

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: SPANISH DANCES FOR VIOLIN: THEIR
ORIGIN AND INFLUENCES

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Many of the Spanish-styled violin virtuoso pieces from the mid-18th century to the twentieth century were dedicated to, or inspired by Pablo de Sarasate's personal style of violin playing and his own Spanish-styled compositions. As both violinist and composer, Sarasate tailored these compositions to his technical flair and unique personality. Among Sarasate's enormous output – total of sixty-one original compositions – the four volumes of Spanish Dances were the most popular and influential. Sarasate successfully translated many of his native folk dances and melodies in these dances, and introduced them to the European musical community with his amazing performances.

In my written dissertation, I have discussed and illustrated in detail Sarasate's four volumes of Spanish Dances, the origin of the Spanish-styled pieces, and the influenced works including Saint-Saëns's *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*, Op. 28, Édouard Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*, Op. 21, Kreisler's transcriptions of Granados' *Spanish Dance in E minor* and Albeniz's *Tango*, and Waxman's *Carmen Fantasie*.

In the performance part of the dissertation, assisted by pianist Kuei-I Wu, I have played all of the mentioned works in their entirety, which is rare in modern concert programming. Through this project, I have gained deeper understanding of the Spanish style and the folk dances, and mastered many of Sarasate's technical innovations.

Spanish Dances for Violin: Their Origin and Influences

By

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Introduction

One of the most widely adapted formats of violin virtuoso compositions is dance. From the Baroque dances to the Romantic and 20th century Nationalistic dances, many of these compositions challenged violinist of the past and the present. From the mid 19th century to early 20th century, the Spanish themed violin virtuoso composition gained wide popularity among the European Composers. Pablo de Sarasate's four volumes of Spanish Dances represent the height and the origin of these Spanish style inspired music.

The Spanish Dance is a complicated dance form that varies from one region to another. Each of Spain's fifty provinces has its own style of dance. Sarasate has adapted and transformed many of these dances into his violin compositions. The biggest challenge of adapting dances for many composers is converting these folk elements and gestures to western music while preserving the essence of their characteristics. With the wild mannerism of many Spanish Dances, the task seems especially difficult and complex. As both violinist and composer, Sarasate successfully recreated these mannerisms and gestures with innovative use of violin techniques and rhythmic adaptations. I will attempt to discuss how Sarasate transformed these Spanish dances and the new technical innovations into his own compositions.

The works by other composers I have selected in this dissertation were either dedicated to or inspired by Sarasate for his very personal violin style and his collection of Spanish Dances. The influences of Sarasate's compositions and playing on these works

are not subtle. I will illustrate and discuss these influences in detail, and also discuss the personal acquaintances Sarasate had with these composers.

Pablo de Sarasate: the Violinist

Sarasate was born in Pamplona, Spain, on March 10th, 1844, and baptized Martín Melitón Sarasate (he later changed his name to Pablo). From his early years, Sarasate displayed amazing talent for the violin. The story of Sarasate's first success as a violinist begins when he was five years old. His father Miguel, an amateur violinist, was practicing and having difficulty with a particular passage. Little Sarasate grew impatient with his father's lack of progress and expressed his concern. Miguel, angered by his own inability and his son's impatience, told the boy to play it himself. Sarasate played the same passage perfectly.¹ This incident was a cause of lifelong animosity between father and son.

The family traveled throughout Spain as Miguel was transferred to various military posts because of his job as the military band director. Sarasate's first teacher was José Courtier in the city of La Coruña. It was here that Sarasate gave his first public debut at the age of eight playing one of his own Fantasias. The Countess de Espoz was stunned by Sarasate's talent and offered to sponsor the young genius. In 1854, Sarasate and his mother moved to Madrid where he studied with Manuel Rodríguez. Rodríguez had connections with many of the musical patrons and royalties; and in no time, Sarasate caught the attention of Queen Isabella II and her court. Queen Isabella offered to pay for Sarasate's education at the Paris Conservatoire. At the age of twelve, Sarasate and his mother moved to Paris, France.

¹ Gold 1994, 676.

At the Paris Conservatoire, Sarasate entered the violin class of Jean Delphine Alard, a representative of the modern French school of violin playing, composed many short violin pieces, duos and etudes, and was the author of *Ecole du violon* that was adopted by the Conservatoire. Sarasate made considerable progress under Alard's tutelage. Alard's unique position as both violinist and composer has also influenced Sarasate greatly. In 1857, after only one year at the Conservatoire, he received the first prize in violin by a rare unanimous decision. In 1858, he won *Première Accésit* in Harmony. The next two years, Sarasate made regular appearances at the famous musical soirées of Rossini in Paris, which, with Rossini's letter of introduction, opened the doors to later successes in England in 1861.

Sarasate's repertoire at this time consisted mainly of opera fantasies, a type of virtuoso concert repertoire made popular by Niccoló Paganini and Franz Liszt. His teacher, Alard, wrote most of these opera fantasies, and some of them were Sarasate's own. *Fantasy Caprice*, written by M (Martín) Sarasate in 1862, was an excellent example of his early compositional style; it remained unpublished until 1982. His other early compositions were fantasies on *La Forza del Destino*, *Faust* and *Hommage à Rossini*.

Throughout the next few years, Sarasate's repertoire and concert programming changed considerably. A typical concert program from his early career would probably begin with a Baroque or Classical sonata. Then Sarasate would dazzle the audience with an opera fantasy by Alard or one of his own compositions. From the 1870s, his programming began to change when he formed close relationships with many prominent musical figures such as Camille Saint-Saëns, Édouard Lalo, Max Bruch, and his archrival Joseph Joachim (1831–1907) who was a composer, teacher and one of the most

influential violinists of the time. During this decade, Sarasate expanded his repertoire to include concertos of Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn and Wieniawski; and Sonatas of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber and Schubert. Like Joachim, He wrote his own cadenzas to many concertos such as Mozart's Concerto No.5 and Beethoven Concerto in D major. Numerous concertos, concert pieces and short virtuoso works were written for, and premiered and performed by, Sarasate. The French composer, Saint-Saëns, anticipating greatness for the young violinist after hearing Sarasate's playing when he was 15, had already dedicated two of his early works to Sarasate: the Concerto No.1 in A major and the *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*. Others included: French composer Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*, the Concerto No.1 and *Fantasie Norvegienne*; German composer Bruch's three concertos, the *Scottish Fantasy* and solo pieces; Polish Violinist and composer Wieniawski's Concerto No. 2; Hungarian composer Goldmark's Suite; Joachim's Variations in E Op. 11; Czech composer Dvořák's Mazurka Op. 49; and Norwegian composer Svendsen's Romance. His willingness to study and perform such a varied new repertoire instantly demonstrated his broad musicianship, which ultimately made him the most popular violinist among the European composers.

From the wide range of nationalities of those composers who dedicated works to Sarasate, one could see that he had carved a place for himself with his elegant and immaculate playing. His sensational debut in Vienna in 1876 raised his reputation to the status of masters such as Paganini and Liszt. By the late 1870s and early 1880s, he had conquered the musical capitals of Germany, where Joachim was the dominant figure; of Russia, where Wieniawski and Auer reigned; and of England, France, Holland, Belgium, and Spain. Leopold Auer (1845–1930), a Hungarian violinist, teacher and composer,

praised Sarasate in his book *Violin Playing As I Teach It*: “To Sarasate belongs the distinction of having been the first to popularize the concertos of Bruch, of Lalo and of Saint-Saëns.”² Eugène Ysaÿe (1858–1931), a Belgian violinist and composer, summed it up: “It is he who taught us to play exactly”³ Carl Flesch (1873–1944), a Hungarian violinist and teacher, wrote in his memoirs, “with Sarasate began the modern striving after technical precision and reliability, whereas before him a somewhat facile fluency and brilliance were considered the most important thing.”⁴

For the next few decades, Sarasate enjoyed great acclaim wherever he appeared. His fame and art reached a new height in the 1890s. A series of highly successful concerts in England and Scotland served as a prelude to a grand tour of Canada, the United States and Mexico in 1889–90 with pianist and composer Eugen d’Albert. The tour consisted of 100 concerts, which began on November 15th, 1889 in New York and concluded on May 15th, 1890. Everywhere the critics were unanimous in their praise. On his second tour to the Americas, an editorial from *The Musical Courier*, May 25th, 1898, commented on Sarasate’s playing as “Feminine, capricious and yet fascinating, his interpretation of the classics is far from satisfactory. In his own transcriptions of Spanish Melodies, he is unapproachable. His tone is small and sweet. He has paid America two visits, the last in company with Eugen d’Albert.”⁵

Many of Sarasate’s contemporaries and critics believed that his strongly and clearly defined style of playing was not ideally suited for large-scale or classical compositions. When he played the Beethoven Concerto in Berlin in the early 1880s, the

² Auer 1980, 92.

³ Ginsburg 1980, 47.

⁴ Flesch, *Memoirs* 1979, 38.

⁵ Ginsburg 1980, 293.

critics compared him unfavorably with Joachim. Carl Flesch, in his book *The Art of the Violin Playing: Artistic realization & Instruction*, criticized Sarasate's playing: "His playing was based all too little on an intellectual-musical basis, and all too largely on technical superiority, on an ever soft, impeccable tone, an unerring, smooth, tonally beautiful technique."⁶ Although his interpretation of the classics may not have conformed to the German ideal and that of the intellectualists, his approach to classical music with scrupulous attention to detail, clarity and beauty was still evident. Sir George Henschel, the first conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, commented on Sarasate's performance in 1877, "His interpretation of the Mendelssohn Concerto came to German ears like something of a revelation, creating veritable furore, and indeed I doubt if in lusciousness of tone, crystalline clearness of execution, refinement and grace that performance has been, or ever will be, surpassed."⁷ Despite the contrary views of Sarasate's playing of the classics, he truly shone when playing his own compositions. His vibrant and energetic playing of his Spanish Dances was unmatched and highly praised by all his contemporaries. In his book, Auer praised Sarasate's Spanish Dances, as well as his performance of major works by his contemporaries: "Sarasate's own original, ingenious and effective concert pieces, his *Airs Espagnols*, so warmly coloured with the fire and romance of his native land, are by no means his greatest tribute to the violin repertory. It was the wider appreciation he won by his playing of the great violin works of his own epoch for which he deserves the highest credit."⁸

⁶ Flesch 1930, 74.

⁷ Henschel 1918, 169.

⁸ Auer 1980, 92.

As the century drew to a close, rumors of Sarasate's deteriorating playing began to spread. Despite some inconsistent views on this matter, the nine records Sarasate made in 1904 (four years before his death) showed him in reasonably good form without any decline in technical mastery. At the age of sixty, Sarasate could be considered elderly if compared to the life span of today. Paganini died at 58; Vieuxtemps suffered partial paralysis at 53, ending his concert career; Viotti and Wilhelmj retired in their early 40s; and Wieniawski died before his 45th birthday. Although Joachim lived to be 76, his playing also succumbed to gradual physical deterioration. A 1903 review in the *Strad* stated, "Sarasate returned to England with his wonderful powers quite unimpaired."⁹ Joseph Szigeti (1892–1973), a Hungarian violinist, commented vaguely in his book *Szigeti on the Violin* about Sarasate's 1906 afternoon recital at Wigmore Hall in London as nothing characteristic. Szigeti could only remember Sarasate's "fixed gaze beyond the heads of the audience and a feeling that he was somehow absent from and not deeply involved in the music."¹⁰ Szigeti suspected that the "fixed gaze" may have been due to physical causes. Szigeti also commented on Sarasate's recording as a contradiction to everything he has heard about his brilliant technical ability. Regardless, Sarasate continued to performed publicly until 1907, when he collapsed during a concert. A lifetime of constant cigar smoking may have brought on the final illness. Sarasate's last summer was spent at his beautiful Biarritz home. In 1908, Sarasate died of chronic bronchitis, surrounded by his dearest friends.

Many believed that Sarasate represented the Apollonian ideal of violin playing — a tone of unsurpassed beauty, a technique of effortless perfection, an interpretation of

⁹ Gold 1994, 687.

¹⁰ Szigeti 1979, 170.

elegant objectivity. He was a true Spanish gentleman and was always impeccably dressed. During his life-long and successful career, he amassed a considerable fortune, which he willed mainly to charities. He left most of his earthly goods to the city of Pamplona, his native town, where there now stands a special Sarasate museum in the conservatory. His Spanish Dances, which will be discussed in the next chapter, continue to inspire musicians and audience around the world.

Pablo de Sarasate: the Composer

Sarasate's artistic image was shaped as much by his impeccable playing as by his own composition. His total output of fifty-four opus numbers was considerable:

Complete Catalogue of Sarasate's Compositions

<u>Opus</u>	<u>Composition</u>	<u>Instrumentation</u>
—	<i>Fantaisie Caprice</i>	Violin & piano
—	<i>Souvenir de Faust</i>	Violin & piano
—	<i>Mazurka Mi</i>	Violin & piano
No. 1	<i>Fantasia on La forza del destino</i>	Violin & piano
No. 2	<i>Homenaje a Rossini</i>	Violin & piano
No. 3	<i>La dame blanche de Boildieu</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 4	<i>Réverie</i>	Violin & piano
No. 5	<i>Fantasia on Romeo and Juliette</i>	Violin & piano
No. 6	<i>Caprice on Mireille</i>	Violin & piano
No. 7	<i>Confidences</i>	Violin & piano
No. 8	<i>Souvenir de Domont</i>	Violin & piano
No. 9	<i>Les Adieux</i>	Violin & piano
No. 10	<i>Sérénade Andalouse</i>	Violin & piano
No. 11	<i>Le sommeil</i>	Violin & piano
No. 12	<i>Moscoviënne</i>	Violin & piano
No. 13	<i>New Fantasia on Faust</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 14	<i>Fantassie on Der Freischütz</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 15	<i>Mosaïque de Zampa</i>	Violin & piano
No. 16	<i>Gavota on Mignon</i>	Violin & piano
No. 17	<i>Prière at Berceuse</i>	Violin & piano
No. 18	<i>Airs espagnols</i>	Violin & piano
No. 19	<i>Fantasy on Martha</i>	Violin & piano
No. 20	<i>Zigeunerweisen</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 21	<i>Malagueña y Habanera</i>	Violin & piano
No. 22	<i>Romanza andaluza y Jota navarra</i>	Violin & piano
No. 23	<i>Playera y Zapateado</i>	Violin & piano
No. 24	<i>Capricho vasco</i>	Violin & piano
No. 25	<i>Carmen Fantasia</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 26	<i>Danzas Españolas No. 1 y No. 2</i>	Violin & piano

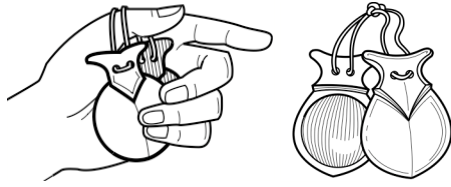
No. 27	<i>Jota aragonesa</i>	Violin & piano
No. 28	<i>Serenata andaluza</i>	Violin & piano
No. 29	<i>El canto del ruiseñor</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 30	<i>Bolero</i>	Violin & piano
No. 31	<i>Balada</i>	Violin & piano
No. 32	<i>Muñeira</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 33	<i>Navarra</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 34	<i>Airs Écossais</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 35	<i>Peteneras, caprice espagnol</i>	Violin & piano
No. 36	<i>Jota de San Fermín</i>	Violin & piano
No. 37	<i>Zortzico Adiós montañas mías</i>	Violin & piano
No. 38	<i>Viva Sevilla!</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 39	<i>Zortzico de Iparraguirre</i>	Violin & piano
No. 40	<i>Introduction et fandango varié</i>	Violin & piano
No. 41	<i>Introduction et caprice-jota</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 42	<i>Zortzico Miramar</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 43	<i>Introduction et tarantelle</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 44	<i>La chase</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 45	<i>Nocturno — Serenata</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 46	<i>Gondoliéra Veneziana</i>	Violin & piano
No. 47	<i>Melodía rumana</i>	Violin & piano
No. 48	<i>K'Esprit Follet</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 49	<i>Canciones rusas</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 50	<i>Jota de Pamplona</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 51	<i>Fantasie on Don Giovanni</i>	Violin & piano
No. 52	<i>Jota de Pablo</i>	Violin & orchestra
No. 53	<i>La Rève</i>	Violin & piano
No. 54	<i>Fantasie on Die Zauberflöte</i>	Violin & orchestra

Most of his early works, consisting of opera fantasies, were also brilliantly played in his earlier concert programming. Later he devoted most of his compositions to the Spanish style pieces, notably the Spanish Dances. The general utilization of the violin techniques in these compositions can be characterized as quick and small-stepped movements in both hands. To play his compositions typically required great left hand agility, fluid movement for quick big leaps and extremely fast bow movement. Contrary to Paganini's compositions, Sarasate rarely used big left-hand stretches and constant long

bows in the right hand. Although often considered the spiritual heir to Paganini, Sarasate rarely performed Paganini's compositions. Despite Sarasate's brilliant virtuoso technique, his small hands discouraged him from performing Paganini's repertoire, which typically included many stretched left-hand techniques such as fingered octaves, tenth double stops and double harmonics. Sarasate tailored his own compositions to fit his own physique and created a new, fresh approach to violin techniques. In this way, Sarasate was continuing in Paganini's footsteps, because Paganini also tailored his own works to his own hands, in his case with techniques that required unusually large hands.

Sarasate also used certain techniques in his own special style. As noted by many of his contemporaries, his left-hand pizzicato created a guitar-like effect, very different from Paganini's, who pioneered this technique. Sarasate incorporated left-hand pizzicato in many of his compositions. In his *Zigeunerweisen* Op. 20, translated Gypsy Airs, left-hand pizzicato was used in combination with the bow in the Allegro molto vivace at a hair-raising speed. In his Jota Navarra Op. 22 No.2, the left-hand pizzicato was utilized in a variety of combinations: left-hand pizzicato with the right hand holding a long note (Example 1.1), which was also used extensively in his *Capricho vasco* Op. 24; a right-hand pizzicato note first followed by a series of left-hand pizzicato notes (Example 1.2), which was used extensively in Sarasate's other Spanish styled pieces. The effect was aimed at imitating noises made by striking the steps, or the castanets, the small concave pieces of wood or ivory joined in pairs by a cord and clicked together by the fingers as a rhythmic accompaniment to Spanish dancing (see Illustration 1); and left-hand pizzicato alternating with quick spiccato (Example 1.3). Also in his *Zapateado* Op. 23 No. 2 (Example 1.4).

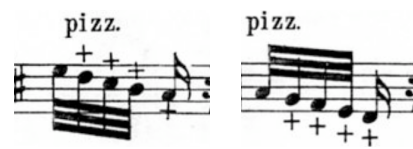
Illustration 1



Example 1.1 - Jota Navarra Op. 22 No.2



Example 1.2 - Jota Navarra



Example 1.3 - Jota Navarra



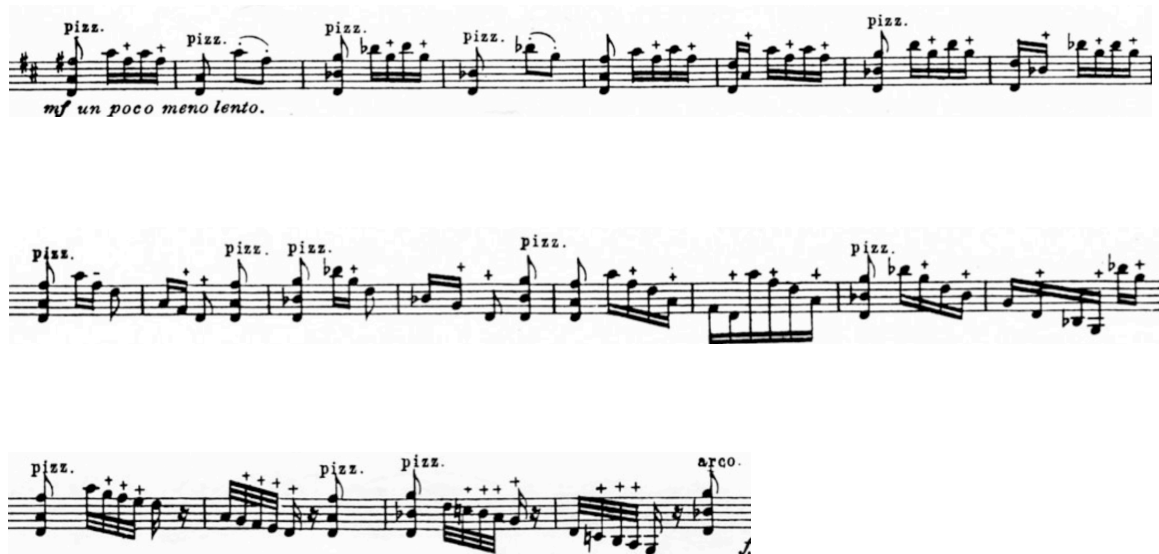
Example 1.4 - Zapateado Op. 23 No. 2



Perhaps it was his *Malagueña* Op. 21 No.1 that had the most striking use of left-hand pizzicato (Example 1.5). In this passage, Sarasate used the pizzicatos to imitate the guitar playing Malagueña dance rhythms and ornamented with faster and more continuous left-hand pizzicatos as the rhythmic pattern repeated. This particular ingenious use of

left-hand pizzicato was adapted by many composers, most notably the French composer, Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) with his *Tzigane* for violin and orchestra.

Example 1.5 - *Malagueña* Op. 21 No.1



Sarasate also had an incredible staccato. He invariably used the *staccato volante*, flying staccato, in his own compositions as well as other major works. Flesch made an observation with regard to Sarasate's flying staccato: "Sarasate was the only violinist whom I ever heard play the flying staccato in the Finale of the Mendelssohn Concerto at the extreme tip of the bow."¹¹ Auer made similar observations: "Sarasate used only the *staccato volante*, the flying staccato, not too fast a type, yet one infinitely graceful. This last quality, grace, illuminated all his playing, and was sustained by a tone of supreme singing quality which, however, was not very powerful."¹² The difference of effect of flying staccato when compared to the regular staccato is no doubt primarily a visual one.

¹¹ Flesch, *Memoirs* 1979, 38.

¹² Auer 1980, 27.

Sarasate, being an experienced performer, knew the advantage of showmanship. He incorporated passages with staccato, intended to be played as flying staccato, in many of his compositions. His *Zigeunerweisen* Op. 20, *Carmen Fantasy* Op. 25, *Habañera*, Op. 21 No.2 (Example 2.1), and *Zapateado* Op. 23 No. 2 (Example 2.2) all incorporated long passages with continuous staccato.

Example 2.1 - *Habañera*, Op. 21 No.2



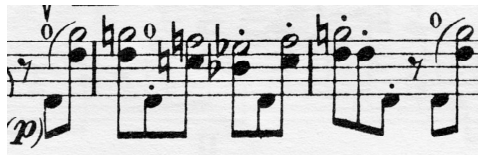
Example 2.2 - *Zapateado* Op. 23 No. 2



Another interesting use of violin technique was the use of harmonics. To counter Paganini's famous double harmonics, a technique especially well-suited to Paganini's large hands and long fingers, Sarasate used harmonics extensively in a variety of ways that were equally demanding. He often alternated harmonics with real notes at an extremely fast speed, sometimes also with big leaps. In his *Zapateado* Op. 23 No. 2, the harmonics alternate with notes at such a speed and irregularity that it is extremely difficult to execute

them with clarity (Example 3.1). In the opening of *Habañera*, Op. 21 No.2, the harmonics were alternated with a series of very difficult arpeggios (Example 3.2).

Example 3.1 - *Zapateado* Op. 23 No. 2



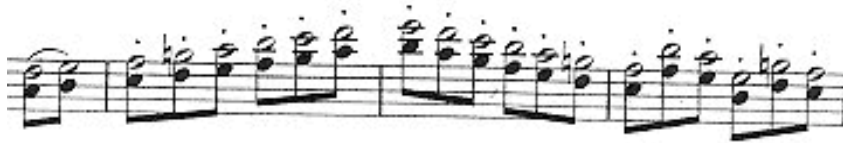
Example 3.2 - *Habañera*, Op. 21 No.2



Sarasate sometimes used continuous harmonics in long passages at an extremely fast speed or high registers. In the *Zapateado* Op. 23 No. 2, an extended passage with continuous harmonics in irregular step-wise motion make it very difficult to play with correct intonation and clarity (Example 3.3). In his *Spanish Dance* Op. 26 No.1, the harmonics are used continuously in a cadenza-like passage (Example 3.4). The technical challenge of playing this passage lies within the artistic choice of the player himself. If one chooses to play the continuous descending and ascending harmonics smoothly, one

would have no choice but to play all the harmonics on G string which will have to shift up to 8th position. To play harmonics at such high position is extremely difficult and risky.

Example 3.3 - *Zapateado* Op. 23 No. 2



Example 3.4 - *Spanish Dance* Op. 26 No.1



Of all of Sarasate's compositions, the fourteen Spanish Dances captured in a special way the attention of his colleagues, composers, critics, and contemporary audiences. Most believed that Sarasate was completely in his element when playing these Spanish Dances. His grace, sound, and incomparable ease of technical mastery when playing these dances inspired countless violinists and composers around the world. Albert Spalding, the American violinist, depicted Sarasate as a bewitching violinist. Flesch described Sarasate when playing his Spanish Dances: "He began to play with unheard of sovereignty and, in a rapid climax, put his audience into astonishment, admiration, and highest rapture."¹³ Out of these Spanish Dances, the four volumes of Op. 21, Op. 22, Op.

¹³ Flesch, *Memoirs* 1979, 38

23 and Op. 26 marked the center and culmination of his art. Each volume, or book, paired a slow and a fast Spanish Dance:

Spanish Dances Book I

Malagueña Opus 21 No.1

Habañera Opus 21 No.2

Spanish Dances Book II

Romanza Andaluza Opus 22 No.1

Jota Navarra Opus 22 No.2

Spanish Dances Book III

Playera Opus 23 No.1

Zapateado Opus 23 No.2

Spanish Dances Book IV

Spanish Dance Opus 26 No.1

Spanish Dance Opus 26 No.2

Malagueña, the first dance of the collection, begins with a simple six bar melody in Andante and expressive 3/8 on the G-string. The *Malagueña* dance originated from the old Málaga fandangos, a court dance. It became a flamenco style in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is very rich from a melodic point of view, and often accompanied with guitar playing the rhythmic pattern of the fandango (meaning “go and dance”). Sarasate accentuated the typical guitar accompaniment by imitating the guitar with violin pizzicatos in the middle section shown in Example 1.5. The same six bar melody returns on the E string to finish the piece.

Habañera, the second dance of the collection, is a fast energetic dance with a constant *Habañera* rhythmic pattern in both the violin and piano throughout the whole piece (Example 4.1). The *Habañera* came from Havana, Cuba and made its way to

Andalusa, Spain in the early 19th century. Although a faster dance than the Malagueña, the Habañera is usually governed by a slower duple meter, 2/4. The violin playing displays the typical Sarasate bravura technique requiring dexterity with extremely fast speed in both hands (Example 4.2). The Habañera rhythm is perhaps the most widely adapted rhythm other than the Tango. Georges Bizet (1838–1875), a French composer, used this rhythm in his opera *Carmen*, namely the Habañera Aria.

Example 4.1 - *Habañera* Op. 21 No.2



Example 4.2 - *Habañera*

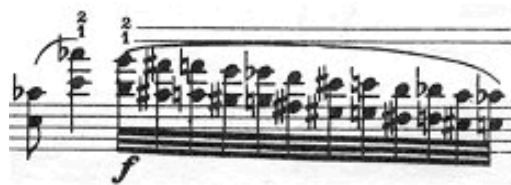


Romanza Andaluza, the third dance of the collection, goes back to a slower pace with a continuous, exotic and quite seductive rhythmic pattern in the piano (Example 5.1), which was later adapted by Saint-Saëns in his Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso Op. 28. The violin uses extensively the thirds and the sixths double stops in the second half of the piece to enrich the harmony, and to imitate duo voices singing together. There is also a descending scale in sixths that is used again in his *Zigeunerweisen* Op. 20, *Carmen Fantasie* Op. 25, and the Franz Waxman *Carmen Fantasie* (Example 5.2).

Example 5.1 - *Romanza Andaluza* Op. 22 No.1



Example 5.2 - *Romanza Andaluza*

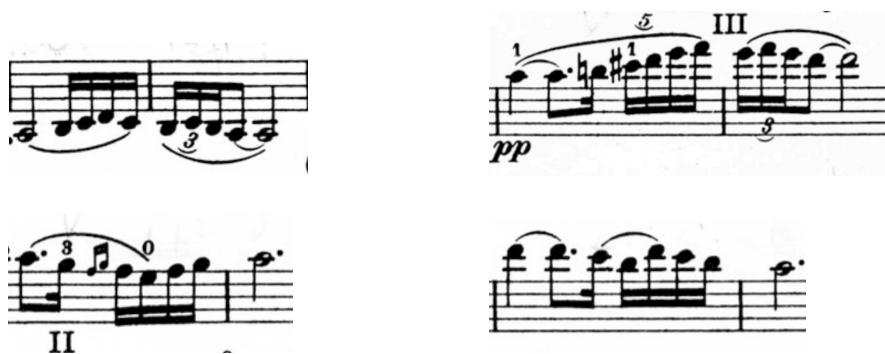


Jota Navarra, the fourth dance of the collection, is a dance in fast triple meter (3/8). The Jota came to be in the 1700s and is the national folk dance of Aragón, Spain. The "Jota of Aragón" is the oldest of the styles and corresponds with the ancient carols, which in Chaucer's time meant a dance as well as a song. Funerals and wakes sometimes afford opportunities for the dance; the Jota, for instance, is often performed as part of the

ceremony. Jota is in great favor with the crowd. The Aragóñese in their pride in the dance say that a pretty girl dancing the Jota sends an arrow into every man's heart by each one of her movements. Navarra is an autonomous region of northern Spain. Out of all four volumes of Spanish Dances, the *Jota Navarra* is by far the most virtuosic and challenging one. As shown in Example 1.1 through 1.3, there are a variety of left-hand pizzicatos. The range of positions and shiftings are extremely wide. There is also the creative use of harmonics that Sarasate typically incorporated in his other difficult works.

Playera, the fifth dance of the collection, is the most soulful and the slowest dance of all. Sarasate used a common four sixteenth note pattern in a very special way, which was adapted by many composers writing Spanish style compositions. The four sixteenth notes are sometimes placed at the end of a bar to create motion to the next one (Example 6.1); or placed at the beginning of the bar to accentuate a phrase (Example 6.2). With these two placements of the four sixteenth notes, one has the freedom to play these notes “out of time” to create an interesting effect.

Example 6.1 - *Playera* Opus 23 No.1



Example 6.2 - *Playera* Opus 23 No.1



Another distinctive use of a common rhythm is the use of quick triplet in the beginning of a bar (Example 6.3). The triplet, either in sixteenth notes or in eighth notes, usually ascends quickly up a step and resolves down two steps into a long note. This rhythmic figure creates a sense of motion and gesture that is the essence and the typical mannerism of most Spanish dances. Lalo used this figure extensively throughout his *Symphonie Espagnole* Op. 21.

Example 6.3 – *Playera*



Zapateado, the sixth dance of the collection, is a quick dance in 3/8. *Zapateado* is a form of Fandango usually accompanied by the guitar. In this dance, there is considerable noise made by the feet. Its steps are struck while the dancing movement progressively grows quicker. Sarasate used left-hand pizzicato extensively to simulate the noise made by the feet. Like his previous fast dances, the *Zapateado* requires total mastery of the instrument and quick reflexes.

Spanish Dance Op. 26 No.1, the seventh dance of the collection, is the least characteristic dance of all. With no distinctive reference to any of the dances, it begins with a quasi-cadenza, fantasy-like section in minor. The beautiful middle section, in major, is reminiscent of the *Romanza Andaluza*. It then returns to the minor section like the beginning. With this particular dance, Sarasate could demonstrate his trademark sensual feminine sound.

Spanish Dance Op. 26 No.2, the final dance of the collection, returns to a fast tempo with the use of both the Habañera and the Tango rhythms. The whole dance alternates between the Habañera, more energetic (Example 7.1), and the Tango, more lyrical (Example 7.2), sections. There is a very interesting use of four-note chord for the violin in the middle of a triplet in the Tango sections, which allows the bow to create a more exaggerated gesture and timing (Example 7.3). This particular effect is used in the Intermezzo movement (in the orchestra) and the Finale of Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*.

Example 7.1 - *Spanish Dance* Op. 26 No.2



Example 7.2 - *Spanish Dance* Op. 26 No.2



Example 7.3 - *Spanish Dance* Op. 26 No.2



As both violinist and composer, Sarasate had intimate knowledge of the instrument and his own physique, which enabled him to successfully and effectively create his own compositions. All eight Spanish Dances were written in Keys that sound good on the violin: the *Malagueña* and the *Jota Navarra* in D major; the *Habañera* and the *Playera* in d minor; the *Zapateado* and the *Spanish Dance* Op.26 No.1 in A major; the *Romanza Andaluza* in C major; and the *Spanish Dance* Op.26 No. 2 in a minor. These keys made use of sympathetic vibration of open strings that also favors the sound of certain double stops and chords. The typical characteristics of every Spanish Dance were faithfully portrayed with ingenious use of virtuoso techniques. Ultimately, it was Sarasate's performance and personality that brought these dances to their height. The influences of these Spanish Dances were immense as we can see by the flourish of similar Spanish-styled music composed for, or after him in the next chapters.

Camille Saint-Saëns

Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso Opus 28

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921) was a French composer and pianist whose long life spanned nearly the entire duration of the Romantic period. He began his career as a musical pioneer who introduced the symphonic poem to France and championed the radical works of Liszt and Wagner in a time when Bach and Mozart were the norms. Saint-Saëns was also part of the phenomenon of exoticism in Europe, an interest in Folk and Oriental elements in music, from the mid-19th to early 20th century. His music was often regarded by his contemporaries and critics as music of elegance, and technically flawless.

During his life, Saint-Saëns was a friend to Europe's most significant musicians. Saint-Saëns remained close to both his pupil, Gabriel Fauré, and to Franz Liszt until the ends of their lives. He also maintained a close relationship with Pablo de Sarasate throughout Sarasate's entire career. Saint-Saëns recalls in his essays about his first acquaintance with the fifteen-year-old, already highly acclaimed, virtuoso in 1859, "He had been good enough to asked me, in the most casual way imaginable, to write a concerto for him. Greatly flattered and delighted at the request, I made him a promise and kept my word with the Concerto in A major to which — I do not know why — the German title of Concertstück has been given."¹⁴ From this moment on, Sarasate was a

¹⁴ Saint-Saëns 1922, 113.

major stimulus for Saint-Saëns's violin works. Subsequently, Saint-Saëns dedicated most of his violin concertos, Sonatas and virtuoso pieces to Sarasate.

Sarasate championed and made popular most of Saint-Saëns's violin works. One particular virtuoso piece, the *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso* Op. 28, written in 1863, stood out with its distinct style rooted in Sarasate's Spanish heritage. The virtuoso piece, in two major sections, begins with the melancholy expressive Introduction, and later explodes into the Rondo section consisting of various Spanish-style episodes with highly technical passages. The whole piece is full of passion yet tastefully and classically controlled, a distinct Saint-Saëns stylistic trait. One could describe the general impression of this work as "grace under fire," which fits Sarasate's personal violin style perfectly. The virtuosic passages were obviously tailored to Sarasate's technical fortes: the continuous staccatos (Example 8.1); the elegant touches at the tip of the bow (Example 8.2); and extremely fast *moto perpetual*-like coda (Example 8.3), which Sarasate also used in the coda of his own *Habañera* (Example 8.4).

Example 8.1 - *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso* Op. 28



Example 8.2 - *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*



Example 8.3 - *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*



Example 8.4 - *Habañera* Op. 21



The Rondo section, in 6/8, is driven by the strong, duple division attacks in the piano while the violin varies and displaces rhythmic patterns between the duple and the triple divisions. In the middle of the Rondo section, where the meter changes in the violin to 2/4, a 6/8 rhythmic pattern, similar to the one used in Sarasate's *Romanza Andaluza*, is used to introduce a more mellow and singing section (Example 8.5). This rhythmic pattern is also cleverly used in a different context and mood, in which the pattern begins in the second half of the bar in fortissimo (Example 8.6).

Example 8.5 - *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*



Example 8.6 - *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*



Édouard Lalo

Symphonie Espagnole Opus 21

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Scherzando (Allegro molto)
- III. Intermezzo (Allegro non troppo)
- IV. Andante
- V. Rondo (Allegro)

Édouard Lalo (1823–1892) was a French composer of Spanish descent. For years Lalo worked as a violinist and teacher in Paris before gaining fame as composer. Although Lalo was not one of the most recognized composers in French music, his *Symphonie Espagnole* Op. 21 for violin and orchestra has secured a prominent place in violin repertoire. Like Saint-Saëns, Lalo was strongly influenced by Sarasate in his violin compositions and found the Spanish rhythms and harmonies irresistible. The *Symphonie Espagnole*, which combines the characteristics of the symphony, the concerto, and the suite, was dedicated to and premiered by Sarasate on 7 February 1875. The wording of *pour violon principale* in the title suggests a concertante style in which the solo and the orchestra are treated equally. However, the solo violin part still remains the dominant voice throughout the entire work.

In Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*, one could find the expression of his Spanish ancestral heritage. Although many criticized the authenticity of its Spanish style, as was done with Bizet's *Carmen*, Lalo was the first to transform a series of Spanish folk melodies, brought to him by Sarasate, into a large scale orchestral work. The *Symphonie*

is in an unusual five-movement format. The first movement, being the most symphonic movement, projects a serious and forceful mood from the opening two-measure fanfare. The more relaxed and seductive second theme is unmistakably in Spanish style. It is in the next four movements that Lalo truly shines with his charming lyricism and the spirit of song and dance that is wholly Spanish. The second movement, a scherzo, begins with pizzicato strings and harp suggesting the sound of guitar. It incorporates an imaginative middle section that utilizes a rhythmic figure (Example 9.1) Sarasate often used in his Spanish dances, including the *Playera* Op. 23 No.1 (see Example 6.3).

Example 9.1 - *Symphonie Espagnole*: Scherzo



This particular rhythmic figure is used to add sentiment to the descending scale and to accentuate the beginning of the bar. It is also used in the opening themes of the first and fourth movements. The Intermezzo, with its constant change of registers, is the most technically demanding movement of the entire work. In the early 20th century, a curious tradition developed, of omitting the Intermezzo movement from performance. This evidently derives from its technical difficulty, as it is a strong movement musically. The capricious middle section consists of scale and arpeggio passages that resembles the ones in Sarasate's *Habañera* Opus 21 No.2 and *Jota Navarra* Opus 22 No.2.

The fourth movement, Andante, opens with a chorale-like sound in the low woodwinds and strings that leads into the somber and impassioned song of the solo violin. The Rondo Finale represents a gracious gesture toward Sarasate, reflecting the spirit of his own *Zapateado* Op. 23 No. 2. The quick 6/8 meter, the graceful yet exciting violin solo, and some technical features (Example 9.2 and 9.3) that Sarasate often used in his Spanish Dances are all evidences of its homage to Sarasate, the violinist and the composer.

Example 9.2 - *Symphonie Espagnole*: Rondo, left-hand Pizzicatos



- *Zapateado*



Example 9.3 - *Symphonie Espagnole*: Rondo, four-note chord.



- *Spanish Dance* Op. 26 No.2



Other Influenced Works

The Fritz Kreisler Transcriptions

Enrique Granados Spanish Dance in E minor

Isaac Albeniz Tango

Histories of contemporary Spanish music usually begin with the triad of composers Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909), Enrique Granados (1867–1916), and Manuel de Falla (1876–1946). To a certain degree, Sarasate epitomized the musical situation in the generation before these three composers with his copious amount of works clearly rooted in Spanish folklore. As both violinist and composer, Sarasate promoted and popularized his own works like many before him, Paganini and Liszt, and those after, Albéniz and Granados.

The works I have selected, Granados's *Spanish Dance* in E minor and Albéniz's *Tango*, were both written for the piano. Fritz Kreisler, an Austrian violinist and composer, made the transcribed versions I am playing for the performance part of this dissertation. Like Paganini and Sarasate before him, Kreisler shaped his career from his own compositions. Kreisler recalls his first impression of hearing Sarasate: "I was only seven when I attended the conservatory and was much more interested in playing in the park...than taking lessons on the violin. And yet some of the most lasting musical impressions of my life were gathered there. Not so much as regards study itself, as with respect to good music I heard. Some very great men played at the conservatory when I

was a pupil. There were Joachim, Sarasate in his prime.... I really believe hearing them was a greater event in my life and did more for me than five years of study.”¹⁵

Inspired by Sarasate’s playing and compositions, Kreisler composed his own Spanish dances, *Malagueña* and *Spanish Valse* (incomplete), and transcribed many others. Kreisler made some interesting additions to Granados’s *Spanish Dance* in E minor and Albéniz’s *Tango*. In the *Spanish Dance* in E minor, Kreisler repeated the beautiful middle section by switching the main voice to the piano with violin playing the ornamented accompaniment on the top (Example 10.1).

Example 10.1 - Granados’s *Spanish Dance* in E minor

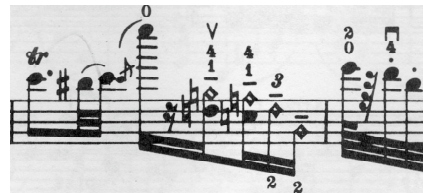


In the *Tango*, Kreisler also added ornamented violin accompaniment with use of Sarasate-styled *staccato volante*, flying staccato (Example 10.2), and continuous fast harmonics (Example 10.3).

Example 10.2 - Albéniz’s *Tango*



Example 10.3 - *Tango*



The additions Kreisler made added grace and lightheartedness that is very much in the style of Sarasate’s playing and compositions.

¹⁵ Martens 1919, 102.

Franz Waxman

Carmen Fantasie

The last work I have selected is a fantasy based on themes from the Opera, *Carmen*, by George Bizet (1838–1875). Bizet was a French composer and pianist who also had a personal relationship with Sarasate. Bizet's 1875 opera, *Carmen*, was based on an 1846 novel of the same name by Prosper Mérimée. Influenced by Verdi's *Don Carlos* (premiered in 1867 in Paris), Bizet composed the title role in *Carmen* for mezzo-soprano. The premier was not an immediate success. Bizet became despondent over the perceived failure, but praise came from such luminaries as Camille Saint-Saëns, Peter Tchaikovsky, and Claude Debussy, who recognized its greatness. Sarasate expressed the same views by composing the *Carmen Fantasie* Op. 25 based on Bizet's opera, and played it all over Europe. Their views were prophetic, as the public eventually made *Carmen* one of the most popular works in operatic history, and Sarasate's *Carmen Fantasie* became the ultimate challenge and delight in the virtuoso violin repertoire.

The Franz Waxman's adaptation of Bizet's *Carmen* continues the path that was laid out by Sarasate and added more complex tonal colors and orchestral accompaniment. Although similar in title and selections of the arias, the Waxman *Carmen Fantasie* is a thoroughly different work. Franz Waxman was a German born Jewish-American composer. He was famous for his musical scores for films. This 12-minute virtuoso piece was one of several works Waxman wrote for a 1945 film, *Humoresque*, starring John

Garfield as a struggling violinist. Jascha Heifetz (1901–1987), a close friend of Waxman, agreed to record the violin part for the soundtrack, and together he and Waxman selected familiar classical works to be adapted for violin and orchestra, with the violin parts tailored and conceived specifically for Heifetz. Unfortunately, Warner Bros. would not agree to Heifetz's contractual terms. The sound track was played by the young American violinist, Issac Stern (1920–2001) instead.

Conclusion

Pablo de Sarasate's influences on the Spanish styled compositions and the development of modern violin technique were evident in all of the works I have selected in this dissertation. With his own compositions, particularly his four volumes of Spanish Dances, and his amazing playing, countless composers and musicians were also inspired. In the first decade of the 20th century, the French music world experienced a veritable glut of Spanish style compositions. Leading the way was Debussy, with his *Estampes* (1903), whose middle movement is entitled "La soirée dans Grenade." Ravel followed suit with his *Rapsodie espagnole* (1908) and his first opera, *L'Heure espagnole* (1911). And finally, Massenet tried to revive the Romantic Spanish style with his *Don Quichotte* (1910). Saint-Saëns, like Lalo, would hardly have thought of enriching his own music with Spanish coloring, were it not for his acquaintance with Sarasate.

Sarasate's art not only influenced composers but also instrumentalists around the world. Nathan Milstein (1903–1992), a Russian-Jewish born violinist, recalls the birth of the famous pianist Vladimir Horowitz's own Carmen Fantasy. "On our tours around the Russia we often played Sarasate's *Carmen Fantasie*. Horowitz complained that Sarasate, as a violinist, wrote a virtuoso violin part and gave the pianist a modest role. Volodya could not accept this, of course, and began improvising his own accompaniment. These

improvisations gradually coalesced into his own “Carmen Fantasie,” which he later recorded, I believe three times, each one a different version.”¹⁶

As a violinist, I performed my first Sarasate Spanish Dance, *Capricho vasco* Op. 24, when I was ten years old. The experience not only enriched my musical language but also expanded my technical abilities. In this dissertation, I performed these Spanish Dances and Spanish style inspired music in its entirety, which is rarely heard in most concert programming. The experience was as rewarding as, perhaps more than, the one I had when I was ten. I have gained interpretive understanding of this Spanish-styled music and, more importantly, have stretched my technical abilities. There is no doubt that the works of the violinist-composer, such as Sarasate, Paganini, Wieniawski and many others, are an invaluable part of the violin repertoire. Their technical innovations are challenging for performers and extremely useful pedagogically. Despite all these wonderful benefits, violinists of today rarely play these Spanish Dances in concerts, or compose their own works like Sarasate and many others did. I am hoping that other violinists and musicians will rediscover these precious sounds of Spain and renew their interest in this great violin music as I did.

¹⁶ Milstein 1990, 54.

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