

REPertoire

ANDREA GONZALEZ CABALLERO

Serenata Española



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"WE HAVE TO BE FREE, BUT NOT SO FREE THAT WE LOSE THE TEMPO AND BEAT".

LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, Andrea González Caballero breaks down *Serenata Española*, a piece written for piano by Joaquim Malats, and arranged by Francisco Tarrega for guitar. She jumps straight into the music, suggesting fingerings that carry the correct musical intent and how to choose the proper tempo. The melodies in this piece are very vocal, and Andrea consistently refers back to the importance of both separating the melody from the accompaniment and adhering to the rules of rubato. Likewise, like a vocal line, certain notes are more important than others, and deserve special attention with articulation and dynamics. Finally, Andrea discusses how to treat repetitions of similar musical elements as well as how and where to shift efficiently. By the end of this lesson, hopefully you'll be inspired and prepared to tackle this difficult yet highly rewarding piece in the guitar repertoire.



ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Andrea González Caballero is one of the most acclaimed young guitarists of her generation. She made her solo debut at the age of eight and has since performed in international guitar festivals and halls such as the Spanish National Auditorium, King's Cross in London, the Monterey Guitar Festival and the San Diego Guitar Festival. She obtained her Master's Degree in Düsseldorf while studying with Joaquin Clerch, and has since won several major international competitions.

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Fingerings
3. Melody
4. B Section
5. Repetition
6. C Section
7. Scale
8. Coda

INTRODUCTION



Welcome to this lesson on Serenata Española by Joaquim Malats, taught by Andrea Gonzalez Caballero. Since this piece wasn't composed for the guitar, there is much to discuss regarding how to execute difficult passages and general tips on how to interpret Spanish music.

FINGERINGS



The first four measures form a small introduction before the main theme. Since they are very rhythmic, take care that your right hand fingerings allow you to play rhythmically and with good articulation. Stop each bass note with your thumb so that it doesn't interfere with the next one. For the chords, it may be helpful to stop them by lifting your left hand fingers. The third finger is usually weaker than the other fingers. To combat this, accent the third note of each group.

The image shows the first four measures of the introduction for 'Serenata Española' on guitar. The music is in 3/4 time and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords. Chord diagrams for C5 and C6 are provided above the first three measures. Fingerings are indicated by circled numbers (1-5) for the right hand and circled numbers (1-3) for the left hand. The fourth measure includes a 'rit....' marking and a dynamic marking of 'imp' (impuetante) with accents over the notes. The notation includes various articulation marks such as accents (>) and slurs.

Andrea plays the final two chords of this line ritardando, to prepare to begin the theme. Remember that whatever tempo you pick for the beginning, you have to maintain throughout the piece. If you play too fast right away, the later parts are not only more difficult, but may not necessarily sound musical. For Andrea, a more modest tempo is suitable for this piece. Be sure not to rush or drag while moving between sections.



MELODY



Beginning in measure five, the melody contains a main voice and an accompaniment. Imagine a singer is performing the melody along with musical instruments. It's alright to be a bit loose with the time, as a singer would, as long as you always come back *into* time before the phrase ends. In measure six, Andrea fingers "*i m p*" for the first three sixteenth notes of the accompaniment. This way, the accent falls on the third note, the G-sharp. On the most important melody notes, consider playing apoyando. For Andrea, this includes the A, the highest note of the phrase, and the E in measures six and eight.



Use of dynamics in the accompaniment aid in making the melody more interesting. Play a crescendo into measure ten, and continue to grow while the melody repeats an E. Never allow the accompaniment to grow louder the melody, however. Andrea likes to linger for a split second over the final B in measure eleven, since this builds up the tension just before the C major resolution in measure twelve. Create a gradual, yet clear crescendo across the long phrase that begins in measure thirteen and goes to the first ending.

The image displays three staves of musical notation for guitar. The first staff, labeled '10', shows a melody in treble clef with a repeated E note (E4) on the downbeats. The accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines. A horizontal line above the staff indicates a crescendo starting in measure 10. The second staff, labeled '13', shows a more complex melodic line with triplets and accents. The third staff, labeled '16', continues the melodic development with similar triplet patterns and accents. The notation includes various fingerings, slurs, and dynamic markings.

A singer wouldn't sing each syllable the same volume. Instead, certain notes would be sung with special attention. For Andrea, the A's on the downbeats of measures 14 and 16 are the key arrival points. The other notes in measures 14 and 16 are less significant, so should be played softer.



The first ending contains a difficult scale run in thirds. Since the first finger usually provides the most control and stability for moving across the neck, lead your left hand with your first finger while making sure that your first and second fingers both arrive at the same time. In the second ending, this phrase repeats only partially. In measure twenty-two, Andrea keeps her third finger anchored as the line decreases. In the final measure, let the open strings ring and pause before starting again in A Major.

B SECTION

The image shows a musical score for the B Section, measures 28-31. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 28 starts with a C7 chord and a melodic line with a scale run in thirds. Measure 29 continues the melodic line with a C7 chord. Measure 30 features a C9 chord and a melodic line with a scale run in thirds. Measure 31 concludes the section with a C9 chord and a melodic line with a scale run in thirds. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics (p, m).

This section contains a vocal-like melody very similar to the beginning. Andrea again plays the important notes apoyando, this time the A and the G-sharp. If the long G-sharp were to be played tirando, it would have less energy and the accompaniment would overwhelm it. Use the same fingering for the accompaniment as the beginning- "*i m p*". For a nice aesthetic touch, consider slowing down or even stopping for a second or two on the C-sharp in the third measure.



In measure thirty-two, the accompaniment is a bit more complicated, so rhythmic precision becomes much more important. The difficulty is in combining this precision with freedom of the melody. This requires stretching and condensing time so that any time you slow down, you speed up later in the phrase, and vice versa.

As an example, if you want to leave a space in each measure after the first melody note, find another place within each measure to speed up. Always return to the pulse!



For the downbeat of measure 35, try to land at the same time with the first and fourth fingers, and place the next two fingers separately. Throughout this section, be sure to preserve the length of notes both in the accompaniment and melody.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Always preserve clarity in the vocal line! This includes separating the melody from the accompaniment, playing the important notes apoyando, and maintaining the pulse.

In measure 36, at the key change, be very careful not to accidentally stop the high G with your other fingers. In measure 38, prepare your third finger early so that it's already on the string and ready to play the trill quickly. Your hand should already be in position for the high E in the following measure.

REPETITION

To vary the repeated elements in this piece, use your own personal taste and decide where to make small alterations to the music. Remember that this piece should always sound very joyful. A common technique is to elongate different notes the second time through a phrase. When the key returns to A Major in measure 52, Andrea likes to change the fingering she uses to play the A Major chord. She will put her third finger on the fourth string and her fourth finger on the fifth string, as pictured below.



With this fingering, you can easily use the fourth finger for the A at the end of the measure. Andrea also suggests right hand fingerings to play the triplet variations. She plays the low A with her thumb, and then "m i p" for each triplet. She also recommends arriving with the m finger on the string one beat early, so that you are confident you can get the sound you want.



A common mistake in measure 59, where a shift from F-sharp to G-sharp is necessary, is to accent notes incorrectly. The G-sharp should not be played with an accent, but should in fact be a bit softer than the A on the beat before it.

C SECTION



At the next key change, in measure 60, the third section of the piece begins. Andrea starts with lots of energy, and the same accompaniment fingerings as earlier in the piece. For the melody, however, she plays each note apoyando.

The triplets in the seventh measure of this section provide another challenge. Practice very slowly with the fingering “*p i m*”, while accenting the melody outlined by the thumb and playing a small crescendo. While this theme is often played highly articulated, this isn’t necessarily a bad thing. In fact, the music is complemented very well by an interpretation that already comes very naturally to the guitar.

Musical notation for measures 66, 67, and 68. Measure 66 starts with a treble clef, a 7/4 time signature, and a C5 chord. The melody consists of five eighth-note triplets. The first triplet is marked with a 'p' (piano) and a circled '5' below it. The second triplet is marked with a circled '8'. The third triplet is marked with a circled '8'. The fourth triplet is marked with a circled '4'. The fifth triplet is marked with a circled '4'. Measure 67 starts with a C7 chord and contains a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 68 starts with a C4 chord and contains a triplet of eighth notes. The notation includes various fingering numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) and accents.

However, this doesn't mean you should be sloppy with the right hand. Instead, define the starts and ends of each note with the right hand to establish clarity. It's always helpful to play a note differently if it's repeated multiple times. Playing a crescendo toward the final note often makes a lot of sense, especially in measure 42, where the G is a dissonance over a D major chord. The repetition in measure 45 may be more effective if played very legato, since it's immediately followed by the returning dotted rhythm, which is always played short. Strong contrast is almost always musical!

The image shows a musical score for guitar, measures 63 through 67. Measure 63 starts with a treble clef and a 7/8 time signature. It features a series of eighth notes with a crescendo hairpin. Measure 64 contains a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, with a 'pim...' annotation in red. Measure 65 is a full measure of eighth notes with a crescendo hairpin. Measure 66 consists of four groups of eighth notes, each with a '3' (triple) marking. Measure 67 begins with a grace note (E) followed by a quarter note, with a 'p' (piano) dynamic marking. Chord diagrams are provided for measures 63, 64, 65, 66, and 67.

Ensure that the grace note in the next measure doesn't prevent the E from entering on time. Instead, play the grace note short, and just before the downbeat. The next rhythmic accompaniment comes in the upper voice, and Andrea plays it using "i m a".

The line in the following measure can be played very free, as if a flamenco singer is performing a short cadenza. Andrea plays a strong apoyando on the downbeats, with her fingers arranged as in the image below.



SCALE



In the original score, written for piano, the second note of the scale in measure 71 is an F-sharp. Andrea believes this is the correct note for the arrangement, even though very often it is printed as an F-natural.

While searching for fingerings for this scale, look for easy and repetitive movements, as well as how to use left hand shifts to get accents on each downbeat. Andrea decided to shift to fifth position for the C, shift again for the E, and arrive on the final high E with a strong apoyando. Jump immediately to the sixth, third, and fourth strings in the right hand to be ready to play the accompanying lines. Use the same articulation as the beginning of the piece on these repeated passages.

CODA



Finishing the piece is a coda section which takes material from several different sections in the piece.

Three measures after the coda, Andrea provides two fingering options. One is simpler, but requires a ritardando to play easily. The other option allows the tempo to remain consistent, but is a bit more difficult.

CODA 75

78

ritard.

Andrea jumps to the fourth string in measure 78. Use the third finger as a “pivot point” by leaving it on the string and revolving all the other fingers around it. While this is more difficult, extend the fourth finger for the high A at the end of the phrase, leaving the other fingers in place.

The final two chords should be forte, very round, and each voice within should be well-balanced. This concludes this exploration into the Serenata Española! Hopefully this lesson is helpful as you work to develop proficiency at this piece. We wish you the best of luck!



RESOURCES



Lesson on Adelita by Eduardo Inestal

Pick up another brilliant piece from the Spanish guitar idiom in this lesson on one of Francisco Tarrega's miniatures for the guitar. Listen to his extensive discussion of the historical etymology of this piece and various techniques it requires.



Lesson on Grand Solo Part I by Andrea Gonzalez

Interested in more from Andrea? Check out her lessons on a masterpiece of Fernando Sor, Grand Solo. Explore hand preparation, color, tempo, and more!



NOTES



