. One of the sets of manuscripts, namely the collection of twelve sonatas in Paris, is marked as an "original", but J. Nín alleged to have proved this untrue by comparing the Paris handwriting to a Soler-autograph at Montserrat.³

It is not known what happened to the original manuscripts, nor why Father Soler — again just like Scarlatti — did not feel called upon to safeguard them. Even Lord Fitzwilliam, to whom Soler gave the above-mentioned twenty-seven sonatas which were later printed by Robert Birchall in London, did not seem to attach much importance to the preservation of the autographical manuscripts, because those, too, were lost.⁴

The full title of the only early publication of Soler's sonatas reads: *XXVII Sonatas para Clave, Por el Padre fray Antonio Soler. Que ha impreso Roberto Birchall. Nro. 133 New Bond Street, Price 15s.*^{1,5} Un-

1. Rubio, S., Foreword (unnumbered) to: *P. Antonio Soler, Sonatas para Instrumentos de Tecla*, vol. I, Union Musical Espagnola, Madrid, 1957. Also: Keller, H., *Domenico Scarlatti*, Peters, Leipzig, 1957, p. 30.
2. Nín, J., "The Bi-Centenary of Antonio Soler", *The Chesterian*, vol. XI, No. 84, London, 1930, p. 99.
3. Nín, J., *Classiques Espagnols du Piano, Seize Sonates Anciennes d'Auteurs Espagnols*, Max Eschig, Paris, 1925, vol. I, p. IV. Nín did not give any particulars as to the work or works he asserted to have seen in Soler's own handwriting at Montserrat. It cannot have been one of the keyboard sonatas, as Father Rubio — having so far published no less than 40 sonatas from or in comparison with Montserrat manuscripts — is still quite emphatic on the point that no Soler sonatas exist in autograph. The only extant Soler autographs appear to be in the Escorial, and these are all ecclesiastical works (Kastner, M.S., private information, May 2nd, 1965).
4. Hill, R.S., "Keyboard Music", *Notes*, vol. 16, Washington D.C., 1958-59, p. 156.
5. Mitjana, R., *Encyclopédie De La Musique et Dictionnaire Du Conservatoire, Première Partie, Histoire De La Musique, Espagne - Portugal* (ed. A. Lavignac), Paris, 1920, p. 2183.

fortunately, this publication is undated. Lord Fitzwilliam received the sonatas from Soler on the 14th February, 1772, and brought them to London;⁶ the year of publication, however, is now thought to be not earlier than 1796, which would make the publication a posthumous one.⁷

In spite of this early print, Soler and his sonatas were forgotten outside Spain for very nearly eleven decades. The first to take notice of their existence again was Robert Eitner, if only by including the Birchall publication of the twenty-seven sonatas in his *Quellen Lexikon*, in 1903.⁸ The true rediscovery of Soler began only with Felipe Pedrell who, in 1908, published a discussion of Soler's life and work in the *Revista Musical Catalana*.⁹

Pedrell, however, in spite of his visits to the Archives of the Escorial, did not happen to find any of Soler's keyboard works there¹⁰ and could not – as he was unaware of the Birchall publication and of Eitner's *Quellen Lexikon* – include them in his list of Soler's works.¹¹

The historical and musical importance of the keyboard sonatas, in fact, remained unnoticed until as late as 1920, when it fell to Rafael Mitjana to focus critical and enthusiastic attention on the twenty-seven sonatas published by Birchall and, above all, to analyse some of them as to form and style.¹²

Although publishing later, J. Nín had come across Soler's sonatas some time before Mitjana.¹³ Nín went two steps further than the former: firstly, he actually edited and republished five of the sonatas of

6. Cf. Hill, R.S. *loc. cit.*; also: Nín, J., work cited in footnote (2), p. 102; also: *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, fifth edition, London 1954, vol. VII, p. 873; also: Chase, G., *The Music of Spain*, Dover Publications, New York, 1959, p. 115.
7. Newman, W.S., *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, North Carolina U.P., 1963, p. 280; G. Chase, in his work mentioned in footnote (6), p. 116, considers this publication contemporary to the composer.
8. Nín, J., work cited in footnote (2), p. 99.
9. 1908/9, Nos. 58-61, 2nd Series of *Musics Vells De La Terra*.
10. The manuscript copies of the ten sonatas at the Escorial were made by Father Cortazar, in 1896. Cf. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, "Sources of Our Edition", vol. I.
11. Nín, J., work cited in footnote (2), p. 99.
12. Mitjana, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 2183 and 2185.
13. The Birchall print was actually found by the American historian C.P. Smith. Cf. Nín, J., work cited in footnote (2), p. 102. Also: Nín, J., *op. cit.*, p. IV, footnote (4).

the Birchall print¹⁴ and, secondly, he added nine sonatas from freshly discovered sources.¹⁵ Although Nín's edition of Soler's sonatas is not always in the best of taste¹⁶ and several statements in his Foreword open to doubt, he can be regarded as a pioneer in the field of Soler-study, because he appears to have been the first to discover some new sonatas from additional sources.

Modern Soler-research on a musicological level began with Monseñor Anglès who, in 1933, in his *Introduccio i estudi bibliografic* to Robert Gerhard's *Antonio Soler: Sis Quintets*,¹⁷ was able to offer a most valuable biographical summary and comprehensive list of Soler's music, pointing to formerly unknown sources.¹⁸

Anglès' great pupil, Macario Santiago Kastner, continued the former's study and, beginning in 1952, first published Soler's unique six concertos for two organs,¹⁹ then two pairs of Soler's keyboard sonatas.²⁰ As regards new sources, Kastner's contribution to the study of Soler is the rediscovery of Soler's correspondence with the famous Father Giambattista Martini.²¹ Kastner's publication of this correspondence is of importance, because it enriches our limited knowledge of Soler's life with glimpses of this master's personal character. Kastner's principal achievement, however, is the evaluation and integration of Soler's place as a composer not only in the history of Spain, but in the history of 18th century music as a whole.²²

14. Nín, J., *op. cit.*, vols. I and II, 1925 and 1929. These sonatas correspond to Nos. 24, 21, 2, 15 and 19 of the Birchall print.
15. Mss. then held by Père Nemesio Otaño and Henry Prunières. These, however, were not all the manuscripts Nín knew; cf. his *Classiques Espagnols du Piano, Seize Sonates Anciennes d'Auteurs Espagnols*, Max Eschig, Paris, 1925, vol. I, p. IV.
16. Hill, R.S., *op. cit.*, p. 155; also: Newman, W.S., *op. cit.*, pp. 279-280.
17. Institut d'Estudis Catalan, Biblioteca de Catalunya, Barcelona, 1933. See Chapter I of this treatise.
18. *Ibid.* p. XII ff.
19. *Música Hispana, Serie C: Música De Camera, I, P. Antonio Soler.*
20. *P. Antonio Soler: 2 x 2 Sonatas for Keyboard Instruments*, Schott & Co., Mainz, 1956.
21. "Algunas Cartas del P. Antonio Soler dirigidas al P. Giambattista Martini", Separata del vol. XII del *Anuario Musical* del Instituto Español de Musicología del C.S.I.C., Barcelona, 1957. This publication contains 7 letters.
22. Cf. Kastner, M.S., "Randbemerkungen zu Cabanilles, Claviersatz", Separata del *Anuario Musical*, vol. XVII, Barcelona, 1962; also: Kastner, M.S., *Carlos de Seixas*, Coimbra, 1947; also: Kastner, M.S., *Contribución al estudio de la musica española y portuguesa*, Atica, Lisbon, 1941.

The next big step forward in the publication²³ and indication of new sources of Soler's keyboard sonatas was taken in 1957, when Frederick Marvin and Samuel Rubio began – independently of each other – to bring out their “complete editions” of the sonatas.

Of these two editions now in progress²⁴ the one by Father Rubio is the most important from the musicological point of view, because it is systematic in the sorting of the sonatas according to their sources, while the one by Marvin offers the sonatas according to their presentability from the performer's point of view.²⁵

Apart from that, Father Rubio's edition has progressed somewhat faster than Marvin's and, therefore, allows a more comprehensive view of the sources at this stage.

In Table I below, the source/s of each sonata is indicated by (x) against its number in the six volumes of the Rubio-edition.²⁶

The number of the sonatas and their sources shown in Table I make it clear how far Soler-research has advanced since the days of J. Nín's *Seize Sonates Anciennes d'Auteurs Espagnols*;²⁷ it also gives evidence of the diligence and resourcefulness of the editor, Father Samuel Rubio.

And yet, the sources quoted by Rubio are not the only ones known. J. Nín, in his above-mentioned publications, edited three sonatas made available to him by Rd. Père Nemesio Otaño. They have not, so far, been published by either Rubio or Marvin, neither from the sources used by Nín, nor from a duplicate manuscript in one of the other collections.²⁸

23. In 1950 another edition of some of Soler's sonatas appeared: Duck, L., *Antonio Soler: Six Sonatas for Pianoforte*, vols. 1-2, Mills Music, New York; This edition contributed nothing new to Soler-research, as it used the Birchall print as its only source, and is over-edited. Cf. Hill, R.S., *op. cit.*, p. 156.
24. Marvin, F., *Antonio Soler: Sonatas for Piano*, Mills Music, New York and London, beginning in 1957; and: Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, also beginning in 1957.
25. Hill, R.S., *op. cit.*, p. 157.
26. The sonatas which are accidentally duplicated (cf. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, “Sources of our Edition”, vol. VI) are marked by bracketing their number.
27. Compare footnote (3) for full title.
28. Hill, R.S., *op. cit.*, p. 156. The manuscripts of these three sonatas are thought to be no longer available. Cf. Newman, W.S., *op. cit.*, p. 279.

TABLE I

Sources of Soler's Sonatas according to S. Rubio (ed.)

Number of Sonata	Publication by R. Birchall	Mss. at Montserrat	Mss. at Biblioteca Central de Barcelona	Mss. Belonging to P. de Guinard; French Institute, Madrid	Mss. at Biblioteca del Orfeo Catala de Barcelona	Mss. at Escorial	Mss. of Paris
1	X						
2	X						
3	X	X					
4	X	X					
5	X						
6	X						
7	X						
8	X						
9	X						
10	X						
11	X						
12	X						
13	X						
14	X						
15	X						
16	X			X		X	
17	X						
18	X						
19	X						
20	X						
21	X						
22	X						
23	X						
24	X						
25	X						
26	X			X			
27	X			X			
28				X		X	
29				X		X	
30				X		X	
31				X		X	
32				X		X	
33				X		X	
34				X		X	
35		X	X				
36		X					
37		X					
39		X					
39		X					
40		X					
(41)		X					
(42)		X					
43		X					
44		X					
(45)		X					
46		X					
47		X					
48		X	X				
49		X		X			
50		X					

TABLE I (Cont.)

Sources of Soler's Sonatas according to S. Rubio (ed.)

Number of Sonata	Publication by R. Birchall	Mss. at Montserrat	Mss. at Biblioteca Central de Barcelona	Mss. Belonging to P. de Guinard; French Institute, Madrid	Mss. at Biblioteca del Orfeo Catala de Barcelona	Mss. at Escorial	Mss. of Paris
51		X					
52		X					
53		X	X				
(54)		X					
55				X			
56		X				X	
57				X		X	
58					X		
59					X		
(60)					X		
61		X					
62		X					
63		X	X				
64		X	X				
65		X	X				
66		X	X				
67		X	X				
68		X	X				
69				X			
70				X			
71				X			
72				X			
73				X			
74				X			
75				X			
76				X			
77				X			
78				X			
79				X			
80				X			
81				X			
82				X			
83					X		
84							X
85							X
86							X
87							X
88							X
89							X
90							X
91		X					
92		X					
93		X					
94		X					
95		X					
96		X					
97		X					
98		X					
99		X					

F. Marvin, too, has come forward in his edition with three sonatas from a source untapped by Rubio, namely those from a manuscript held by the Biblioteca Catalu a.²⁹

As of this writing, then, adding N n's and Marvin's sources to those of Rubio, the manuscript copies of Soler's sonatas are known to be spread over eight different libraries³⁰ and collections, even apart from the four institutions which each hold one example of the Birchall print.

29. Hill, R.S., *op. cit.*, p. 157.

30. Santiago Kastner's *2 x 2 Sonatas* (see footnote (20)) are also based on manuscript copies in the Biblioteca Central de Barcelona.

CHAPTER IV

THE QUESTION OF CHRONOLOGY

Apart from the orthographical mistakes made by copyists,¹ the most deplorable aspect of the loss of Soler's sonata-autographs is the fact that no conclusive chronology of these works can be established. The uncertainty in this respect is only increased by the manuscript copies being scattered over eight different libraries and collections, and the confusion reaches its peak when one realises how many different copyists must have been employed in the transcription of Father Soler's sonatas.²

Usually these copyists, when they gave a date at all, merely fixed the date of the completion of their copy, leaving posterity to surmise whether the sonata or sonatas were originally composed years or even decades before the date of copy. Two excellent examples of such vagueness are the manuscript copies of those sonatas which Father Rubio places as Nos. 16,³ 58, and 59 in his edition; in both these cases the name of copyist and the year of copy are recorded.

The title of the manuscript which contains the sonata No. 16 reads as follows: *Quaderno de Sonatas y Versos que compuso el P. Fr. Antonio Soler, Maestro de Capilla de el Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo del Escorial. Son de Vicente Torreno, las que copié en el presente año de 1786.*⁴

Torreno's explanation only leaves this to be desired: he should have

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1. Nín, J., *Classiques Espagnols du Piano, Seize Sonates Anciennes d'Auteurs Espagnols*, Max Eschig, Paris, 1925, p. IV. Also: Rubio, S., Foreword (unnumbered) to: *P. Antonio Soler, Sonatas para Instrumentos de Tecla*, vol. I, Union Musical Española, Madrid, 1957.
 2. Even apart from copies which are no longer traceable, like those of Otaño and Villalba, Table I gives sufficient evidence of how much duplication took place in the copying of Soler's sonatas. That a considerable number of men of varying degrees of competence were involved in this copying is shown by the incompleteness of some copies (in the case of the sonatas with three movements in vol. IV of the Rubio-edition), by the different mistakes made in transcription, by the different methods of distributing the parts on the staff, and even by a case of transposition (compare sonatas Nos. 54 and 92). See also Chapter I, footnote (14).
 3. The sonata No. 16 has three sources, namely the Birchall print, a manuscript at the Escorial, and the manuscript of M. P. de Guinard (see Table I). It is the latter to which we are referring here.
 4. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, "Sources of Our Edition", vol. I.

informed the reader whether he copied from an autograph or from an already existing manuscript copy, and – if he did copy from an autograph – which date this autograph showed. As Torreno's date indicates, his copy was made three years after Soler's death, and if this particular sonata had not happened to be one of those which Soler himself gave to Lord Fitzwilliam, in 1772, we would still have to consider any year of Soler's creative life as its possible year of composition. Even as it is, we can only be sure that this sonata was not written during the last eleven years of Soler's life, which still leaves the question of its exact placing before the year 1772 unsolved.⁵

In the case of the sonatas Nos. 58 and 59,⁶ the vagueness of the copyist turns into obscurity; the title to these two sonatas reads: *Sonatas del P. fray Antonio Soler que hizo para la diversión del Serenísimo Señor Infante Don Gabriel. Obra 7.^a y 8.^a. Año 1786. Joseph Antonio Terrés, 1802.*⁷ Pointing to the "Obra 7.^a y 8.^a", it takes a great deal of credulity to accept that these pieces are, in fact, Soler's opp. 7 and 8, because both – and very particularly the first – remind one in spirit and texture so much of the early Viennese Classic that it is difficult to believe that they could have grown from the tuition Soler received at the Monastery of Montserrat, nor that in their simplicity they could have been the result of Scarlatti's influence. As regards the "año 1786", that cannot – as it should in this context – indicate the actual year of composition, because it is a posthumous date. Neither can it be the year during which the copy was made, because that the copyist stated as being 1802. Does "año 1786" then date the copy from which Terrés copied in his turn?

The latter explanation seems the most plausible, as copying from copies appears to have been done quite frequently. Another example of this is the manuscript copy at the Escorial, containing ten sonatas, made by Father Isidore Cortazar, in 1896, by copying from a copy made available to him by Father Luis Villalba. It is obvious that this date of copy is even more useless for an attempted chronology than those in

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5. There is no reason to believe that Soler did not write keyboard sonatas before 1760 when, after the ascension of Carlos III, the *Infante Don Gabriel* became his pupil. Nor is there any reason to think that Soler only began to write sonatas after he had met Scarlatti, which was probably in 1752.
 6. Father Rubio published these works not as sonatas, but No. 58 as a Sonata-Rondo, and No. 59 as a Rondo.
 7. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, "Fuentes De Nuestra Edición", vol. III.

the cases mentioned previously, particularly since Father Villalba's copies are no longer available.⁸

At the present moment we know of only one manuscript copy which, according to its date, was made while Soler was still alive. This manuscript, held by the Biblioteca Central de Barcelona, contains a sonata in three movements, which is presented as No. 63 in the Rubio-edition. In his "Sources of Our Edition" to vol. IV, Rubio gives the full title of the manuscript: *Seis obras para órgano, con un cantabile y allegro cada una, compuestas por el Rvdo. P. Antonio Soler. Año: 1777*. The indicated year may, in this case, happen to be the actual year of composition. It may also – like in the former cases – just be the date of copy. Either way the date is not of much help, because it falls so close to the end of Soler's span of life.

Lacking dependable dates, a plausible chronology can be based on opus numbers, provided that they are consistent. Apart from the two copies by Terrés mentioned above, there are only nine sonatas in the Rubio-edition which carry opus numbers. These nine are the sonatas placed as Nos. 91 to 99,⁹ and – even assuming for the moment that together with the Terrés copy we have eleven sonatas with correct opus numbers – they are not sufficient in quantity to help us place the rest of the sonatas, especially as the highest number indicated is opus 8. This "opus 8", however, cannot be seriously regarded as Soler's true opus 8 because, as Rubio puts it, "The sonatas in 4 movements ... indicate that P. Soler was in touch with other musical worlds apart from the Scarlattian world in which he moved for many years",¹⁰ and this clearly means that these sonatas come from a later period in Soler's life.¹¹

From this it is obvious that Soler's opus numbers are of no value to a chronology, because he seems to have resorted to the use of such num-

8. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, "Sources of Our Edition", vol. I. R. Kirkpatrick has attempted a chronological order of Scarlatti's works according to the dates given by copyists, with the result that some early sonatas appear after the *Essercizi* of 1738 (cf. Keller, H., *Domenico Scarlatti*, Peters, Leipzig, 1957, p. 33).
9. The first six of these sonatas are all part of op. 4, the latter three make up op. 8. It should be mentioned here that the copyist Terrés also named as op. 8 the sonata which is placed as No. 59 in the Rubio-edition.
10. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, "Sources of Our Edition", vol. VI.
11. This would indicate that Father Soler's musical development is in this respect a reversal of that of Scarlatti, who developed from sonatas with more than one movement to the one-movement sonata (cf. Keller, H., *op. cit.*, p. 33).

bers rather late in his life, and to have omitted to integrate his earlier works in his new system of numbering.

Straightforward dates and opus-numbers being either unavailable or insufficient, there is a third method by which a chronological listing of Soler's sonatas could be attempted, namely by trying to integrate the stylistic characteristics of the sonatas in a progressive evolutionary pattern. Such a determination of a chronological order by way of comparison of stylistic criteria is most challenging, but also very dangerous. Particularly in the case of Soler — where it is not a question of placing a single work or a comparatively small group of works within the already established chronological framework of the composer's general output¹² — the danger is that a grouping of the sonatas according to stylistic criteria would neither guarantee the chronology within the tentatively determined groups, nor necessarily the chronology of these groups as such.

It cannot be denied, however, that the criteria of stylistic development exist in Soler's sonatas. When J. Nín said that the sonatas of the Guinard collection "A première vue ..." appear to be older than those in the Paris collection,¹³ he undoubtedly based his statement on stylistic observations. Santiago Kastner, too, resorted to features of style when — comparing Soler to Seixas —¹⁴ he stated that both masters evolved from the composition of one-movement sonatas to the composition of sonatas with more than one movement. Samuel Rubio's statement quoted above indicates that he places the sonatas in four movements, opp. 4 and 8, in a later period of Soler's creative life, and Father Rubio's decision

12. Even the placing of a single work is often difficult; often remembered classics in this respect are Beethoven's "Die Wut um den Verlorenen Groschen", and Chopin's Mazurka in A, op. 68, No. 2.

13. Nín, J., *op. cit.*, p. IV, footnote (3). Nín did not publish any of the sonatas in the Guinard collection. In his "The Bi-Centenary of Antonio Soler" (*The Chesterian*, vol. XI, No. 84, London, 1930, p. 103) Nín again stated that the Paris sonatas belong to Soler's "... final period ...". Nín's reasoning was based on Soler's advanced modulations, but to our mind the Paris sonatas show little in the way of modulation that is not established in, for instance, the sonatas Nos. 2, 4, 6, 11 and 15 (all from the Birchall print) or, for that matter, in the sonatas Nos. 78 and 79 (from the Guinard collection). Besides, Soler's treatise *La Llave de Modulacion* was published already in 1762, when he was 33 years of age and, in 1765, Soler wrote that he had composed pieces "in all keys and in all styles" (Cf. Anglès & Gerhard, *Antonio Soler: Sis Quintets*, Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalan, 1933, p. VII).

14. Kastner, M.S., *Carlos de Seixas*, Coimbra Editora, Coimbra, 1947, p. 88.

here does not only take multiple movements as a determining factor, but also the musical texture of these sonatas, which remind one often of the style of Bach's sons, Wagenseil and early Haydn. Furthermore, Father Rubio seems to share Santiago Kastner's opinion that not only opp. 4 and 8, but *all* the sonatas with more than a single movement are of later date.¹⁵

A scrutiny of these attempts at determining a chronology on the grounds of stylistic comparison reveals the dangers of this procedure: the Guinard collection – assessed by J. Nín as probably earlier than the Paris collection – contains a sonata with two movements, contrasted in time, tempo, and character, but clearly interconnected (No. 79). Example 1, below, shows the last four bars of the first movement and the first bars of the second movement.

Example 1

Cantabile

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Cantabile' and shows the final four bars of a movement, ending with a double bar line. Above the final two bars are markings for '1.° vez' and '2.° vez'. The bottom staff is labeled 'Allegro' and shows the first four bars of a new movement, beginning with a fermata over the first note. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 3/4.

Allegro

The existence of such a work in the Guinard collection would seem to prove Nín wrong, because it is reasonable to suppose that the presentation of a two-movement sonata – instead of presenting two

15. Private information, 11th January, 1964.

autonomous sonatas as a pair, as both Soler¹⁶ and Scarlatti¹⁷ liked to do – is an evolutionary step towards the later multi-movement sonatas: the Paris collection contains no such two-movement sonata.

Another striking sonata from the Guinard collection is No. 81. What makes this work so exceptional is the deliberate emotional contrast of its seemingly fragmentary sections. Example 2, below, shows two pages of this sonata.

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16. The fact that some of Soler's sonatas are presented in pairs is of itself not necessarily proof of a consideration of a larger musical form. These pairs appear in the Birchall print as well as in the Guinard collection, though not in the collection of Paris. It is very tempting to regard the sonatas from the Guinard collection, which Rubio places as Nos. 77, 78 and 79 as a double pair with an underlying formal principle, but as it is quite possible that their grouping is again no more than a copyist's whim, it is better to refrain from any speculation on this subject. W.S. Newman (*The Sonata in the Classic Era*, North Carolina U.P., 1963, p. 282) was actually trapped into taking these pairs too much for granted as the composer's intention. Among others, he pointed to Nos. 40 and 41 in the Rubio-edition as such a pair, which is probably just a slip because those two sonatas have nothing in common; we take it that Newman meant Nos. 41 and 42 which he also mentions on p. 11. But it turned out that these sonatas are not a pair, but the 2nd and 4th movements of an incompletely copied sonata. (Cf. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, vol. VI, pp. 89 and 97.)
17. Keller, H., *op. cit.*, p. 34. – Likely pairs of Soler's sonatas are, for instance, Nos. 5 and 6, Nos. 10 and 11, Nos. 12 and 13, Nos. 16 and 17, Nos. 26 and 27, Nos. 32 and 33, the already mentioned Nos. 77-79, etc. We say "likely" pairs in accordance with our remarks in footnote (16): we can only be certain of Soler's intention when there is an indication like *Segue* at the end of the first sonata, as is the case with the e-minor–g-major pair in Kastner's: *P. Antonio Soler, 2 x 2 Sonatas for Keyboard Instruments*, Schott & Co., Mainz, 1956.

Example 2

Prestissimo

The musical score is divided into three main sections. The first section, marked *Prestissimo*, consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system has two staves (treble and bass clef) with a 2/4 time signature. The second system also has two staves, with the right hand playing chords and the left hand playing a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The third system continues with two staves, showing a more complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand. The second section, marked *Cantabile*, begins with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The right hand part features a melodic line with some grace notes and a fermata, while the left hand provides a simple accompaniment. The third system of this section shows a more intricate melodic line in the right hand with various ornaments and a fermata. The final section, marked *Allegro*, consists of two staves. The right hand part features a rhythmic pattern with some grace notes and a fermata, while the left hand provides a simple accompaniment.

Cantabile

Allegro

The image shows a page of musical notation for a piano sonata. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The tempo marking 'Cantabile' is written above the first and third systems. The marking 'ad libitum' is written above the fourth and fifth systems. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, notes, rests, and ornaments like trills. The overall style is characteristic of the late 18th or early 19th century.

The whole conception of this sonata is far removed from the Scarlattian method of composition which is quite prominent throughout the sonatas of the Paris collection, and reminds one rather of C.P.E. Bach's polyphathetic *Fantasie-Sonaten*. Here, then, is an additional reason why Nín's surmise, that the Guinard-sonatas belong to an earlier period than the sonatas in the Paris collection, is open to doubt: if we accept Rubio's view that Soler began to incorporate features of contemporary mid-European style in his later works,¹⁸ it is reasonable to suppose that the sonata No. 81 was written somewhere near the beginning of this new development in Soler's life and, therefore, later than the Paris sonatas. What makes Nín's theory completely untenable, however, is the fact that the Guinard-collection contains a pair of sonatas – Nos. 32 and 33 – which are both in ternary first-movement form

18. Newman, W.S., *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, North Carolina U.P., 1963, p. 281.

(cf. Chapter VIII) and point to a transitional period: all the sonatas in the Birchall print and the Paris collection are in binary form.

In a chronology based on stylistic features the chance of error is, as we see, greater than in a chronology based on established historical facts, and the reason for this lies in the prerequisite necessity to assume the existence of a plausible pattern of development, and to decide on the criteria of such a pattern. Such an assumption – made inevitable by this method of research – cannot account for a composer's momentary whim, and it is under such circumstances that a method of research crosses the line between competence and incompetence, as it did in Nín's case, who evidently saw a plausible pattern of development in technical largesse.

Particularly in the case of Soler, where the available biographical material does little to afford the researcher the facility to point to definite periods during which either personalities or publications exerted a fresh influence on the composer, the stylistic approach is of questionable value to chronology. While it is apparent that a sonata like No. 66, which W.S. Newman observed to resemble the Mannheim style very closely,¹⁹ does not belong to the same period as, say, the pair of Nos. 10 and 11, there can be no certainty in fixing its chronological place in relation to the Minuets in the sonata No. 97.

As a last resource, and in the hope of finding at least some little pointer towards a solution of this question of chronology, we have examined the compass of Soler's sonatas. Even this method of enquiry – which might have shown that during his later period Soler wrote for an instrument with increased compass – proved to be singularly devoid of chronological clues. Here are the extreme pitches of the sonatas as they are presented in the different collections:²⁰

Publication by R. Birchall:	F, - g'''
Mss. at Montserrat:	G, - a'''
Mss. at Biblioteca Central de Barcelona:	A, - f#''' (implying a keyboard with g''')

19. *Loc. cit.*

20. Helmholtz pitch notation is used. No reference to manuscripts at the Escorial is made, because they are all duplicated in the other collections. Reference to manuscripts in the Biblioteca Central de Barcelona is only made in those cases where sonatas with more than one movement are complete in this and no other Library.

Ms. belonging to M. P.

Guinard: F, - g^{'''}

Ms. at Biblioteca del

Orfeo Catalá: C - e^{'''}

Ms. of Paris:

D^b, - g^{'''} (the D^b, is a case of octave-tripling: it appears at the very last cadence point of sonata No. 88 and, in the same form, in bar 5 of that sonata.)

The extreme pitches used by Soler are, therefore, D^b, and a^{'''}. The D^b, in one of the Paris sonatas actually implies the existence of a C, on the particular instrument, which would be rather unusual for an 18th century keyboard, and this circumstance suggests the possibility that the D^b, is an arbitrary notation, although it follows the preceding pattern of motion as its logical conclusion.²¹

If the D^b, is disregarded, the lowest pitch of the Paris sonatas is F,, the highest g^{'''}, and from the above comparison it is clear that these pitches also represent the extreme notes used in both the Birchall publication and the Guinard collection. This again implies that a com-

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21. It is quite possible that the D^b, is an adaptation of the copyist: apparently, copyists not infrequently adjusted pitch to the particular instrument at their disposal, as Santiago Kastner found to his chagrin when taking at face-value the concluding B, of the e-minor sonata (2 x 2 *Sonatas*, see footnote (20)), which then turned out to be a copyist's adjustment (Kastner, M.S., private information, 2nd May, 1965). That the principle of the "short octave" was applied to the notation of the D^b, is unlikely, because in bars 52, 64, 65 and 70 of sonata No. 88 most of the keys between F, and C are accounted for. — The extreme compass used by Scarlatti is given as G, - g^{'''} (cf. Keller, H., *op. cit.*, p. 33). — The largest compass on a harpsichord built by the famous Flemish family of harpsichord-builders was introduced by Andreas Ruckers (1579-c.1654). This compass was C, - f^{'''}. Apparently only one instrument with this compass is still extant. The next largest compass of an Andreas Ruckers harpsichord is E, - f^{'''}, and that, too, is a singular case. Usually the bottom note was F, (cf. *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, fifth edition, London, 1954, vol. VII, pp. 316-323). It stands to reason that Ruckers' compass was enlarged by other instrument-builders during the next hundred years, particularly as regards the altissimo — as is evident from Soler's use of the a^{'''} — but all the harpsichords we have seen stop at bottom with F,. As regards the pianoforte, one built by Cristofori, in 1726, has C as its lowest note, one built in England by Zumpe and Buntebart, in 1770, has G, (cf. *Grove's Dictionary*, fifth edition, London, 1954, vol. VI, plate 50).

parison of pitch notation does not offer a solution to the question whether or not the Guinard collection is older than the Paris collection, and that it can neither solve the problem of the relationship in time between the Birchall publication and the Paris collection.

It also becomes evident that the comparison of pitch notation cannot furnish proof nor, indeed, even corroboration of Father Rubio's and Santiago Kastner's theory that the sonatas with more than one movement belong to a later period than those with a single movement: there is no sonata with either three or four movements in the manuscripts at Montserrat which goes below the pitch of G₂, while the one-movement sonatas generally employ the F₂. Far from disproving Rubio's and Kastner's theory, however, this circumstance merely shows the impracticability of a chronology based on pitch notation: in Soler's case stylistic development did not run parallel to an increased compass of the keyboard because, quite contrary to expectations, those sonatas, which in their musical texture show an adaptation of contemporary mid-European style, give evidence of *diminishing* compass; such is the case with sonatas Nos. 58, 59 and 66, whose stylistic properties have been discussed above: the respective compass of these sonatas is C-d''', E-d''', and C-e''', and so the question arises whether these works were not intended for an early pianoforte, the compass of which may initially have been smaller than that of the harpsichord.²²

Just how inadequate a comparison of pitch notation is for our purposes, becomes clear by considering cases in which it is evident from Soler's notation that he was hampered by the insufficient compass of a keyboard. An example is the sonata No. 48. In bars 40-46 Soler was forced to interrupt a downward octave-progression which, as is proved by its transposed parallel in bars 102-108, he would rather have continued. (See Example 3 (a) and (b).)

22 Nín, J., *op. cit.*, p. I, set the introduction of the pianoforte into Spain at 1760, but according to H. Keller (*op. cit.*, p. 35) this must have happened much earlier. Keller (*loc. cit.*) confirms smaller compass of pianoforte. See also footnote (21).

Example 3

(a)

[Allegro]

(b)

[Allegro]

That, however, still does not place this sonata as either an early or a late one; the source of the manuscript is the Monastery of Montserrat, and this sonata stands together with seven others from the same source, none of which exceed the compass C-e^{'''}. This *may* mean that the composer had the organ in mind rather than a stringed keyboard instrument, a distinction which even in Soler's time was not rigidly observed.²³ Also, one could again mention the possibility that these sonatas were written for the early *Hammerklavier*, if it was not for an inconsistent pedal-point in No. 44, bars 21-33, which defies this reasoning.²⁴

23. The title to a manuscript copy containing the sonata No. 63 begins as follows: "Seis obras para órgano ..." Aside from the *Intento*, the ornamentations in the first movement and the drum-basses of the second make this sonata a very unlikely piece for the organ, although it must be admitted that most pages of Soler's concertos for two organs show as little regard for idiomatic organ style as does this sonata. (Cf. Kastner, M.S., *P. Antonio Soler, Conciertos Para Dos Instrumentos de Tecla*, Instituto Español de Musicología, Barcelona, vols. I-VI, 1952-1962.) In fact, Santiago Kastner asserts (private information, May 2nd, 1965) that neither in Spain nor in Portugal has there ever existed an organ-style as differentiated from a harpsichord-style, and that music for the organ was as indiscriminately played on the harpsichord as was music for the harpsichord played on the organ.
24. See Example 16 in Chapter V of this treatise.

We must realise with regret that neither the enquiry into manuscript copies, opus numbers, stylistic idioms, nor the examination of the compass of Soler's keyboard sonatas can help us to retrieve the vital information which was lost with Soler's manuscript autographs, without which a chronological listing of this master's works can only be based on surmise. Santiago Kastner goes so far as to say that "Eine Chronologie zur Entstehung der Sonaten nur möglich [wäre], wenn man von den Kopien die Wasserzeichen des Papiers untersuchen würde, obwohl man niemals weiss, ob Restbestände von Papier oder ganz neues Papier den Kopisten zur Verfügung stand. Das wäre freilich eine sehr mühsame Arbeit und mit zweifelhaftem Erfolg",²⁵ and to this we must add that even then only the date of copy could be determined.

There is only one fact which remains beyond doubt in this question of chronology, namely that the style shift from Galant to Classic principles is clearly reflected in Soler's sonatas and that, therefore, a rough distinction between an earlier and a later style can be made. Just when this style shift was effected in the case of Soler, cannot be ascertained.

It has already been pointed out during the course of this chapter that Soler's multi-movement sonatas belong to the later group, because of their assimilation of the early Classic idiom. Since, as we have seen in our enquiry into pitch notation, the problems of style and chronology are closely connected with the question of the actual instrument employed, some of the criteria of Soler's later idiom as, for instance, melodic continuity, harmonic rhythm, tempo indications, use of drum-basses and Alberti-basses — are touched upon, in their proper context, in Chapter V.

25. Kastner, M.S., private information, May 2nd, 1965.

CHAPTER V

THE QUESTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The last few pages of the previous chapter prompt the question for what kind of keyboard instrument Soler actually wrote his sonatas. The title pages of the various manuscript copies rarely specify the instrument, and when they do, as in the case of the sonata No. 63 where the organ is indicated,¹ it is not very convincing.²

The title page of the Birchall print speaks of "...Sonatas para Clave..."³ which is not as clear an indication as would appear at first sight: in Rubio's multilingual Foreword to vol. 1 of his edition, the English translation of "para Clave" reads "for clavichord", while the French translation gives "pour Clavecin".⁴ As the clavichord and the clavecin are entirely different instruments, we have turned to Slabý-Grossmann⁵ for a reliable translation of the word *clave*, and what we found was "spinet". It would seem, therefore, that even to this day a vagueness is perpetuated which in earlier centuries, too, failed to distinguish clearly between clavichord, harpsichord, virginal, spinet,⁶ and — as in the case of Soler — even the organ.

As regards the title page of the Birchall print, however, it is safe to assume that not the clavichord but a plucked keyboard instrument is indicated, as the plucking mechanism is what the *clavecin* and the spinet

1. Rubio, S., *P. Antonio Soler, Sonatas para Instrumentos de Tecla*, Union Musical Espagnola, Madrid, 1957, "Sources of Our Edition" (unnumbered), vol. IV. The full title of the manuscript with the sonata No. 63 is *Seis obras para órgano, con un cantabile y allegro cada una compuestas por el Rvdo. P. Antonio Soler. Año 1777*.
2. Cf. footnote (22) in Chapter IV.
3. Mitjana, R., *Encyclopédie De La Musique et Dictionnaire Du Conservatoire, Première Partie, Histoire De La Musique, Espagne - Portugal*, (ed. A. Lavignac), Paris, 1920, p. 2183. There are some differences in spelling between the title as given by Mitjana and as given by Rubio. We have adopted Mitjana's spelling throughout this treatise.
4. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, vol. I, "Fuentes De Nuestra Edición". "Sources of Our Edition", "Sources De Notra Edition" (unnumbered).
5. Slabý, R.J., and Grossmann, R., *Wörterbuch der Spanischen und Deutschen Sprache*, Brandstätter Verlag, Wiesbaden, 4th edition, 1953, p. 150.
6. *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, fifth edition, London, 1954, vol. VIII, p. 7 gives a good description of the confusion in the terminology regarding keyboard instruments.

have in common.⁷ Besides, clavichords which would accommodate the compass required by the sonatas in the Birchall print (F,-g^{'''}) were rare and probably not built before the end of the 18th century.⁸

As the *clavecin* is for all practical purposes identical with the harpsichord, and the spinet differs from the harpsichord only inasmuch as the former is restricted to "... one set of jacks sounding strings at 8 ft pitch",⁹ it will be acceptable if we conclude that Soler wrote *these* sonatas for harpsichord.

Except Georgii, who does not commit himself and writes only of the *Klavier*,¹⁰ most scholars also seem to think of the harpsichord as Soler's principal instrument: G. Chase speaks of harpsichord sonatas,¹¹ W.S. Newman of the harpsichord lessons Soler gave to the Infante Don Gabriel,¹² R. Mitjana speaks of the *clavecin*,¹³ M.S. Kastner of the "... cravista e organista espanhol ..." Soler,¹⁴ J. Nín writes alternatively of the harpsichord, of "... Soler, ... the most brilliant, of Spanish clavicebaldists ...",¹⁵ and of the *clavecin*; he even reasons that Soler's adherence to Scarlattian form is caused by a previous lack of *clavecin*-tradition in Spain.¹⁶ Rubio, too, speaks of harpsichord sonatas,¹⁷ but on the title page of his edition he describes them as "para Instrumentos de Tecla".

Father Rubio's insistence on this neutral description of Soler's sonatas as being "for keyboard instruments" — that is for any instrument with keys, regardless of whether they activate a pneumatic mechanism, a tangent, a quill, or a hammer — appears to be somewhat overcautious in the light of the inconsistent reference in his Foreword

7. *Loc. cit.*

8. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 338. The sonatas in the Birchall print were all written prior to 1772.

9. *Ibid.*, vol. VIII, p. 7.

10. Georgii, W., *Klaviermusik*, Atlantis-Verlag AG, Zürich 1950, pp. 76-77.

11. Chase, G., *The Music of Spain*, Dover Publications, New York, 1959, p. 114.

12. Newman, W.S., *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, North Carolina U.P., 1963, p. 279.

13. Mitjana, R., *op. cit.*, p. 2183.

14. Kastner, M.S., *Carlos de Seixas*, Coimbra Editora, Coimbra, 1947, p. 60.

15. Nín, J., "The Bi-Centenary of Antonio Soler", *The Chesterian*, vol. XI, No. 84, London, 1930, p. 103.

16. Nín, J., *Classiques Espagnols du Piano, Seize Sonates Anciennes d'Auteurs Espagnols*, Max Eschig, Paris, 1925, p. III. However, see Chapter VIII of this treatise.

17. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, vol. I. Spanish original: para clave; French translation: pour clavecin.

to Soler's total of "... about a hundred and thirty 'Sonatas' for *harpsichord*."¹⁸ From two other points of view, however, this neutral description is well chosen because, firstly, it must be remembered that in the second half of the 18th century the harpsichord and the pianoforte existed alongside each other and that, as Hermann Keller put it, "... niemand auf eine feste Abgrenzung Wert legte"¹⁹ and, secondly, it would appear that the organ played a somewhat peculiar role in Soler's sonata-composition, as will be shown at the end of this chapter.

Our first problem, then, is to decide whether Soler's sonatas show evidence of a new idiom adapted to the possibilities of tone-production on the pianoforte, as contrasted to those on the harpsichord, or — upholding Keller's view — whether the composer did not make any such distinction in idiom.²⁰

One cannot be sure whether Soler knew of the *clavecin parfait*²¹ and whether he felt hampered by the normal harpsichord's limitations, but there can be no doubt that Soler knew the pianoforte. Invented in 1709 by the Italian Bartolomeo Cristofori,²² the pianoforte was introduced into Spain not later than the fifth decade of that century, perhaps even earlier. R. Kirkpatrick established that the Queen of Spain, Scarlatti's royal pupil, possessed seven harpsichords and five pianofortes,²³ and Hermann Keller mentioned the probability that at court Scarlatti had to accompany the great singer Carol Broschi on the pianoforte rather than on the harpsichord.²⁴

As this was the situation before the year 1759, when Carlo Broschi was exiled back to Italy,²⁵ Father Soler — having been Scarlatti's pupil — must have become acquainted with the pianoforte before he was thirty years old, and it is most unlikely that he did not use it, particu-

18. *Loc. cit.*, italics mine.

19. Keller, H., *Domenico Scarlatti*, Peters, Leipzig, 1957, p. 37; also: Newman, W.S., *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press (1959, c1958), p. 57.

20. Elsewhere, the pianoforte was first specified in 1732 (cf. Newman, W.S., work cited in footnote (19), p. 57).

21. Kastner, M.S., "Le clavecin parfait de Bartolomeo Jobernardi", *Anuario musical*, Instituto Español de Musicología, Barcelona, 1953. This instrument was built in 1639, had three 8' registers alongside each other and was capable of remarkable tone-grading (cf. Keller, H., work cited in footnote (19), p. 36).

22. *Grove's Dictionary*, *op. cit.*, vol. VI, pp. 724-725.

23. Kirkpatrick, R., *Domenico Scarlatti*, Princeton U.P., 1953, p. 361.

24. Keller, H., *op. cit.*, p. 36.

25. Chase, G., *op. cit.*, p. 107.

larly since (during the reign of Carlos III) a member of the royal family – Infante Don Gabriel – took lessons with him.²⁶

As there is no recorded statement about Father Soler's attitude towards the pianoforte, either second hand or in his extant letters to Father Martini,²⁷ we must again turn to the sonatas themselves for information.

The most obvious difference between sonatas for pianoforte and sonatas for harpsichord should be expected to be the employment of the second manual in the latter case. Curiously enough, none of Soler's sonatas present any serious difficulty when performed on a single manual,²⁸ i.e. there is no overlapping of parts or intertwining of voices which positively demand a second manual, nor do there seem to be any written indications that a second manual must be used. Example 4 shows an instance where one would logically use the second manual, but it is not imperative because, provided it is not completely bare of registers, even a single manual can offer some dynamic contrast. However, three bars after the alternating *f* and *p*, in the same sonata, we find the indication *dim.* – obviously authentic according to Rubio's Foreword – which may point to an instrument with hammer action, although in this particular case – the *dim.* marking the repeat of a two-bar phrase – a satisfying echo-effect is possible on the harpsichord.

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26. The full title to sonatas No. 58 and 59 reads *Sonatas del P. Fray Antonio Soler que hizo para la diversión del Serenísimo Señor Infante Don Gabriel, Obra 7.^a y 8.^a, Año 1786. Joseph Antonio Terrés, 1802.* (Cf. Rubio, S., *op. cit.*, "Fuentes De Nuestra Edición", vol. III.) Also: Newman, W.S., *op. cit.*, p. 279.
27. Kastner, M.S., "Algunas Cartas del P. Antonio Soler dirigidas al P. Giambattista Martini", Separata del vol. XII del *Anuario Musical* del Instituto Español de Musicología del C.S.I.C., Barcelona, 1957. – We should draw attention here to a document entitled "Instrumentos Musicos para el Infante Don Gabriel (Doce Documentos Ineditos De 1777 y 1784)" published by A. Rodriguez-Moñino, which we have received, too late for study, in the form of a photostatic copy and without any bibliographic details.
28. H. Keller remarks on the same circumstance in Scarlatti's sonatas: all but one can be performed on one manual; cf. *op. cit.* p. 36.