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Christian Gotthilf Tag
Four Sonatas transcribed for Guitar Duo

VOLUME 1

By

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Abstract

This study focuses on a guitar duo transcription of four keyboard sonatas composed by the north German Cantor, Christian Gotthilf Tag (1735-1811). While the works were never published and the original manuscripts are lost, the music survives in manuscript copies made by K.H.L. Pöhlitz, which have served as the source. After a brief discussion of the composer and his life, the author explores transcription techniques used in previous duo transcriptions. The study gives a detailed rationale for the editorial methodology used, with examples from the present transcriptions. A separate volume includes the sonata transcriptions laid out in parallel to the keyboard edition, and provides brief performance instructions, mostly regarding ornamentation. The four sonatas add up to a collective length (including repeats) of approximately 60 to 70 minutes of music.

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Introduction

Transcription has long been an invaluable tool for broadening the repertoire of the guitar. Whether it was the Rossini overtures or the more closely-related lute suites by Bach, transcription has offered guitarists the opportunity to stretch the somewhat limited repertoire of our relatively young instrument to include music from much earlier periods. Among the most famous transcriptions are the piano works of Albéniz transcribed for guitar by Tárrega. The legend goes that apparently upon hearing one of these transcriptions, Albéniz himself admitted that it worked even better on the guitar than his own piano original. Following the various transcriptions of Albéniz, Granados and Chopin as well as many others by Tárrega, many guitarists have successfully followed the path of transcribing works from the keyboard repertoire.

The classical guitar's rise in popularity began only in the second half of the 18th century, fostered primarily by composers like Carulli, Giuliani and Sor. It was not until the end of the century that they began composing for guitar duo and in the case of Sor, it was not until 1828 that his first duet was published. Thus it is not surprising that there are not many 18th century compositions available for guitar duo today, especially when compared to the repertoire for solo guitar. Over the years a number of transcriptions for guitar duo of keyboard works, mainly by Scarlatti, Haydn and Soler, as well as some other scattered works by a variety of composers,

have helped to reduce this shortage of repertoire. However much remains to be still explored.

It is therefore the intention of the author to contribute further to the repertoire of 18th century guitar duo, through transcribing four keyboard sonatas by Christian Gotthilf Tag. In addition the author hopes to raise awareness of this composer, who until now has been an unknown figure to guitarists.

Transcription

Transcription has often been considered to be synonymous with arrangement. However, there seems to be a number of different interpretations of the two terms amongst some authors. While the Ellingson describes transcription as the “copying of a musical work, usually with some change in notation (e.g. from tablature to staff notation to Tonic Sol-fa)”¹, Malcolm Boyd, who provides a definition of arrangement, recognizes that the two terms may be interchangeable and that definitions are not universally accepted². In his book *Instrumental Arranging*, Gary White distinguishes the two by saying that “transcription involves rescoring a work with the intention of preserving, as nearly as possible, the original musical affect”,

¹ Ter Ellingson: 'Transcription', *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 20 December 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

² Malcolm Boyd: 'Arrangement', *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 20 December 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

while the arrangement “involves the composition of certain elements like introductions[and] planning the overall form of the piece”.³

A common understanding of transcription within the context of western classical music is that it is an adaptation of a work from one medium to another. In an article of 1976, guitarist Carlos Barbosa-Lima explains the Latin origins of the word – “*trans* – to move from one place to another, and *scribere* – to write down a thought or an idea”. Furthermore he states that: “Obviously any music transcription requires an arrangement.”⁴ Although the distinction is not made quite clear here, this last statement seems to imply that transcription refers to the overall process and its consequential outcome, while arrangement is a means to a transcription. It is the present author’s interpretation, and henceforth the definition used for the purposes of this research, that transcription is the act of changing the medium of the music, and arrangement (or perhaps better understood in its verbal form – arranging) is modifying that music to work best within its new medium.

Christian Gotthilf Tag

Christian Gotthilf Tag was born on 2nd April 1735 in Beierfeld, a village north of the Saxon-Bohemian border, where his father held the post of *Kantor*. After receiving

³ Gary White, *Instrumental Arranging*, Boston, Mass: McGraw-Hill, 1992. p.193.

⁴ Carlos Barbosa-Lima, ‘Guitar: The Art of Transcription’. *Music Journal*, Vol. 34, no. 5, May 1976, p.32.

his early music education from his father, he studied at the Dresden Kreuzschule with Gottfried Augustus Homilius, between the years 1749 and 1755. During his studies in Dresden he befriended Johann Adam Hiller and Johann Gottlieb Naumann who were both to become successful composers.

In 1755 Tag moved to Hohenstein where he was appointed Kantor of St. Christophori protestant church, a post which he held until his retirement in 1808. During his time in Hohenstein Tag also kept himself busy working as a school teacher, as director of a concert society which he had founded, as an organ building expert, and also as a private music tutor. Some of his more notable students were G. F. Ebhardt, K. H. L. Pölitz, as well as C. G. Neefe, who was later to become Beethoven's teacher.⁵

Apart from a number of visits to Dresden, where his friends Homilius, Hiller and Naumann lived and worked, as well as some travels around Western and middle Saxony due to his expertise as an organ specialist, Tag did not travel much. After retiring he moved to the small village of Niederzwönitz, where he lived with his daughter's family until his death on 19th July 1811.

His main compositional output comprised a variety of sacred vocal works, in particular the 115 sacred cantatas for which he is mostly remembered today. Other

⁵ L. Hoffmann-Erbrecht: 'Neefe, Christian Gottlob', *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 26 February 2008), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

vocal works included secular cantatas, masses, choral arias, motets and hymns as well as a number of Lieder collections.⁶

The most notable of his keyboard works are the impressive *Siebenzig Veränderungen über ein Andantino fürs Clavier* (1784), the so far unpublished *VI Divertimenti für Klavier und ein Choral* (copied by Pölitz c.1786-87) and the present *7 Sonaten fürs Klavier*. Additionally Tag wrote many didactic pieces for the keyboard, for example the *Sechs kurtze und leichte Parthien für kleine Anfaenger im Fortepiano oder Clavier* (1804), a set of short and easy etudes through all major and minor keys as well as several other smaller pieces published in various anthologies, such as the *Sammlung kleiner Clavier- und Singstücke zum Besten der Friedrichstädtischen und Werdauischen Armenschulen* (1774). Tag also wrote numerous works for the organ, such as the *Zwölf kurze und leichte Orgelvorspiele nebst einer Orgelsinfonia* (1794) or the *Sechs Choralvorspiele nebst einem Trio und Allabreve für die Orgel* (1783).

Form and style

The influence of the north German 18th-century movement of *empfindsamer Stil* - with Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach as its best known representative - is clearly evident in Tag's keyboard sonatas. The sudden changes of mood, unusual and dramatic

⁶ D. Härtwig, *Tag, Christian Gotthilf*. Grove Music Online ed. L. Macy (Accessed 01 October 2006) <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

harmonic progressions, “sigh” figures and unprepared pauses⁷, give these sonatas a flair that is reminiscent of some of C.P.E. Bach’s own keyboard works.

A source of particular interest when considering 18th-century keyboard music is Bach’s *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments), which was, and still is, a significant treatise, especially in the context of the north German tradition. However, it was influential beyond the boundaries of Germany too, and was endorsed by composers such as Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven,⁸ amongst others. While we know that Tag had made copies of C.P.E. Bach’s cantatas and oratorios⁹, no other historical link has been made between the two composers. Yet considering their close proximity within Germany, it is likely that Tag was familiar with Bach’s ‘Essay’ as well as his other works.

All seven sonatas are written in three movements, characteristic of the north German sonata, as opposed to south Germany, where the minuet or rondo were also used.¹⁰ The movements are mostly written in binary form with a reprise at the end of each section. While these sonatas do not adhere to the textbook definition of either simple, symmetrical or rounded binary form, they manifest elements of all of these forms. The second half of each movement is longer, in some movements as much as

⁷ R. L. Marshall (ed.), *Eighteenth Century Keyboard Music*, 2nd edition, New York: Routledge, 2003, pp.193-195.

⁸ C. P. E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. W.J. Mitchell, London: Eulenburg Books, 1974, p. 2.

⁹ Personal correspondence with Tag specialist Tilo Kittel, 09 Dec 2007.

¹⁰ H. G. Ottenberg, *C. P. E. Bach*, trans. P.J. Whitmore, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p.40.

three times the length of the first section. Most movements feature at least a partial recapitulation of the theme, however apart from some brief allusions, it is not recapitulated in the tonic key. The sonatas are generally in two-part homophonic writing with the right hand predominantly carrying the melody.

While it is theoretically possible to transcribe these sonatas for guitar solo, the often busy and expressive melodies interspersed with rich ornamentation, make this music more suitable for guitar duo. The transcription for guitar duo also allows for a more faithful reproduction of the music, and overall creates a more dynamic performance.

Sources of the sonatas

The main sources of the sonatas are manuscript copies made by Karl Heinrich Ludwig Pölitz - *7 Sonaten für Klavier von Ch. G. Tag, Besitzer Pölitz 1789* (7 Sonatas for Keyboard by Ch. G. Tag, owner Pölitz 1789). These hand-written copies are held at the Musikbibliothek of the Leipzig Stadtbibliothek, in the private collection of K.H.L. Pölitz, signature D-LEm/ Poel.mus.Ms 328. To date, the original Tag manuscripts have not been found.

In the *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler* (New historical-biographical encyclopedia of composers) published in 1814 - only three years after Tag's death - the editor mentions ten sonatas. This is also confirmed in the doctoral

thesis of Heinz Joachim Vieweg, *Christian Gotthilf Tag als Meister der nachbachischen Kantate* (C.G. Tag as a master of the post-Bach cantata) published in 1933, which mentions three “grosse Sonaten” (large sonatas) in addition to the seven sonatas copied by Pölitz. Recently, an additional sonata in F major was found by musicologist Axel Röhrborn, in the anthology *Musicalisches Magazin* (Breitkopf, Leipzig, 1765).¹¹ Assuming that the above records are correct, this would bring the total number of sonatas by Tag to eleven.

Although mostly known as a political scientist, Pölitz made an enormous contribution to the preservation of musical works by making copies of music by various composers. In his younger years Pölitz lived near Hohenstein, where he took musical lessons with Tag. Their acquaintance lasted throughout most of Tag’s life, as Pölitz had recorded attending the 50th anniversary of Tag’s employment as Kantor of Hohenstein in 1805.

The indication ‘für Klavier’ in the present collection of seven sonatas is slightly problematic in terms of identifying the instrument they were written for. The expansive ornamentation throughout all the sonatas would normally suggest the preferred instrument to be either the harpsichord or clavichord. On the other hand the dynamics in these sonatas are equally plentiful, in which case the fortepiano would seem the logical choice. While the clavichord is also capable of producing dynamics, there does not seem to be any other evidence within these sonatas which would point to either of the above instruments. It is probable that ‘Klavier’ refers to

¹¹ Tilo Kittel, 09 Dec 2007.

a generic keyboard instrument, in which case all of the above instruments could be used, as it is the case with the *VI Divertimenti* (also copied by Pölitz) in which Tag specifies the use of a ‘Fortepiano’ or ‘Klavier’.

The file of an incomplete keyboard edition begun in Finale, edited by Tilo Kittel (in the archives of Artaria Editions, Wellington) was used as a starting point for these transcriptions. Kittel’s edition was checked against the manuscript D-LEm/Poel.mus.Ms 328 discussed above, and where appropriate, corrections were introduced by the present author. This included the addition of all dynamics, articulations and ornamentations, precisely as they appear in the manuscript.

Guitar Transcription

Literature

Considering that transcriptions comprise such a prominent part of the guitar's repertoire, one would expect that a thorough methodology of guitar transcription exists by now. While over the years a number of articles, written mostly by guitarists, have explored the topic of transcription, the result is not detailed or concise enough to be considered totally sufficient. Some basic arranging skills may be learned through orchestration texts, although with the exception of that Berlioz, these generally do not pursue the topic of the guitar beyond a basic description. As a guitarist himself, Berlioz provided brief instructions on the technical aspects of writing for the guitar, especially its use as an accompanying instrument.¹² Worthy of mention is the series of articles entitled the *Transcriber's Art* by Richard Yates, which makes a considerable contribution to the body of knowledge on the topic of transcription.¹³ A source of particular interest is a thesis by Ronald W. DuBois Jr., who evidently recognized the need for an instructional text.¹⁴ The focus of his thesis is the analysis of a Haydn concerto transcribed for guitar, but it also provides general

¹² Hector Berlioz, *Treatise on Instrumentation*, trans. Theodore Front, New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, 1948, pp.145-153.

¹³ Richard Yates, 'Transcriber's art', *Soundboard - Guitar Foundation of America*.

¹⁴ Ronald W. DuBois Jr, *Theoretical Considerations in the Transcription for Guitar of Haydn's Concerto in C Major for Cello and Orchestra, Hob. VIIb: 1. Master of Music in Theory*, Duquesne University, 1990, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms Inc., 1990, order no. 1340220.

guidelines for guitar transcription, and employs these principles in the author's own transcription of a small Scherzo by Haydn for solo guitar.

General considerations

Based on the above sources as well as the present author's own thoughts, the following are a set of considerations, which relate to the present transcriptions.

Choosing a key is one of the first decisions which has to be made when preparing a transcription and therefore the choice should be a well thought-out one, as it will directly influence the practicality of the transcription.¹⁵ When transcribing for guitar the choice of key should be mostly dictated by the roots of the tonic, dominant and sub-dominant, which should ideally all be played as open strings. This allows for more legato passages and more often than not, makes the music less demanding for the guitarist.¹⁶ However, since the bass notes of standard six-string guitars are composed only of E, A and D, it is usually not possible to have all three roots as open strings, and it may be necessary to settle for only one or two. While it is possible to re-tune the 6th and 5th string (*scordatura*), usually down, giving us further bass notes C, D or G, the spectrum of practical keys is still rather limited in comparison to the keyboard.

¹⁵ Ronald W. DuBois Jr, *Theoretical Considerations* pp.63-63.

¹⁶ Robert Davoli, 'Transcription Process - Piano to Guitar', *Classical Guitar*, Vol 4, no. 8, 1986, p.43.

It should always be remembered that the guitar is a transposing instrument, sounding one octave lower than it is written. Therefore when the typical keyboard score is the point of departure, a large portion of the treble register will be either out of reach, or impractical for the guitar, despite not appearing to be so at first glance. Naturally this works in favour of the guitar when one transcribes the left hand part of the keyboard which – providing it is originally written in the bass clef – typically is mostly within the guitar's register. Because this is a keyboard to guitar transcription, the only types of transposition, apart from transposition of the whole work into another key, are octave transpositions. In most cases, transposing a whole phrase or passage is more appropriate than breaking it up, as it does not disrupt the musical line.¹⁷ However, as this is not always possible, a transposition mid-way through a phrase may be necessary at times. In these situations, care must be taken to avoid poor voice-leading or inconsistencies in the motivic material. Where appropriate, the last and first notes can overlap at the point of transposition in order to maintain good voice-leading.¹⁸ These octave transpositions are useful not only in cases of too-close spacing or voice overlapping, but also in contrasts of texture.

When considering the spacing of the two guitar parts one is immediately confronted with the issue of register. Compared to the seven octave range of most keyboard instruments, the three-and-a-half octave range of the guitar poses some issues when transcribing from the former. This compression of register causes the parts to come

¹⁷ J. O'Connor, D. Huxtable & G. Klippel, 'Transcribing for Guitar Ensemble', *Classical Guitar*, Vol. 6, no. 3, November 1987, p. 36.

¹⁸ J. O'Connor, D. Huxtable & G. Klippel, 'Transcribing for Guitar Ensemble', p.36.

much closer to each other and sometimes even overlap. The usual recommendations for solo guitar transcriptions are to keep the melody line no lower than the 3rd string G, and not exceeding the high G on the 1st string.¹⁹ While transcriptions for two guitars allow for a slightly more versatile approach, this recommendation should not be completely discarded but instead used as a rough guideline.

Within the context of 18th century keyboard music, the overlapping of parts is a rare occurrence, as it would imply the crossing of hands. In addition to the purely technical issues, the crossing of parts on a keyboard may also cause some confusion due to the comparatively uniform tone of the instrument. In this, the guitar has an advantage over the keyboard, with its ability to bring out the melody line by means of a simple change of tone colour. This can be achieved either by shifting the right hand to play *sul ponticello* or *sul tasto*, or through careful left hand fingering of the melody. The 4th and 5th strings are especially effective in bringing out melodies due to their ‘crisp’ character. All things considered, the overlapping of voices may at times be used to good effect, but care must be taken not to accidentally alter the harmonic progression.

Sometimes the original score may not be easily adaptable for the guitar and it is necessary to omit certain notes or arrange a particular passage. These instances could occasionally prove tricky to solve and one should follow the general rules of harmony as the basis for the majority of decisions. One of the frequently recurring

¹⁹ Dale Miller, ‘Wood Chops: Arranging Piano Music for Guitar’, *Acoustic Guitar*, Vol. 7, no. 5, 1996, p. 98.

cases is that there are too many notes in a chord, in which case omitting the 5th, the octave, or even the tonic of a chord is preferable to the omission of the 3rd or the 7th.²⁰

Another important consideration in the transcription of keyboard music regards ornamentation. As keyboard ornamentation is far more developed than that of the guitar, it may sometimes prove to be difficult to transcribe. For example, it would not be unreasonable to write a trill for the keyboard at a relatively fast tempo and it is quite possible to play it clearly. On the guitar however, trills can be rather hard to play well (depending on where they are fingered) and paired with a fast tempo, could turn out somewhat unattractive. In addition, due to the rapid decay of the sound it may also be rather difficult to maintain a clear trill over longer notes.

The sustain and clarity of sound on the guitar are largely dependent on the left hand. Once the first note of the ornament is plucked, it is then left up to the left hand fingers to 'fight' against the fast decay of the sound. While this is quite manageable on the first string E, the same clarity is more challenging to achieve on the remaining five strings due to the likelihood of obstructing other strings in the process. An alternative option for the guitarist is to perform a cross-string ornament. Although this is not a traditional guitar technique, this type of ornament is perhaps the most brilliant and rewarding technique of ornamentation on the guitar, especially when used for trills. The use of this relatively modern trill may be considered

²⁰ J. O'Connor, D. Huxtable & G. Klippel, 'Transcribing for Guitar Ensemble', p.37.

inappropriate in the context of these 18th century sonatas, however as these are keyboard transcriptions, the use of a cross-string trill which is so very imitative of the keyboard trill, can be justified.

One last consideration regards fingering. In addition to the purely technical aspects, it is also important to think about how fingering may affect tone. A common example of this involves fingering a melody or a motive on one string to ensure a consistent tone. Since the right hand fingering is typically left up to the performer, this applies only to the left hand fingering. However, there are instances where special right-hand techniques like *rasgueados* or tremolos are implicated, where the notation of right hand fingering is appropriate. As mentioned beforehand, changes of tone may be used to bring out a melody over its accompaniment, but it may also help to articulate a contrasting phrase or just simply alter the character of the music.

Except for the right hand changes of tone (*sul tasto/ sul ponticello*) which are usually left to the discretion of performers, all other changes can be notated with fingering. Conversely, fingering directly affects tone and therefore should be also considered in regards to the effect it has on the music. In the words of Carlos Barbosa-Lima, “[t]he fingering should establish the complete expression of the work and will greatly influence interpretation”²¹

²¹ Carlos Barbosa-Lima, 1976.

Examination of selected existing transcriptions

Most writings on guitar transcription focus on solo guitar, and while many of the principles may be applicable to the medium of guitar duo, others are not. It is therefore beneficial for the purposes of this study, to explore existing transcriptions of keyboard music for guitar duo. Considering the period of musical history in which Tag composed, it is most appropriate to examine the transcriptions of keyboard music which were written by his contemporaries; Haydn, Scarlatti and Soler. While possibly not stylistically appropriate, the study of later compositions, in this case by Albeniz and Granados, is also beneficial. These transcriptions make use of idiomatic guitar techniques, such as rasgueados and artificial harmonics, which could be of assistance to the transcriber.

List of guitar transcriptions

	Composer	Transcriber	Original/Transposed Key	
<i>Sonata</i> K.472 L.99	D. Scarlatti	J. Duarte	Bb	/ A
K.512 L.339			D	/ none
<i>Sonata</i> M.34 R. 92/4	A. Soler	R.Long	D	/ none
<i>Sonata in A</i> Hoboken XIV no. 12	J. Haydn	J. Harris	A	/ none
<i>Oriental</i> from <i>12 Danzas Españolas</i>	E. Granados	H.G. Fey	Cm	/ none
<i>Granada</i> from <i>Suite Española</i>	I. Albeniz	L. Oltman	F	/ none
		M. Newman		

In the above examples, only one of the Scarlatti sonatas has veered from the original key. Its original key of Bb severely limits the use of the guitar's open strings, which would make the task fairly complex for the transcriber and player alike. The transposition of the work down to A offers the use of the 6th string as the dominant and the 5th string as the tonic in the bass, as well as the 4th string as the sub-dominant. In addition, the 1st and 2nd strings become readily available as open strings. For much the same reasons, the keys of C minor and F major in the Granados and the Albeniz transcriptions are not ideal. A transposition to A minor in the case of the Granados would undoubtedly have been much more accessible and would have made the recurring high thirds easier for the player. (Ex.1)

Example 1 - Oriental, Guitar 1, bars 1-10. ²²

The musical score for 'Oriental' by Enrique Granados, Guitar 1, bars 1-10, is presented in two staves. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The first staff contains measures 1 through 5, featuring a series of chords with fingerings such as 2 3, 1 3, 1 3, and -3. The second staff contains measures 6 through 10, starting with a trill in measure 6, followed by more chords and fingerings (1 2, -1 3, -1 2, 4, 2). The word 'dolce' is written below the first staff, and the piece concludes with a sustained chord in measure 10.

While the Albeniz transcription is not too technically challenging, perhaps it too could have been easier to play if transposed to E or G major. In relation to keys, it is worth noting the tuning of Guitar 2 (D,A,D,G,B,E) in the Scarlatti sonata in D. The

²² Enrique Granados, *6 spanische Tänze*, Edition for two guitars by H. Fey, West Berlin: Edition Margaux, 1988. The present source is published in separate performance parts for two guitars, and therefore any examples drawn from this source, required modifications of layout to ensure clarity.

tuning of the 6th string down to D enables the use of this open string as the tonic, and also extends the range of the guitar by a tone. The same change of tuning appears in Guitar 1 in the Albeniz transcription. However the lowest note in this part is an F, making the modified tuning redundant in this particular movement of the suite.

In terms of transposition, the Scarlatti and Soler sonatas both take a similar approach. Guitar 1 retains the original contour of the right hand, which leaves any necessary transpositions to occur in the left hand (Guitar 2). While these transpositions change the contour of the bass line, they mostly do so in a manner which is not disruptive to the overall affect of the music. The Andante of the Haydn transcription utilizes the frequently-used orchestration device of dividing melodic lines by doubling up on notes at the points of division. An example of this can be seen in bar 5, where a lower A is added in the Guitar 2, to ensure a smooth change of register. (Ex.2) While the technique here is not used as a means of passing a continuous melody from one instrument to another, the principles and results are the same; a smooth transition and logical motives for the performer.²³

²³ Gary White, *Instrumental Arranging*, Boston, Mass: McGraw-Hill, 1992, p. 201.

Example 2 - Sonata in A, Guitars 1 and 2, bars 3-6. ²⁴

Apart from a few transpositions of larger sections of the work, the transcription of Albeniz's *Granada* is very straightforward. The register changes apply to whole sections of the composition rather than occurring in the middle of phrases. This sometimes results in the overlapping of voices, and while at times an overlap was also written by the composer, the transcription often exaggerates this, due to necessity. A prime example of such a case is clearly evident in bars 53-66. (Ex.3)

However, it is interesting to note that in this instance the homophonic texture of this composition allows for the large overlaps of the bass part, without it overshadowing the melody. The melody here may be further projected by fingering this passage on the fourth and fifth strings.

²⁴ J. Haydn, *Haydn for Two Guitars*, Transcribed and Edited by J. Harris, London: Ricordi & Co. Ltd, 1982.

Example 3 - Granada

Keyboard, bars 55-60.²⁵



Guitar 1 and 2, bars 53-60.²⁶



Perhaps the most interesting and intricate approach to transposition manifests itself in Granados's *Oriental*. A clear example of this may be observed in bar 12, where Guitar 2 is playing the bass part which moves down in a scale-like passage. (Ex.4) However, instead of transposing the part up an octave when the guitar runs out of range, the transposition is cleverly done beforehand, thus creating a repetition with the following bar. This cunning transposition completely masks the otherwise blunt change of register and makes the transposition sound intentional. A similar effect is also achieved in B.40-42.

²⁵ I. Albeniz, *Suite espagnole: für Klavier*,. Edited by P. Roggenkamp, Vienna: Universal Edition, 1991.

²⁶ Isaac Albéniz, *Cantos de España*, arrangements by L. Oltman and M. Newman, Mel Bay Publications, Inc., 1999.

Example 4 - Oriental

Keyboard, , bar 11-20²⁷

Keyboard, , bar 11-20²⁷

Guitar 1 and 2, bar 11-20.²⁸

Guitar 1 and 2, bar 11-20.²⁸

²⁷ E. Granados, *Granados Masterpieces: Danzas Españolas*, Edited by L. Sucra, Edward B. Marks Music Company, 1941.

²⁸ E. Granados, *6 spanische Tünze*, 1988.

However the most notable characteristic which sets the Granados transcription apart from the others is its different approach to part allocation. Unlike all of the other transcriptions mentioned above, the voices in *Oriental* are exchanged between the two guitars. Because it is seldom that two guitars or guitarists are able to produce exactly the same tone, such exchanges of voices offer the possibility for an effective natural contrast of sound. Such an exchange of voices may be observed in the above example. (Ex.4)

A number of further techniques which have been employed in the transcriptions discussed are also worthy of mention. The use of harmonics is one of the more idiomatic techniques of the guitar (especially when compared with the piano), and they are attractively used in the Soler sonata. (Ex.5) Here they provide a nice contrast in Guitar 1 and an appropriately light feel, giving the part an almost staccato feel on the upbeat.

Example 5 - Sonata M.34 R. 92/4

Keyboard, bars 37-46. ²⁹



²⁹ A. Soler, *Sonatas para instrumentos de tecla*, Edited by S. Rubio, Madrid: Unión Musical Española, 1972.

register. It also means that the transposed melody becomes intertwined in the accompaniment (played here by Guitar 1), with the voices overlapping. However, the explanation lies in the piano part where at bar 61 it is marked to be played ‘Una Corda’, or on one string. This meaning that on the grand piano the player would use his left pedal which shifts the hammers to the right, resulting in the hitting of only two strings of the treble instead of three (and only one of the two basses). This obviously makes the dynamic a much softer one, but also changes the timbre of the sound, making it softer and less brilliant. Therefore the melody in the second guitar is rightly moved to the lower register, creating a comparable effect.

Example 6 – Oriental

Keyboard, bars 58-63.³¹



³¹ E. Granados, *Granados Masterpieces: Danzas Españolas*, 1941.

Ex.6 Cont.

Guitars 1 and 2, bars 58-62.³²

58 *a tempo*
rit. un poco
p

58 I II III
rit. un poco
p
a tempo
dim.

61 III
p p p

61
a tempo

When considering ornamentation it would be best to compare the present transcriptions with the original composer's edition. However within the scope of this study we have assumed that the transcribers of the presently discussed transcriptions were working from a reliable source. This is of course also true for the keyboard editions amongst which there are often many variations. Of the six transcriptions discussed, only the Haydn transcription includes Critical Notes, which include all changes and omissions made by the editor, including ornaments. In this particular case, a number of ornaments have been left out due to the target skill level of the

³² E. Granados, *6 spanische Tänze*, 1988.

player being from 1-2 years of experience. The Scarlatti and Soler transcriptions often omit embellishments, and in the case of the latter, sometimes they are changed. These alterations seem to be mostly guided by technical difficulty of performance. Both the Granados and Albeniz transcriptions precisely follow the ornamentations of the keyboard editions.

Another aspect of ornamentation that should be considered is its notation. Apart from the Scarlatti, all of the transcriptions follow the standard signs for ornamentation:

tr /  and 

The selected transcriptions of Scarlatti have the ornament written out in small notes.(Ex.7) This seems to be a very clear way of indicating what is required, but it also imposes a set number of notes to be played in each ornament. While this is counter to the Baroque spirit of free ornamentation³³, the changing attitudes to performance practice, clearly evident in Bach's frustration with "tasteless performers"³⁴, perhaps make this practice justifiable. However this format should also be considered in terms of appearance, as it could cause clutters, should the music become busy and ornaments occur frequently.

Example 7 – Sonata K.472 L.99.

³³ Robert Donington, *Baroque Music: Style and Performance*, London: Faber Music Ltd., 1982, pp.91-96.

³⁴ C.P.E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, 1974, p.97.

Guitars 1 and 2, bars 75-79.³⁵



Editorial Methodology

Choice of key

³⁵ D. Scarlatti, *Two Sonatas: Two Guitars*, Edited by J. Duarte, England: Universal Edition (Australia) Pty. Ltd., 1977.

Apart from Sonata 4, all of the present transcriptions of Tag sonatas were transposed to keys more accessible for the guitar. Sonata 4 was originally written in G major, which is a rather practical and common key on the guitar, with the 3rd string as the tonic. Additionally the 6th string was tuned down to give an additional dominant, D, as the lowest bass note. The key of C major, the original key of Sonata 1, is a common one for the guitar and does not pose too many problems. However, this key does not offer any open string bass notes which would have been particularly useful. As with Sonata 4, it would have been possible to tune the 6th string down, in this case to gain the tonic C in the bass. Unfortunately the change would have impeded some parts of the sonata instead of making them easier. For this reason Sonata 1 was transposed up to D major, with the 6th string tuned down to D. This tuning offers two open strings as the tonic, the 5th string as the dominant and the 3rd string as the sub-dominant. As a result of this key transposition the middle movement was changed from the key of C minor – of which the draw-backs are substantial, with the Bb and Eb further diminishing the availability of open strings – to the more accessible D minor.

For the reasons discussed above, Sonata 3 in C minor has been transposed to E minor, which offers the tonic and sub-dominant as open bass strings and also the dominant as an open treble string. This transposition also brings a few more of the bass notes into the available register, while at the same time the highest note does not exceed a high G on the 15th fret of the first string. Sonata 7 was also transposed,

from Bb major to A major. This is arguably the most accessible key for the guitar, with all three open bass strings as the tonic, dominant and sub-dominant. As this sonata was only transposed down one semi-tone, the change did not have any detrimental effects relating to the register. However, the last movement required the sixth string to be tuned down to D, for the benefit of the D# in bars 17 and 97.

While a number of other keys were perhaps also worthy candidates, the variety of keys within these four transcriptions was a consideration which guided the choices here as well. The resulting selections present a contrasting collection of keys which are practical for the guitar and consequently the transcriber.

Octave transpositions

Since octave transpositions are used regularly throughout these transcriptions, the transcriber has used these without further comments. However there are a number of specific issues regarding transposition which call for some commentary. In the Allegro Assai of Sonata 7, bar 17 has been moved up an octave due to the low B falling out of range of the guitar. While initially it seems that the transposition caused poor voice leading by breaking the movement from C to B, the situation is rectified with the appearance of the B a semiquaver later. At such a fast tempo the momentary disruption is hardly perceivable, but it allows the preservation of the original motif with its rhythmic accentuation. Despite the notes being within the

guitar's range in bar 77, this bar has been arranged in the same way, to keep consistency with bar 17.

Every effort was made to keep the transpositions consistent, in order to ensure the reappearance of familiar ideas, and to form logical and symmetrical phrases as intended by the composer. Two examples of this, in close proximity to each other may be found in the Allegro Assai of Sonata 1, bars 58 and 60. In the first of these bars the A is transposed down to avoid an overlap with the melody and two bars later the same idea was imitated by transposing the D down an octave, despite the lack of overlap. In this example it would have been possible to transpose the melody up to avoid the overlap, however the close spacing and the low register of the melody provide a nice contrast. This is a new and so far not heard musical idea within the context of this movement, and the change in timbre is welcome here.

One other transposition which might initially seem unnecessary has been made in the last four bars of both sections of the Presto Assai in Sonata 4. When these bars were played on the guitar at their original pitch (relative to the preceding bars), the ending sounded very understated, despite the *forte* dynamic. This register of the guitar is not a particularly loud or strong one, and as a result the passage sounded weak, even when juxtaposed with the *piano* passage beforehand. The octave transposition (original pitch of the keyboard part) ensures a solid and conclusive ending.

Spacing and register

While generally the transcribed guitar parts have often required transposition to prevent overlapping, or to ensure clear spacing, at times the overlapping of voices was intentionally introduced for variation. A perfect scenario for doing this presented itself in bars 38-40, in the Largo Mesto movement of Sonata 4. Here Guitar 1 is playing repetitive thirds, while Guitar 2 carries the melody. Due to the simplistic nature of Guitar 1, the melody line here is clearly separated from the accompaniment, despite beginning and ending at a lower pitch. While these particular bars illustrate a perfect opportunity to introduce an overlap of voices, in reality this overlap begins as far back as bar 33. Even though it is possible to transpose the melody up, it is kept in the low register which, as with the example discussed above, creates a contrast of timbre. The melody part is still quite clear, although some differentiation of dynamics and tone by the performers will help to broaden this distinction even further. Overlapping can also be used effectively in busier textures like that of bars 58-61 in the Allegro movement of Sonata 3. As in the previous example, the overlap works well here and does not obstruct the harmonic progression.

In cases where the compression of register caused very close spacing of parts, it often created undesirable clusters and harmonies which obscured the melody or the harmonic progression of the music. This is a problem which often may not be solved

through tone change, in which case octave transpositions of the parts proved to be a more effective solution.

Note omissions

These four sonatas by Tag are all written mostly for two or three voices, and therefore the omission of notes is seldom necessary when transcribing for a guitar duo. However some of the larger chords, used predominantly for dramatic effect, needed to be thinned out to some extent. Such dramatic devices are found throughout all of the sonatas but are perhaps best evident in the *Largo Mesto* movement of Sonata 4 bars 27-28 and preceding that in bars 7-8. Unfortunately, here the narrower register of the guitar does not allow for such large intervals in each part, and as a result a number of omissions were necessary. While the arrangement here downplays the drama somewhat, it makes both of the parts more practical and ensures the clarity of the melody line. The dramatic effect may still be emphasised through appropriate fingering and a change of tone colour. One other omission worthy of mention, which was only necessary in this instance, was in the *Andantino* movement of Sonata 3 bars 65-67. Here the rapid thirds in Guitar 2 were too fast to be executed convincingly. As a result the lower thirds were omitted, except for the first crotchet of every bar, which was kept in thirds to retain the progression beginning in bar 60 and ending in bar 69.

Arrangements

While the present sonatas by and large lend themselves well to a transcription for guitar duo, from time to time particular issues of arrangement arose. Generally attempting to find a solution which is idiomatic to the guitar proved to be both helpful and interesting – “giving the impression that the piece could have been written for the guitar.”³⁶ The following examples demonstrate a few such instances.

A frequently recurring rhythmic motif throughout all four sonatas is the entry of a voice on the off-beat 16th note and sometimes the 32nd note. The former is not usually a problem, except when it appears in the manner seen in the first movement of Sonata 1, bars 75-78. For a keyboard player this passage would not be a problem as they are in control of both the voices, however when split between two players, the passage can be quite tricky to synchronise at the given tempo. To solve this potential problem, the passage has been divided into separate imitative motifs played in turn by each player. Despite this musical idea not being originally intended here by the composer, the arrangement still retains a musical purpose, whilst making the passage much more manageable for the ensemble. A similar idea also appears in the last movement of this sonata, bars 44-52. In this case, both of the parts have been arranged to be played by Guitar 2, which provides a pleasant change of texture. Because of the technical difficulty, the same could not have been achieved in the previous example.

³⁶ Davoli, ‘Transcription Process’, p.44.

The best examples of the off-beat 32nd notes are found in the first movement of Sonata 4, bars 30-32 and later in bars 68-70 and 106-107. Here a bass note has been substituted for a rest and a passing note has been omitted in order to create an Alberti bass-like passage. The change makes the passage easier to play in terms of rhythm as well as fingering, both of which would have been awkward if left as the original. The Alberti bass is a technique which allows for very rapid tempos on the guitar and therefore fits perfectly here. The arrangement achieves an effect very much comparable to the original (an additional observation needs to be made here regarding the last note of bar 68 in Guitar 1. The D here has been dropped down to a B, to fit the rearranged motif. The original note would not do any favours here for either the transcription or the guitarist). The Alberti bass was originally a keyboard technique and consequently it was used by Tag himself, as can be seen in the last movement of Sonata 1, bars 69-76. In this case the original idea was transposed up an octave in the transcription to compensate for the range limitations. As a result, a number of clashes were caused with the Guitar 1 part, which were then all resolved by inverting the Alberti Bass. The same idea appears earlier in the movement (bars 5-8) and despite not having the same register issues, the whole passage has been transposed and inverted to match the bars discussed above.

One of the constant issues with the transcription of these sonatas were fast tempos, paired with keyboard figures which are not easily adaptable to the guitar. Usually this manifested itself through long rapid scalar passages or fast runs like that seen in the Allegro Molto of Sonata 1, bars 12-14. Unfortunately most of the time there was

not much that could have been done to make these runs any easier. The players have to either adapt the tempo to their abilities, or their abilities to a desired tempo.

Careful fingering can definitely improve one's chances of an effective execution, and where appropriate, slurring may also help.

On occasions where more than two voices were present, it was sometimes necessary to redistribute the lines in order for the voices to be clear. The opening bars of Sonata 4 illustrate this point well. Here the middle voice of bars 2-4 has been moved to Guitar 2 and a B quaver was added in bar 1 to make this voice consistent. The omission of this quaver in the keyboard part was due to the inability of the keyboard to play a unison, which of course in the case of a duo is not an issue at all. This redistribution of voices made the melody line in Guitar 1 much clearer and uncluttered by the entry of extra voices half way through. A similar case may also be found in the main theme of the Andantino in Sonata 3. The shift of the lowest voice of the treble part into Guitar 2 was especially helpful in bar 6 (later also in bars 36 and 42), as it made the Guitar 1 part much clearer and convenient to play.

Another case of voice distribution which had to be employed was the rearrangement of chords. An example can be observed in the last movement of Sonata 3, bars 50-52, where the 3rd of the chord has been moved to Guitar 1 (currently playing the accompaniment). The division makes the performance of these chords much less demanding (especially considering the brisk tempo) and also gives the first beat of

each bar extra strength, which is appropriate here. This example is also followed in bars 121-123 and 133-135.

Exchange of parts/voices

Part allocation could be simply approached by assigning each of the keyboard player's hands to separate guitars. However, for the most of the music this would create an ensemble of a lead guitar and a bass guitar, rather than an even duet. So unless the duet is intended for teacher and pupil, or for guitarists who enjoy playing only bass notes on their guitar, it is more favorable to share the parts between the two guitars. This method is well illustrated above in the transcription of the *Oriental* by Granados, and is also employed in the present transcriptions.

There does not seem to be a universal approach to exchanging the melody within the 18th century duet. In some compositions, such as the *Three Flute Duos* by Leopold Hofmann³⁷ the melody is exchanged almost every time an answering phrase is heard. (Ex.8) Others, like the violin duets by Christian Bach³⁸ allow for longer breaks between these exchanges. This seems to be dependent on the composers themselves, as well as on the music they wrote.

³⁷ Leopold Hofmann, *Three Flute Duos*, edited by Allan Badley, Wellington: Artaria Editions Limited, 1998.

³⁸ Johann Christian Bach, *Six duets for two violins*, Miami: Kalmus, (2005?)

Example 8 – Three Flute Duos, bars 1-7.

The musical score for Example 8 shows two staves, Flauto I and Flauto II, in a key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato'. The first staff (Flauto I) begins with a melodic line in bar 1, while the second staff (Flauto II) provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The music continues for seven bars, with various musical notations including trills (tr) and triplets (3) appearing in the later bars.

However it should be noted that the above duets have a similar ensemble balance, with the first instrument (violin 1/ flute 1) as the bearer of a majority of the melodic material. This also typically means that the first instrument introduces the main melodic material at the start of a movement, and often also has the ‘last word’ at the end. While the present transcriptions endeavored to achieve a similar balance, the often busy texture encountered throughout these Sonatas did not always facilitate the exchange of parts whenever it seemed musically appropriate. The exchanges of voices were often limited by technical aspects and at times the opportunity did not present itself for a number of phrases (and was not by any means forced).

Where possible, the transcriber exchanged the voices between whole phrases or larger sections of a movement. However, at times they have also been exchanged within repetitive or imitative ideas like that seen in the Allegro Moderato of Sonata 1, bars 21-24. This type of imitation/echo is often evident at the first repeat of a movement where it usually appears in the dominant of the original key and then mimicked again at the end in the tonic key. Of the twelve movements (each sonata

has three movements) five employ this compositional device, all of which have had their parts exchanged in the transcription. While the interpretation of these echoes may often be left up to the performer, or indicated with dynamics, in the present transcriptions, the transcriber also used the natural contrast of the two guitars to emphasise this effect. Similar exchanges of parts employed by the composer may be found throughout the sonatas like for example bars 37-39 of the Allegro Moderato in Sonata 1.

On a few occasions, as in bars 25-26 of the Allegro in Sonata 3, the phrase is purposely 'broken' in the middle. The switch here is effective as it emphasises an interesting and yet a somewhat unexpected imitation. Although breaking a phrase up may often cause poor voice leading, it is not the case this time, as the exchange of parts here emphasises the effect which the composer implies through the dynamics. This idea appears again later in the movement, bars 79-80. The example also illustrates the doubling up of the first/last note in order to maintain good voice leading.

Dynamics

Save for a few cautionary repetitions of dynamics, which are sometimes found either on new pages or systems, all of the dynamic marks found in the manuscript also appear in the transcription. Inconsistencies found in the manuscript have been remedied at the discretion of the transcriber.

One of the main problems encountered when transcribing dynamics was their often inconsistent placement. At times the manuscript is rather imprecise and a decision, usually based on phrasing, had to be reached on a case by case basis. Considering that the only source of these sonatas manuscripts made by a copyist, it is not surprising that inconsistencies crept in. An example of this may be found in bar 109 in the last movement of Sonata 3 (Ex.9) where the *mf* appears to have been placed a beat too late. This is confirmed when compared to the corresponding passage in bar 26, where the dynamic is placed at the beginning of the bar. A further case may be found in bars 73-74, in the Andantino Amoroso of the same sonata, where the *p* appears in the manuscript in the middle of bar 74 instead of bar 73, as it appeared in a corresponding passage in bar 19. These alterations to the placement of dynamics have been made in the transcription without further comment or distinction.

Example 9 - Sonata 3, Movement 3, bar 109-112.



Ex. 9 Cont.**Sonata 3, Movement 3, bar 26-29.**

An especially prominent case where dynamics do not seem to be aligned appears in the Presto of Sonata 4, bars 75-78. In this phrase it seems that the dynamics deviate from the music by a whole bar. This however reveals a much larger mistake in the manuscript – a missing bar 77. This missing bar was filled in by Tilo Kittel (as well as another bar in Sonata 6), who makes the following comment: “In the opinion of the editor, without these bars the symmetry and the logical consistency of the musical course are disturbed. He regards the absence of these bars as a mistake of the copyist.”

The present author agrees with this addition, and has included it in the transcription without any particular distinction. The absence of this bar which resulted in a shift of the dynamics, presents an interesting insight into the work of Pölitz, as it suggests he had entered the dynamics only after having copied a larger section of the music.

On a few occasions the required dynamic called for a particular arrangement. A prime model of this is in the last movement of Sonata 3, bars 107-108, where Guitar

1 enters an octave above Guitar 2 in order to achieve a *fortissimo*. As the melody spans over three octaves here, it was impossible to enter a lower voice (as was done in the original keyboard part). The arrangement achieves an effect akin to the original, and while it may initially appear to be disruptive to the downward contour of the line, in practice, this distraction is minimal. In other instances, octave doubling was used to reinforce *forte* bass lines which would have otherwise sounded weak and understated. While this is a device often used by the composer, it is used sparingly in the transcription due to frequently causing unfavourable dissonances with the melody.

An interesting technique which has been incorporated on a rare occasion into the transcription, is the substitution of a *forte* or *fortissimo* for an accent. While this is an unusual change, in such instances the accent achieves the same effect as that intended by the dynamic, but also makes the music much less cluttered. Bars 17 and 19 of the Allegro in Sonata 3 best represent this change.

One last word on dynamics concerns their occasional absence. This is mostly noticed at the beginning of movements where the appropriate dynamics were determined by comparing similar phrases later on in the movement, or considering the first dynamic present in that movement. A good example of this may be observed at the beginning of the Andantino Amoroso in Sonata 3. However, the case of missing dynamics is not only limited to the beginning of movements. This can be seen at the end of bar 6, in the Allegretto of Sonata 4, where a *piano* has been

entered to emphasise a contrasting phrase. The absence of this dynamic can be easily noticed here as both bar 4 and 8 are marked with a *forte* and yet no other dynamic is present between them.(Ex.10) These missing dynamics are entered into the transcription in brackets, and the observance of them is left to the discretion of the performer.

Example 10 - Sonata 4, Movement 1, bar 1-9.



Articulation

While the irregularity or absence of dynamics pose a few dilemmas for the transcriber, the inconsistencies encountered with the articulation completely overshadow the previous difficulties. It is not certain whether these irregularities stem from the composer or the copyist, however a number of ambiguities can be directly attributed to the copyist's handwriting and/or rashness. An example of this common occurrence may be seen in bar 30 of the Allegro Assai, Sonata 7, where the

slurring of the four 16th notes could be interpreted as either one or two slurs. (Ex.11)

In this case the answer is found in bar 92 where the idea reappears with clear slurring in two. Unfortunately this single case does not provide a concrete rule which could be applied in the rest of the sonatas. Each case was considered within its own context, with consequently varied results.

Example 11 - Sonata 7, Movement 1, bar 28-32.



Sonata 7, Movement 1, bar 90-94.



More often than not, the problem lies in the absence of an articulation indication in one place and its presence in another. An intriguing case of this appears in Sonata 7 bars 5-10 where the slurring is absent in places which are indicated to be played *forte*, but present in the echoes of those same ideas which are marked *piano*. As this practice is comparatively consistent throughout this movement, it suggests that these were the intended articulations, aimed at emphasising the echoes. As with the previous example, this does not set a precedent for all other missing slurs, as in most other cases explanations are hard to come by. Any slurs which have been added to the transcription are indicated with a dotted line and can be found throughout all movements of the four sonatas.

An interesting articulation which makes a frequent appearance throughout these sonatas is the stroke (also referred to as the vertical dash). The interpretation of this articulation is not clear within the context of the 18th century, and while it is possible that its meaning was synonymous to staccato, there is much debate over this issue.³⁹ One of the leading theorists on the differentiation of dots and strokes (also referred to as ‘dualism’) in Mozart’s music, Frederick Neumann, suggests three different interpretations of the stroke; “(1) to indicate an accent *without* a staccato; (2) to indicate a staccato with special emphasis of either accent or sharpness...; (3) to mark a staccato, usually without special emphasis, that serves to separate clearly a single

³⁹ Clive Brown, ‘Dots and Strokes in Late 18th- and 19th-Century Music’, *Early Music*, Vol. 21, No. 4, Monteverdi I, 1993, pp. 593-597 and 599-610.

note from a group of slurred notes.”⁴⁰ Furthermore, he points out that our modern indication for an accent (>) was not used yet, and therefore composers resorted to the stroke instead. As there does not seem to be a clear pattern for the use of the stroke within these sonatas by Tag, its interpretation was considered in comparison to parallel sections within the music, as well as its context.

An example of this is found in the first movement of Sonata 3, bars 46-50, where the strokes were interpreted as staccatos, giving the music a bouncy feel with emphasis placed on the down beats. However, in bars 49-50 the strokes were changed to accents, giving the top note extra emphasis and helping to achieve the *fortissimo* dynamic. A further example of stroke interpretation may be seen in bars 24-25 of the Andantino Amoroso in Sonata 3 (also appears later in bars 78-79). Here the slurring implies a separation of the third note and the last note of the sextuplets and therefore an extra articulation is not needed. The exact interpretation of these notes has been left to the performer. Such intricate decisions are often very difficult to make, especially when the source has shown to be so unreliable when it comes to attention to detail. In cases where a logical conclusion could not be reached, the transcriber usually chose the option which worked best on the guitar, or more specifically, in the context of guitar duo.

⁴⁰ Frederick Neumann, ‘Dots and Strokes in Mozart’, *Early Music*, Vol. 21, No. 3, French Baroque II, 1993, p. 429.

Ornamentation

Although guitarists have the choice of performing either a left-hand ornament or a cross-string ornament, the transcriber does not wish to place these constraints on the performer by specifying the preferred fingering. Yet whichever option is chosen by the performer, it should always be remembered that these ornaments are always supposed to be performed on the decorated note, and not before. Fortunately, in a transcription not all ornaments are expected to be played exactly as they are written in the original score. In the present transcription, some ornaments were omitted and others modified to fit the capabilities of the guitar. Any such alterations were considered with regard to the stylistic etiquette helpfully provided here by Bach's *Essay*. Omitted ornaments have been notated in the transcription in brackets above.

Unlike articulation and dynamics, the ornamentation was mostly correct and consistent throughout the sonatas. The few irregularities concerning the notation of appoggiaturas and their durations, were by and large resolved contextually, without too much difficulty. Short appoggiaturas (acciaccaturas) have been modernised with a diagonal slash and long ones left at their original value. The latter here take half of the value of the note to which they resolve, except in the case of triple length notes, in which case the appoggiatura is worth two thirds of that note.⁴¹ One of the examples of a modernised appoggiatura may be found in bar 33, of the first movement of Sonata 3. As the performance of this appoggiatura is very quick, it

⁴¹ C. P. E. Bach, *Essay*, p. 90.

would be futile to attribute any specific value to it. The result would have been the same as that of an *acciaccatura*. Another noteworthy modification of *appoggiaturas* is found in the first movement of Sonata 4, bars 19-20. Due to the speed and numerous shifts of position required to play this passage, the *appoggiaturas* have been simplified. Additionally, the *appoggiatura* on the second beat of bar 20 has been transposed up. While the melodic function of that *appoggiatura* is lost as a consequence, the transposition assures a much more practical and, as a result, attractive performance.

The other ornaments used here by the composer are trills, turns, mordents and trilled turns. While the guitar is capable of performing all of these embellishments in their simplest forms, the context did not always facilitate an easy execution. A frequently recurring figure in these sonatas is an ornament on the top note of thirds. Unless an open string was available, a turn in this case would require the use of all four fingers. Although this is possible, more often than not it is also very awkward and therefore undermines the effect of the ornament. An example of this can be found in bars 87 and 89 in the last movement of Sonata 1. Here the first turn is awkward to play on the top two strings (B, E), and although possible to play in a higher position on strings g and b, the different tone would likely obscure the melody. The second turn in bar 89 is inconvenient to perform in any position, which is why both ornaments have been ‘turned’ into trills. Trills and mordents are better suited in these scenarios (although they can also sometimes prove to be quite tricky) and as it was illustrated, they were occasionally used to replace the turn by the transcriber.

An even more complicated ornament is the trilled turn. This ornament usually requires the use of the weakest of all fingers, the pinkie, as the main trilling finger. For this reason the transcriber mostly reserved the use of this particular ornament for instances where an open string may be used. An example of this may be seen at the start of the middle movement of Sonata 1. Despite the corresponding passage (Sonata 1, Largo Mesto, Bar 1) featuring a trilled turn without the use of any open strings, the slow tempo of the movement makes the performance of this ornament possible. Most other emergences of the trilled turn have been simplified to either the turn or the trill, depending on context.

The symbols used for ornamentation vary between different composers, transcribers and editors. For this reason the author has included brief explanation of these, which is found at the beginning of Volume 2.

Fingering

With the exception of one passage, all right-hand fingering has been left up to the performers. This exclusive passage is found in bars 49-50 (also discussed earlier) of the Allegro in Sonata 3, where the 64th notes have been indicated to be played as an 'arpeggio' using the thumb. The performance of the three notes with one movement has exactly the same affect as the original and also makes this rather difficult motif manageable for the player. The use of the thumb here also helps with achieving the

fortissimo, which could have otherwise been difficult with such a busy and fast passage.

Regarding left-hand fingering, the transcriber endeavored to balance the technical practicality with musical considerations. A common occurrence of this involves fingering a melody or motif on the same string, an example of which can be found in the opening phrase of the middle movement of Sonata 4 in Guitar 1. In instances where this is not possible, avoiding open strings can partially achieve the same effect.⁴² On the whole, rather than clogging the music with scrupulous fingering for each note, the fingering has only been provided where the transcriber deemed it necessary or helpful. In the end all fingerings are subject to criticism. However, one individual's interpretation is better than no fingering at all.⁴³

Tempo

It is not possible to discern what exact tempo a composer had in mind in the 18th century. As performance practice changed over a period of time, as well as from one region to another, the tempos also tend to fluctuate. Since the Maelzel metronome was not invented (or more correctly, patented) until 1815,⁴⁴ specific tempos were not recorded before-hand. However, there are some indications that around 1750s the

⁴² Richard Yates, 'The Transcriber's Art: Brahms', *Soundboard - Guitar Foundation of America*, Vol. 28, no. 4, 2002, p.43.

⁴³ J. O'Connor, D. Huxtable & G. Klippel, 'Transcribing for Guitar Ensemble', p.38.

⁴⁴ David Fallows: 'Metronome (i)', Grove Music Online ed L. Macy (Accessed 29 January 2008), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

tempo in Northern Germany had become slower.⁴⁵

When considering the guitar, it must be remembered that the tempos for keyboard instruments are usually faster than those for the guitar. Although this may seem somewhat limiting at first, the guitar redeems itself in view of its arguably superior ability to interpret individual notes.⁴⁶ The metronomic marking for these transcriptions has been left up to the performers' interpretation of the composer's original tempo indication. According to Bach "[T]he pace of a composition....is based on its general content as well as on the fastest notes and passages contained in it. Due consideration of these factors will prevent an allegro from being rushed and an adagio from being dragged."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ R. L. Marshall (ed.), *Eighteenth Century Keyboard Music*, p.39

⁴⁶ Richard Yates, 'The Transcriber's Art'. *Soundboard - Guitar Foundation of America*, Vol. 27, no.1, 2000, p.28.

⁴⁷ C. P. E. Bach, *Essay*, p.151.

Conclusion

The four transcribed sonatas are representative of an interesting period of music, which so far has been mostly unfamiliar to guitarists. Although Tag had “established an outstanding reputation as Kantor and organist”⁴⁸ during his lifetime, today this small-town 18th century composer is hardly a familiar name in the musical world. While some contemporary publications and reprints are presently available, a large portion of Tag’s music, such as these sonatas, still remains unpublished and mostly unknown.

Although all four sonatas comprise a similar musical language, each one still manages to convey its distinctive personality. As the shortest and also technically easiest to play, the first sonata provides a nice introduction to Tag’s style. After the statement of the subject, the first movement wastes no time in launching into what become characteristic sequential modulations. On occasion these sequences seem to carry on for longer than one expects, and although they are well suited for the keyboard, the transcription to guitar often requires various different fingering solutions for one motif. The lyricism of the middle movement with its rich ornamentation, often essential to the melodic line, provides a stark contrast to the more driven outer two movements. This sort of juxtaposition is perhaps most evident in Sonata 4, where the drama and melancholy of the *Largo Mesto* in G minor, is balanced with the merry gallop of the *Presto Assai* in G major. Such slow

⁴⁸ Härtwig, *Tag*, Christian Gotthilf. Grove Music Online.

movements adapt especially well for the guitar duo, exploring the intimate nature of the instrument. Both first movements of Sonata 3 and 4 – the energetic E minor and the equally rapid G major – present somewhat of a challenge for the guitarist. While some of the very rapid passages have been arranged or fingered to facilitate an easier execution, the fast tempo and the often specific articulation still makes these movements the most challenging of the present transcriptions. The elegant Sonata 7 presents some attractive articulation, which may be subject to various approaches on the guitar, with the often sparse last movement giving performers a perfect opportunity for individual interpretations.

Although the interpretation of this music may at times pose a challenge for the transcriber/ performer, as was previously discussed with regard to articulation, the nature of this transitional period of music is hardly characterised by uniformity of compositional or performance practice. While the transcriber has attempted to approach such details in the most faithful and appropriate way, in the end the final decision is left with the performer, who will interpret the music in their individual way, and no doubt make changes.

Overall the often delicate melodies and homophonic texture transcribe well to the timbre of guitar, and are further enhanced by the guitar's expressive capabilities. While the often unfamiliar wealth of ornamentation may at times seem overwhelming for guitarists, the transcription ensured that these are all within the capabilities of the guitar, and with a little bit of practice can prove to be very

rewarding. The addition of these sonatas to the guitar's repertoire will hopefully raise awareness of this period of music and inspire further guitar duo transcriptions. Furthermore, it is the hope of the author that the present transcriptions contribute to the revival of Christian Gotthilf Tag's reputation, and help expose his music to performers and audiences alike.

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Christian Gotthilf Tag
Four Sonatas transcribed for Guitar Duo

VOLUME 2

By

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A note on ornamentation

Many of the ornaments found throughout the present sonatas are not common to a majority of guitarists. Therefore a brief clarification of the relevant ornaments has been provided below. For a more comprehensive understanding of 18th-century keyboard practice and ornamentation, performers should refer to the *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* by C. P. E. Bach, which served as a model for the present examples.¹ While the performance of some of these ornaments may sometimes prove tricky on the guitar, the transcriber has ensured that all transcribed ornaments are within reach of the technical capabilities of the guitar. Any omissions of ornaments have been notated in brackets.

¹ C. P. E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. W.J. Mitchell, London: Eulenburg Books, pp. 79-166.

Turn



Trill



Trilled Turn



Mordent



