

Antonio
SOLER

Keyboard Sonatas Nos. 57–62

Mladen Čolić, Piano



Antonio Soler (1729–1783) Keyboard Sonatas Nos. 57–62

Born in 1729 at Olot, Girona, Antonio Soler, like many other Catalan musicians of his and later generations, had his early musical training as a chorister at the great Benedictine monastery of Montserrat, where his teachers included the *maestro di capilla* Benito Esteve and the organist Benito Valls. Soler studied the work of earlier Spanish and Catalan composers, of Joan Cabanilles and his pupil Josep Elías, combining his abilities as an organist with those of a composer. He took an appointment as organist at the Santa Iglesia de Lérida and was also employed at the Cathedral of La Seu d’Urgell. It was there that in 1752 he met the Bishop of Urgell, former Prior of the monastery of the Escorial, Sebastián de Victoria, who was seeking someone to serve as an organist at the Escorial. Soler took this opportunity, and was ordained subdeacon by the Bishop, entering the Hieronymite Order of San Lorenzo de El Escorial and taking his vows the following year. In 1757, on the death of the previous incumbent, Soler became *maestro di capilla* and organist at the Escorial, positions he held for the rest of his life.

Soler also benefited from contact with musicians from the court. The Escorial had been built by Philip II as a royal palace and a monastery, and the court generally spent the autumn there. This brought the initial possibility for Soler of further study of the organ with the court organist and for contact with Domenico Scarlatti, a strong influence on Soler’s style of writing in his addition to keyboard repertoire in some 150 surviving sonatas. Soler, in the course of his duties, wrote music for the church, but also contributed to secular repertoire for the entertainment of the court. Music received particular encouragement under Ferdinand VI, and rather less under his successor Carlos III. Soler, however, was charged with the teaching of the young princes Antonio and Gabriel, the sons of Carlos III, and received particular support from the younger of the two, Don Gabriel, whose *Casita del Infante*, built in the early 1770s, was in part designed for musical performances in which Don Gabriel participated.

As a theorist Soler published in 1762 a study of modulation, *Llave de la Modulación*, a treatise explaining the art of rapid modulation (*modulación agitada*), which brought correspondence with Padre Martini in Bologna, the leading Italian composer and theorist, who vainly sought a portrait of Soler to add to his gallery of leading composers. Soler was also an acknowledged expert on the construction of organs, advising on instruments for the cathedrals of Málaga and Seville, while his wider interests are exemplified in his *Combinación de monedas y cálculo manifiesto contra el libro anonimo intitulado “Correspondencia de la Moneda de Cataluña a la de Castilla”*, a polemical study of the comparative currencies of Castille and Catalonia, dedicated to Carlos III.

The many keyboard sonatas of Soler remain his best known achievement as a composer. Many of these were written for Don Gabriel and suggest, at least, the influence of Domenico Scarlatti, while continuing to reflect something of the changing styles of music exemplified in Vienna. The modern publication of the sonatas owes much to Father Samuel Rubio, who collected many of the sonatas in seven volumes, published between 1957 and 1962, and whose R numbering is in wide use, including sonatas subsequently added to his first listing.

Sonata No. 57 in G minor draws inspiration from Spanish folk-materials, with its lively attack, crossing of hands and recurrent ornamentation. It has sometimes been grouped with two other sonatas in G minor and G major. *Sonata No. 58 in G major* is a rondo, its cheerful main theme returning to frame episodes of varied figuration that call for some technical command. *Sonata No. 59 in F major*, another rondo, includes an episode in rapid figuration, a triplet episode and an episode in F minor.

Sonata No. 60 in G major has two movements, a fairly lively first movement, with the direction *Andantino* and a rapider *Allegro vivo* second movement. It is here followed by *Sonata No. 61 in C major*, a work dating from 1782 and in four movements. The first of these is a

rondo, its relatively simple principal theme framing episodes of greater complexity. The rapid second movement brings characteristic figuration and is followed by a *Minue di rivolti*, an unusual form of Minuet, with themes returning in a different order. The sonata ends with a final movement replete with extended hand-crossing and use of the Scotch snap rhythm.

Sonata No. 62 in B flat major also dates from 1782

and is in four movements. It opens with a rondo, a form that offers episodes for technical display. The second movement is marked *Allegretto espressivo* and is followed by a *Minue di rivolti*, a form that seems to have been special to Soler. The sonata ends with a movement marked *Allegro spiritoso* that allows a lively exploration of remoter keys.

Keith Anderson

Maria Canals International Music Competition

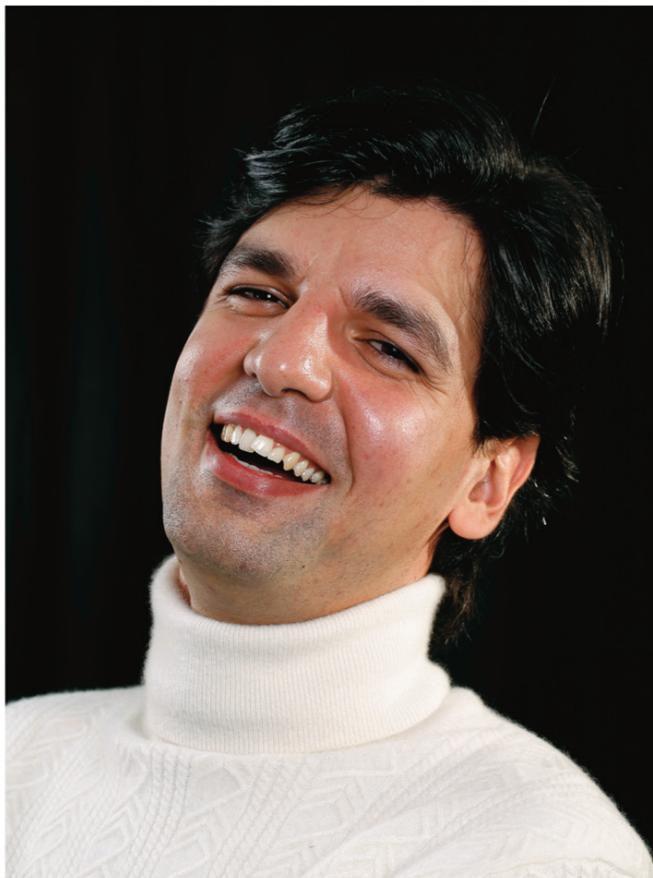
The Maria Canals International Music Competition of Barcelona (www.mariacanal.cat) is the principal music competition in Spain and one of the leading events in the world following its recognition by the World Federation of International Music Competitions in 1958. It was founded in 1954 by the leading pianist and pedagogue Maria Canals, and her husband Rossend Llates. With Her Majesty Queen Sofia as President of Honour, since 1954 the competition association has organised 110 competitions in the branches of piano, singing, violin, cello, guitar, flute, percussion and chamber music. During

these years more than 7,000 entrants have taken part from a hundred countries from the five continents, and there have been more than 180 jurors from around the world. The competition holds its auditions in the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona, and offers the prize-winners important financial rewards, a tour of recitals and concerts with orchestra around the world and a recording for the Naxos label. Its winners have developed important professional careers in both performance and teaching in leading centres throughout the world.

Concurso Internacional de Música Maria Canals

El Concurso Internacional de Música Maria Canals de Barcelona (www.mariacanal.cat) es el decano de los concursos de música en España y uno de los primeros del mundo en ser aceptados por la Federación Mundial de Concursos Internacionales de Música en 1958. Fue fundado en 1954 por la prestigiosa pianista y pedagoga Maria Canals y su marido Rossend Llates. Con S.M. la Reina Sofía como Presidenta de Honor, desde 1954 la asociación del concurso ha organizado 110 concursos de las ramas de piano, canto, violín, violonchelo, guitarra, flauta, percusión y música de cámara. Durante estos años

han participado en el mismo más de 7.000 concursantes de un centenar de países de los 5 continentes, y más de 180 jurados procedentes de todo el mundo. El Concurso celebra sus pruebas en el Palau de la Música Catalana de Barcelona, y ofrece a los premiados importantes premios económicos, una gira de recitales y conciertos con orquesta por todo el mundo y una grabación para el sello discográfico Naxos. Sus ganadores han desarrollado importantes carreras profesionales tanto en el ámbito de la interpretación como de la docencia en los centros más importantes de todo el mundo.



Mladen Čolić

Born in Serbia in 1982, as a four-year-old prodigy Mladen Čolić was musically guided by Ivana Branovački and Svetlana Bogino in his home town, Novi Sad. He later entered the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris to study with Prisca Benoît and Jacques Rouvier, under a scholarship of the French government and the Académie des Beaux Arts. Over thirty prizes in international and national piano competitions have marked his career as a pianist, with First Prizes at the Maria Canals and Jaén Piano Competitions, First Prize at the Rachmaninov Competition and Second Prize at the China Shenzhen Piano Concerto Competition, among others. His numerous recitals have won international critical acclaim. In addition to teaching at the Paris Conservatoire, he also plays in a piano duo with Prisca Benoît. He has recorded for Naxos, in addition to many live recordings and broadcasts for Radio France and Serbian Radio.
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Photo: Jacphot

In 1757 the young Catalan composer Antonio Soler was appointed to a distinguished position at the Escorial, the palace of the Spanish Court. The keyboard sonatas he wrote there, many specifically for the son of King Carlos III, Don Gabriel, constitute his best known achievement as a composer. The Sonatas heard on this fifth volume once again reflect the influence of Domenico Scarlatti and the latest central European models but *Sonata No. 57* also draws inspiration from Spanish folk music while *Sonata No. 61* ends with use of the Scotch snap rhythm.



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SOLER**
(1729–1783)



Keyboard Sonatas Nos. 57–62

1 Sonata No. 57 in the Dorian mode (G minor) 5:51	6 Allegro 3:40	Sonata No. 61 in C major 17:05
2 Sonata-Rondo No. 58 in G major 3:45	7 Allegretto 5:44	8 Minue di rivolti: Tempo suo 2:34
3 Sonata-Rondo No. 59 in F major 3:55	9 Allegro 5:03	Sonata No. 62 in B flat major 16:05
Sonata No. 60 in C major 6:49	10 Andantino con moto 4:55	11 Allegretto espressivo 4:29
4 Andantino 4:54	12 Minue di rivolti: Tempo suo 2:36	13 Allegro spiritoso 4:00
5 Allegro vivo 1:54		



Mladen Čolić, Piano
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53:53



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