

# Sor's Guitar Sonatas: Form and Style

Stanley Yates

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## 1. Introduction

The guitar sonatas of Fernando Sor are significant to the instrumental output of Sor himself, to the guitar repertoire in general, and to the instrumental literature of early nineteenth-century Spain. It is therefore surprising that no detailed study of these works has appeared in print, despite a number of studies dealing with Sor's music. As a result, consensus opinion regarding Sor's sonata style would appear to end at an almost casual association with the high classic style of Haydn, while other influences remain unexamined. There even exists a lack of acknowledgment amongst the scant literature on the subject as to which of Sor's works actually employ the form.

This confused state of affairs would appear to derive, at least in part, from the brief discussion of Sor's sonatas contained in William Newman's seminal work, *The Sonata in the Classic Era* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1963).<sup>1</sup> Here, Newman recognizes the creative value of Sor's guitar sonatas, but misconstrues several important points. Most significantly, Newman falls into an easy association of Sor's sonata style with that of Haydn (and Boccherini), with the implication that "bold key changes," "rich modulations" and "considerable flexibility in the application of 'sonata form,' especially in the larger number of ideas introduced and recalled" are exceptional to that style. (Are they exceptional to the style of Haydn, or are they manifestations of an entirely different model?). In a footnote, Newman supports these observations with a reference to the dissertation on Sor by William Sasser, "The Guitar Works of Fernando Sor" (1960), also produced at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. In Sasser, we find a listing of the main sections of the opening movement of Sor's *Grande sonate*, op. 22,

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<sup>1</sup> William Newman, *The Sonata in the Classic Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 663-4.

along with a statement that the exposition of the movement contains “seven definite themes, a rather unusual amount of material.” This must have been taken at face value by Newman, since the movement contains nothing of the kind (Sasser does not distinguish between a complete thematic statement and its constituent parts, nor between a theme and a transition or a codetta, simply labeling each discreet section “theme”). Sasser also proposes the theory, subsequently adopted by later writers, that Sor's “rather unusual” treatment of sonata form stems from technical limitations of the guitar—an attempt to explain why Sor's development sections, lacking contrapuntal discussion of previously heard material and introducing new material instead, do not adhere to the Haydn model. As Newman points out, the developmental “development” section is not a prerequisite of the classic sonata style; it simply happens to be a common feature of the Austrian sonata style of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven (and certain other composers, the Viennese guitarists Diabelli and Matiegka for example). Again, the argument assumes the model to be Haydn.

In a single paragraph, Newman laid a foundation that appears to have been taken at face value by virtually all subsequent writers on the subject. In his *The Guitar from the Renaissance to the Present Day* (1974), Harvey Turnbull quotes Newman in full, as well as citing Sasser's argument concerning the “limited resources of the instrument” and a supposed inability of the guitar (and the lute!) to support contrapuntal textures.<sup>2</sup> Six years later, in his article “Guitar” in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (vol. 7, 838), Turnbull combined the two misconceptions: “In his sonatas (opp. 22 and 25) Sor introduced a larger number of themes than is usual in this form, thereby compensating for the restrictions in development imposed by the limitations of the instrument.”

Further confusion exists. Newman is of the opinion that Sor wrote only three sonatas; he does not mention Sor's *Sonata prima*, perhaps misled by the work's better known title, *Grand solo*, op. 14. Though Sasser recognizes the work as a sonata form, Brian Jeffery, in his *Fernando Sor: Composer and Guitarist* (1994), considers op. 14 a “free fantasy in which themes recur, rather than a work in strict sonata form.”<sup>3</sup> In addition, all writers seem to have missed the remarkable fact that Sor's op. 25 sonata begins with a highly unusual pairing of two connected

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<sup>2</sup> Harvey Turnbull, *The Guitar from the Renaissance to the Present Day* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), 89.

<sup>3</sup> Brian Jeffery, *Fernando Sor: Composer and Guitarist*. Second edition (London: Tecla Editions, 1994), 26.

movements (slow-fast), both in sonata form, and substantial ones at that. Newman describes the work as simply “a rather free, pathetic ‘Andante’ in the tonic minor, a gay ‘Allegro’ in 6/8 meter, and a theme-and-variations.” (He apparently didn’t notice that the work has a fourth movement, a concluding minuet and trio.) Sasser did recognize the first movement of op. 25 as a sonata form (and says nothing else about it), but failed to recognize that the second movement is a sonata form as well, labeling it a rondo. It is a pity that Newman did not realize the true nature of Sor's op. 25—it is one of the most sophisticated guitar sonatas of the period. Furthermore, no writer seems to have noticed that Sor's remarkable *Fantaisie*, op. 30, is a further example of the form: it comprises a connected introduction, theme-and-variations, and concluding extended sonata form of some 266 measures duration.

Newman's assessment of Sor's sonata style can be understood within the context of a complex work of scholarship that examines the sonatas of literally hundreds of composers peripheral to the central figures of the study, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Nevertheless, our understanding of Sor's sonata style and our appreciation of its compositional and aesthetic qualities have suffered considerably as a result.

An examination of a genre that occupied a central position in the *compositional* output of most instrumental composers of the early nineteenth century therefore seems appropriate to the comprehensive study of Sor offered in these volumes. The present article examines the formal and stylistic procedures employed by Sor in his guitar sonatas, determining appropriate models for these works and placing them in a likely chronological context. This examination affords a telling glimpse of Sor at two very different stages of his career: as a young composer in Spain emulating the imported cosmopolitan high-classical style of the Italian opera overture and Austro-French symphony; and as an established post-classicist exercising a personal aesthetic and a confident, individual approach to formal construction.

## **2. A Note on Form, Style and Terminology**

Before turning to a detailed discussion of Sor's sonata style, I should give a brief overview of the various solo and orchestral sonata styles relevant to our discussion, as well as clarify the terminology that will be used.

The solo instrumental sonata existed in a great variety of styles during the closing decades of the eighteenth century. Indeed, the term “sonata” still continued to be used to indicate

“instrumental music” in general, encompassing works not actually written in *sonata form* (for example, the andante-rondo pairs favored by many Italian composers). Our textbook definition of the form is derived from the Viennese high-classic keyboard sonata style of Haydn and Mozart, and their contemporaries Dittersdorf, Vanhall and Pleyel (active in London and Paris). We understand a three movement scheme, fast-slow-fast, the first movement being in sonata form (the last movement often a rondo). The essentials of first movement form are an overall binary division: the first half establishes the tonic and dominant keys (in minor, usually the tonic and the relative major), marked by thematic statements; the second binary-half of the form begins with a section of further modulation and “development” of previously stated material, followed by a recapitulation of previously stated themes reconciled to the opening key. In practice, though, even the high-classic Viennese sonata style itself deviated often from this model.

Elsewhere in Europe we find a considerable variety of sonata forms and styles in use. The native Italian keyboard sonata style, characterized as much by diversity as anything else, ranges from the three-movement sonata-forms (fast-slow-fast), singing allegros and alberti textures of the Venetian Grazioli, and the sonata-form allegro/rondo pairs of the Florentine Cherubini, to the single (possibly paired)-movement near-sonata forms of the Neapolitan Cimarosa. The Parisian keyboard sonata style of such native composers as Hummel, Riegel and the Italian-flavored Méhul, on the other hand, is more consistent, usually consisting of three movements (sometimes two) with the opening movement generally in a brief (but varied) sonata form. An Italian violin sonata style is also to be found in Paris (and London), represented by the hugely influential Paris and London-based Italian violinist Viotti, and his French disciples Rode, Kreutzer and Baillot. Again, the scheme is three movements (fast-slow-fast) with a flexibly applied sonata form for the opening movement. On the Iberian peninsula a distinct keyboard sonata style in the lineage of Scarlatti, Seixas, Soler and Nebra is to be found. The style is characterized by single or paired movements and “incipient” sonata forms (that is, forms that do not employ a development section within their overall repeated-binary design, and which do not feature systematic restatement of thematic material in the home key). In London, on the other hand, we find the “pre-romantic” keyboard sonata style of the enormously influential Italian Clementi and the Bohemian Dussek, as well as the Italian violin sonata style of Viotti, already mentioned. Although the movement scheme is generally the high-classic three-movement one (fast-slow-

fast), the “pre-romantic” style combines a fairly strict first-movement sonata form with a dramatic, romantic quality of texture, key scheme, and dynamic expression. Finally, during the early decades of the nineteenth century, a Viennese “post-classic” sonata style can be identified. In the hands of Beethoven, Schubert, Adam, Reichal, and others, the outer form is quite stable, generally the four movements of the high-classic symphony or string quartet (fast-slow-minuet(scherzo)-rondo), with fairly strict adherence to the broad structural design of the textbook sonata form (though with widely-varying internal details of form).

Turning to orchestral sonata styles in the eighteenth century, the term “sinfonia” was used both for (what we would call today) the purely orchestral symphony and the opera overture. Although overtures were often performed as symphonies, orphaned from their parent operas, there nevertheless exists important differences between the two: the length and number of movements, the degree of compositional sophistication, and the overall character of the music. The high-classic orchestral symphony was generally of four movements (fast-slow-minuet-rondo), whereas the opera overture was generally a fairly short single movement (although three-movement examples were sometimes produced as well). While the high-classical symphony dealt with matters of thematic development and organic growth, the character of the overture was much more direct: it was highly rhythmic, employed little or no development of ideas, and usually ended with a series of highly recognizable codettas.

I should also clarify the terminology that will be used in describing the formal attributes of these sonata styles. The term *theme* does not necessarily refer to a discernible melody, but to a musical section that, defined by a strong sense of cadence, projects and reinforces a single tonality. The term *transition* refers to a passage or section that connects one thematic area to another. Although a transition may begin with a melodic or thematic quality, it does not serve to reinforce a single tonality. The transition that follows the first theme in the exposition modulates (or at least *reaches* the new tonic), the transition that appears in the recapitulation does not (neither do secondary transitions that may connect thematic statements in an extended theme group). I do not use the term “closing theme,” preferring instead the term *coda* (a section comprised of any number of short *codettas* that affirm the current tonality) for the outer closing sections of the form. The term *development section* refers only to the area of contrasting tonality (consisting of one or more *episodes*) that intervenes between the exposition and the recapitulation; the term does not necessarily imply a process of thematic or motivic development.

The term *retransition* refers to the modulatory passage or section that connects the final episode of the development section with the beginning of the recapitulation (it precedes the thematic statement that marks the return of the opening tonality). In addition, I have often used the term *sonata style* (as distinct from *sonata form*); as we have seen, beyond the most rudimentary notion of sonata form are many variants which relate principally to compositional style, rather than to the form itself.

### 3. General characteristics and likely chronology of Sor's sonatas

Despite his fame and skill as a guitarist, Sor did not devote himself exclusively to composing for the instrument. The considerable energies he expended on vocal music and the grander genres of opera and ballet, no doubt combined with the demands of publishers for marketable items of guitar music, resulted in a sporadic sonata output totaling only four works (along with a fantasia in sonata form). These sonatas are serious, ambitious compositions nevertheless, and comprise two substantial single-movement works, two highly developed multi-movement forms, and a fantasia-sonata hybrid. The works in question are the following:

- 1) Sonata prima (Grand solo, op. 14)
- 2) Sonata seconda (Sonate, op. 15b)
- 3) Grande Sonate, op. 22
- 4) Deuxième Grande Sonate, op. 25
- 5) 7e Fantaisie, op. 30

These works span Sor's compositional career, we do not know precisely where or when they were written. We do know that a “Gran Sinfonia” for solo guitar and “una sonata” by Sor were advertised for sale in Madrid in 1806,<sup>4</sup> and that Sor’s *Sonata prima* and *Sonata seconda* appeared in Parisian publications sometime between 1802 and 1814. However, since publication dates establish only an upper limit for the date of composition, in the absence of dated autograph manuscripts, letters, or other compelling evidence, the precise dating of the works remains a matter of conjecture.

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<sup>4</sup> The “Gran Sinfonia” was advertised on November 1, “una sonata” on October 4. Mangado, *La Guitarra en Cataluña, 1769-1939*, 288. Also see footnote 19, below.

### 3.1. *Sonata prima* (*Grand Solo*, op. 14)

Sor's first sonata, the single-movement *Sonata prima* (later known as *Grand Solo*, op. 14, and which may very well be the “Gran sinfonia” advertized for sale in Madrid in 1806) was published in Paris, sometime between 1802 and 1814.<sup>5</sup> The piece appeared in Salvador Castro's *Journal de Musique Etrangère pour la Guitare ou Lyre* (“Journal of Foreign Music for the Guitar or Lyre”), indicating that Sor was still regarded as a “foreign” musician at the time and presumably predating his exile to France in 1813. However, the work was likely composed much earlier, and quite possibly dates from as early as the latter part of Sor's Barcelona period of around 1796-1800, during his time as a student at the Real Escuela Militar de Matemáticas de Barcelona. Here, as well as successfully producing his opera *Telemaco* (1797) at the Barcelona opera house, Sor began composing guitar music after the style of the Italian guitarist Federico Moretti. Moretti had arrived in Spain from Naples in 1795 and, although the six-course guitar had been known in Spain for some time, published his *Principios para tocar la guitarra de seis órdenes* in Madrid in 1799. Sor spoke of the influence of Moretti in his *Méthode pour la Guitare* (Paris, 1830):<sup>6</sup>

J'entendis un de ses accompagnements exécuté par un de ses amis; et la marche de la basse, ainsi que les parties d'harmonie que j'y distinguai, me donnèrent une haute idée de son mérite; je le regardai comme le flambeau qui devait servir à éclairer la marche égarée des guitaristes.

I heard one of his accompaniments played by one of his friends; and the movement of the bass, and the parts of the harmony which I distinguished gave me a good idea of his merit; I regarded him as the torch that should serve to light the wandering steps of guitarists.

Significantly, the *Sonata prima* is one of very few works by Sor to contain examples of *brillante* passagework in the Italian style.

Following the re-opening of the Barcelona opera house in 1788, and the appointment of Antonio Tozzi as director, Sor surely heard the contemporary Italian operas of such composers as Cimarosa, Paisiello and Sarti produced there, and (with friends in high places) presented his

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<sup>5</sup> The opus numbers attached to these works first appeared, in a non-chronological fashion, in subsequent releases of Sor's guitar music issued by the French publisher Meissonnier and, later, the German publisher Simrock. For information relating to the dating of the various publications of Sor's music I have relied upon Brian Jeffery, *Sor* (1994), and presently unpublished research provided by Erik Stenstadvold (Norwegian State Academy of Music).

<sup>6</sup> Page 3, footnote.

own opera in the Italian style in 1797.<sup>7</sup> Sor was young, not yet having reached his twentieth birthday, but was quite capable of composing the overture and set numbers of a well-received opera. Provided a suitable period of assimilation, a solo guitar sonata in the Italian style would hardly have been out of the question.

Evidence to support a relatively early date for the work comes from a contemporary diary entry of Baron Maldá, reproduced in Josep María Mangado's *La Guitarra en Cataluña 1769-1939*, which describes a performance by Sor at the house of the Marqués de Castellbell in Barcelona on May 7th 1802:<sup>8</sup>

“When the refreshment was over, we changed the scene, as in a play, and we all went to the drawing room beyond the main room of the Castellbell house, and all gathering round Fernando Sors, seated in chairs, we listened to his guitar, after he had well tuned it, on which he played one of his inspired pieces of music, with such sweetness and dexterity of the fingers that it seemed to us that we were listening to a pianoforte in the variety of expression, sometimes soft and sometimes loud, with certain scales that he performed, never missing one note on his well-tuned guitar in the toccata which he played to us first, with many variations and musical modulations; then he sang a bolero or two, in which he is the champion.”

This “toccata,” with its “many variations and musical modulations” sounds very much like a description of a sonata (given that variation forms themselves generally do not modulate), especially one with the brilliant passagework of the *Sonata prima*.

Further evidence to support an early date for the first sonata comes from the extended biographical account (presumably supplied by Sor) contained in Ledhuy and Bertini's *Encyclopédie Pittoresque de la Musique* (Paris, 1835).<sup>9</sup> Here, it is mentioned that Sor did not dare to compose an overture in the style of Haydn for *Telemaco* in 1797, but had begun a study of string quartets by Haydn and Pleyel before leaving for Madrid. That is, before 1800. Although the overture Sor wrote for *Telemaco* is thoroughly Viennese (quite reminiscent of Mozart), the *Sonata prima* relies heavily on the Italian overture style. If Sor composed the *Sonata prima* after or around his study of Haydn and Pleyel string quartets, the work shows no signs of it. Many details of form and style, however, link Sor's early sonata style with the single-movement Italian opera overture, especially as represented by Cimarosa (the most widely performed, arranged and published Italian opera composer of the time). At this point, it is enough to mention a correlation

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<sup>7</sup> See the article by Josep Dolcet contained in these volumes.

<sup>8</sup> English translation provided in Jeffery, preface to “More Seguidillas,” (Tecla Editions, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> Page 164.



of theme types, motivic gestures, key schemes, and formal plans. The relationship is explored in some detail during the course of this article.

### 3.2. *Sonata seconda* (op. 15b)

Sor's *Sonata seconda* (later known as op. 15b), another single-movement work, was also published in Paris in Castro's *Journal de Musique Etrangère pour la Guitare ou Lyre*, sometime between 1802 and 1814. Although the overall graceful character of this work stands in contrast to the brillante exuberance of the first sonata, the model is again the Italian opera overture. With an almost identical internal structure, and similarly few signs of Austro-French style, the *Sonata seconda* was very likely written around the same time. That is, probably the latter part of Barcelona period of around 1796-1800.

### 3.3. *Grande sonate* (op. 22)

The *Grande sonate*, op. 22, is a multi-movement work set in the four-movement scheme of the high-classical Austro-French string quartet and symphony. This brings us to the question of a Haydnesque quality so often noted by commentators on Sor's music. In addition to the music of Haydn himself (which Sor first heard as a student at Montserrat) and the study of string quartets by Haydn and Pleyel mentioned above, Sor may also have heard the music of the esteemed “Haydnite” Luigi Boccherini, who was active in Madrid during Sor's time there in 1800-2 and 1804. In addition, Sor may well have come across the several guitar arrangements of music by Haydn (and Pleyel) advertized in Barcelona during the closing years of the eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the resemblance between Sor's sonata style and the sonata style of Haydn is quite superficial. In fact, few internal features of Haydn's style are to be found in Sor's writing; certainly, a developmental style—the distinguishing internal feature of Haydn's sonata style—is not employed by Sor. Sor's style in the op. 22 sonata actually owes as much to the style of Pleyel who, in addition to having been both Haydn's student and publisher, had formed an early friendship with the Italians Cimarosa and Paisiello, and appears to have absorbed certain elements of their style as well. We will examine the details in due course.

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<sup>10</sup> See the article by Josep Mangado contained in these volumes.

Although in the opening movement of Sor's op. 22 elements of overture style remain, improvements in compositional technique would seem to place the work somewhat after the two single-movement sonatas. But by how much? Though first published in Paris in 1825, the work clearly was written much earlier. On historical grounds alone, the past tense construction of the patriotic dedication, “Grand Sonate de Sor, qui fut dédiée au Prince de la Paix” (“Grand Sonata by Sor, which was dedicated to the Prince of Peace”) suggests it was written before 1808, since in that year Spanish statesman Manuel Godoy, the “Prince of Peace,” was exiled and Sor accepted a post with the French administration.

Adding to the problem of provenance, however, is a manuscript located at the Archivo de Pilar in Zaragoza of what appears to be an early version of the work:<sup>11</sup>

El Merito / Gran Sonata para Guitarra compuesta / por D<sup>n</sup> Fernando Sors para el uso / Luis Pajaron

The term “El Merito” could of course refer to Manuel Godoy, though the title suggests that the work was actually “composed for the use of” one Luis Pajaron. Unfortunately, no information on Pajaron has come to light.

With persisting elements of overture style, but also significant compositional advances over the first two sonatas, and with little justification for a patriotic dedication after 1808, op. 22 must have been composed during the period 1800-08. (And since Godoy regained the position of chief minister in 1801, after having fallen from power in 1797, we can perhaps modify these dates to 1801-08.) The period of sinecure in Barcelona, around 1802-3, seems quite likely. Here, according to Ledhuy, Sor worked on an opera, orchestrated oratorios for the chapel of Santa Maria del Mar, and composed Spanish vocal works, sacred vocals works and, more significantly, three string quartets and two symphonies.

Why did it take so long for this early work to appear in print? One answer is the seriousness and technical difficulty of Sor's “Grande sonata,” coupled with an increasing lack of interest shown in the genre by purchasers of music. By the time Sor established a relationship with his principal French publisher, Antoine Meissonnier, around 1816, the guitar sonata was no longer the popular recreational piece it had been a decade earlier. The sonata was now regarded as a serious composition, written more for the benefit of fellow musicians than for amateurs; the

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<sup>11</sup> Luis Gasser reports that the manuscript, which is undated and in an unknown hand, was donated to the archive in 1868 by one D. Juan Bernardon.

publishing houses of Paris and Vienna appear to have produced the majority of their guitar sonatas by around 1811-2 (and their piano sonatas even earlier). Sometime after 1817 Meissonnier had published (or republished) much of Sor's back-catalogue (along with several newly composed works). Based on a firmly established reputation, and with Sor's earlier works already in print, in 1825 Meissonnier published the work.

Returning to Spain at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and an assessment of Sor's position amongst his Spanish contemporaries, we find a surprisingly broad range of sonata styles in use there. The older Iberian keyboard sonata in the style of Soler was still very much in evidence during the 1790s, and was practiced by such figures in Sor's general environment as Narciso Casanovas at Montserrat and José Gallés in Barcelona.<sup>12</sup> Sor, in fact, refers to both Soler and Casanovas in the Ledhuy article (though his style bears no relationship to them). We also find a unique symphonic style that appears to combine elements of the early sinfonia and the Iberian sonata. The resulting works of such Madrid symphonists as Pablo de Moral, Francisco Javier Moreno, Felipe de Mayo and José Nonó commonly employ the highly-rhythmic triple meters and sharp ornamentation of the Iberian sonata, but show few signs of the standardized formal procedures, key schemes or movement forms of the high-classical Austro-French symphony.<sup>13</sup> Finally, a fully contemporary imported style is found in the keyboard and symphony sonata-style of Matteo Ferrer, the symphony style of Carlos Bager, the Italian overture style of Juan Balado and, of course, the three guitar sonatas of Sor discussed so far.<sup>14</sup> Sor, then, was one of the more progressive of the early nineteenth-century Spanish composers of sonatas. His musical language received further contemporary impetus with his exile to Paris in 1813, followed by his move to equally cosmopolitan London in 1815 and later travels in Eastern Europe.

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<sup>12</sup> A selection of Casanova's sonatas is contained in *Mestres de l'escolania de Montserrat*, iv: Música instrumental, i. Ed. David Pujol (Montserrat, 1934). Examples of sonatas of both Casanovas and Gallés are contained in Joaquin Nin's *Classiques Espagnols du Piano*, i (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, 1929).

<sup>13</sup> See the collection, *The Symphony in Madrid*, ed. Jacqueline A. Shadko (New York: Garland Publishing, 1981), series F, vol. IV, *The Symphony*, ed. Barry S. Brook.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

### 3.4. *Deuxième Grande Sonate* (op. 25)

The *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, first published in 1827 in Paris around the time of Sor's return from Eastern Europe, is undoubtedly a much later work than the previous three sonatas and must have been written either during the London period (1815-23) or during the travels in Eastern Europe (1823-7). It could therefore post-date the op. 22 sonata by as much as two decades. The character of the first movement of the work has much in common with Sor's romantically-inclined fantasia, *Les Adieux*, op. 21 (pub. 1825), which he dedicated to Francesco Vaccari, an Italian violinist with whom he associated in London.<sup>15</sup> *Les Adieux* has all the appearances of a trial run at the first movement of op. 25; the working-out of the opening phrases is identical, as are the aria-like character and general mood. Both works, as well as several later ones, seem somewhat indebted aesthetically to the style of influential London pianist Johann Cramer, dedicatee of Sor's *Three Italian Ariettes*, 5th set (pub. 1819). From the early 1820s Cramer had used rhetorical French and Italian titles for his instrumental works, many of which were in the form of andante-allegro pairs which could have served as models for Sor's *Les Adieux* and for the outer form of the opening movements of op. 25 (though not the internal form).<sup>16</sup> The major characteristic, however, is a pervading operatic quality stemming not from the overture, but from the aria, coinciding with Sor's preoccupation during the London years with the music of Mozart.

Bearing no dedication, op. 25 was a further publication directed as much to the benefit of Sor's reputation as a composer as at meeting the tastes of an amateur clientele. The movement scheme may be unprecedented: a first movement Andante largo in a fully developed sonata form connected to a second movement in sonata form, Allegro ma non troppo; followed by an Andantino grazioso theme-and-variations and a concluding minuet and trio.

### 3.5. *Fantasia* (op. 30)

After op. 25, Sor clearly no longer considered the sonata to be an appropriate (or popular enough) form for his more ambitious instrumental efforts which, with one exception, he subsequently devoted to the fantasia. The exception is the *7th Fantasia*, op. 30, a hybrid fantasia-

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<sup>15</sup> Jeffery, 46.

<sup>16</sup> See *John Baptist Cramer*, vols. 10-11, *The London Pianoforte School 1766-1860*, ed. Nicholas Temperly (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985).

sonata in Sor's later operatic style comprising a connected introduction, theme-and-variations, and concluding allegretto in sonata form. The work was published by Messonnier in 1828, the year following Sor's return from Eastern Europe, and is based upon two popular French children's songs. Dedicated to Sor's friend and compatriot Dionisio Aguado, and performed in Paris by Sor himself (as announced on the published title page), the work was likely newly composed by Sor for his own benefit concert of May 18, 1828.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4. Sonata styles of guitarists contemporary to Sor

Although we have suggested an orchestral model for Sor's early sonata style, any attempt to measure the solo guitar sonatas against the symphonies of Haydn, Boccherini, or Pleyel would hardly be reasonable. In addition, since Sor's sonata style owes nothing to keyboard models, and barely enjoys the same resources, comparison with contemporary piano sonata styles would be unrealistic also. A reasonable detailed comparison may, however, be made with the sonata style of Sor's guitarist contemporaries.

The main production of guitar sonatas during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries took place in two principal centers, Paris and Vienna, both of which accommodated influential Italian guitarists in addition to native guitar composers. Late eighteenth-century Spain also saw the publication of a number of sonatas for guitar, and it is there that we should begin our survey.<sup>18</sup>

##### 4.1. Spain

Sor was not the only Spanish composer of guitar sonatas. He remains, however, the only Iberian guitarist known to have written sonatas in the classic style. Although the recent research of Josep Mangado has revealed that several guitar sonatas were published in Madrid between 1780 and 1793, no copies of these works are known to have survived. It therefore is not possible to determine the style in which they were written.<sup>19</sup> However, since the content listings of these

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<sup>17</sup> Date from Jeffrey, 101.

<sup>18</sup> I am indebted to Erik Stenstadvold for much of the publication information presented throughout this chapter.

<sup>19</sup> The works in question, advertized in the *Gazeta de Barcelona* (but for sale in Madrid), include: “una sonata” by Don Juan Garcia (advertized September 9, 1780), “una sonata á 1<sup>a</sup>. Guitarra” by Máximo Merlo (advertized November 16, 1784), “una sonata para guitarra” by Pedro Soliveres (advertized September 13, 1788), “una sonata en música y cifra para guitarra,” composer not listed, (advertized January 1, 1789), “una sonata” by the Portuguese

collections generally comprises the older Spanish genres (such as fandangos and contredance settings), it seems likely that the majority of sonatas included were of the earlier Iberian type. (They could also simply be generically-titled pieces.) Some evidence to support the earlier style exists in the form of a surviving Allegro by one Dn. J. Arizpachoga, published in Castro's *Journal* in Paris, again sometime between 1802 and 1814. The piece is a single-movement binary-form sonata in the Iberian style.<sup>20</sup>

#### 4.2. Paris

Publication of guitar sonatas in Paris, where all of Sor's sonatas were published, began early, one of the earliest examples being a three-movement sonata for the then five-string guitar contained in Pierre Porro's *Nouvelle Etrennes de Guitarre*, op. 4 (Paris, 1784)—a work in Italian style consisting mainly of shallow passagework, included in a collection of music intended to introduce amateurs to the new arpeggio style of guitar playing. Indeed, most Parisian guitar sonatas, especially before the arrival of Carulli and Sor, were somewhat modest efforts intended for amateurs; those of Charles Doisy, D. Joly and Antoine Meissonnier, for example (one exception being Antoine Lhoyer's somewhat more technically-involved *Grande sonata*, op. 12, for five-string guitar, published in 1799). The native French guitar sonata generally employs a two-movement scheme: an allegro in sonata form followed by a rondo or set of variations (occasionally a valse). (This can be distinguished from the two-movement, andante-rondo “Italian sonata” of the time, which did not include a movement that actually employed sonata form.) Themes tend to be defined more by their concerto-like texture of fast, violinistic passagework and arpeggios than by any strong melodic quality, the main intention undoubtedly being to provide amateurs with material that was brilliant-sounding yet fairly easy to play. Motivic development is non-existent and the key schemes are extremely predictable—the development sections of all these works center on the dominant or the relative key areas only. An exception to the two-movement format, marking the adoption of Italian keyboard sonata style by

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Sr. Brito (advertized August 11, 1789) and “una sonata con una nota particular,” again by Máximo Merlo (advertized October 19, 1793). See Mangado, *La Guitarra en Cataluña, 1769-1939*; the online supplement “Anuncios de Obras para Guitarra de 1780 a 1789 en la “Gazeta de Barcelona”” at <http://www.tecla.com/catalog/0375c.htm>; and the articles by Mangado contained in these volumes.

<sup>20</sup> This piece also exists in a version for two guitars with continuo as, “Sonata del S.or Arizpachoga puesto a trio,” located in the Biblioteca Historica Municipal de Madrid. See Luis Briso de Montanio, *Un fondo desconocido de Música para Guitarra*. (Madrid: Ópera Tres, Ediciones Musicales, 1995), p.83.

native French guitarists, is found in the three sonatas, op. 31 of Charles de Marescot (publication date unknown, but almost certainly post-dating the arrival in Paris of Carulli, in 1808).<sup>21</sup> Marescot employs a three-movement scheme (fast-slow-rondo), further distinguished by a keyboard-like idiom of alberti textures and running scale passages. The forms remain undeveloped, however, and the development sections center on the dominant key area only.

The sonata style of Marescot was, no doubt, a derivation of the highly developed three-movement Italian keyboard/concerto-style guitar sonata that had been introduced to Paris by the Italian virtuoso Ferdinando Carulli (1770-1841), who in 1808 arrived there from Naples (possibly via Vienna). Carulli's sonatas seem just as appropriate for concert purposes as for recreational ones, and surpass the native Parisian guitar sonatas in significant ways, notably: length, thematic quality, inventiveness, grace, and formal substance and balance. Carulli makes little reference to the orchestral models preferred by Sor, however, relying instead on the often extended pianistic alberti textures and singing allegros commonly employed by Italian guitarists of the time. Further, a concerto-like element derives from a propensity for brilliant passagework, usually in the second theme area, which often concludes with a full cadential trill prepared by a short ascending "solo" cadenza (op. 16, pub. 1810, and op. 83, pub. 1815, for example). Fully integrating these keyboard and concerto elements with a natural guitaristic idiom, Carulli's main achievement is his ability to combine brilliant texture and passagework with memorable thematic content. On a structural level, within an overall larger form (sometimes literally double the length of the earlier works) the structural points are very clearly, almost dramatically defined. A strong arrival point is routinely reserved for the beginning of the transition which, marked with highly active rhythm and forte dynamic, assumes almost thematic interest. The development sections are also dramatically marked, moving directly and exuberantly to remote third-related/Neapolitan key areas such as the flattened mediant key (op. 21, nos. 1 and 2, pub. ca. 1810) or, by a half-step ascent, to the flattened sub-mediant (op. 83), as well as traversing widely-varied tonalities during the course of the section.

This was the Parisian sonata style contemporary to the publication of Sor's first and second sonatas there, a few years before his arrival in 1813. If Sor knew the music of the French guitarists, there is little evidence for it. His second sonata, with its single-movement form modeled after the overture and its absence of brilliant passagework, has nothing in common with

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<sup>21</sup> Marescot's *Methodes de Guitare*, opp. 15 and 16, was published in 1825.

them. The Italian guitar style, however, is a different matter. We know that Sor fell under the influence of the music of Italian guitarist Federico Moretti in Barcelona sometime around 1796 and, with the pervasive Italian climate in Madrid and Barcelona at the time, it is certainly possible that the music of other Italian guitarists fell into his hands. Whatever the case may be, in the first sonata Sor reveals his knowledge of the Italian guitar style, combining the overture and singing allegro styles and incorporating passages of brillante violinistic passagework. Like Carulli in his *Grande sonata*, op. 83 (pub. 1815) and Luigi Moretti (younger brother of Federico) in his *Grande sonata*, op. 11 (publication date unknown, but probably c.1810), Sor employs a slow introduction, an extended second theme group consisting of brillante passagework, and a dramatic opening development key (albeit a very unusual and short-lived one, the flattened tonic). Nevertheless, Sor also remains distinct in this work; the procedures and gestures of the overture are obvious at the opening period of the allegro (and elsewhere), as is the use of unifying motives that mark important structural points of the form.

Additional factors separate Sor's early sonata style from both the Italian and the French guitarists; most obvious, his use of single-movement forms for the first two sonatas and Austro-French symphonic movement scheme for op. 22. Less obvious, is the use of scordatura tuning in the *Sonata prima*, at the time most unusual. Sor's notational style is also significant. Few of Sor's Parisian predecessors took the step of accurately notating the polyphonic texture of their music (even Carulli had mainly relied upon a single-stem, violinistic form of notation). Sor did so, and for one very good reason: his guitar music relies far more heavily on a genuinely independent lower voice, true dialog between the voices, and a consistent three-voice texture. In other words, Sor's notation was, of necessity, a representation of his advanced conception of the textural possibilities of the guitar.

During Sor's residence in London and travels in Eastern Europe, from 1815-1826, Paris saw the publication of few guitar sonatas. Apart from Sor's op. 22 and op. 25 "Grande sonatas" and Marescot's op. 31, mentioned above, we can mention here only the *Trois sonatas*, op. 6 (pub. c.1815?) and a single-movement *Grand ouverture*, op. 17 (pub. c.1820) by the Italian violinist and guitarist Francesco Molino, the former being short, graceful, recreational pieces in Italian keyboard style that little more than hint at the true abilities of their composer. (Incidentally, and despite their title, Molino's *Trois sonates*, op. 15 and *Grande sonate*, op. 51 do not employ any movements that actually employ sonata form.)



### 4.3. Vienna

In Vienna, during the first decade-and-a-half of the nineteenth century, we find numerous examples of multi-movement guitar sonatas, some in the style of Haydn, but little in common with the style of Sor. A survey of these sonatas reinforces just how short-lived a genre the Viennese guitar sonata actually was—virtually all significant examples were published within a period of five years, between c.1806-1811. The Viennese guitar sonata took a variety of forms and styles, perhaps not surprising for a city that supported guitarists as diverse as the Italian Mauro Giuliani (1780-1829), the Austrians Anton Diabelli (1768-1858) and Simon Molitor (1766-1848), and the Bohemian Wenzel Matiegka (1773-1830). Several of these guitarists moved in the most elevated musical circles, Matiegka in Schubert's, Giuliani in Beethoven's, Diabelli in both, and the Viennese guitar sonata style reflects this.

Giuliani's sonata output, consisting of only one multi-movement work and two single-movement works (a *Grand ouverture*, op. 61 and the posthumous *Sonata eroica*, op. 150), is small but high in quality. The multi-movement *Sonata brillante* in C-major, op. 15, published in 1808 (two years following his arrival in Vienna) displays a refined, sophisticated pianistic style which is melodic rather than concerto-like, and which avoids the brillante passagework that defined the sonata style of fellow Italian guitarists such as Carulli and Moretti (though Giuliani does retain the extended pianistic alberti accompaniments typical of the Italian guitarists). A concern for structural refinement and balance is very evident: connections between sections are gradual rather than direct or dramatic; and a concern for the unity of the cycle as a whole is evidenced by the appearance toward the end of the final rondo of a graceful chromatic alberti accompaniment figure which introduced the opening movement. The rondo is an interesting form in itself which, in addition to the quotation from the first movement just mentioned, contains an inserted aria-like *grazioso* section in the middle of the movement—a device sometimes found in the rondos of other Viennese composers (including the guitarist Molitor in his unpublished op. 12, c.1808). Giuliani's *Grand ouverture*, op. 61 (pub. 1816), like Sor's *Sonata prima*, is a single-movement sonata allegro with slow opening introduction. There, however, the similarity ends: Giuliani's work is an overture in the contemporary style of Rossini,

complete with extended crescendo and diminuendo effects, whereas Sor's is based on the earlier Cimarosa model.<sup>22</sup>

Two native Austrians, Anton Diabelli and Simon Molitor, composed in the four-movement plan of the string quartet or symphony, as did Sor. However, the style employed is a contemporary, post-Haydn one, and owes much to the keyboard. The allegros are full of weak-beat, sforzandi-marked syncopations, sequences, (modest) contrapuntal textures, and short *ad libitum* cadenzas (also employed by Giuliani). In contrast to Sor's high-classical Austro-French minuets, the Austrian guitarists themselves usually employ the contemporary Viennese type characterized by hemiolas and frequent syncopation. The internal forms differ from Sor's sonata style as well, often incorporating monothematic elements, tempo changes, interpolated episodes, and third-related key schemes. The structural points of the form are often marked with fermatas. The second of Diabelli's *Trois sonatas*, op. 29 (published c.1807) is a good example of the style: the first movement employs a monothematic, developmental form; the second theme area is prefaced by a slow chordal insertion in the flattened mediant key; the second movement, an Adagio in ABA form, is built on the third-related I-bVI-I (rather than the usual I-V-I); the rondo incorporates abridged thematic restatements with an interpolated episode in the dominant. Molitor employs an outer style similar to Diabelli, though internally his movement forms and treatment of tonic modality lean somewhat toward the style of Schubert. The inner form of the opening movement of Molitor's *Grosse sonata* in a-minor, op. 7 (pub. c.1806) is again quite distinct from the classically-oriented forms of Sor, employing a false recapitulation followed by a tonic-major recapitulation. The rondo of Molitor's unpublished op. 12 sonata (c.1808) employs an extended andante sostenuto episode (in both minor and major versions of the relative key), while his unpublished op. 15 sonata (c.1808) comprises a quite unusual movement sequence: an anthem-like Prelude in G-major, followed by a short sonata-form Marcia in the sub-dominant, and a concluding theme-and-variations in the opening key.

The remaining significant Viennese composer of guitar sonatas is the Bohemian Wenzel Matiegka (1771-1830), whose twelve remarkably varied examples include both the fully developmental high-classic sonata style of Haydn and the more romantically-inclined movement

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<sup>22</sup> Giuliani's remaining single-movement sonata, the *Gran sonata eroica*, op. 150, is a problematic work. Published posthumously, in 1840, without an expression marking of any kind, this large-scale work appears to be comprised of sections borrowed from other pieces and "fitted" to a sonata form, rather than successive sections of an organically composed piece.

forms and character of Schubert. In contrast to Sor, Matiegka's adoption of Haydn style is quite specific: his *Grande sonate* no. 2 in A-major (pub. c.1808) concludes with a “Variations par Haydn” while his Sonata in b-minor, op. 23 (pub. c.1811) adapts movements from Haydn piano sonatas. Matiegka employs the three-movement scheme of the Haydn piano sonata (fast-slow-rondo or variations), rather than the four-movement schemes used by Sor, Diabelli and Molitor, along with a fully developmental style in which a principal motive often provides the material for both theme areas as well as the development. Another Haydnesque feature, the first theme is often used to frame the form, appearing at the beginning of the development and in both codas. The detail is generally motivic and rhythmic, though brillante passages are also employed, including extended measured cadenzas in the rondos of the *Grande sonate* no. 1 (pub. 1808) and the *Sonata Progressive*, op. 17 (pub. 1810). Matiegka also employs the metric effects of his Viennese contemporaries, very much so, including the superimposition of 3/4 groupings over 4/4 meter (*Grande sonate* no. 1). His style contains further progressive elements, sometimes reminiscent of Schubert, that stand in marked contrast to Sor's classically-oriented sonata style: in addition to the general character of themes in such works as the *Grande sonate* no. 2 and the *Sonata progressive* in e-minor (op. 31, no. 2), we can mention pianissimo endings to a large form (the opening movement of the *Grande sonate* no. 1) and to the whole cycle (op. 27 and op. 31, no. 6); the juxtaposition of tonic major and minor (*Grande sonate* no. 2, second movement); and a variety of recapitulation schemes ranging from sub-dominant recapitulations (*Grande sonate* no. 2) to such altered keys as both tonic and major versions of the relative key (op. 31, no. 1) and, in minor-mode forms, a sub-mediante recapitulation (op. 31, no. 2) and the recapitulation of the second theme in major (op. 31, nos. 2 and 6). Representing an expansion of a process used by Giuliani, Diabelli and Molitor, in his *Sonata progressive*, op. 17, Matiegka defines *all* the major sections of his form with contrasting tempos (first theme, second theme, development, and codas).

These Viennese guitar sonatas of Giuliani, Diabelli, Molitor and Matiegka, written before or around the time of Sor's exile to France in 1813, demonstrate a contemporary, post-classical approach to sonata writing that Sor was not to adopt until significantly later, with his op. 25 *Grande sonata* published in 1827. However, in all matters, the stylistic difference between Sor and his Viennese contemporaries is considerable. Whereas Sor's early model was an orchestral one, the Viennese guitarists were influenced by the keyboard (with the exception of Matiegka's

op. 22, no.21, “en forme d'une symphonie,” pub. c.1810); when Sor uses a four-movement scheme, it is a high-classic style rather than the contemporary Viennese style employed by Molitor or Diabelli; when Sor adopts the style of Haydn, it is a matter of general aesthetic rather than the developmental style adopted by Matiegka; and when Sor adopts an individual romantic approach to formal construction it remains within a classic framework of movement types and key schemes, rather than the varied-tempo forms and third-related schemes of the Viennese. In fact, Sor appears to have shared so little with the style of his guitarist contemporaries, that one wonders to what extent he was actually aware of their music.

### 5. Sonata prima in D-major (Grand Solo, op. 14)

Sor's *Sonata prima* appeared in Castro's *Journal de Musique Etrangère pour la Guitare ou Lyre* in Paris, sometime between 1802 and 1814, without opus number (although, as we have seen, it could quite easily have been written around 1800 and may very well have been published in Spain in 1806 under the title “Gran sinfonia”). This early version by Castro differs in many details from subsequent editions and contains several errors, including the omission of the eight-measure consequent portion of the first allegro theme (surely an engraving or copying error, since the theme appears in full in the recapitulation). The Parisian publisher Meissonnier issued a revised version during the period 1820-1,<sup>23</sup> this time as *Grand Solo*, op. 14, which corrects the errors and omissions of the Castro edition but also differs in many matters of detail. Although quite refined, the Meissonnier version seems to have been made with more than an eye to the buying public—the Db-major portion of the development section was removed. A further Meissonnier edition, published sometime during the period 1824 to ca.1827, restores the development section to its previous state (along with some chromatic harmonies from the introduction, and other refinements), and may be regarded as the definitive version of the piece.<sup>24</sup>

As we have noted, Sor's early sonata style owes much to the single-movement Italian opera overture of the 1780s and 90s, which was most widely represented at the time by the music of

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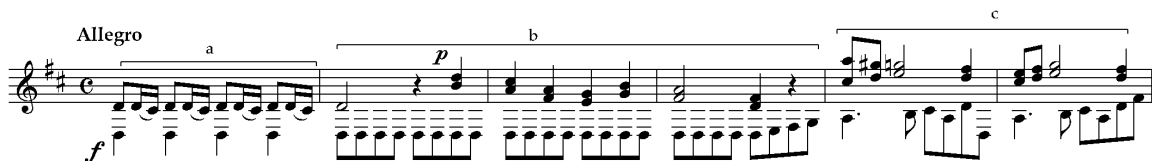
<sup>23</sup> This dating, which conflicts with that of 1822 given in Jeffery (1994), is based upon information provided by Erik Stenstadvold, whose research into Meissonnier suggests that the publisher had moved from Boulevard Montmartre No. 4 (the address indicated on the publication) to Rue Montmartre No. 182 sometime between September 1820 and April 1821.

<sup>24</sup> This was also the version used by Sor's friend and compatriot Dionisio Aguado as the basis of his *Gran Solo de Sor* (Madrid: Benito Campo, 1849) which, according to Aguado's preface, was intended to demonstrate “certain orchestral effects” on the guitar.

Spontini, Paisiello and Cimarosa—composers whose music Sor almost certainly heard during his time in Barcelona. In common with Sor's early style, the overture is characterized by very direct, non-developmental forms in which sections are defined by clear points of arrival (rather than seamlessly connected). The opening typically consists of a short head-motive followed by an immediate launch into a lively first theme consisting of parallel string-thirds over a repeated-note bass. Phrase groupings are symmetrical and periodic with literal repetition of phrases and periods as the principal means of developing sections. Transitions are highly rhythmic, and are usually built on one or more common motives. The second theme area is lively rather than lyrical; the Cimarosa overture often contains two secondary themes, the second being more rhythmic than melodic. The development section begins with a striking modulation and functions as an area of contrasting tonality rather than as a place to develop previously heard material. The final coda consists of an often-extended series of familiar codettas.

With its persistent repeated-note accompaniments, brilliant Italianate passagework, sonorous D-scordatura tuning, and overall theatrical exuberance and humor, the *Sonata prima* is very much a display piece in the “grande overture” style—a combination of overture and concerto styles. It is also an ambitious work, cast in the form of a sonata-allegro of orchestral proportions (some 270 measures) prefaced with a slow introduction in the tonic minor. The first thematic period (mm. 1-20)<sup>25</sup> comprises, in typical overture style, a short introductory head motive followed by ubiquitous “string”-thirds over a repeated-note bass (fig. 1):

Figure 1. *Sonata prima* (*Grand solo*, op. 14), first theme, 1-6.



The transition (21-33), also in typical overture style, is highly rhythmic, incorporating dotted rhythms, repeated sixteenth notes and triplet “string” tremolando. The new dominant is not reached, however, and the arrival at the secondary key area (34) is weakly defined. This rudimentary transition type, which proceeds on static harmony (dominant becomes tonic), is rare in the high-classical symphony but is often found in short sonata forms and overtures. A

<sup>25</sup> Measure numbers refer to the second Meissonnier edition.

procedure used in the longer Cimarosa overture to extend the secondary theme group, and also employed by Sor here, follows the first theme of the secondary group with a more emphatic second transition that now does create a well-marked arrival point on the new dominant; this is followed by a second thematic statement, often defined rhythmically rather than melodically. Of the two secondary thematic areas in this sonata (34 and 54), the first again suggests the three-part string textures of the Italian overture (fig. 2):

Figure 2. *Sonata prima* (*Grand solo*, op. 14), first secondary theme, 34-7.



The second is marked by a well-defined arrival point, but begins ambiguously, with transition-like material, before its elision to a period consisting of brilliant Italianate passagework (fig. 3):

Figure 3. *Sonata prima* (*Grand solo*, op. 14), Italianate passagework, 63-5.



The “development” portion of the movement is quite extended (48 measures) and, in typical overture fashion, progresses through a series of highly-rhythmic, easy to follow, two and four-measure phrases. The opening key area, however, is very unusual (though short-lived): the flattened-tonic (Db-major). Sor finds an interesting way out of this remote area, enharmonically respelling the Neapolitan to the dominant (Bbb becomes A), which is instead used to establish an episode in the large-scale tonic-minor. This episode employs the same rhythmic figuration as the codetta at measures 90-6, a rhythmic gesture very often found in the Italian opera overture (fig. 4, also fig. 15, below):

Figure 4. *Sonata prima* (*Grand solo*, op. 14): codetta, 90-3; development episode, 144-7.

While the retransitions of many overture composers (Paisiello, for example) consist of a simple arrival on the dominant followed by a rest and immediate launch into the first theme, Cimarosa often employs a connected approach to the first theme, as does Sor. In fact, Sor routinely employs a gradual lead-in to the recapitulation, of one type or another. In the *Sonata prima* the retransition (154-166) recalls both the tonality and closing material of the slow introduction before reintroducing the first theme through an anticipatory descending sequence built on its opening motive (fig. 5):

Figure 5. *Sonata prima* (*Grand solo*, op. 14), retransition, 158-67.

Beyond the customary changes of detail (to accommodate the tonic key) and omission of material from the second theme group (to maintain a balanced proportion of key areas; theme B1 is omitted), the most notable feature of the recapitulation is the extended coda (223). Consisting of no less than seven codettas, interspersed with measures of silence and excursions to the sixth-related keys (vi and bVI), this final section is again highly characteristic of the concluding psychological “crescendo” of the opera overture.

We have mentioned that one aspect of Sor’s early sonata style, shared with the the Italian opera overture, is that the important structural points of the form (transitions, codas, development episodes, etc.) are defined with highly identifiable rhythmic figuration, commonly taken from a

common set of figures. Sor, however, also relates important structural areas to one another through thematic references. In the *Sonata prima*, the first codetta in both the exposition (78) and recapitulation (223) clearly is based on the (b) motive of the opening theme (this is also a feature of Haydn's sonata style, which Sor may have picked up from the performances of Haydn symphonies he heard at Montserrat or from the various guitar arrangements advertized in Barcelona during the 1790s) (fig. 6):

Figure 6. *Sonata prima* (*Grand solo*, op. 14), thematic references: first theme, 10-12; exposition coda, 78-80.

Having mentioned earlier the relationship between the tonic-minor development episode and the exposition coda (see fig. 4), we may also note a relationship that exists between the opening motive of the first theme and a prominent figure introduced during the introduction (fig. 7):

Figure 7. *Sonata prima* (*Grand solo*, op. 14), motivic similarities: a) Introduction, 9-12; b) Allegro, 1.

The brilliant, exuberant, orchestral character of the *Sonata prima* is a quality that has helped the work remain popular to the present day. However, we should also recognize a certain looseness of form; Sor finds it difficult to maintain momentum through the varied sections of the exposition, and the development key (although skillfully negotiated) does not serve the larger tonality of the form. Furthermore, the brillante passages are not best served by the periodic phrase construction employed; though an element of the style, with barely a two or four-measure phrase escaping immediate repetition the result is often overly repetitive, and therefore



predictable. Nonetheless, the *Sonata prima* is a quite remarkable, ambitious guitar work for its time.

### 6. Sonata seconda in C-major (Sonate, op. 15b)

Sor's *Sonata seconda* also appeared in Castro's *Journal de Musique Etrangère pour la Guitare ou Lyre* in Paris sometime between 1802 and 1814, though (oddly) with a slightly earlier plate number (47) than the *Sonata prima* (50). Meissonnier published a revised version sometime during the period 1816-21<sup>26</sup> (plate no. 110), again without opus number, titled simply *Sonate*. This version differs from the Castro edition in many small details and omits the final codetta and the repetitions of two non-thematic phrases. A further Meissonnier publication, dating from the same period and employing the same plate number, restores the final codetta (or at least a version of it) and corrects the few errors found in the presumably earlier edition. This version was also reissued after Meissonnier became a partner with Heugel in 1839 (plate no. H. & Cie 110). A further Paris edition, likely dating from the period 1814-1820, is included in a "Collection de Morceaux Choisis des Meilleurs Autuers Espagnoles et Italiens pour Guitarre ou Lyre, Rédigée par un Espagnol," as "Sonata di Sor" (plate no. 81, no publisher). This version shares similarities with both Meissonnier editions, but employs yet another variant of the final codetta. A German edition published by Simrock around 1824-5 (plate no. 2310) is virtually identical to the first Meissonnier edition however. This edition by Simrock is the only one to be assigned an opus number, op. 15 (the work thus becoming one of four by Sor to be assigned that number). Although the later editions present the more refined versions of the piece, the original Castro edition does contain a number of unique charming details. Nevertheless, due to its relative completeness, refinement and accuracy, the second Meissonnier edition best represents the piece.

The *Sonata seconda* is another single-movement work in overture-style, though less exuberant and of more modest dimensions than the first sonata (178 compared to 270 measures). A lively, yet graceful character is supported by the original tempo marking of Allegretto (which became Allegro moderato in later editions), lively short appoggiaturas (especially in the early edition by Castro), a general absence of brillante passagework, and a less extravagant coda. Nevertheless, the two sonatas share many similarities: three-part textures in parallel thirds with

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<sup>26</sup> This dating also conflicts with that given in Jefferey (1994). Stenstadvold suggests that Meissonnier occupied the address Rue Montmartre No. 182 (the address indicated on the publication) from May 1815 until, at the latest, April 1821 (see footnote 23, above).

repeated-note bass, the use of well-defined rhythmic figuration and motives, a reliance on period phrase construction and symmetrical groupings, a rudimentary transition leading to a two-part second theme group, a new clearly-defined development “theme,” and a gradual lead-in retransition. The opening themes of the two works share an almost identical construction: a short head motive, followed by parallel thirds over a repeated-note bass, followed by dialog texture (fig. 8):

Figure 8. *Sonata prima* (*Grand solo*, op. 14), [Allegro] 1-6; *Sonata seconda* (*Sonate*, op. 15b), 1-6.

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is for Op. 14, marked 'Allegro'. It features a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first six measures are divided into three sections: 'a' (measures 1-2), 'b' (measures 3-4), and 'c' (measures 5-6). Section 'a' has a forte (f) dynamic. Section 'b' has a piano (p) dynamic. The bottom staff is for Op. 15b, marked 'Allegro moderato'. It also has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It follows the same structural layout with sections 'a', 'b', and 'c' over the first six measures.

The secondary theme area is defined as much by its rhythm and texture as by its melodic component (a common feature of the overture), as is confirmed when it reappears in the recapitulation with only vague pitch resemblance (fig. 9):

Figure 9. *Sonata seconda* (*Sonate*, op. 15b), secondary themes, 33-6, 60-1, 138-41 and 153-4.<sup>27</sup>

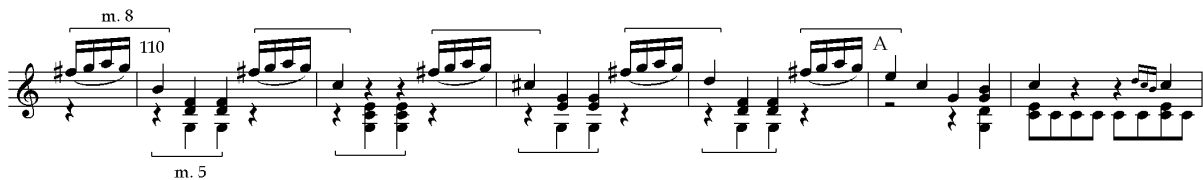
The image shows a single staff of music with two systems. The first system is labeled 'EXPOSITION Theme B1' and contains measures 33 through 60. It features a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. There are triplets marked with a '3' and a fermata over measure 60. The second system is labeled 'RECAPITULATION' and contains measures 138 through 153. It features a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. A slur labeled 'glissez' covers measures 153-4. Vertical dashed lines connect the corresponding measures between the two systems.

As a shorter movement containing somewhat less immediate repetition (especially in the sequentially treated transitions) and subtle variations in the phrases that are repeated, the second sonata is a tighter and better balanced form than the first, though not without its peculiarities. The transition theme that follows the first thematic period re-cadences on the tonic (at 22) before

<sup>27</sup> Measure numbers refer to the second Meissonnier edition.

moving off again to the dominant, with the curious effect of neither closing the first theme nor moving away from it. The transition proper is the non-modulatory type, and the first dominant theme is followed by a second, modulatory transition (48) and a second dominant theme (53), after the Cimarosa model. The core development key again is unusual—the lowered-seventh—a tonality entirely unrelated to the large-scale harmonic structure of the movement (and not even functioning in the customary manner as the dominant to the relative major of the tonic minor, or as any kind of Neapolitan dominant). Sor does not resolve this tonality, but rather moves to the supertonic of this key (the large-scale tonic-minor) and a tonic-minor prolongation of the large-scale dominant. Like the first sonata, an anticipatory retransition “leads-in” to the recapitulation with motives adopted from the first theme (mm. 5 and 8) (fig. 10):

Figure 10. *Sonata seconda* (*Sonate*, op. 15b), retransition, 110-15.



The piece contains further structural motivic connections. The following rhythm, ubiquitous to the overture since its earliest days (Pergolesi's overture to *S. Guglielmo*, Naples, 1731, for example, is based entirely upon it), appears at each transition, in both codas, and announces the development section (fig. 11):<sup>28</sup>



Furthermore, first theme motive (b) appears prominently in the secondary theme area of the exposition (37 and 45) and the recapitulation (142 and 150) (fig. 12):

<sup>28</sup> This figure is easily confused with the characteristic *seguidilla* rhythm which, however, occurs in triple-meter only.

Figure 12. *Sonata seconda* (*Sonate*, op. 15b), motive (b), 2-4, 36-8 and 141-3.

The image shows three staves of music. The top staff is labeled 'Theme A' and starts at measure 2. The middle staff is labeled 'Theme B2 (exposition)' and starts at measure 36. The bottom staff is labeled 'Theme B2 (recapitulation)' and starts at measure 141. A bracket labeled '(b)' spans across measures 2-4, 36-8, and 141-3 in all three staves, indicating the core motive.

The core development episode appears to be built on a lower voice presentation of the opening motive of the movement (in the later editions this is hidden in uncharacteristically imprecise notational texture) (fig. 13):

Figure 13. *Sonata seconda* (*Sonate*, op. 15b), development episode, 1-2 and 85-7 (Castro, 93-5).

The image shows three staves. The top staff is 'Theme A' starting at measure 1. The middle staff is 'DEVELOPMENT Castro' starting at measure 93. The bottom staff is 'Meissonnier' starting at measure 85. A bracket labeled '1' spans across measures 1-2, 85-7, and 93-5, indicating the development episode.

And a second development episode relates to the second theme of the dominant area (fig. 14):

Figure 14. *Sonata seconda* (*Sonate*, op. 15b), development episode, 53-4 and 98-9.

The image shows three staves. The top staff is 'Theme B2' starting at measure 53. The middle staff is 'DEVELOPMENT (with restemming)' starting at measure 98. The bottom staff is 'ALL EDITIONS' starting at measure 98. A bracket spans across measures 53-4 and 98-9, indicating the development episode.

Are these thematic associations deliberate? If so, one assumes Sor would have notated them more clearly. However, the following ubiquitous overture figure is similarly hidden in the notational texture (fig. 15):

Figure 15. *Sonata seconda* (Sonate, op. 15b), overture motive, 35 and 43.



One of the most used clichés of the Italian opera overture, from the early overtures of such Neapolitan composers as Lampugnani to those of Paisiello and Cimarosa, and beyond, its appearance here can hardly be coincidental. The figure is also found in many symphonies, including some of Boccherini's, and is a particular feature of Pleyel's style, appearing with very great frequency in his transitions (it is also found in Mozart, but is rarely used by Haydn). (The figure is accurately notated in both Sor's *Sonata prima* and *Grande sonate*, op. 22, by the way).

To sum up, although the second sonata differs considerably in character from the first, the formal procedures employed are the same—they are those of the Italian opera overture. Several specific internal details link the works: the opening periods of both are constructed in an identical fashion (a short head-motive, followed by parallel thirds over a repeated bass, followed by a dialog texture), the first transition is non-modulatory, the dominant area is in two parts and includes a second modulatory transition, the core development key is arbitrary and does not resolve to a structural key, and the retransition is connected and gradual. Both sonatas employ motivic relationships, the second being even more unified than the first in this respect: all of the structural points of the form are marked by common motives, including thematic references in the development.

## 7. Grande Sonate in C-major, op. 22

The *Grande Sonate*, op. 22 was first published in Paris by Meissonnier in 1825 but, as we have noted, could hardly have been conceived at that time. Indeed, the work that precedes it in Meissonnier's plate numbers, the fantasia *Les Adieux*, op. 21, employs the same romantic aesthetic and compositional style as the *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, published just two years later, but shares few of the high classical traits of the op. 22 sonata. The version of the work presented in the “El Merito” manuscript has all the appearances of an earlier version of the work, being rhythmically more direct and somewhat less refined in both phrase construction and overall detail.

Op. 22 presents a somewhat more ambitious compositional style than the previous sonatas and, in the first movement sonata-allegro at least, a greater command of larger form. Following the standard four-movement plan of the Austro-French symphony of the 1790s—fast (sonata)-slow-minuet-rondo—an aesthetic resemblance to Haydn can perhaps be justified. The inner workings of the movements, however, remain distant from Haydn's compositional style and the overall form probably owes as much to Pleyel. The monotonal key scheme between movements— all are in C-major/minor—is an occasional feature of Haydn, but also of Pleyel (and Boccherini). An extended secondary area in sonata form is also a feature of Pleyel's style (though it is also a feature of Cimarosa's overture style, as we have seen). An aria-like adagio for the second movement, very unusual before Beethoven, is often used by Pleyel (especially in sonata form, as Sor's form suggests here). Although not unique, and quite orchestral, both Sor and Pleyel show a marked preference for themes that contain assertive repeated-note motives in quarters or eighths. Similarly, the diminished-seventh harmony, a colorful pre-cadential gesture favored by Sor, is also a decided characteristic of Pleyel's style. This is not to suggest that Sor's style in the op. 22 sonata is modeled exclusively after that of Pleyel. Sor does not discuss previously heard material in the development section, nor frame his form with appearances of the first theme in the codas or at the beginning of the development (both are Haydnesque characteristics of Pleyel). Moreover, Pleyel does not employ Sor's characteristic lead-in retransition (also a feature of Haydn), but invariably precedes the return of the first theme with a fermata. In addition, the opening allegro of Sor's op. 22 retains many elements of the overture, including a highly rhythmic character, a non-developmental form, and a dramatic development key (Pleyel prefers closely-related keys).

## 7.1. Allegro

The opening allegro of op. 22 shares a marked similarity of material with the second sonata (it could almost be a re-working of it). The first-theme launch into repeated-note texture is prefaced by an eight-measure introductory motivic period, also a feature of Pleyel's style (Haydn would spinout this material for the entire first theme, adopting repeated-note texture only at the transition). This is simply an expanded version of the opening themes of the previous sonatas: an opening head-motive (now occupying seven measures), followed by “string” thirds over repeated-note bass, followed by dialog texture. The prominent repeated quarter-note motives presented here introduce a marked preference for repeated-note, orchestral melodic figuration throughout the entire movement, and in the later movements (fig. 16):

Figure 16. *Grande sonate*, op. 22, Allegro, first theme, 1-14.

The musical score for the first theme of the first movement of Sor's *Grande sonata*, op. 22, is presented in three staves. The tempo is marked *Allegro moderato* and the dynamic is *f* (forte). The first staff (measures 1-5) shows the initial head-motive with a repeated-note bass line and a melodic line. The second staff (measures 6-9) continues the melodic line with a repeated-note bass line. The third staff (measures 10-14) features a complex texture with repeated-note bass lines and melodic lines, including a sextuplet 'string tremolando' in measure 10.

In comparison with the earlier sonatas, the opening movement of op. 22 is better balanced, employing more varied phrase construction, subtly varied repetition, non-symmetrical phrase groupings, and cadential extensions and elisions. The result is a more organic form in which less predictable transitions grow out of the themes that precede them. Furthermore, the transition functions immediately as an effective arrival point, not simply reaching the new key but cadencing firmly on the new dominant after reinforcing the dominant area; in this case with an extended sextuplet “string tremolando” built on the new dominant Neapolitan key (Eb-major) (31-41). This striking modulation is quite reminiscent of Cimarosa (his overture to *Il mercato di Malmantile*, 1784, for example, employs the same modulation as Sor here). The effect, coupled with the fragmented lead-in to the second theme group (42-3), could hardly be further removed from the functional uncertainty of the second sonata at this point (fig. 17):

Figure 17. *Grande sonate*, op. 22, Allegro, transition, 31-44.

Although still not developmental, significant changes are to be found in the construction of the development area as well. At the outset of its three rhythmically and texturally-defined episodes (94, 102, 114), the development pivots from the G-major ending of the exposition to Eb-major. The core development key is therefore clearly related to tonal events heard previously in the exposition, i.e., to the transition key (the same procedure was used by Cimarosa in the overture just mentioned; Pleyel generally adopts closely-related development keys). Furthermore, Sor resolves the key area appropriately, to a dominant prolongation of the large-scale tonic-minor that precedes the retransition (which again employs a characteristic gradual lead-in). Short transitions between development episodes and phrases are built on the overture motive found embedded in the notational texture of the second sonata (as already mentioned, the use of this motive at the structural points of the form is a particular element of Pleyel's style) (fig. 18):

Figure 18. *Grande sonate*, op. 22, Allegro, development transition motive, 104-5.

The structural areas of the form continue to be linked through common motivic ideas: the repeated-note idea presented in the first theme is also used melodically throughout the transition, in the two secondary themes, and throughout the development (fig. 19):



Figure 19. *Grande sonate*, op. 22, Allegro, repeated-note motives, 21-2, 36-7, 42-3, 62-3 and 95-6.

The musical score for Figure 19 consists of five staves of music. The first staff is labeled 'Transition' and contains measures 21 through 6. The second staff is labeled '36' and contains measures 36 through 7. The third staff is labeled 'Theme B1' and contains measures 43 through 3. The fourth staff is labeled 'Theme B2' and contains measures 61 through 3. The fifth staff is labeled 'Development' and contains measures 95 through 6. The music features various repeated-note motives and rhythmic patterns.

## 7.2. Adagio

When Sor later dedicated a work to Pleyel, the *Fantaisie*, op. 7 (published by Pleyel himself in Paris in 1814), he prefaced a variation set in C-major with an extended largo introduction in the tonic minor. The slow movement of Sor's op. 22 is also in c-minor, and takes an uncommon form (at least before Beethoven) which happens to be the slow-movement form preferred by Pleyel: a long aria-like adagio in sonata form. Sor's second-movement adagio juxtaposes an outer da capo form with sonata form as follows (fig. 20):

Figure 20. *Grande sonate*, op. 22, Adagio, hybrid sonata form.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>
(17)	(37) (46)	(62) (82) (91)
: a1 :  : a2 :	b1 b2 coda	b2 coda
c-mi	Eb	f-mi c-mi
Expo.		"Dev." Recap.

The first theme group, a 16-measure closed binary form, moves directly into a much longer secondary theme group in the relative-major (17-59) comprising two themes with intervening



Figure 22. *Grande sonate*, op. 22, Adagio, 9-10, 37-8 and 60-2.

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The first staff, labeled 'A2', contains measures 8-10 and features a melodic line with repeated notes and a bass line with sustained chords. The second staff, labeled 'B2', contains measures 37-38 and shows a more active melodic line with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The third staff, labeled 'Development', contains measures 60-2 and begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a piano (*p*) section. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

In addition to the prominent use of repeated-note melodic figuration and the structural use of dominant Neapolitan harmony to open the development, a further connection with the first movement is apparent: the retransitions of both movements are built from identical material (fig. 23):

Figure 23. *Grande sonate*, op. 22: Allegro 115-22; Adagio, 70-81.

The image displays two sections of musical notation. The first section, labeled 'First movement', covers measures 115-22 and consists of two staves. It features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass and a melodic line in the treble with a *dol.* (dolando) marking. The second section, labeled 'Second movement', covers measures 70-81 and also consists of two staves. It shows a similar eighth-note accompaniment and melodic line, with a *dol.* marking at the beginning. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings.

### 7.3. Minuetto Allegro

The third movement is a standard high-classical Austro-French minuet and trio (distinguished from the earlier minuet by its anacrusis and tempo, and from the typical contemporary Viennese minuet through its lack of hemiola and syncopation). The unassuming, regular syntax of both minuet and trio results from a standard binary form comprising eight-measure phrases and

textbook tonic-dominant key scheme. Motivically, the repeated-note idea is again prominent in the leading themes of both minuet and trio (though this is characteristic of many such movements) (fig. 24):

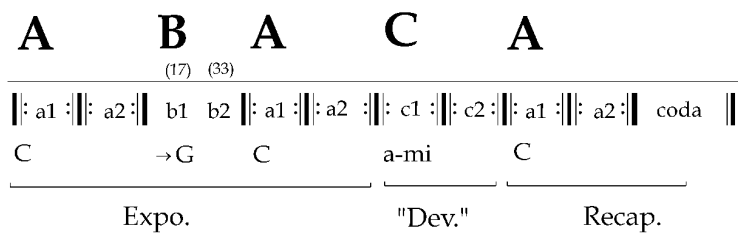
Figure 24. *Grande sonate*, op. 22, repeated-note motive, Minuetto, 1-4; Trio, 1-4.



#### 7.4. Rondo Allegretto

The final movement is an extended five-part rondo that, like the second movement, suggests elements of sonata-form through the rhetoric of its transitions and theme types (though it is not a genuine sonata-rondo and the sectional plan remains one of rondo form) (fig. 25):

Figure 25. *Grande sonate*, op. 22, rondo form.



The main theme (a 16-measure rounded binary) is followed by an extended B section, very much in the form of a sonata secondary area: an extended transition (17-32) establishes the new dominant; the second theme proper (33-52) is followed by a twelve-measure retransition back to the main theme. The “development” (another self-contained binary, in the relative minor) is followed by a second retransition (96-117, an extended 21 measures) to the main theme. Both retransitions are characteristically gradual, and form connections with transitional passages found in previous movements of the cycle: the first retransition (from the B area, 53-63) shares material with same functional area in the preceding minuet; the second retransition (from the

“development,” 96-117) shares material with the transition from the opening movement of the sonata (fig. 26):

Figure 26. *Grande sonate*, op. 22, Minuetto, 25-6; Rondo, 53-56 and 114-5; Allegro, 42-3.

MINUETTO  
(24)

RONDO (first transition)  
(52)

RONDO (second retransition)  
(113)

ALLEGRO (first movement)  
(41)  
*p*

Clearly, these transition figures are related to the motive as presented at the opening of the first movement of the sonata (fig. 27):

Figure 27. *Grande sonate*, op. 22, Allegro, 7-8.

(6)

Like the second movement, the manner in which Sor closes the form is unusual. Unlike a genuine sonata-rondo, the secondary theme does not reappear and is instead replaced by an extended overture-style coda of some 52 measures duration. After such a well-developed transition and secondary area, and the use of structurally prominent retransitions to move back to the main theme, we could expect a reference to the secondary area to close the form. The coda that appears instead seems appended rather than organically connected, though it is not entirely unrelated to the rest of the movement as it contains references to both the transition motive shown above and motives from the relative-minor portion of the movement (fig. 28):

Figure 28. *Grande sonate*, op. 22, Rondo, 160-5 and 178-81.

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The top staff begins at measure 160 and contains a melodic line with eighth notes and a bass line of repeated notes. A bracket above the first few measures is labeled '(Transition motive)'. The bottom staff begins at measure 178 and features a melodic line with eighth notes and a bass line of repeated notes. The first measure of the bottom staff is marked with *pp* and the final measure with *ff*. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings.

The op. 22 *Grande sonate*, then, is another ambitious, though slightly uneven, early work of Sor's. The first movement, still essentially an overture form, substantially solves the earlier problems of momentum and arrival, as well as of relating a striking development tonality to the overall tonal structure of the form. Motivically, many of the ideas for the movement, if not the whole work, are stated at the opening period of the movement, especially the orchestral repeated-note idea that is present in virtually all the major themes presented during the cycle. Like his probable model Pleyel, Sor's high-classical style incorporates elements of both the Austro-French symphony and the Italian overture and employs (or suggests) sonata form for the three extended movements. Relying still on an overture sonata-style for the opening movement, the incomplete hybrid form of the adagio suggests that Sor's absorption of this second-movement form was intuitive. Certainly, the sonata element is as much rhetorical as literal. What should we make of Sor's use of unifying motives? Although melodic repeated-note motives are hardly unique to the themes of Sor and Pleyel, Sor's apparent method of associating them, probably absorbed from the highly identifiable structural figuration of the Italian overture, appears to have developed into a quite individual characteristic of his sonata style.

### 8. Second Grande Sonate in C-major/minor, op. 25

Perhaps two decades separate Sor's op. 22 and op. 25, the *Deuxième Grande Sonate*. During the intervening period, Sor had lived in Paris, built a successful career in London, and had possibly begun his travels in Eastern Europe. As an established member of the musical circles of London and Paris, he associated with many leading musicians of the day and had the opportunity to hear performances of the widest range of music. (Performances of Beethoven symphonies, for example, were given in London and Paris almost contemporaneously with the premieres in Vienna.) Amongst his friends and professional associates he counted such esteemed personalities

as the pianists Kalkbrenner and Cramer, the violinist Baillot, the flautist Druet, (as publishers of his music) Pleyel and Clementi, and even shared a concert with Field in Russia. In London, he was a sought-after teacher of singing, composed vocal music after the Italian style, and became absorbed in producing music for the ballet. Not surprisingly then, the Sor of the 1820s composed in a quite different style than the young composer we have seen so far.

Sor's London period (1815-23) is marked by the adoption of a new, romantically-inclined operatic style characterized by a preponderance of minor tonalities, a solemn, pathetic mood (in major, a gentle, bright mood), seamless connections between movements, aria-like andantes accompanied with repeated diadic harmonies, and gentle but insistent pedal tones. Also during this period, Sor appears to have become preoccupied with the music of Mozart. He arranged arias from *Don Giovanni* for guitar and voice (published in 1820); he made solo guitar arrangements of arias from the *Magic Flute* (published as *6 Airs from the Magic Flute*, op. 19 around 1823-5); and wrote his celebrated *Introduction et Variations sur un Thème de Mozart*, op. 9 (published sometime between 1817-21). Op. 9 appears to be a pivotal work. Mozart's theme inspired Sor to compose an introduction, and it is here that we first encounter his new style (fig. 29):

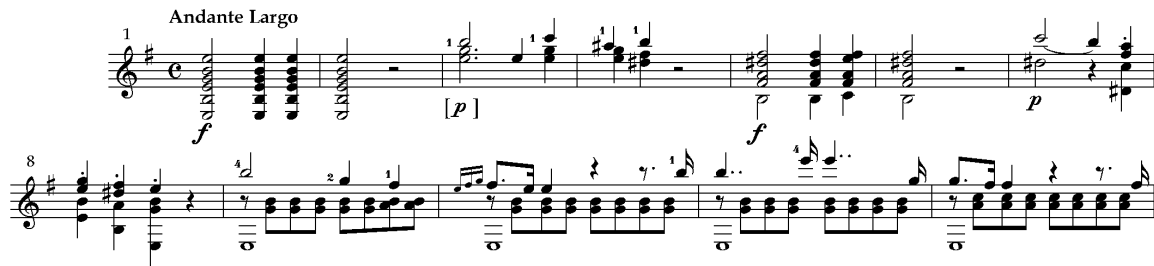
Figure 29. *Introduction et Variations sur un Thème de Mozart*, op. 9, Introduction, 1-12.



The opening scheme of this introduction is as follows: forte block-chordal statement in the tonic followed by piano polyphonic statement to the dominant; consequent version of the same; a melodic period accompanied with gently repeated diads. An identical procedure and mood is found in opening measures of the fantasy *Les Adieux*, op. 21 which, although published in 1825, appears to have been written around the same time (fig. 30):<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Jeffery, 46.

Figure 30. *Les Adieux*, op. 21, 1-12.



And, in more elaborate form, in the opening movement of the *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25 (pub. 1827) (fig. 31):

Figure 31. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Andante largo, 1-12.



Clearly, the style is operatic. However, it is now the rhetoric of the aria, rather than of the overture, that provides the material and the mood.

The *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25 is the first (presumably) of several quite extended works in Sor's new operatic style. First published in Paris by Meissonnier in 1827,<sup>30</sup> around the time of Sor's return from Eastern Europe, op. 25 could perhaps have been written during these travels or, just as likely, earlier in London. It is a sophisticated, highly unified work, in several respects quite unique, and certainly one of the finest guitar sonatas of the classic-romantic period. The outward form is very unusual, perhaps unprecedented, beginning with two connected movements in sonata form: the opening Andante largo begins with all the appearances of a slow introduction before unfolding as a full developmental aria-style sonata form in itself, and is elided to an elaborate sonata, Allegro non troppo. The pairing may certainly be regarded as an



expanded form of the elided Andante largo-Un poco mosso that comprises Sor's (presumably) earlier *Les Adieux*. Op. 25 continues with an Andantino grazioso theme-and-variations, and concludes with a minuet and trio. The latter two movements are also connected; the minuet shares its opening motive with the opening of the preceding theme, initially suggesting itself as a further variation. And the two pairings themselves are connected, though not literally; the Allegro non troppo ends so gently that a psychological connection with the theme-and-variations that follows is made virtually inevitable. This sequence of movements can perhaps be best understood aesthetically, as a romantically expanded introduction and allegro followed by a nostalgic pairing of movements in high-classical style. (We perhaps tend to forget that as many classical-period sonatas end with a theme-and-variations or a minuet as with a rondo.) Like the first Grande sonata, the key scheme is monotonal—all movements are in C. Although unifying motivic and thematic connections between sections and movements are pervasive, unlike the earlier sonatas Sor employs here a developmental first-movement form.

### 8.1. Andante Largo

The opening Andante largo is a movement of finely balanced dimensions and organically derived formal sections. The movement begins solemnly, presenting the motives that comprise the entire movement: a dotted sixteenth-quarter anacrusis figure (a), an accompanimental figure of repeated eighth-note diads (b), a dotted eighth-sixteenth melodic figure (c) (which obviously derives from the anacrusis figure that precedes it) and its auspicious echo in the lower register (c') (fig 32):

Figure 32. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Andante largo, opening motives, 1-4.

The musical score for the opening of the Andante Largo movement is shown in a single staff. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Andante Largo'. The first measure contains a dotted sixteenth-quarter anacrusis figure, labeled (a), with a forte (f) dynamic. The second measure contains an accompanimental figure of repeated eighth-note diads, labeled (b). The third measure contains a dotted eighth-sixteenth melodic figure, labeled (c), with a 'dol' (dolce) marking. The fourth measure contains its echo in the lower register, labeled (c'), with a piano (p) dynamic. The score ends with a fermata over the final measure.

<sup>30</sup> A few subtle notational refinements are introduced in a later edition, published in Germany by Simrock in 1830 (plate no. 2843).

Following this initial first thematic period, what begins as a second tonic theme built on an inversion of the opening measures of the movement becomes a well-developed transition section with a modulating sequence which establishes the new dominant area (9-19) (fig. 33):

Figure 33. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, Andante largo, transition motives, 8-10.



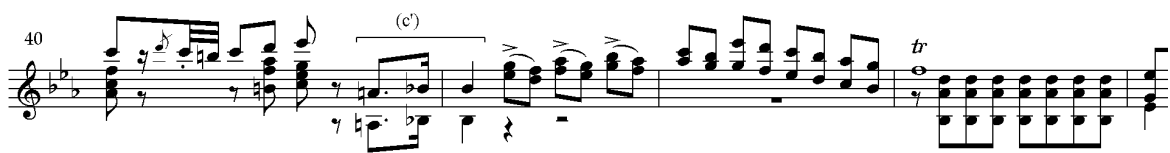
The second theme, an aria-like duet in the expected relative major, is built on identical material to the opening theme and transition (motives b and c), but projects an altogether distinct character (fig. 34):

Figure 34. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, Andante largo, second theme, 27-30.



At the closing of the secondary theme, motive c' appears as an operatic pre-cadential cliché, introducing a short duet-style cadenza in thirds and sixths, and equally typical full cadential trill (fig. 35):

Figure 35. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Andante largo, second theme, 40-3.



The coda maintains the repeated-note accompaniment that has served most of the movement thus far, and recalls the lower voice motives first heard in the transition (fig. 36):

Figure 36. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Andante largo, coda, 44-8.



The development begins in the large-scale Neapolitan key (Db-major), enabling a modulation to the closely related large-scale sub-dominant (f-minor), and an elaboration of the first theme (fig. 37):

Figure 37. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Andante largo, development, 63-4.



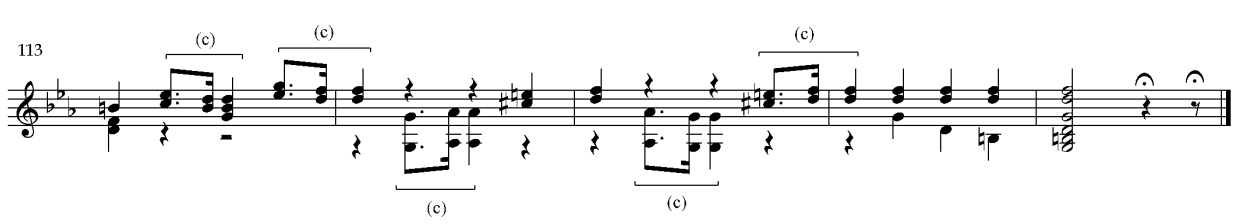
Consequently, the recapitulation omits the first theme at the return and instead moves directly to a tonic-minor restatement of the second theme, complete with the short cadenza and trill heard earlier. Instead of the expected final coda, the insistent repeated-note accompaniment figure (b) reappears, and now introduces a reworking of the first theme to close the form (fig. 38):

Figure 38. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Andante largo, closing theme, 98-102.



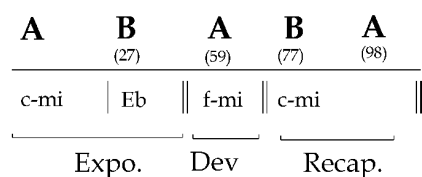
The final closing material, which connects to the second movement by ending on dominant-seventh harmony, is based almost entirely on the (c) motive which, especially in its low octave version, has appeared as a structural marker throughout the movement (fig. 39):

Figure 39. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Andante largo, closing motives, 113-7.



The formal effect of this finely balanced, organic movement is of a symmetrical sonata form built around an insistent principal idea, as follows (fig. 40):

Figure 40. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Andante largo, sonata form.



The minor-mode recapitulation is an interesting detail, since post-classical sonatas (and even the late ones of Haydn) often switch to major-mode in the recapitulation of the second theme in a minor-mode sonata. This preserves the major-mode character of the theme as first heard in the exposition, as well as adding an element of sublimation to the form. Sor's paired-movement form, however, leaves this function to the ensuing major-mode allegro.

## 8.2. Allegro non troppo

The second movement, an Allegro non troppo in the large-scale tonic major, is a second elaborate and well-balanced sonata form (of some 278 measures duration). Like Sor's earlier sonatas, the exposition employs a two-part secondary theme area. The themes, which resemble a succession of graceful ariettas, are related both to one another and to the previous movement. The first thematic period is characterized by an opening anacrusis and an ascending 4th (fig. 41):

Figure 41. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Allegro non troppo, 1-4.

Theme A  
Allegro non troppo

The second theme, a major-mode version of the theme that pervaded the first movement, combines these two features (fig. 42):

Figure 42. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Allegro non troppo, 46-50.

Theme B1  
46

A further secondary theme (76) recalls the first theme (fig. 43):

Figure 43. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Allegro non troppo, 76-9.

Theme B2 (= A)

The exposition therefore assumes a symmetrical ternary grouping within the two tonal areas (as does the exposition of a sonata-rondo). The transitions and codas are fully developed sections in themselves and grow out of the principal themes in an organic, developmental fashion such that it is often difficult to define precisely where the one function starts and the other stops. Perhaps twenty years earlier, Sor used the same transition textures heard here. The following examples could have been taken directly from the pages of op. 22 (fig. 44):

Figure 44. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Allegro non troppo, 39-45 and 105-7.

After an otherwise conclusive coda, the exposition ends gently, though unpredictably, with a sixteen-measure cadential period in which repeated soprano harmonics alternate in dialog with a repeated chordal accompaniment (fig. 45):

Figure 45. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Allegro non troppo, 116-30.

Following this loosening of the form the development begins without break in the tonic minor, and in turn centers around the dominant-Neapolitan key (Ab-major) and the tonic minor again, echoing the tonality of the first movement and forming a symmetrical three-part tonal scheme. The motivic material is freely derived from the secondary theme area (principally the rhythmic outline of theme B1, but also quotes from measures 63-6 and 91-94) (fig. 46):

Figure 46. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Allegro non troppo, 142-4, 49-51, 148-52, 63-7 and 91-3.

The image shows a musical score for Figure 46. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows measures 142-4, with the top staff labeled 'Theme B1'. The second system shows measures 49-51, 148-52, 63-7, and 91-3. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and various rhythmic values and accidentals.

Like the earlier sonatas, the retransition is gradual, and is built on the repeated accompaniment diads of the second theme. The restatement of second dominant theme in the tonic key is a close substitute for the first theme, and the result is an overall symmetrical rondo-like sonata form similar to the first movement (though here the second theme group dominates) (fig. 47):

Figure 47. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Allegro non troppo, sonata form.

A	B	B2	B	B	B2
	(46)	(76)	(135)	(146) (167)	(179) (210)
C	G		:   c-mi   Ab   c-mi		C
Expo.			Dev		Recap.

The gentle, anti-climactic codetta that closed the exposition is again present at the end of the recapitulation, ending softly and coaxing the large form into the beginning of the next movement.

### 8.3. Andantino grazioso (theme and variations)

Sor's third movement takes the form of an infectious *Andantino grazioso* theme with five variations. The theme begins with an ornamented version of the ascending-fourth motive that opened the principal themes of the previous movement (with which it also shares a common harmonic plan), sounding as an anacrusis until the true downbeat becomes apparent with the change of harmony on the first beat of the third measure. This type of metric effect is rarely present in Sor's music (fig. 48):

Figure 48. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, 3rd movement, theme, 1-6.

Andantino grazioso

asc. 4th

3

3

3

3

3

3

3/8

2/8

3/8

2/8

The variations are in standard classical form, comprising a short series of textural-rhythmic elaborations of the underlying harmonic progression of the theme.

### 8.4. Minuetto Allegro. Trio

Sor ends his large form on a graceful note, with an innocent, perhaps nostalgic reference—a high-classic Austro-French minuet and trio. The minuet uses the opening motive of the previous theme, with the result that it could at first be taken for a further variation (fig. 49):

Figure 49. *Deuxième Grande Sonate*, op. 25, Minuet, 1-4.

MINUETTO

Allegro

asc. 4th

Despite the obvious stylistic and formal differences that exist between the multi-movement op. 25 sonata and its predecessor, op. 22, Sor's new style does retain an important element of the classical style: the psychological weight of the work falls to the opening movement. Unlike the classical style, however, the emotional energy is dissipated gradually through the cycle rather than being balanced with an extended, lively final movement (although lively, the extended

second movement of the opening pairing is also graceful and ends softly rather than affirmatively); the cycle thus becomes progressively lighter, finally dissipating on a graceful, nostalgic note.

As we have already noted, the main production of nineteenth-century guitar sonatas took place between around 1800-1811, with subsequent publications of sonatas being mainly concerned with further editions of the more successful of the earlier works. (Even if Sor's *Deuxième Grande sonate* had been written early in his London years, it would still be the last substantial multi-movement guitar sonata of the period.) Only the music of such celebrities as Sor and Giuliani was marketable to the extent that even beyond the 1820s it was possible for a publisher to print a “new” sonata under their name: Giuliani's op. 150 *Gran sonata eroica* appeared for the first time in 1841; newly edited versions of Sor's earlier sonatas continued to appear at least into the 1830s. Despite this, Sor published no further sonatas by name after op. 25 (indeed, no further guitar sonata seems to have appeared before the early twentieth century and the sonatas of Heinrich Albert, Federico Moreno Tórroba and Manuel Ponce). Sor did, however, publish a further sonata form as the conclusion to his *Fantasia*, op. 30.

### 9. *Fantasia in E-minor, op. 30*

Sor's 7e. *Fantaisie et Variations Brillantes Sur deux Airs Favoris Connus*, op. 30 was published in Paris by Meissonnier one year after op. 25 (in 1828) and shares the same minor tonality and connected movement forms. The outer form is very interesting, comprising an introduction and theme-and-variations connected to an extended allegretto in sonata form. The piece is based on “two well-known favorite airs.” The first, the subject of the variation set, appears to be based on “C'est la mèr' Michael,” a popular French children's song of the time (fig. 50):<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> I am grateful to Brigitte Zaczek for sharing this example, which is taken from a nineteenth-century collection in her possession: *Vielles Chansons et Rondes pour les petits enfants*. Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cle[illegible] Editeurs.



Figure 50. “C'est la mère Michel.”

Allegretto

C'est la mère Michel qui a perdu son chat, Qui est par la fenêtre à qui le lui ren-  
dra Et l'empêcheras-tu? Cru qui lui a répondu: Allez, la mère Michel, votre chat n'est pas perdu.

The second “favorite air,” presumably the first (or second) theme of sonata portion of the fantasy, is presently unidentified.

The introduction, *Lentement*, is marked by references to the forthcoming theme, accompanied by repeated diads above. The similarity with the opening movement of op. 25 is obvious (fig. 51):

Figure 51. *Fantaisie*, op. 30, Introduction, 9-10.

The variation set that follows is one of Sor's best, and departs from his usual notated practice: the variations are connected to one another without pause, and each has fully written-out repeats of one or both halves of its binary form containing further variation (something usually reserved for extended orchestral, chamber, or keyboard sets). In addition to the customary changes of texture and rhythmic figuration that defines each variation, Sor also employs harmonic variation in two of the variations (the second is embellished with chromatic harmonies, the third with secondary dominants). An interrupted cadence resolves to a return of the introduction for an extended coda, *Lentement*, followed by a complete statement of the theme (apparently in the new tempo). Stopping short, on dominant harmony, the theme resolves directly (V-i) into the sonata-form *Allegretto*.

The *Allegretto* presents an extended and well-balanced sonata form of some 266 measures of 6/8 time. Like op. 25, much attention is given to the transitions and other connective areas of the form, and the whole remains flexible and unpredictable, yet highly unified. The themes are given aria-like settings, and the overall mood and style is operatic. The first theme (the second

“favorite well-known air” of the work's title?) is a self-contained small-ternary form (i-V-i) built almost entirely from a subtly-varied two-measure figure (fig. 52):

Figure 52. *Fantaisie*, op. 30, Allegretto, 1-3.



The extended second theme area has all the appearances of an operatic finale in miniature, comprising three periods (the second and third repeated en bloc), each of which adds to a rhythmic and textural crescendo progressing from solo melody (perhaps the second of the “deux airs favoris connus”), through exuberant duet thirds, to repeated eighth-notes before reaching the coda (fig. 53):

Figure 53. *Fantaisie*, op. 30, Allegretto, 50-3, 58-61 and 66-9.



The development, perhaps not surprising for such an operatic movement, is short and harmonically direct (focusing almost entirely on the dominant). The retransition however is elaborate: introduced by the lead-in material first heard in the exposition transition, along with a fragmentary re-harmonized presentation of the first theme, *ad libitum*, the first theme is not restated literally (8 + 4 + 4) but is temporarily interrupted, the middle-four measures replaced with a contrapuntal sequence (fig. 54):

Figure 54. *Fantaisie*, op. 30, Allegretto, 149-72.

Sor omits the transition and moves directly to a full restatement of the second theme group. As with the first movement of op. 25, Sor does not adopt a major-mode version of the secondary themes, but instead reconciles the original material to the new key and modality. The first period (177) is displaced relative to the barline (confirmed for the performer with accent marks), resulting in a series of appoggiaturas—a quite unusual, Beethoven-like effect (fig. 55):

Figure 55. *Fantaisie*, op. 30, Allegretto, 177-82 and 50-4.

The first theme reappears in the coda (reharmonized with descending chromatic thirds), as was the case with the opening movement of op. 25, and the movement ends in cyclic fashion with the repeated tonic pedal-point and chordal texture of the very opening measures of the fantasy, closing with an eight-measure crescendo of tonic-major harmony (fig. 56):

Figure 56. *Fantaisie*, op. 30, Allegretto, 250-66; Lentement, 1-6.

The image displays three staves of musical notation. The first staff, starting at measure 250, is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and shows a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass accompaniment of chords. The second staff, starting at measure 259, is marked with a crescendo (*cres*) and includes the instruction 'do.' above the staff. It features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass accompaniment of chords, ending with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The third staff, starting at measure 1, is marked 'Lentement' and shows a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a bass accompaniment of chords.

Despite the implication of its title, this “fantasia on two favorite and well-known airs” clearly was not intended for the popular market, but rather was a concert work of Sor's (dedicated to his friend and compatriot Dionisio Aguado, another virtuoso guitarist) published for the benefit of the few who could appreciate it. Like op. 25, op. 30 finds Sor adopting a personal approach to sonata form, such that he no longer even uses the term to identify the piece. Despite the unique overall construction, however, the work remains unified and persuasive. As a piece of music, it is without question a pinnacle of the nineteenth-century guitar repertoire.

## 10. Conclusion

All of Sor's sonatas are ambitious concert works, and although the early works in some respects fall short of the lofty goals Sor set for himself, the overall result is invariably of high quality. It is worth stressing that only two of the works discussed in this article are mature ones; the three earlier sonatas are likely the work of a composer in his early twenties—a composer significantly younger than Carulli, whose earliest sonatas appeared when he was in his late thirties; Giuliani, whose op. 15 appeared when he was twenty-eight; and Matiegka, whose earliest sonatas appeared during his mid-thirties.

The early sonatas almost certainly predate those of Sor's more notable guitarist contemporaries, and the later works (opp. 25 and 30) certainly post-date them. Consequently, his models remained distinct, standing apart from the keyboard-inspired style and virtually defining the concept of the guitar as an orchestra in miniature: the early single-movement works derive from the Italian opera overture, especially the extended model of Cimarosa; the multi-movement op. 22 adds formal models and gestures typical of the string quartets and symphonies of Pleyel, yet retains elements of overture style. The influence of Haydn, often cited in connection with

Sor, is one of general aesthetic only; few traces of Haydn's compositional style are present in Sor's sonata-style.

Though nothing can be found to relate Sor's sonata style with that of the French guitarists, a brief point of contact with the Italian guitar style is found in the single-movement first sonata, which shares common ground with the single-movement works in “grande overture” style of the Italians Carulli and Luigi Moretti (though not with Giuliani or Molino). Although Sor shares with the Viennese guitarists Diabelli and Giuliani a common desire for a unified multi-movement cycle, the means used to achieve it are quite different: Diabelli and Giuliani employ cyclic quotations from earlier movements, whereas Sor links movements through motivic associations (op. 30 does contain a cyclic element, though not in the form of direct quotation).

In the later works, Sor shares a post-classical formal approach with the earlier examples of the Viennese guitarists. However, Sor's forms remain distinct and classically tempered: although movements are connected, the internal forms remain in a single tempo; the key schemes are the closely-related ones of the classic symphony or the Neapolitan ones of the opera overture, but not the third-related ones of the Viennese; and even in minor-mode sonatas Sor does not depart from the classical tonic-minor recapitulation. Furthermore, Sor's model is operatic rather than pianistic, and appears to have been inspired, at least in part, by a preoccupation with the music of Mozart. Despite being classically tethered, the two late sonatas are as distinct in form and aesthetic character as any guitar work from the period. It is perhaps the fundamentally classical foundation of Sor's style that lends otherwise highly individual, unpredictable forms an abiding element of cohesiveness and persuasion.

Although spanning a period of almost three decades, Sor's sonatas are bound by a common thread of compositional intention: a concern for formal unity rather than idiomatic display, for motivic and thematic connection rather than melodic charm; a technical challenge that stems from musical necessity, from the use of Neapolitan development keys and extended textures, rather than from virtuosic display; a concern for the unity of the larger form; and, above all, a desire to compose an aesthetically substantial music for an instrument at the time not generally considered capable of it. These exceptional works, written not simply to please or to sell, affirm the view Sor held of himself: that he was not a guitarist-composer, but a composer-guitarist.

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