

CHAPTER X

LA MODULACIÓN AGITADA

In the previous two chapters we have repeatedly pointed to Soler's use of striking and even startling modulations. It is well worth devoting a separate chapter to this particular feature, because the frequency of modulatory experiments in Soler's sonatas, and the fact that he actually wrote a book on the subject, make it clear that our composer was, indeed, much preoccupied with this aspect of harmony.

The book we have just mentioned is, of course, Soler's *Llave de la Modulación*,¹ and it is necessary to discuss at least some aspects of this book to find an appropriate approach to the modulatory progressions encountered in the sonatas. In chapter ten, Soler explained at length why he attached such importance to modulation. He wrote: "In the time of the famous Zarlino, who (as can be gathered from Cerone) was so influential during the last years of the 16th century, composers already used to write such modulations as are still to-day employed by composers whom one may (as the saying goes) call cheap ... And to prove our assertion, we refer you to Zarlino, book 2 of his Harmonic Demonstrations, and you will agree. There are excellent masters of music to-day, who modulate their work so superbly that the result is truly a masterpiece of sonority: this is the latest musical discovery, and surpasses the rest."²

Evidently, then, Soler was prepared to evaluate a composition according to the amount and suavity of modulation therein — being, in 1762, just as militant about the "latest" musical discovery as, in another frame of reference, Pierre Boulez in 1952.³ This militant "modernism" of Soler is even more strongly expressed in the following: "It is necessary to be well versed in the definition [technique of modulation], in

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1. Soler, A., *Llave de la Modulación*, Madrid, 1762. — The English equivalent of this title would be "Key to Modulation". — See also Chapter I of this treatise.
 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80. — This translation from Old Spanish into English was prepared by Mrs J. de Ferretti. — It is opportune to point out here that extant copies of Soler's *Llave* are extremely rare, and that we were only able to get hold of the text by the great courtesy of Prof. M.S. Kastner of Lisbon, who went to the trouble of having photostats of his own copy made for our use.
 3. Boulez, P., "Schönberg is dead", *The Score*, No. 6, May 1952, p. 21: "... all composition other than twelve-tone is *useless*."

order to answer those who would have composition confined to the use of regular progressions, with the result, of course, that an uninspired composition is the outcome. This is the opinion of an authority in the matter, who surpasses (let that be known in this Faculty) any of those who have written music,⁴ and I add that if a composition has no modulation, it will lack perfection altogether.”⁵

Soler's expostulation that “it is necessary to be well versed in the definition” was no mere verbiage, because in chapter ten of his *Llave de la Modulaci3n* he outlined and exemplified⁶ a method of modulation, called by him *la modulaci3n agitada*,⁷ by which one can proceed from and to any key⁸ within three or at the utmost within four bars. Soler's Latin definition of this type of modulation reads: “*Modulatio agitata est illa, que de remoto loco brevissime ad proprium pervenit.*”⁹

The four Rules governing these modulations are as ingeniously simple as they are practical. To show their practical side first, it is interesting to note that Soler's versatility in modulation apparently stemmed from his long experience as organist; he wrote: “Whenever the music is wandering away from its original key, in which it must perforce end, and a sudden close is called for, as happens to the organist who is signalled to stop playing an Offertory ..., it does not follow that he must stop suddenly in the middle, but that he must pass with agility and smoothness back to the original key of the work, because it is proper that the end should be precisely in that key, and not in the one he might happen to be in at that particular moment...”¹⁰

The basic simplicity of Soler's Rules is best shown by quoting them:

No. 1.

“It is unwise to pass from one key to another when they are not interrelated by notes which are mutual to both – unless one uses a tie.”¹¹

4. It is not quite clear to whom Soler is referring here as the authority.

5. Soler, A., *op. cit.*, p. 80.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-127.

7. Agitated or Fast Modulation. Cf. Soler, A., *op. cit.*, p. 80.

8. See Table VIII in this chapter. Soler's final key is always E^b major, and other keys can be arrived at by simple transposition. C[#], G^b, and G[#] major are missing from the list of departure keys, but only a little mental arithmetic is needed to make them serviceable via enharmonic change. See Examples 129 and 130 in this chapter.

9. Soler, A., *op. cit.*, p. 80.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

11. At another place (cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83) Soler adds to this that a sudden juxtaposition of unrelated keys is possible when a pause (∞) is inserted.

No. 2.

"In order to achieve sonorous modulations it is necessary to employ the dominant."

No. 3.

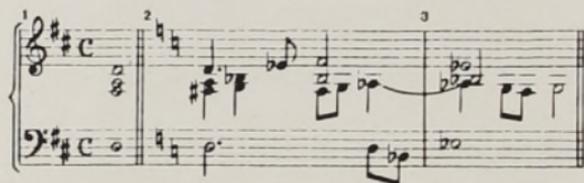
"If any key seems repugnant to the one aimed at, use the opposite".¹²

No. 4.

"The modulation will be more beautiful if it is brought about by alternating movement of the outer voices."¹³

Such as they are, these Rules may even seem too simple to make it credible that they do, indeed, embrace a complete system of modulation. A closer look at what these Rules imply will show, however, that they are really serviceable. Take, for instance, the modulation which Soler called the first *Termino*, i.e. the progression from D major to E^b major, which he exemplifies as follows (see Example 119):

Example 119 (transcription to modern notation of example I on page 86 of Soler's *Llave de la Modulación*.)



This modulation is done according to Rule 1 and – as nearly always – to Rule 2. Soler himself gave a detailed account of this particular

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12. Soler explained this more clearly on pp. 83-84 of his *Llave*: "This general rule indicates that when the original key seems repugnant to the key to be approached, because the former has sharps and the latter has flats, then flats may be used instead." In other words: enharmonic notation is required.
13. On this, too, Soler enlarged on p. 84 of his *Llave*: "This rule commands that the voices should not move together, but alternate in such a way that all the principal movements of parts should be concentrated in the outer voices. The reason is that the ear hears these two parts better than those in the middle. For in all modulation it will be observed that the voices in the middle, i.e. Alto and Tenor, serve only to accompany in accordance with the consonance that is to be produced."

modulation:¹⁴ "If I want to wander away from the said key, I make use of a natural [perfect] fourth and a minor third [sixth, above the bass]; that is the first step ... Raising the voice [soprano] from the octave above the bass to the minor third [tenth], the fourth will pass to the octave below the said minor third [will pass to the minor third, forming an octave with the soprano], rising gradually to find the false [diminished] fifth of the bass. With appropriate movement in the bass we then pass to the desired interval [dominant of the final key]. The reason why instead of dissonance we find good harmony, is that the minor sixth on the second beat is the perfect fifth of what is to come, i.e. the dominant of where the bass is to settle and simultaneously consonant with the bass of the original key; and as the minor sixth [!] is accompanied by the natural [perfect] fourth, this presupposes Gsolreut¹⁵ with a minor third [G minor] ... and as each key admits a flat, the soprano goes orderly to E^b major. — Thus it is necessary to use the minor third [sixth] which calls for the key of B^b major and, adding to that another flat, we obtain an A^b where the tenor takes over. Here the bass must move from its place to reach the interval which was indicated [to reach the dominant of the final key]. From this it can be deduced ... why this type of modulation is called Fast Modulation ...".¹⁶

Rule 2 is a plausible factor in most modulations (although in Example 120, for instance, modulation is brought about *without* a clear dominant), and need not be discussed at length. Rule 3, however, turns out to be an enlargement of Rule 1 because, essentially, Rule 3 merely stresses that the mutual note or notes of two chords are dependent only on pitch, and not on notation, i.e. Soler elevated the enharmonic change to a legitimate harmonic resource, as will be clear from the modulation which Soler called Termino 18 (see Example 120):

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14. It will be observed that Soler's terminology is archaic and, to the 20th century reader, not immediately clear and systematic; we therefore give in brackets [] whatever term would apply in modern usage.
15. The terminology of the Guidonian hexachords is used throughout Soler's *Llave*.
16. Soler, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.

Example 120 (Copy of example 2 on page 107 of Soler's *Llave de la Modulación*.)



The “opposite” mentioned by Soler in Rule 3 is, of course, D^b as against C^\sharp , A^b as against G^\sharp , F^b as against E (see Bass, Tenor, and Alto in bars 2 and 3 of Example 120). It goes without saying that the enharmonic change depends on Equal Temperament, and it is therefore obvious that in Soler’s time Equal Temperament was common usage in Spain.

Rule 4 has two aspects. Firstly, there is the stylistic one, which has a bearing on the harmonic texture of the keyboard music of Soler, Scarlatti, and pre-Classic *clavier*-composers in general:¹⁷ the outer voices not only carry most of the rhythmical and melodic action of a composition, but also imply an harmonic framework to which the middle-parts usually add no more than a dab of colour here and there. This – together with its consequences, namely the “random” dropping and introduction of parts, and the often resulting harmonic ambiguities (see Example 127) – is a legitimate development following the emancipation of idiomatic keyboard music (see Chapter VI).¹⁸

Secondly, there is the modulatory aspect of Rule 4, which is nothing but an application of the stylistic aspect to the needs of a preconceived harmonic situation to which Soler’s Rules 1 and 3 cannot spontaneously respond, i.e. a situation where the original key is so far removed from the desired key that a pivot according to Rules 1 and 3 – even on notes which are mutual to some of the cadence-chords – must be carefully prepared. Take, for instance, *Termino* 8 (see Table VIII), i.e. the modulation from B minor to E^b major, which Soler exemplified as follows (see Example (121):

17. Cf. Kirkpatrick, R., “Domenico Scarlatti’s Harmony”, *The Score*, No. 5, August 1951, p. 46.

18. Compare footnote (13), above, for Soler’s reasoning about the principality of the outer voices.

Example 121 (Copy of example 1 on page 97 of Soler's *Llave de la Modulaci3n*.)

Soler's own explanation of this modulation reads: "Termino eight you will solve by Rule four, ... and the reason [for its application] is that there are no voices which give consonance [that there are no mutual notes]. With the above Termino you must find the note which gives the order of Rule 1. Therefore, if you choose the [minor] sixth [of the original root], it will be the third of the desired key. As you alternate the movement of the outer voices, they will modulate promptly and smoothly."¹⁹

That the outer voices do, indeed, move alternately is quite obvious in Example 121 – as is the "random" introduction of parts we have mentioned in connection with the stylistic aspects of Rule 4.²⁰ Also clear is the first tentative introduction of the sixth (G) in the "bass", and how Soler never abandons it while the top-most part moves to establish this G first as VI_6 in B minor (second half of bar 2), and then as V_6 of C minor (first half of bar 3). Then the "bass" takes over the movement again against the static insistence on the D in the "soprano", which latter helps to make the C minor arpeggio ambiguous enough to be accepted – in retrospect – as VI of E^\flat major (as soon as IV of E^\flat major is established in the first half of bar 4) – from where the top-most part takes over again to introduce the final cadence. The function of the

19. Soler, A., *op. cit.*, p. 96.

20. The texture of Example 121 changes successively from two parts to four parts, to two parts, to three parts, to four parts and finally, back to two parts.

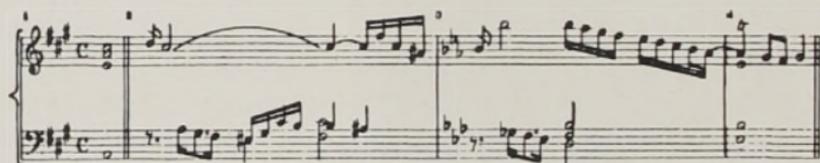
outer voices is, therefore, to “gradually” establish an harmonic frame of reference in which the pivot note (in this case G) can become plausible and functional.

Speaking about suspensions at the time, Soler made a remark that is equally fitting to the proceedings of Rule 4: “... [This] is necessary so that the ear may not get lost on the round-about way which leads it to the desired end, while distracting it from the original path it was treading.”²¹

Actually, the modulation in Example 121 can be explained in another way, though still according to Rule 4: the minor third (D) of the original key is also the leading-note (or the major third of V) of the desired key. The D is being retained (or always returned to – note that there is not even a half-bar in the whole Example without this D, until the final cadence) in its original position, while the alternating movement of the outer voices establish an harmonic frame of reference in which this D can proceed to E[♯] as an accented passing-note (second half of bar 4, prepared by the same interval in the “tenor” in the first half of that bar) in IV of the desired key.

Whichever way one wants to see it, Rule 4 still applies. To avoid any misunderstanding about this Rule, we should mention that its function is not confined to the preparation of a point of departure for Rule 1 – as may be erroneously deduced from Soler’s quoted explanation of *Termino* eight. The following Example of *Termino* eleven should make it clear that Rule 4 may also prepare the way for Rule 3 (see Example 122):

Example 122 (Copy of example 2 on page 100 of Soler’s *Llave de la Modulación*. The wrong note values in bar 2 are original.)



All these modulatory progressions are, of course, taken for granted by the 20th century reader, and it is perhaps opportune to give our appreciation an additional incentive by pointing out again that the

21. Soler, A., *op. cit.*, p. 80. May the mixed metaphor be excused.

year of Soler's publication was 1762. In his time, the above progressions were not at all taken for granted, in fact, they caused a learned paper-war between Soler, A. Roel del Rio, and Gregori Diaz.²² But even to-day the student of music, who wishes to be proficient in modulation and improvisation, could hardly do better than to work his way through the *Llave de la Modulaci3n*: once one has come to terms with the archaic nomenclature, Soler's treatise stands out as an explicit and impressive document of musical scholarship. The full scope even of chapter ten of Soler's book can only be very insufficiently demonstrated by a list of Soler's modulations – numbered in descending chromatic order – and an indication of the Rules by which they are governed (see Table VIII). We may add that each Termino is illustrated in Soler's book by four independent examples of the type we have discussed in Examples 119 to 122 and, in addition, by eight specially composed Preludes.

TABLE VIII

Summary of Soler's Key to Modulation in Chapter Ten of his
Llave de la Modulacion

<i>Termino</i>	Proceeding from this original key	to this final key	by means of these Rules
1	D major	E ^b major	1+2
2	D ^b minor	E ^b major	1+2
3	D ^b major	E ^b major	1+2
4	C [#] minor	E ^b major	2+3
5	C major	E ^b major	1+2
6	C minor	E ^b major	1+2
7	B major	E ^b major	2+3
8	B ^b minor	E ^b major	2+4
9	B ^b major	E ^b major	1+2
10	B ^b minor	E ^b major	1+2
11	A major	E ^b major	2+4
12	A ^b minor	E ^b major	1+2
13	A ^b major	E ^b major	1+2
14	G [#] minor	E ^b major	2+3
15	G major	E ^b major	2+4
16	G ^b minor	E ^b major	1+2
17	F [#] major	E ^b major	2+3
18	F [#] minor	E ^b major	3+4
19	F major	E ^b major	1+2
20	F ^b minor	E ^b major	1+2
21	E major	E ^b major	2+3
22	E ^b minor	E ^b major	2+4

22. Cf. Chapter I of this treatise, footnote (24).

How are all these aspects of Fast Modulation reflected in Soler's keyboard sonatas? As the Rules and Terminos set out in the *Llave de la Modulaci3n* are the result of Soler's practical musicianship, it is only to be expected that his sonatas are even more striking illustrations of his theories than the examples in his book. Take for instance Rule 1, which advises to make modulatory progressions plausible by a discriminate use of mutual notes or, if so desired, to create such mutual notes by a tie.²³ In Example 123 we show a passage in Soler's sonata No. 8, where an elaborate combination of mutual notes and ties brings about a modulation from an implied C major to the dominant of B minor:

Example 123 (Sonata No. 8, bars 94-109)

Andante

Bars 94 to 99 are occupied by a restatement of the Thematic Announcement and the preparation of $\frac{V}{7}$ to C major but, as from bar 100, mutual notes and ties – in the form of continuations and reiterations – lead the way over A major-minor (bar 101), $\frac{V}{7}$ of D major (bar 102), D major (bar 103), B minor-major (bar 104), $\frac{V}{7}$ of E minor (bar 105), to the imperfect cadence in B minor (in bars 106 and 107). What with syncopations and accented chromatic passing-notes in addition to the technique of modulation according to both aspects of Rule 1, this passage proves that Soler – in spite of the soundness of his Rules – was by no means a dry theorist. It is very important to realise that Soler's modulations in live compositions are very fluid and not at all as static as his examples in the *Llave* needs had to be. That is something one

23. The word "tie" does not merely mean "suspension" here, because continuations, inner and outer pedals, and reiterations can have the same function of carrying over elements of a previous chord to the next.

easily overlooks when merely studying Soler's book – although the eight Preludes at the end were probably written just to avoid such misunderstanding – and we have quoted bars 108 and 109 in the above Example particularly to demonstrate one of the most frequent means by which Soler kept his modulatory cadences from becoming distressingly final: the implied dominant (of B minor) in bar 107 is especially marked with a *Fermate*, bringing about an undecided intake of breath in harmonic mid-sentence, so to speak, and is then in bar 108 not followed by the tonic – which a dry theorist would have been sure to write – but by a renewal of the same dominant, which then, in bar 109 – when finality has been successfully circumvented – allows the tonic to be mentioned in passing...

Imperfect cadences just before the end of a modulatory progression – as in the case above – are most frequent in Soler's sonatas and always effect a fluid and often ambiguous harmonic colour-scheme, as Example 124 will confirm:

Example 124 (Sonata No. 22, bars 18-29)

Cantabile Andantino

The musical score is titled "Cantabile Andantino" and shows three systems of piano music. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system contains bars 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22. The second system contains bars 23, 24, and 25. The third system contains bars 26, 27, and 28. The notation includes various chords, melodic lines, and dynamic markings such as *f* and *mf*. Bar 22 is marked with a fermata, indicating a moment of suspension or hesitation.

Bar 22 is not in C major, as bars 23 to 25 would have us believe, but actually in F minor-major, because in bar 21 the B[♭] minor chord becomes – in retrospect – the subdominant of F by reason of the passing Neapolitan sixth on the fourth beat, bringing about an imperfect cadence with C as dominant. Bars 23 to 25 are but a colourful and

ambiguous interpolation, before the tonic F – not without some oscillating between major and minor – claims its rights as from bar 26.

May it be noted, too, that the dominant C in bar 22 is brought about by the application of the second aspect of Rule 1, i.e. the tie (in this case the carrying over of the note F from bar 21 to bar 22 by reiteration).

The pauses (∩) in bars 25 and 28 bring to mind another matter, which we have already mentioned in connection with Rule 1,²⁴ namely that the juxtaposition of unrelated keys should be buffered by the insertion of a pause. There again, reading it in the *Llave de la Modulaci3n*²⁵ gives one no idea what truly remarkable effects can be achieved by such juxtapositions. Soler used this device very frequently for the purpose of colourful fluidity, and more often than not he used it in conjunction with the imperfect cadences mentioned above.

In Examples 125, 126 and 127, we give three instances where unexpected keys are suddenly embarked on after a pause or rest.

Example 125 (Sonata No. 57, bars 5-27)

[Allegro assai]

5 7 9

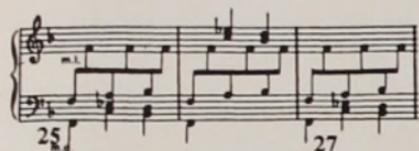
10 12 14

15 17 19

20 22 24

24. See footnote (11).

25. Cf. pp. 82-83.



In bar 12 of the above Example an imperfect cadence in G minor is followed by a pause and then, as from bar 13, by an interlude in E^b major which, in bars 24-25, leads back not to the key of G minor but to its relative major.

In Example 126, we quote sonata No. 6 as from the beginning of the Digression to show the key-scheme prior to the pause, and it should be mentioned that this sonata begins in F major and ends in F minor. In bar 65, the dominant of the final key is established.²⁶
Example 126 (Sonata No. 6, bars 51-73)

[Presto]

Instead of proceeding with the tonic minor, a pause is inserted and followed by a new motif in what appears to be an unprepared B^b major, which then eventually modulates to $\frac{V}{7}$ of the final key.

In Example 127, below, we find an imperfect cadence in D major

26. That Soler did not regard C as an independent tonic – in spite of the B^b – is proved by the key-signature in bar 58.

Example 127 (Sonata No. 4, bars 9-25)

Allegro

and the significant rest in bar 14. In bar 15 we find ourselves suddenly in F major, instead of in D major: a six-bar interlude in F ending on V of D (bars 15 to 20) again separates the dominant from the tonic (first appearance of the tonic on the third beat of bar 21, and quite finalised only in bar 25). It is interesting to note that Soler merely wrote a rest in bar 14 instead, of the usual pause. That is not an oversight, because in this case a mutual note (A) actually exists between the opposing keys. In spite of this mutual note, the ear would still balk at a direct juxtaposition of A major and F major, and it is for that reason that Soler suppressed the third in bars 13 and 14: an experiment at the keyboard will show that the introduction of a major third in bars 13 and 14 would ruin the sudden change to F major in bar 15, while the introduction of a minor third in bars 13 and 14 would be equally unacceptable in the light of the C \sharp in bar 12. Hence the ambiguous open fifth, in which the ear takes the missing C \sharp as implied in bars 13 and 14, and in which it acknowledges the same C \sharp as having been absent when bar 15 is played.

Soler's Rule 2, i.e. the desirability of modulating via the dominant of the final key, needs little comment. We have seen that even Soler's juxtaposition of keys is usually concerned with such a dominant. For some straightforward modulations via the dominant see the progressions from bar 10 to bar 11, 15 to 16, 16 to 17 and 20 to 21, in Example 128:

Example 128 (Sonata No. 23, bars 10-22)

Allegro

The musical score for Example 128 consists of three systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The first system covers bars 10 to 12, the second system covers bars 15 to 17, and the third system covers bars 19 to 21. Bar numbers 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, and 21 are printed below the bass staff. Bar 10 is marked with an 'X' above the treble staff. Bar 15 is marked with an 'X' above the treble staff. Bar 16 is marked with an 'X' above the treble staff. Bar 17 is marked with an 'X' above the treble staff. Bar 20 is marked with an 'X' above the treble staff. Bar 21 is marked with an 'X' above the treble staff. The score shows a series of modulations via the dominant, as indicated by the 'X' marks.

Instances of the application of Rule 3, i.e. the enharmonic change, can be found in abundance in Soler's sonatas. In Examples 129 and 130 below, we quote two passages in which the top-most part literally adheres to Soler's Rule of using "the opposite" of an already sounded note (the two opposites are marked by X):

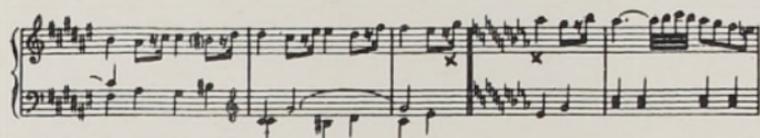
Example 129 (Sonata No. 11, bars 22-26)

[*Andantino*]

The musical score for Example 129 consists of two systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The tempo is marked 'Andantino'. The first system covers bars 22 to 24, and the second system covers bars 25 to 26. Bar numbers 22, 24, 25, and 26 are printed below the bass staff. Bar 22 is marked with an 'X' above the treble staff. Bar 24 is marked with an 'X' above the treble staff. Bar 25 is marked with an 'X' above the treble staff. Bar 26 is marked with an 'X' above the treble staff. The score shows a passage with enharmonic changes, as indicated by the 'X' marks.

Example 130 (Sonata No. 79, bars 12-15)

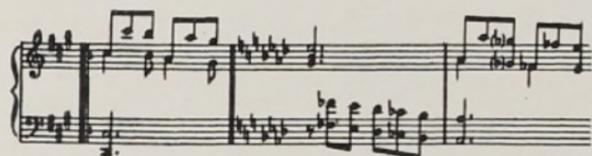
[Cantabile]



Modulation by enharmonic change is, of course, not confined to using "the opposite" of a note already sounded. In Example 131, below, we show an instance where a melodic-rhythmical pattern slides very slickly over the point of enharmonic change:

Example 131 (Sonata No. 78, bars 68-70)

[Allegro non tanto]



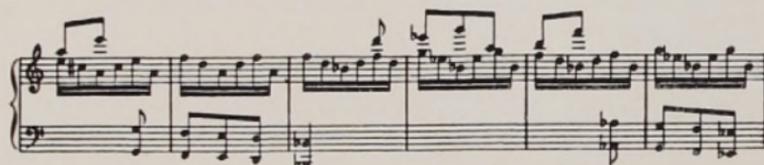
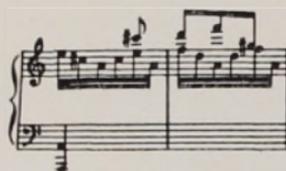
While the modulation from C[#] minor to A^b major in the above Example is a transposed (up a fourth) illustration of Soler's Termino 14, it may have been noted that the modulations in Examples 129 (C[#] major to E^b major) and 130 (F[#] major to A^b major) have no equivalent in the Terminos listed in Table VIII. F[#] major to A^b major in Example 130 is, of course, merely a transposition (again up a fourth) of the key-relationship found in Example 129. Soler did not list C[#] major as a departure-key in the examples to his twenty-two Terminos. He listed D^b-major, but the modulation from D^b major to E^b major follows Rule 1, and not Rule 3. It would seem, therefore, that Soler's harmonic resources were less limited in composition than in theory — although it must be said that Soler was consistent inasmuch as he never used more than six sharps as a full key-signature, being satisfied to note additional accidentals where needed (cf. bars 28-29, sonata No. 79). The same applies to the keys of G^b major and G[#] major. They are not exemplified

in the *Llave*, nor can their full key-signatures be found anywhere in the sonatas.

Rule 4, modulation by alternating movement of the outer voices, is conveniently exemplified in sonata No. 15, where a modulation from A major (with minor subdominant) to E^b major proceeds exactly as prescribed for Termino 11 in the *Llave* (see Example 132):

Example 132 (Sonata No. 15, bars 87-94)

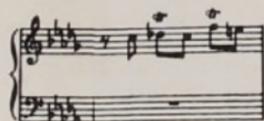
Allegretto

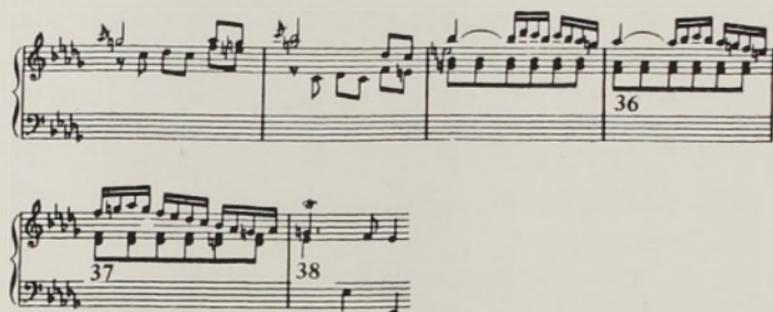


While showing that all of Soler's Rules for Fast Modulation are, indeed, reflected in his sonatas, we have already pointed to a number of literal or transposed illustrations of the Terminos to which the individual Rules are applied. Those are not the only instances in which the Terminos appear in the sonatas. Although we have seen, in Examples 129 and 130, that an application of the Rules for Fast Modulation does not necessarily establish a Termino, it is still only natural that in most cases Terminos and Rules prove to be interdependent. So we find, for instance, a literal Termino 20, i.e. a modulation from F minor to E^b major, in sonata No. 23 (see Example 133):

Example 133 (Sonata No. 23, bars 32-38)

Allegro |





It will be noticed that once the key of F minor is definitely established (in bar 36), the note F is never abandoned until the key of E^b major is arrived at via the dominant (3rd beat of bar 37). This modulation therefore, proceeds exactly as set out in Table VIII, namely by means of Rule 1 and Rule 2.

In the same sonata we also find Termino 3 exemplified, this time transposed up a fifth (see Example 134):

Example 134 (Sonata No. 23, bars 62-67)

Allegro

Soler himself described Termino 3 in these words: "This is very clear: you need only take away the flat of the bass and carry on with the false [diminished] fifth, after which you will find yourself in the desired key...".²⁷ The bass-line in bars 65 and 66 of the above Example answers this description in a most satisfactory manner, and the second semiquaver of beats two and three in bar 66 represents the "false"

27. Soler, A., *op. cit.*, p. 91.

Example 136 (Sonata No. 90, bars 48-54)

Allegro

It is obvious that the outburst into F major in bars 52 and 53 comes as a surprise in spite of the fact that D^b major and F major have a mutual note (F) which, indeed, is used here not as a pivot, as it were, but as a hook on which to fasten the new key. It is also obvious that no real modulation takes place from D^b major to F major, but that, in bar 54, the ear nevertheless accepts F major as already existing – merely on the strength of the insistent arpeggios in bars 52 and 53. It is also interesting to note that the pause (bar 54) appears this time *after* the juxtaposition of keys.

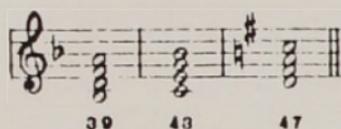
A string of seventh chords is quite a common – though not the best – feature of modulation, particularly when their roots stand in dominant-relation to one another. But how about a string of seventh chords with roots on ascending major seconds? That does not “lead” anywhere, and yet Soler used it in one of the most ingenious and provoking passages in his sonatas (see Example 137):

Example 137 (Sonata No. 43, bars 39-48)

[Allegro soffribile]

Reduced to the essential harmonic content, this is the progression (see Example 138):

Example 138 (Example 137 reduced to its harmonic essentials, with indication of corresponding bars.)



This is beyond any of Soler's Rules and Terminos, but in spite of the most daring underlying harmony and the parading of the augmented fourth (bars 42-43) and the diminished fifth (bars 46-47), Soler not only managed to "put over" this passage, but to make it shatteringly impressive.

In conclusion of this chapter, then, we cannot help saying that in view of Soler's scintillating mastery of the technique of Fast Modulation – to say nothing of his already discussed abilities as regards musical architecture and phrase-construction (see Chapters VIII and IX) – we find it inexplicable that a man like R. Hill could stamp Soler as a "... minor talent..."²⁹

29. Hill, R.S., "Antonio Soler", *Notes*, vol. 16, 1958 and 1959, p. 157. – See also Chapter II of this treatise.

CHAPTER XI

TEMPO, RHYTHM AND FOLKLORE

Suo Tempo and *Tempo suo*, i.e. "its pace", is the tempo indication on three of Soler's Minuets (in sonatas Nos. 61, 62 and 96). With such indications Soler acknowledged the axiomatic truth that a significant relationship exists between tempo and rhythm. But that even an axiomatic truth can sometimes escape recognition is proved by the often incongruent tempi chosen for performances of Scarlatti's sonatas – even by men whose life-long study of these works is of outstanding merit –,¹ and for this reason we must stress the fact – lest performers should also destroy the inherent pace of Soler's often folkloristic rhythms – that, in addition to the many differences between the two masters already pointed out previously, Soler's attitude towards tempo, too, was quite of another order than that of Scarlatti. In Table IX, Soler's tempo indications are listed and sorted into groups.

Scarlatti's tempo indications have been listed in a similar manner by Hermann Keller,² and if one compares his list to the one in Table IX and gives particular attention to the percentage of movements represented in each tempo group,³ it becomes clear that Soler's distribution of tempi differs considerably from that of Scarlatti (see Table X).

Now, we do not believe that statistics always have the scientific significance their neatness suggests – and we hasten to point out that Scarlatti's movements outnumber Soler's very nearly by 4:1 –, but even so we have to accept the overwhelming evidence of Soler's comparative moderation in regard to speed: it is certainly no coincidence that in Group(d) Soler is represented with less than half of the percentage of Scarlatti, and that in Group(c) Scarlatti appears with

-
1. Keller, H., *Domenico Scarlatti*, Peters, Leipzig, 1957, pp. 62 and 64.
 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63. Keller's groups "Normal bewegtes Tempo" and "Lebhaftes Tempo" are treated as one group parallel to our own grouping of Soler's sonatas.
 3. In Table IX, we have put the tempo-indication "Andantino" in group (c), but it should be mentioned that "Andantino" was apparently a rather elastic term in Soler's usage: for instance, the sonatas Nos. 11 and 20 both carry this tempo-indication, although the "inherent" tempo of No. 20 – for musical and technical reasons – is about half of that of No. 11.

TABLE IX

Soler's Tempo Indications

Tempo-group	Number of movements falling into each group	Tempo Indication	Frequency of Tempo Indications
(a) Slow Tempo	6	Largo andante Andante largo Andante maestoso Maestoso	1 2 1 3
(b) Quiet Tempo	18	Cantabile Andante Andante cantabile Andante espressivo Andante amabile espressivo Cantabile con moto Andante con moto Andante gracioso	4 5 2 1 1 1 1 3 1
(c) Moderate to Moderately Quick Tempo	38	Andante gracioso con moto Andantino Cantabile andantino Andantino cantabile Andantino espressivo Andantino con moto Tempo suo [Minuets] Allegretto Allegretto espressivo Allegretto gracioso Allegro cantabile Allegro moderato Allegro non tanto Allegro non troppo Non presto Allegro non molto Allegro espressivo non presto Allegro ma non presto	1 7 1 1 1 1 3 10 1 1 1 2 2 1 2 1 1 1
(d) Quick to Lively Tempo	44	Allegro Pastoril Allegro Con spirito Allegro spiritoso	3 39 1 1
(e) Very Lively Tempo	18	Allegro molto Allegro assai Allegro assai spiritoso Allegro soffribile Presto Presto assai Prestissimo	4 4 1 2 4 1 2
(f) Without Tempo Indications	18		18

TABLE X

Scarlatti – Soler : Comparison of Tempo Groups

Tempo Group	Scarlatti – Percentage of Movements in Tempo Group	Soler – Percentage of Movements in Tempo Group
(a) Slow Tempo	1.15 %	4.25 %
(b) Quiet Tempo	13.6 %	12.8 %
(c) Moderate to Moderately Quick Tempo	5.3 %	26.15 %
(d) Quick to Lively Tempo	65.0 %	31.2 %
(e) Very Lively Tempo	12.2 %	12.8 %
(f) Without Tempo Indication	2.75 %	12.8 %

less than a fifth of the percentage which represents Soler.⁴ Obviously, then, Soler was less inclined towards the spectacular than was Scarlatti and, accordingly, his tempi should be treated with even greater care and even less flamboyancy. It should also be kept in mind that Soler seems to have become increasingly sensitive to the appropriateness of a chosen tempo, as can be deduced from such careful indications as *Allegro espressivo non presto* (No. 95 II).

There is more evidence that Soler's musical thought was projected on somewhat broader time elements than Scarlatti's: the latter's most beloved time signature was $\frac{3}{8}$, in fact just on 32% of his movements carry that time signature, which "... verbindet sich ... mit Dur-Stücken fröhlichen Charakters in einer fast stereotypen Weise";⁵ Soler, too, wrote a number of sprightly movements in $\frac{3}{8}$ time, but it must be noted that there are also some rather slow movements in a minor key with this time signature,⁶ and that only just below 17% of his movements – as against Scarlatti's 32% – are so marked. It is also quite striking

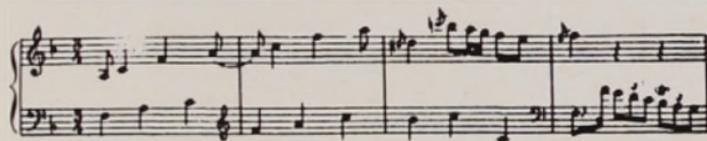
4. This evidence of Soler's moderation in speed would be further strengthened by a tempo-analysis of the movements without indications in Group (f), of which exactly half the number are Intentos and Minuets, i.e. of moderate tempo.
5. Keller, H., *op. cit.*, p. 75. The percentages relating to Scarlatti's use of time signatures are worked out on the basis of Keller's summary on the same page.
6. See very particularly sonata No. 24.

that the time signature of $\frac{3}{8}$ appears only five times in all the sixty-two movements of Soler's multi-movement sonatas, while it is used eighteen times in his earlier single-movement sonatas. It would seem, therefore, that Soler developed a definite preference for $\frac{3}{4}$ as against $\frac{3}{8}$ — 24% of his movements make use of the former time signature. Scarlatti's use of $\frac{3}{4}$ time — in 14.5% of his movements — is even less frequent than Soler's use of $\frac{3}{8}$ time.

But whether their preference was $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{3}{8}$, what Soler and Scarlatti had in common was their love for an uneven number of pulses in a bar, and they also shared a pre-occupation with the *alle breve*: with Scarlatti, the *alle breve* comes only second in frequency after $\frac{3}{8}$ time, and in Soler's case the *alle breve* and $\frac{3}{4}$ time are both represented by 24% each of the total number of movements. That, apart from the "odd" number of pulses, both composers found the "short" measure best suited to their requirements, is also shown by their rare employment of $\frac{4}{4}$ time (Scarlatti about 9%, Soler about 2%) and the scarcity of the larger compound measures: $\frac{9}{8}$ time is used by Soler only once, by Scarlatti not at all; $\frac{12}{8}$ time is used by Scarlatti in only twenty-two out of more than five hundred movements, and never by Soler.

More interesting than tempo indications and time signatures, however, is that all-important factor in musical texture they both serve to make intelligible: Rhythm. If one were justified in singling out any one characteristic of Soler's genius as particularly fascinating, we would without hesitation point to his acute awareness and brilliant handling of rhythm. His inventiveness in this sphere is excellently illustrated, for instance, by his patterns of syncopation.⁷ So we find syncopation in conjunction with several other rhythmical groupings in sonata No. 55 (see Example 139), and the nine bars of the Cadential Confirmation of

Example 139 (bars 1-4)



7. Here again the Examples are selected from a multitude of quotable instances. — Some Examples quoted in connection with Iberian folklore in the latter part of this chapter also show some striking syncopations.

sonata No. 35 consist in their entirety of a string of syncopations (see Example 140).

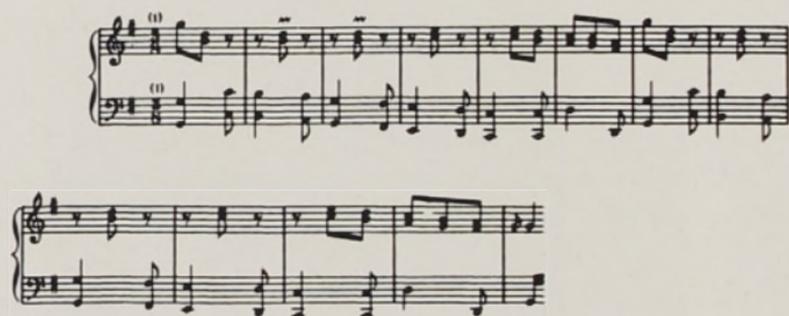
Example 140 (bars 60-68)

[Allegretto]



In the same sonata we also find the *ostinato* syncopations so favoured by Scarlatti (see Example 141), and the joy Soler found in exploring

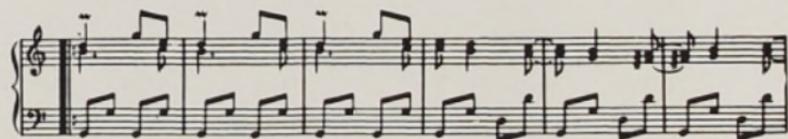
Example 141 (Sonata No. 35, bars 1-13)

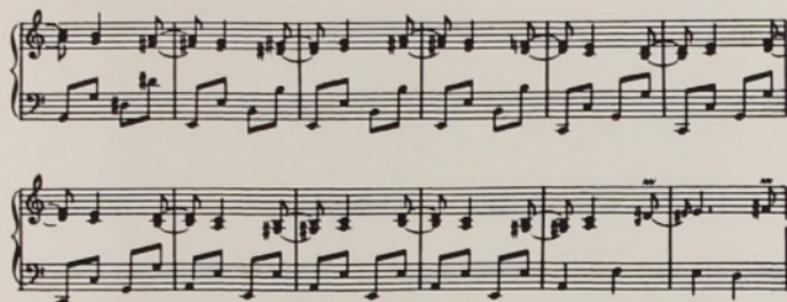


such and similar patterns is illustrated by his extensive dwelling on syncopation in No. 28 (see Example 142).

Example 142 (bars 68-85)

[Andantino]

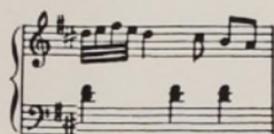




Another instance of syncopation, which is not only of interest rhythmically, but also as regards melody-forming and harmony, is found in sonata No. 86 (see Example 143).

Example 143 (bars 14-26)

[*A Allegretto* o]



The combination of two overlapping patterns of syncopation can be seen in Example 29 (Chapter VII), and in an even more striking form in Example 144, below.

Example 144 (Sonata No. 30, bars 110-117)

Vivo

The two bars marked (X) in the above Example show a particularly headstrong pattern, and it will also be noticed that, right through the Example, the syncopations in soprano and alto form independent patterns in $\frac{3}{4}$ time as against the compound duple time of the lowest part.

Apart from syncopations, Soler used and enjoyed all imaginable combinations of the rhythmical patterns characteristic of 18th century chambermusic, as is evident from a mere glance over the many Examples quoted throughout this treatise, and is again illustrated in the Theme of sonata No. 91: none of the first five bars of the Theme share the same rhythmical pattern, and the effect of the combination of these rhythmical patterns with a *cantabile* toneproduction – who will doubt that this is a piece for the pianoforte? – is that of infinite grace (see Example 145).

Example 145 (Sonata No. 91 I, bars 1-6)

Andantino con moto

Even more striking than Soler's inventiveness in this sphere is his assimilation of Iberian dance rhythms. We pointed out, in Chapter II, that one of the reasons why Soler's status next to Scarlatti was not always sufficiently appreciated, is found in the fact that both composers made use of the same ethnic idiom, namely Iberian folklore. We would like to emphasise again that Soler's status is in no way diminished by this because, far from making Soler an "Italian", the presence of Iberian folklore in Scarlatti's sonatas rather makes the latter a Spanish composer. It is, therefore, Soler's own heritage we shall meet in the Examples quoted below, which all reflect his spontaneous grasp of the Iberian idiom.

Gilbert Chase was certainly justified in pointing out that the Iberian Peninsula is richer in folklore than any other region in the world.⁸ The reason for this is the strong musical individuality developed and for a long time retained by the various provinces,⁹ and the very strong imprint Moorish and Gypsy influences left on the musical formulae of the people.¹⁰ The collective musical tradition of the several provinces, like Andalusia, Castile, Aragon, Catalonia, is today accepted as the "Spanish" idiom. In this, too, consist the idiomatic traces found in Soler's works, i.e. his sonatas do not merely reflect the musical traditions of his native Catalonia, but that of other provinces as well.

We say that these traditions are *reflected* in Soler's music because, needless to stress, Soler was not a copyist or a collector of dance rhythms, but — although he was a recluse even within the Escorial —¹¹ he was a court composer by inclination of taste and royal favour and, therefore, his music and the national elements therein are highly stylised. We very much doubt whether Soler was consciously waving the national flag when composing his sonatas, and it is part of the inherent charm of his music that the Spanish "colours" do not appear in it by studied purpose, but by a spontaneous integration in Soler's personal style.

So, for instance, is the Thematic Announcement of No. 71 a rhythmical derivation from the *polo*, which in turn is a form of the Andalusian *seguriya gitana* (see Example 146).

8. Chase, G., *The Music of Spain*, Dover Publications, New York, 1959, p. 222.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 222-256.

10. Moslem domination in Spain lasted from 711 to 1492. The first Gypsies arrived in Spain in 1449 (cf. Chase, G., *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16, and 336: footnote (3)).

11. Cf. Chapter I of this treatise.

Example 146 (Sonata No. 71, bars 1-9)

Andantino

Another very striking rhythm, also of Andalusian Gypsy origin, is the alternation between $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ time. Now, Soler never allowed himself the "crudeness" of changing his time signatures from one bar to the next, but consider the following: sonata No. 69 contains several phrases in $\frac{3}{8}$ time like the one quoted in Example 147, below, which –

Example 147 (bars 17-24)

particularly on the harpsichord – sound sufficiently ambiguous to be interpreted thus (see Example 148):

Example 148 (alternating time signatures projected on the inherent rhythm of the previous Example)

If one compares this to Torner's transcription¹² of the *falsestas* of a typical *seguriya gitana* (see Example 149) the proximity of the two

Example 149



(From Gilbert Chase, *The music of Spain*, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1941, 1959. Reprinted through permission of the publisher.)

phrases – in pattern, *ostinato* basses, and some of the appoggiaturas – becomes impressive while, at the same time, it becomes clearly apparent just what we meant by stating that in Soler's music the national elements are highly stylised.

The *jota* comes from Aragon and, to quote Gilbert Chase, "... is in rapid triple time and the harmony alternates between dominant and tonic, usually four measures of each. Guitars of various sizes and *bandurrias* (a kind of mandolin) are the typical accompanying instruments, marking the rhythm strongly with strummed chords ...".¹³ The following section of Soler's sonata No. 48 answers perfectly to that description, the only deviation being that the harmonic levels are more extended (see Example 150).

Example 150 (Sonata No. 48, bars 10-43)

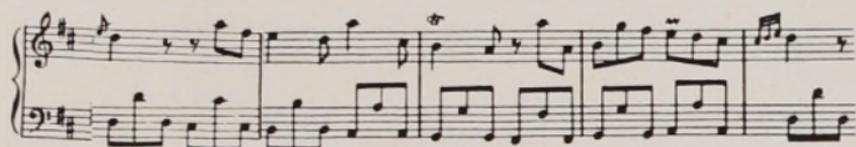
12. Chase, G., *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

Very obvious dance patterns are also found in those movements which Soler called *Allegro pastoril*. In one of these movements we find a reflection of the *sardana*, one of the most popular¹⁵ dance rhythms of Soler's native Catalonia (see Example 153).

Example 153 (Sonata No. 92 IV, bars 9-13)

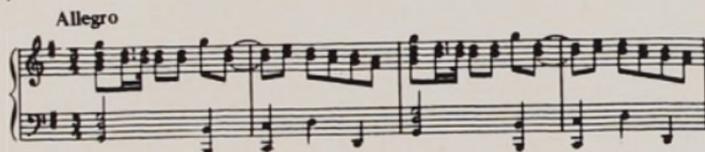
[*Allegro pastoril*]



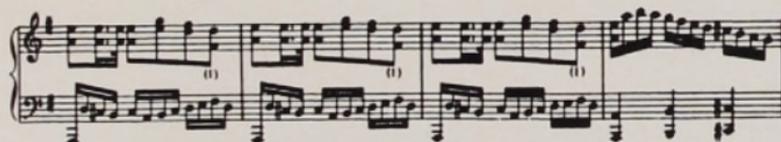
The best-known Iberian rhythm – one which has also gained considerable popularity outside the Peninsula – is perhaps the *bolero*. Rafael Mitjana¹⁶ already pointed to the *bolero* rhythm in sonata No. 4, which we quote in Example 154 (a) and (b).

Example 154 (Sonata No. 4, bars 1-4, and bars 21-24)

(a)



(b) [*Allegro*]

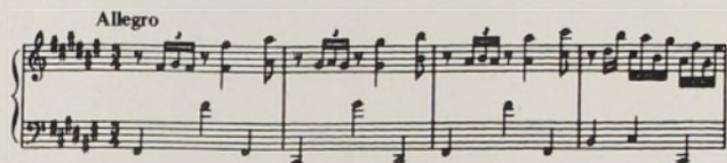


There are, however, other instances of *bolero* rhythm in Soler's sonatas, such as the Announcement of sonata No. 90 (see Example 155),

15. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

16. Mitjana, R., *Encyclopédie De La Musique et Dictionnaire Du Conservatoire, Première Partie, Histoire De La Musique, Espagne - Portugal*, (ed. A. Lavignac) Paris, 1920, p. 2183.

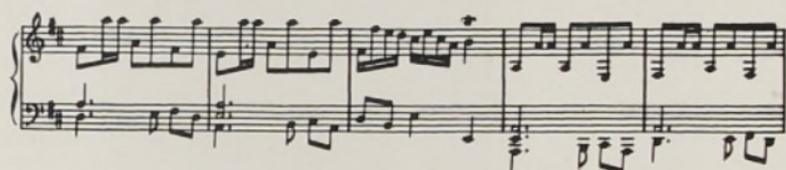
Example 155 (bars 1-4)



the Cadential Confirmation of sonata No. 73 (see Example 156), and

Example 156 (bars 57-61)

[*Allegro*]



— in two different forms — the *bolero* rhythm also appears in the Announcement and Extension of sonata No. 86 (see Example 157).

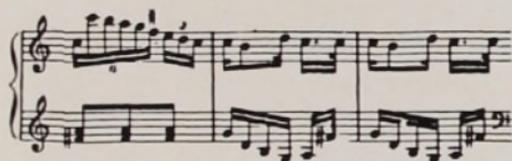
Example 157 (bars 1-13)

Allegretto

It is understood, of course, that the traces of folklore in Soler's sonatas are not confined to rhythmical patterns. The melodic characteristics of Iberian folkmusic are fully as strong as those of its rhythmical elements, and have left as strong an imprint on Soler's personal style. Again, the influences of traditional melody are much stylised in Soler's sonatas, and are not exemplified by a reproduction of, say, an Andalusian air or a sudden reference to a street ditty. Instead, these influences mostly make themselves felt by the frequent use of certain basic formulae. One of these formulae is, of course, the asthmatic motivic repetition and shortness of phrase discussed in Chapter IX, and another is the curious dropping or skipping into the endnote of a motif or phrase, which is characteristic of the melody-forming in most Iberian folkmusic, including the *charrada*, the *jota*, the *vira*, and the *polo*. This dropping or skipping into the endnote of a motif or phrase usually involves a feminine ending of some sort and, within this feminine ending, the endnote can either be advanced in time by means of syncopation, as is characteristic of the *rueda* and exemplified in Soler's sonata No. 44 (see Example 158), or it can be delayed by gliding over

Example 158 (bars 16-18)

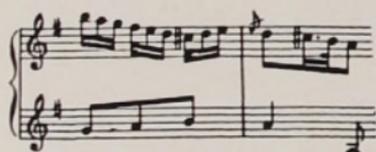
[*Andantino*]



the third of the scale — which in contemporary mid-European style would almost invariably have been the endnote of the motif or phrase — to the root (see Examples 159 and 160).

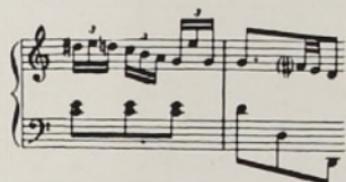
Example 159 (Sonata No. 43, bars 12 and 13)

[*Allegro soffribile*]



Example 160 (Sonata No. 46, bars 29-30)

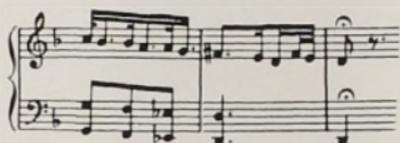
[Cantabile]



Sometimes the delay of the endnote is such as to wilfully – but graciously – circumvent what is felt to be the genuine feminine ending (see Example 161).

Example 161 (Sonata No. 80, bars 13-15)

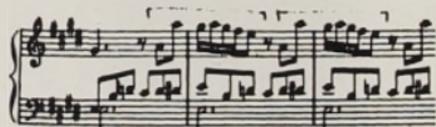
[Allegretto]



Yet another form of feminine ending – very popular in Castilian folksong –¹⁷ is the subdivision of the strong first beat into small notevalues, with the endnote falling on the weak second beat, or even between two beats. This is a particularly “Spanish” characteristic, and it is interesting to note that Hermann Keller spoke of Scarlatti’s¹⁸ frequent employment of this specific melodic fragment. In Soler’s sonatas such instances are innumerable and the four Examples quoted below must suffice to illustrate the typical (see Examples 162 to 165).

Example 162 (Sonata No. 21, bars 27-29)

Allegro

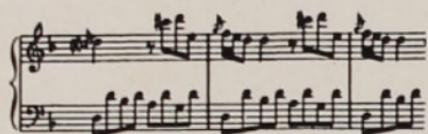


17. Chase, G., *op. cit.*, p. 230.

18. Keller, H., *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67. This, along with other such idiomatic traits, shows to what extent Scarlatti had become a “Spanish” composer.

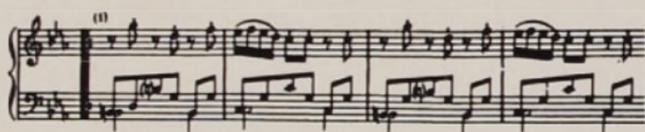
Example 163 (Sonata No. 6, bars 35-37)

[Presto]



Example 164 (Sonata No. 96 II, bars 65-68)

[Allegro cantabile]



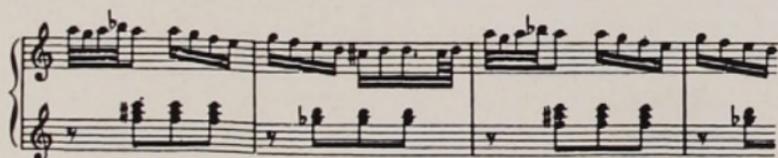
Example 165 (Sonata No. 85, bars 5-10)

[Allegretto]



The subdivision of a strong beat into small melodic particles is, of course, not restricted to the end of motifs and phrases, but also occurs at their beginning, as is evident from a reconsideration of Example 143, and from a glance at Example 166, below.

Example 166 (Sonata No. 49, bars 42-45)

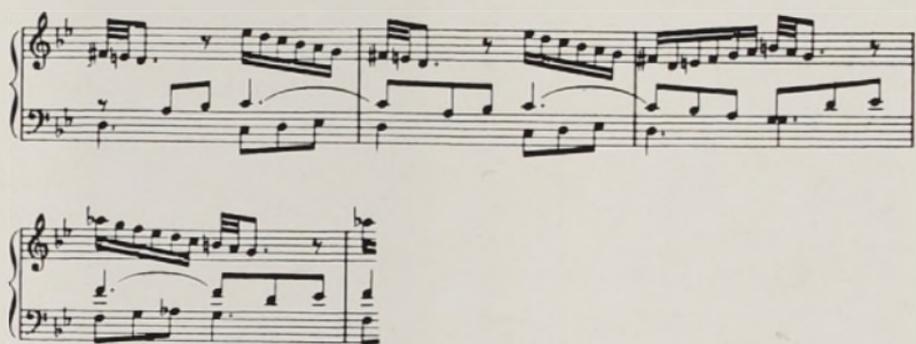


Not infrequently the strong beats – at the beginning or at the end of a motif or phrase – are subdivided in such a way as to suggest the

vocal *glissando* of Oriental and Gypsy association.¹⁹ The Example quoted below gives the impression that its needs conventional notation represents but a courtly “purification” of a vocal gliding through vacillating intervals (see Example 167).

Example 167 (Sonata No. 19, bars 48-52)

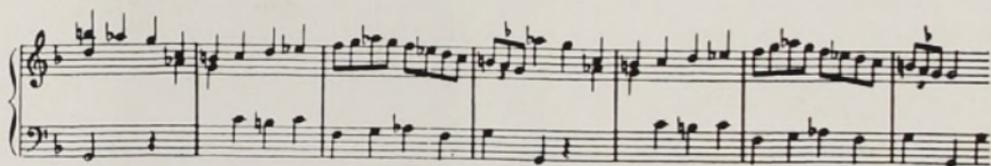
[*Allegro moderato*]



Melodic fragments of Byzantine origin – Moslem domination did, indeed, leave its mark on Iberian music – are also found in Soler’s sonatas, as the frequent use of the interval of the augmented second in sonata No. 5 proves (see Example 168).

Example 168 (bars 14-20)

[*Allegro*]



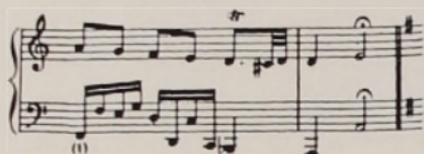
While the Byzantine cadence – transposed to another pitch – reads A – G[#] – F – E, the Phrygian cadence reads A – G – F – E, and the implied bassline in the following Example clearly shows the influence of the Phrygian mode²⁰ (see Example 169).

19. Chase, G., *op. cit.*, p. 224.

20. It is particularly the folksong of Castile which shows strong modal influence (cf. Chase, G., *op. cit.*, p. 230).

Example 169 (Sonata No. 4, bars 19-20)

[Allegro]

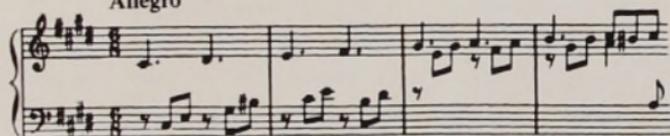


It should be mentioned here that Soler's preference for the chord of the augmented sixth for certain harmonisations – as quoted in Chapter IX, Example 118 – also explains itself as a realisation of the bassline of the Phrygian cadence, because this chord makes the sinking cadential semitone available, while at the same time – most un-Phrygian, but very much in keeping with Andalusian chromaticism – offering the rising leading-note.

The insistence on a modal melodic line sometimes led Soler to interesting compromises in regard to harmony, as is illustrated in the Announcement of sonata No. 21, in which the higher part presents an unmodified ascending Aeolian tone-row, and the lower part alternately intones the sharpened and the natural seventh degree of the minor scale (see Example 170).

Example 170 (Sonata No. 21, bars 1-4)

Allegro



That the idiom of Iberian folklore in Soler's works is not always restricted to such fragments as we have quoted above, but sometimes pervades the texture of a whole sonata, was already mentioned by Mitjana, according to whom the sonatas Nos. 8, 10, 15, 19 and 23 "... procèdent directement des chansons andalouses ...", and who characterised No. 24 as "... bien flamenco (bohémien) par sa grâce mélancolique et son accent passionné ...".²¹

We would like to conclude this chapter by reproducing a larger

21. Mitjana, R., *op. cit.*, p. 2183.

section of one of the sonatas mentioned by Mitjana, namely No. 19, and to show how several of the characteristic traits we have discussed above appear in the context of this work (see Example 171).

Example 171 (Sonata No. 19, bars 1-30)

Allegro moderato

4

8

12

15

19

23

27

Apart from the short motivic repetition which is characteristic for both Iberian folklore and Soler's sonatas – and which is illustrated in the above Example in bars 7-8, 13-14, 16-17, 23-24 and 25-26 – we find in bars seven and eight a curious oscillating between the notes A^b and A^{\natural} , and a similar oscillating – this time between E^b and E^{\natural} – is obvious in bars thirteen and fourteen. While the juxtaposition of A^b and A^{\natural} in the former case brings to mind the undulation of Semitic chanting,²² the latter case makes one wonder whether one has to do with a mixture of Phrygian and Byzantine elements – in the lower part it is quite definitely only the latter, but in the upper part they seem to command separate half-bars – or whether one just faces a keyboard version of the indefinite intervals of the Gypsy wail. Bars 25 and 26 represent the very nearest approach to be found anywhere in Soler's sonatas to the gliding through the vacillating intervals of the Andalusian *canto jondo*.²³ The tortuous winding through the intervals of the now harmonic and now melodic minor scale in bars 2-4 and 15-18 is also suggestive of the Gypsy lament.

The cumulative effect of these melodic characteristics gives sonata No. 19 its Andalusian stamp – for it was particularly in Andalusia that Moorish and Gypsy traditions mingled –,²⁴ but in spite of these idiomatic characteristics No. 19 is still a keyboard sonata suitable for performance in the sophisticated surroundings of a Spanish court. As we remarked earlier, it is this spontaneous integration of “national” idioms in his personal style which makes Soler such an outstanding figure in the history of music.

From this enquiry into tempo, rhythm, and folklore in Soler's sonatas it becomes evident, then, that Soler was a composer of a strong individuality, a master in his own right, and firmly rooted in the musical traditions of his own country.

22. Chase, G., *op. cit.*, pp. 239-240.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

24. *Loc. cit.*

EPILOGUE: STATUS REVIEWED

We have said, in Chapter II of this treatise, that as regards Soler's status in the history of music it seems best – at least as a point of departure – to rely on his assessment by musicologists who have made Iberian music their specialised field of study.¹ Our reason was that the very method of approach to a subject can to a great extent prejudice the result of an enquiry, and that of the two approaches previously tried –² i.e. the negative comparative one, which aspires to no more than showing up the *similarities* between Soler and Scarlatti, and the positive comparative one, which strives to establish Soler's *individual characteristics* – only the latter held any promise of giving a true picture of Soler's work. In our discussion of the nature of Soler's sonatas, we have, therefore, used this latter approach whenever it was justified.

We were able, accordingly, to show that Soler was not only a composer of strong individuality, but that the criteria of stylistic comparison are, in Soler's case, not exhausted with Scarlatti, and must at least partly be sought in the development of the mid-European pre-Classic and even Classic keyboard sonata. We have seen that Soler's individuality expressed itself in the use of instruments,³ the development of form,⁴ in phrasing,⁵ tempo and rhythm.⁶ We have also shown why the influences of Iberian folklore – great source of inspiration to both Soler and Scarlatti – cannot possibly make Soler suspect of plagiarism,⁷ and that Soler's mastery of modulation – in theory and in practice –⁸ puts him right into the first rank of 18th century composers. The fact that the musical texture of many of Soler's sonatas closely resembles Scarlattian formulae – and even that is restricted to the single-movement sonatas – will be seen in better proportion when one reminds oneself that Haydn and Mozart, too, shared the formulae of their day without, however, being accused of lacking individuality. It must be accepted, therefore, that Soler was not a "follower", but a creative composer in his own right.

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1. M.S. Kastner and S. Rubio. See Chapter II of this treatise.
 2. cf. Chapter II of this treatise.
 3. cf. Chapter V of this treatise
 4. cf. Chapter VIII of this treatise.
 5. cf. Chapter IX of this treatise.
 6. cf. Chapter XI of this treatise.
 7. cf. Chapters II and XI of this treatise
 8. cf. Chapter X of this treatise.

This established, the purpose of our treatise would be fulfilled, were it not for the realisation that proof of Soler's undoubted independence is by no means proof of his greatness. It is at this point that our positive comparative approach, developed from the assessment of Soler by Iberian musicologists, ceases to be helpful: greatness, unfortunately, cannot be measured by the inches, however precise, on the ruler of musicology – who can “explain” by comparison or otherwise, just why the Arietta-theme in Beethoven's last sonata is great, or why Schumann's F# major *Romanze* just fails to be that? – and so, for our final review of Soler's status, we must ask permission to leave the realm of scientific enquiry and to enter the rather subjective field of personal opinion.

Such permission granted, we must then point out that the best years of Soler's life fell somewhere between the best years of Scarlatti on the one hand, and those of Haydn on the other, and that the quality of Soler's musical thought fits this historical situation with an exactness which is too convincing to be coincidental: Soler's earlier single-movement sonatas *just* fall short – in spite of their spontaneous and original inventiveness as regards form, phrasing, rhythm and modulation – of the exhilarating boldness and vividness of Scarlatti's best works, and the later multi-movement sonatas *just* fail to combine the sure-footed grace with the personal warmth, which is the significant characteristic of Haydn's genius. This, we must emphasise, is an opinion, a matter of personal taste, but we must also point out that our reason for making such an assessment is not the fact that Soler did, indeed, write some poor sonatas (Nos. 33 and 53, to name just two examples). That Beethoven permitted himself to write a thing like *Wellingtons Sieg* does not make him less of a genius, and even Mozart was quite able to become trivial, as the very disappointing *Maggiore* in the Rondo of his Concerto in D minor (K. 466) will prove. No, even Soler's best sonatas in both style-groups (for instance Nos. 19 and 97) are eclipsed by Scarlatti's best on the one side, and Haydn's best on the other. Just what the quality is which Soler lacked, is impossible to define, and in any students' debate different answers could be sought and found, precisely because greatness – even though convincing when met – cannot be scientifically measured.

But – and this is important to remember – it takes Scarlatti's and Haydn's best to overshadow Soler, quite in the same way as it took J.S. Bach's best to overshadow some of the best works of Buxtehude, and as it took Mozart's best to overshadow some of the best works of the Mannheim School ...

It is in such company, then, that we would place Soler: in the company of truly outstanding musicians who, far from being "minor talents" or plagiarists, and far from having foregone the right to get an appreciative audience, merely had the misfortune to belong to a stylistic period which either just had produced or was yet about to produce the one towering genius, with whose work posterity would then be inclined to identify the whole creative output of that particular period.

It is our sincere wish that this treatise should help to encourage the performance of Soler's keyboard sonatas, which have so long and quite undeservedly been neglected. —

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