

Antonio
SOLER

Keyboard Sonatas Nos. 42–56

Mateusz Borowiak, Piano



Antonio Soler (1729–1783) Keyboard Sonatas Nos. 42–56

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 of 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. 42 in E flat major is described as a *Sonata Pastoril*, its title reflected in its lilting 6/8 metre and dotted rhythms, as in the drone bass of the concluding bars of the first and the second section, both of which are repeated. The sonata was also later used as the fourth and final movement of *Sonata No. 96*. The brilliant *Sonata No. 43 in G major*, with the direction *Allegro soffribile*, brings a display of rapid repeated notes, with unexpected modulation marking the start of the second section.

Sonata No. 44 in C major, a graceful *Andantino*, makes characteristic use of triplet rhythms and effective modulations. The following *Sonata No. 45 in G major* is described as written for the Princess of Asturias and forms the fourth movement of *Sonata No. 94*, making use of

rapid figuration. *Sonata No. 46 in C major* is a graceful *Cantabile*, characterized by its 3/8 metre, triplet rhythms, repeated notes and modulation.

Sonata No. 47 in C minor (Dorian mode) has an air of gentle melancholy, dispelled at once by the brilliance of *Sonata No. 48 in C minor (Dorian mode)*, with its rapid figuration recalling Scarlatti. *Sonata No. 49 in D minor*, also described as in the Dorian mode, again suggests Scarlatti in its figuration.

Sonata No. 50 in C major makes a pair with *Sonata No. 51 in C major*, both reflecting a graceful charm. *Sonata No. 52 in E minor* starts with the upper part alone, imitated in reply in the left hand. The second section brings characteristic modulation. *Sonata No. 53 in A major 'De*

Clarines' as its name suggests, imitates the sound of a bugle. *Sonata No. 54 in C major* is described in the same way in its title and reflects a similar mood. *Sonata No. 55 in F major* opens with a syncopated ascending arpeggio figure and introduces varied modulation in the second section. It is followed here by *Sonata No. 56 in F major*, marked *Andante cantabile* and offering considerable variety of key and mood. It provides a fitting conclusion to the present recording, a summary of the devices and figuration that becomes familiar after so many sonatas, each with its own characteristics and here ending in a suggestion of contemporary Turkish harmonies, as echoed by Mozart and his Viennese contemporaries.

Keith Anderson

Maria Canals International Music Competition

The Maria Canals International Music Competition of Barcelona (www.mariacanal.cat) is the most senior 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.



Mateusz Borowiak

Mateusz Borowiak is a graduate of Cambridge University and the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice where he studied under Andrzej Jasiński. He is a recipient of several awards including third prize and the Musiq'3 Radio Audience Prize at the Queen Elisabeth Piano Competition in Brussels (2013), Gold Medal and first prize, prize for the youngest finalist and prize for the best performer of the music of Isaac Albéniz at the 57th Maria Canals International Piano Competition in Barcelona (2011), first prize and Audience Award at the 21st Rina Sala Gallo International Piano Competition in Monza (2010), first prize at the Yamaha Music Foundation of Europe Piano Competition (2011), the Contemporary Prize at the 19th Cleveland International Piano Competition (2011), the Harriet Cohen Memorial Award (2010), first prize for keyboard at the Royal Over-Seas League Music Competition in London (2006) and the Gawon International Music Society Award in Seoul (2014). He has performed as a soloist in major venues throughout Europe and as far afield as Beijing, and has appeared with distinguished orchestras and ensembles, collaborating with conductors of renown. Many of his concerts have been broadcast by national television and radio stations in Belgium, Hungary, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Poland.

Photo: Bogdan Kułakowski

Although Soler wrote for the church it is his secular compositions, in particular his keyboard sonatas, that are his best-known achievement. Most were written for Don Gabriel, son of King Carlos III, and they show how adeptly Soler had absorbed the influence of Domenico Scarlatti but also listened to the changing musical styles emanating from Vienna. The result is music of brilliance, full of unexpected modulations, rapid figuration, and graceful charm. This is Volume 4 of the complete Soler Keyboard Sonatas.

Audenis



**Antonio
SOLER**
(1729–1783)



Keyboard Sonatas Nos. 42–56

- | | | | |
|--|------|---|------|
| 1 Sonata No. 42 in E flat major | 7:40 | 9 Sonata No. 50 in C major | 2:15 |
| 2 Sonata No. 43 in G major | 2:57 | 10 Sonata No. 51 in C major | 3:34 |
| 3 Sonata No. 44 in C major | 5:40 | 11 Sonata No. 52 in E minor | 4:10 |
| 4 Sonata No. 45 in G major | 3:36 | 12 Sonata No. 53 in A major
'De Clarines' | 5:20 |
| 5 Sonata No. 46 in C major | 4:21 | 13 Sonata No. 54 in C major
'De Clarines' | 5:34 |
| 6 Sonata No. 47 in the Dorian
mode (C minor) | 4:06 | 14 Sonata No. 55 in F major | 6:31 |
| 7 Sonata No. 48 in the Dorian
mode (C minor) | 2:33 | 15 Sonata No. 56 in F major | 6:31 |
| 8 Sonata No. 49 in the Dorian
mode (D minor) | 2:43 | | |



Mateusz Borowiak, Piano
1st Prize 57th Maria Canals International
Music Competition of Barcelona, 2011

Recorded at the Auditorium, Palau de Congressos, Girona, Spain, 4–6 February 2013
 Producer: Solfa Recordings • Engineer & Editor: Lluís Miquel Soler i Farriols
 Co-produced with Maria Canals Competition • Sponsors: Yamaha, Audenis, Girona Auditorium
 Editions (both used for all tracks): Union Musical Ediciones, S.L., Madrid (edited by P. Samuel Rubio) and
 Due West Editions (edited by Steve Wiberg) • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson
 Cover image: Montserrat, view from the monastery, Catalonia (Jurekszyper / Dreamstime.com)



8.573281

DDD

Playing Time
68:07



© & © 2014
 Naxos Rights US, Inc.
 Booklet notes in English
 Made in Germany
www.naxos.com