



Antonio Soler: A 250th-Anniversary Review Article

El padre fray Antonio Soler: Vida y Obra. By SAMUEL RUBIO, in *Monasterio de San Lorenzo el Real El Escorial. IV Centenario de la Fundación 1563-1963*. (El Escorial: Real Monasterio [Madrid: Gráficas Benzal], 1964, pp. 469-513) [Biblioteca "La Ciudad de Dios" I. Libros 10]

DESPITE PUBLICATION A DECADE and a half ago, Rubio's milestone monograph has been all but ignored in the abundant post-1964 Soler literature listed at the close of the present appreciation and synthesis. True, the distinguished author of a 1978 University of California at Santa Barbara doctoral dissertation did acknowledge the existence of Rubio's 1964 monograph. Nonetheless, it "was unavailable" for her consideration. If even industrious dissertation and thesis writers complain that it remains "unavailable," a summary of selected valuable disclosures in it will at least belatedly doff the hat to Rubio for "discoveries" and "corrections" that are now being credited to younger Soler researchers. In a more timely sense, this review article will provide an American pendant to 250th-anniversary publications in Spain.

For a first valuable "discovery": long before Marion O. Winter published her "Addenda and Corrigenda Antonio Soler," *Recorded Sound*, 59 (July 1975), 463, Rubio had already pronounced against December 3, 1729, as the birthdate of *Antoni Francesc X[avier] Josep, fill legitim natural de Matheu Soler, Musich del Regiment de Numancia, y de Theresa Ramos su muller* ("Antonio Soler Ramos, legitimate son of Mateo Soler, musician of the Numancia Regiment, and his wife Teresa Ramos"). Instead of December 3, 1729, for Soler's birthdate, he was baptized on that day at Sant Esteve = San Esteban Church in Olot (Gerona)—his godparents being the colonel of his father's regiment, Antonio Zúñiga, and a family friend at Olot, Mariana Sánchez Capay.

In view of the composer's being barely 54 when he died at El Escorial December 20, 1783, his father's being already 56 when he was born adds a filip to the composer's biography. Marcos Mateo Pedro Soler, native of Porrera (Tarragona), was born in January of 1685 of laboring class parents. María Teresa, the composer's mother—born at Daroca (Aragon) December 17, 1702, and therefore seventeen years younger than the composer's father—married the regimental musician in 1720 during his tour of duty at Daroca. Her parents were Juan Ramos, baptized at Galve church (Teruel) October 9, 1661, and Isabel Cebrián baptized in Fuentescalientes parish (Teruel) August 25, 1675. The composer's ancestors on both sides were therefore natives of northeastern Spain.

His father having descried his bent had him enrolled at age six in the Montserrat Escolanía. There he studied *música, órgano y composición* according to folio 294^v in the Madrid Palacio Real two-volume *Memorias sepulcrales* that contains El Escorial

obituaries (published in *Antóni Soler i els Sis Quintets*, introduction by Higinio Anglés [Barcelona: Biblioteca de Catalunya, 1933; Publicacions del Departament de Música, IX], page vi). Since only the musically apt with excellent voices gained entry to this foremost choir-school, his native ability obviously shone early. His Escolanía teachers were the maestro Benito Esteve and the organist Benito Valls (Dom Ambrós M. Caralt, *L'Escolanía de Montserrat* [Montserrat: Abadía, 1955], pp. 46, 97). Apart from gifts as a pedagogue, Esteve oversaw improvements in the choirboys' quarters and supervised installation of a new organ. Together with Valls (a fine performer trained at the Escolanía who took vows January 13, 1730), Esteve prepared Soler for a professional music career. Already at the early age of 13 or 14, according to testimony in his *Satisfacción a los reparos precisos hechos por D. Antonio Roel del Río, a la Llave de la Modulación* (Madrid: Antonio Marín, 1765), page 64, Soler studied 24 organ works by José Elías (organist of Sant Just i Sant Pastor church, Barcelona, 1715-1725; of Descalzas Reales chapel at Madrid, 1725-ca. 1755).

Custom permitted exceptionally talented enrollees of the Escolanía to remain in the choir-school even after their voices changed (to a maximum age of 18). Meantime, choir-school authorities helped them locate vacant music directorships for which they could compete. The obituary that Soler wrote in 1766 for his fellow El Escorial monk Pedro Serra, who had been a choirboy with him in the Montserrat Escolanía, twice implies Soler's having remained at Montserrat as late as 1746 (*Memorias sepulcrales*, tomo II, fols. 401 and 405^v). No confirming proof, either by way of capitular acts or pay vouchers, has thus far been found at Lérida Cathedral to prove Soler's ever having held a post there. Nonetheless, Soler's obituary in *Memorias sepulcrales*, fol. 294^v, states that he competed for two chapelmasterships, winning the second at Lérida Cathedral, and connects his becoming a Hieronymite with the interest taken in him by Sebastián de Vitoria, inducted bishop of Urgel May 15, 1744.

Vitoria, prior of El Escorial before becoming bishop and himself a musician with a fine tenor voice, heard Soler's competitive examination for the Lérida Cathedral chapelmastership. Also, according to Soler's obituary, it was Bishop Vitoria who ordained Soler subdeacon in early 1752. Upon his being then asked by the bishop if he knew any young organist inclined toward becoming a Hieronymite at El Escorial, Soler answered, "Here am I" (*Memorias sepulcrales*, fol. 294^v: "Dicho señor le ordenó de epistola, y diciéndole si había algun chico que se inclinase a ser religioso en El Escorial que fuese organista, respondió que allí estaba él"). Next came examination of Soler's family antecedents at Daroca (between August 3 and 14, 1752) and at Porrera (on August 21 and 22). Transmitted to El Escorial, these testimonies were approved by both the prior and his council September 12. Thanks to this data, plus a guarantee that he knew Latin—but most importantly on account of his "notorious ability as organist and composer"—he was voted into the Hieronymite community at El Escorial September 25, 1752. The El Escorial capitular act of that date testifies: "Siendo así mismo notoria su habilidad en el órgano y composición se pasó a votar en la forma acostumbrada, y regulados los votos dijo su Rma. [Fray Blas de Arganda] que la comunidad le había recibido."

After the usual year's novitiate, he professed September 29, 1753 (not 1752 as implied in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. XII [1965], 832). So uniformly favorable an impression did his profuse compositions make (including the *Veni Creator, a 8, con violines* "compuesto por Fr. Antonio Soler, novicio en este Real Monasterio de S. Lorenzo para el día de su profesión, que será el día 29 de septiembre

de 1753") that the community on March 16, 1754, unanimously voted his now 69-year-old father a lifetime pension of 100 ducats annually. Their reasons were his father's need *y las particulares habilidades (notorias a todas) de dicho nuestro hermano Fr. Antonio Soler su hijo* ("and the special abilities (now patent to all) of our brother, fray Antonio Soler, his son" [*Actas Capitulares*, fol. 137^v]).

Gabriel de Moratilla (1700–1788), El Escorial maestro de capilla when Soler entered, held the post from 1743—the year of his appointment by the then prior Sebastián de Vitoria—to 1757 (necrology in *Memorias sepulcrales*, two added pages between fols. 34 and 34 *bis*). The widely copied assertion that in 1752 Soler "was admitted organist and choirmaster to the royal monastery at the Escorial" (*Grove's Dictionary*, Fifth Edition [1954], vii, 873) therefore needs correction. He cannot have become maestro de capilla = choirmaster before 1757. Nor was Moratilla an inconsequential composer. Three still extant polychoral Masses in El Escorial archive prove quite the contrary. So far as Soler's studies during the five years, 1752–1757, are concerned, he identified himself (in his first letter to P. Giambattista Martini, dated June 27, 1765 [Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, *Carteggio Martiniano*, XXVI, signatura I-22, fol. 122; cited in Santiago Kastner, "Algunas cartas del P. Antonio Soler dirigidas al P. Giambattista Martini," *Anuario Musical*, XII-1957, 237]) as a *scolare dil Sr Scarlatti, di chi V. R^a, ne parla con molta stima* ("pupil of Scarlatti, spoken of with great esteem by Your Reverence"). Soler's self-identification as a pupil of Domenico Scarlatti (who died at Madrid July 23, 1757) confirms the note written by Lord Richard Fitzwilliam February 14, 1772, on "the day that he visited Soler at the Escorial, that Soler had been a pupil of Scarlatti." How long was he Scarlatti's pupil? In the *Grove's* 1954 article, Kastner suggests five years: 1752–1757. Where? Ferdinand VI and Queen María Bárbara with the rest of the royal retinue regularly spent October and November at El Escorial. Presumably, the late sixtish Scarlatti came with them.

However, Rubio considers it likelier that Soler took lessons with Scarlatti at Madrid—also that José de Nebra taught Soler at Madrid, rather than at El Escorial. Shortly before Soler, the El Escorial community had sent three other musicians, Juan de Alaejos (died December 23, 1752), José del Valle (died October 23, 1743), and Manuel del Valle (died December 13, 1775), to study with José de Nebra at Madrid. Proof that Soler studied with Nebra, court organist and vice-chapelmaster, comes to light in Nebra's commendatory letter dated December 21, 1761 at Madrid. Published among the preliminaries to Soler's *Llave de la modulación y antigüedades de la música* (Madrid: Joaquín Ibarra, 1762), Nebra's letter begins with his averring himself *de haver sido su Maestro algun tiempo* ("to have been [Soler's] teacher for sometime").

In the *Llave*, page 11, Soler identifies the exact geographical location of both the Hieronymite monastery at Madrid and the hostel for Hieronymites from El Escorial monastery who were temporarily resident in Madrid. Further to show his familiarity with Madrid, Soler in his *Satisfacción a los reparos precisos hechos por D. Antonio Roel del Río, a la Llave de la Modulación*, page 66, claims to have heard performances at Madrid of compositions by all five maestros who wrote testimonials published in his *Llave*. He heard works by Francisco Courcelle, José de Nebra, and Nicolò Conforto at the court chapel, works by José Mir y Llussá at Encarnación convent chapel, works by Antonio Ripa at Descalzas Reales convent chapel. The absence of Soler's name from the manuscript *Libro en que estan escritos los ordenados "in*

sacris" at El Escorial giving ordination dates for all members of the community ordained there between 1589 and 1765 can best be explained by assuming that he was ordained both deacon and priest while studying at Madrid sometime between 1753 and 1757.

His multiple duties as chapelmaster on his reincorporation in El Escorial community consumed the better part of an eighteen-hour day. At 8 A.M. and 3 P.M. he gave hour lessons in chant and Latin grammar. Office hours began at 5 A.M. followed by first Mass. Conventual sung Mass, beginning at 9, was preceded by terce and followed by sext. At 7:30 or 8:30 P.M. were recited the Stations of the Cross, and at midnight the community rose to sing *maitines* and lauds. Nevertheless, Soler's extreme laboriousness enabled him to complete his 272-page *Llave* for publication when he was only 33, to publish his 67-page *Satisfacción* three years later and a 13-page *Carta escrita a un amigo* in 1766. In his letter of July 2, 1766, to Padre Martini he mentions then preparing an extremely ambitious five- or six-tome treatise on *Musica Ecclesiastica antica* (AM, XII, 238). On June 25, 1771, he found himself prevented from finishing it because of waning health and the pressure of monastery duties. Although no trace of this work now survives at El Escorial, Rubio with good reason opines that the Madrid royal chapel organist José Teixidor y Barceló plagiarized the unfinished portions in his *Fragmentos autógrafos o Discurso histórico sobre la música religiosa*, Madrid Biblioteca Nacional MS 14060/14, and in *Discurso sobre la Historia Universal de la Música* (Madrid: Villalpando, 1804 [334 pp.]).

By 1765 Soler had composed four books of harpsichord sonatas (*Satisfacción*, p. 63; N. 25: "aunque es verdad que tengo algunos tonos escritos en los quatro libros de clavicordio"). In his letter to Martini dated November 30, 1766, he mentions his *essendo stato occupatissimo p. le Persone Reali* ("being extremely occupied with his duties to the royal persons" [giving lessons to the infantes Antonio and Gabriel]). Of the two "royal persons," his joy turned out to be the then fourteen-year-old favorite son of Charles III, Gabriel de Borbón (1752-1788). Hardly less important in Soler's career than María Bárbara in Scarlatti's or the Archduke Rudolph in Beethoven's, Prince Gabriel throughout life abstained from politics. Instead, he immersed himself in music, painting, and literature. Forgoing marriage until May 25, 1785, Gabriel previously was prior of the Knights of Malta (Castile and León priorate). Author of a *Carta pastoral* to the Knights of Malta (Madrid: Joaquín Ibarra, 1767), Gabriel published next his translation of Sallust, *La Conjuración de Catalina y la Guerra de Jururta* (Madrid: J. Ibarra, 1772).

Soler's six quintets for strings and organ or harpsichord (*Obra I Quinteto[s] con viol^{ls}, viola, Violoncelo y Org^{no} ó clave obligado Para la R^l Camara del Serenissimo Sr. Infante Dⁿ Gabriel Comp^{ta} i Dedicada â su A^{za} R^l por el P^{er}fr. Antonio Soler. Año 1776*) were composed specifically for Prince Gabriel. The title page of the 66-folio Violin I part implies that they were destined for performance in the two-story music pavilion built on El Escorial grounds between 1768 and 1772 by the renowned architect Juan de Villanueva. This *Casita de Arriba o del Infante* provided the locale for performance of Soler's *Seis Conciertos de dos Organos Obligados Compuestos por el P^{er} Fr. Antonio Sólèr Para la diversion del SS.^{mo} Infante de España D.ⁿ Gabriel de Borbòn*. As if these masterpieces did not sufficiently document his devotion, Soler also supervised construction of a tuning box, the keys of which plucked or struck strings that divided the 9:8 tuning ratio in 20 equal parts. By means of this *afinador*



or *templante*, described in Soler's obituary, he proposed enabling Gabriel to distinguish the limits of microtonal pitch perception. One such *afinador* Soler presented to Gabriel, and its twin to the Duke of Alba.

Because of the delight Prince Gabriel took in Soler's compositions written especially for him, he placed Soler on an annual lifetime pension of 25 doubloons (*Memorias sepulcrales*, fol. 295: "y le compuso a S.A. mucha música especial, a juicio de los inteligentes como correspondía a una persona real y que habían de ver y oír tantos facultativos, por cuyo trabajo le daba su Alteza todos los años 25 doblones para sus urgencias religiosas"). Apart from the six quintets and six concertos that survive at El Escorial, the rest of Soler's instrumental oeuvre survives elsewhere—XXVII *Sonatas para Clave* in a 1796 London 91-page imprint by Robert Birchall, another hundred or so sonatas at Montserrat in MSS 23, 27, 28, 29, 48, 53, 57, 58, 76, 77, 82, 90, 94, 97, 99, 110, 118, 130, 135; at Barcelona in Biblioteca de Catalunya = Biblioteca Central MSS M. 791/12, 751/4, 848, 921/2, 921/6, 921/12, 924, 932/1, 932/2, 932/4, 932/5, 932/8, 932/14 and in Orfeo Català MSS 45, 58; at Madrid and Paris in manuscript collections that were privately owned when Anglés constructed the first "complete" catalogue of Soler's works (*Sis Quintets* [1933], pp. xiv-xxiv).

How many of these sonatas did Soler compose specifically for Prince Gabriel? And like María Bárbara who played Scarlatti's sonatas, did Gabriel play Soler's sonatas "composed for his diversion"? The evidence of such a copy as the Orfeo Català MS 58 headed "sonatas del P^e fray Antonio Soler que hizo para la diversion del Serenissimo Señor Infante Don Gabriel. Obra 7.^a y 8.^a año 1786" implies that he did. The present review article cannot be extended with an in-depth appreciation of Rubio's editions of *Seis Conciertos para dos órganos* (Madrid: Unión Musical Española, 1968) and of 120 keyboard sonatas (1957-1972). Nonetheless, all Soler enthusiasts must now agree that without the nonliturgical instrumental works stimulated by Prince Gabriel, Soler would today be a stranger to general encyclopedias and a nonentity in popular histories.

Some further biographical tidbits merit mention before attention is drawn to Soler's theoretical publications. Among instrumental virtuosi whom he met and heard play at El Escorial before 1766, Soler himself names the flautist Luis Misón = Misón. Cited in *New Oxford History of Music*, VII (1973), 285, as "the outstanding composer of theatrical *tonadillas* at the beginning of their heyday" but given a death date ten years too soon (Misón died at Madrid February 13, 1776, not 1766), Misón was so much the paragon of flute playing as to be a household celebrity (Félix María Samaniego, *Fábulas en verso castellano* [Valencia: Benito Monfort, 1781] libro noveno, fábula xiv, line 5). Soler tells of being present when Misón played a flute duet with fray Pedro Serra—his companion from choir school days at Montserrat who died in 1766 (*Memorias sepulcrales*, fol. 402). Even if exaggerated, the anecdote still implies real excellence among El Escorial instrumentalists while at the same time implying constant fruitful contact with secular virtuosos at court.

Luis Misón, royal chapel musician and great cross flute virtuoso, was one day playing for fray Manuel del Valle. Fray Vicente Julián, organist, invited fray Pedro Serra [proficient not only on cross flute but also on oboe and bassoon] to go meet Misón in fray Manuel del Valle's quarters. Asked to play a duet with Misón, fray Pedro modestly declined claiming he had no flute. "Well, if that's your problem, here's one," said fray Vicente, pulling out of fray Pedro's sleeve a flute that he had furtively concealed there. When the great Misón and fray Pedro finished a duet the



music of which fray Pedro had never seen, Mison complimented him thus before everyone present: "So, countryman, you are the reluctant flautist, unwilling to play! What you have just played at sight has not been played better after much practice by any of my musician colleagues at Court."

In his plagiarized *Fragmentos autógrafos* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS 14060/14) José Teixidor retailed an anecdote that humanized Soler after the fashion of Scarlatti's cat of *Cat's Fugue* fame.

During the 1770's Soler kept a cat. Even when curled up contentedly by the fire in howling winter, the cat crawled out of his corner to sit immobile on Soler's harpsichord [*clave*] when Soler or one of his pupils played smooth modulations. But when the modulations [of a pupil] were foolish and went astray, the cat jumped off the harpsichord and grew wild if the door were closed preventing his exiting outside.

Whatever truth this anecdote enshrouds, a cat cued to complain against pupils' transgressions of Soler's modulation rules makes a titillating tale. What were Soler's modulation rules?

Reduced to present-day classroom jargon, the four rules at page 81 of Soler's *Llave de la Modulación* enjoin the following: (1) in a modulating passage; retain common notes in the same voice-part; or if there be no common notes between successive chords, introduce a tied suspension (2) seek the dominant of the new key (3) if the desired key is distant, enharmonic relations permit faster key-shifts (4) alternately moving outer and inner voices in a modulation enhances its sonority. To exemplify these rules he inserts four musical examples at pages 81-84. Rule 1 he exemplifies with his treatment of the progression G minor-A^b Major (root positions). Lacking a common note, the progression can be ameliorated thus: tie g above the bass in the first chord, letting it resolve as a 7-6-[5] suspension above A^b in the bass of the second chord. Rule 3 he exemplifies with the progression C[#] minor-E^b Major (both in root position). Interpreted as a IV-V progression in A^b minor, these chords read D^b minor-E^b Major. Ornamenting the first chord with a top-voice upper neighboring note smoothes the progression. Rule 4 he exemplifies with a progression from D Major to E^b Major. The bass note D remains stationary during quarter-note movement to G minor (second inversion), B^b Major (first inversion), dominant-7th B^b (first inversion); then moves to the root of the dominant-7th.

Book I of Soler's *Llave* contains some 42 dispersed examples plus 22 + 7 full-page plates gathered towards the close. The plates at pages 87, 91-111 contain paradigms showing how to move quickly from any major or minor key (except E^b minor) to E^b Major. The starting keys in the paradigms are: D Major, D minor, D^b Major, C[#] minor, C Major, C minor, and so forth down to E minor. Soler's paradigms (four per plate) enable the organist to get back to home key on a moment's notice. For the sake of the paradigms E^b Major serves as invariable home key. However, any other home key could have served. Top voices in the paradigms abound in fast scale runs, trills, and other graces.

Book II retrogresses to problems of Renaissance notation. To explain these, Soler requires an equally lavish layout of musical examples. He scatters some 54 among pages 133 to 191 and at 211-212, 234. Canons in Renaissance notation accompanied by their resolutions in eighteenth-century notation occupy pages 194-198, 200-208, 208 (inset), 214-222, 223-231, 236, 237-241, 242-243, 245-249, 250-253. His diffusely devoting 49 pages to enigma canons and their resolutions gives him opportunities not only to solve his own puzzle canon propounded at folios 3^v-4 of the unpagged



preliminaries to the *Llave*, but also to show at pages 194–98, 200–208, 208 bis, 214–231 his familiarity with Alonso Lobo's *Liber Primus missarum* (Madrid: Johannes Flandrus, 1602). How generous Soler's 1762 printer could be in spacing *Osannas I* and *II* from Lobo's *Missa Prudentes Virgines* (occupying only folios 61^v–62 and 63^v–64 of the 1602 imprint) comes to light when the *Llave* spreads these two canons together with their resolutions over 33 pages. By contrast, *Spanish Cathedral Music in the Golden Age* (1961 [1976]) could contain the scored resolutions of this same pair of canons in only five pages (268–272).

Soler's publication of so luxurious a volume (xxxviii + 272-pages) at the age of 33 bespeaks the extreme generosity of El Escorial community in allowing him time to concoct this prolix treatise. More importantly, the community subsidized publication in the most resplendent manner. El Escorial *Actas Capitulares*, II, fol. 165^v contains the act of January 13, 1762, transcribed first by Anglés (*Sis Quintets*, p. vii) and next in Rubio's 1964 monograph at page 487 (note 51).

His Reverence [the prior] announced to the community that Fray Antonio Soler, member of the community and presently chapelmaster, had completed a book called "Key to Modulating" that musical experts deem a very worthy and useful work. Having now obtained all permissions except the Father General's he wishes to publish it with a dedication to the community and asks that the community bear all printing costs. He will thereby feel extremely well rewarded for all his labors. The community having heard all this accepted the dedication and with great pleasure offered to bear the entire printing costs. Signed Fray Bernardo Lorca, vicar, Fray Francisco de los Ríos, secretary and archivist.

The dates of the five approbations secured at Madrid fall within a span of only a fortnight. Antonio Ripa, Tarazona-born maestro of Descalzas Reales, signed his December 13, 1761; José Mir y Llussá Catalonian maestro of Encarnación, signed December 15; Francisco Courcelle, royal chapelmaster, signed December 16; Nebra December 21. Nicolò Conforto (1718–ca. 1790), Neapolitan opera composer called to Madrid in 1755, signed December 28. The speed with which Soler obtained these eulogies of his treatise probably testifies more to the personal esteem that he had inspired at Madrid than to any close reading of his treatise by busy practicing musicians. At all events, the Heronymite Father General Fray Agustín Gómez commissioned yet another reading of the *Llave*. Not signed until February 24, 1762, by the 72-year-old Jaime Casellas who was on the point of retiring from the Toledo Cathedral chapelmastership (held since November 17, 1733), this final approbation caps the other five. To establish his erudition, Casellas quotes Augustine—with a footnote in the original Latin. He endorses Soler somewhat thus:

His penetrating intelligence buttressed by indefatigable study has enabled Fray Antonio Soler to produce writings that justify his being called an inventor in the Musical Art. He places in public hands a master key opening doors for students while simultaneously easing the teacher's task. The rules that he gives for modulating codify current practice and conform with good taste and a refined ear. However, these rules have not heretofore been scientifically demonstrated.

Despite these commendations, Antonio Ventura Roel del Río, who preceded Mir y Llussá in directing the music at the Madrid Encarnación convent and who became maestro de capilla at Mondoñedo Cathedral in 1747, vituperated the *Llave*. A busy carper who had already published attacks on Benito Feijóo (1748) and Antonio Rodríguez de Hita (1760), Roel del Río impugned (1) Soler's classifying the major third as sometimes dissonant, (2) calling it impossible to add correctly moving voices to a certain designated tenor and bass duet, and (3) requiring a liturgical organist to



rush back to the key from which he started—as if ending in a different key necessarily contravened art (*Reparos músicos precisos a la Llave de la Modulación, &c.* [Madrid: Antonio Muñoz, 1764], pp. 5, 14). Soler signed his 67-page *Satisfacción a los reparos precisos* (1765) November 28, 1764. Now indulging in overkill, Soler here goes far beyond his 1762 *Llave* in citing authorities (Prosdocimus de Beldemandis [ca. 1380–1428], Gaffurius, Othmar Luscinius [1478/1480–1537], Zarlino, Christopher Simpson [ca. 1605–1669], Nassarre, Giambattista Martini, Pedro de Ulloa) and in adducing musical examples (Morales, Palestrina, Gesualdo). Among modern compositions he names “the 13 harpsichord books of Scarlatti (*los trece libros de clavicordio de Scarlatti*, p. 54), the printed violin works of Francisco Manalt (*Obra harmónica a seis sonats de cámara de violín y bajo solo, dedicadas al Excmo. Sr. D. P. Téllez Girón, Duque de Osuna* [1757]) and of a certain “Domingo Porreti” who had published something at Madrid *concertada a 4 Violoncellos*.

In 1766 Soler returned to the lists with a defense of the *Llave* against an anonymous *Diálogo crítico reflexivo entre Amphión y Orpheo* published in 1765. In his 13-page reply, *Carta escrita a un amigo* (Madrid: Antonio Marín, 1766), Soler insists that he never insulted Nassarre by denying him knowledge of the rules of quick modulation propounded in the *Llave*. He claims to have read 154 authors, none of whom ever gave written rules for quick modulations. Certainly Pedro Rabassa, maestro de capilla at Seville Cathedral 1724–1760, gave none. Soler acknowledges no treatise by him, by Scarlatti or by Manalt that parallels the *Llave*. If Soler's rules were previously exemplified when José de Nebra composed a *Missa Primi toni punto bajo* (C minor with two-flat key signature) or Bernardo Tria wrote a *Missa O sacrum convivium a 6* with violins, so much the better for Soler's rules. He still contends that nobody anticipated him with written modulating rules.

Juan Bautista Bruguera y Morreras, chapelmaster at Figueras in Catalonia and winner in 1765 of a gold medal from the recently (1761) formed Catch Club in London for a *Beatus vir a 3* (published in Thomas Warren's *A fourth collection of catches* [London: P. Welcker, 1766]) attacked Soler in 1766 with a 14-page *Carta Apologética, que en defensa del Labyrintho de Labyrinthos compuesto por un Autor, cuyo nombre saldrá presto al Público escribió Don Juan Bautista Bruguera, i Morreras . . . contra la Llave de la Modulación* (Barcelona: Francisco Suriá). More designed as self-advertisement, and a diatribe against Soler, than a defense of the anonymous author of any “labyrinthine” circle of keys, this pamphlet accuses Soler of disrespect to the Cross because the *Llave* (page 71) discountenances double sharps.

Later that same year, 1766, José Vila who was organist at Sanahuja (Lérida) fired the last shot in the controversy. The 11-page *Respuesta y dictamen que da al Público el Reverendo Joseph Vila Presbytero, y Organista de la Villa de Sanahuja a petición del Autor de la Carta Apologética* (Cervera: Universidad) ostensibly sides with Bruguera y Morreras but in reality exposes his maliciousness.

In defense of the *Labyrintho* you take seven folios to allege three matters against the *Llave*: the Cross, double flats, and 12 Tones. You say that some authors admit 12 Tones. Fray Antonio does not deny that. You say that Fray Antonio reprehends the *Labyrintho* because he advocates modulating. What Fray Antonio does object to in the *Labyrintho* is confusing keys [*términos*] with Tones.

A dozen years elapsed between the close of the *Llave* controversy and Soler's public embroilment in a polemic agitated by the chief organ-builder and repairer at El Escorial, José de Casas y Soler. At the invitation of the Seville Cathedral chapter,

Casas y Soler arrived at Seville in July 1775 to inspect the deteriorated *órganos del coro*. On August 7 he delivered the chapter his written assessment: "the cathedral organs must be completely overhauled and rebuilt to continue being of any service." Impressed by the thoroughness of Casas y Soler's report, the chapter commissioned him to do the necessary reconstruction. In September 1776 he began work. Thirteen months later, October 7, 1777, the rebuilt organ on the archdeacon's side was heard for the first time. However, it was not yet entirely ready to be played. At last on January 9, 1778, Casas y Soler declared it ready for the inspection and approval of Juan Roldán Gardel and José Blasco de Nebra (second organist of Seville Cathedral from about 1750 to his death there September 12, 1784). Both delivered their written opinions the morning of January 15. On February 28 the chapter told Casas y Soler the results. Both organists complained that Casas y Soler had worked too fast and had disobeyed known rules of organ construction. Casas y Soler requested a public hearing with both organists present to specify the defects. The chapter on that occasion completely absolved Casas y Soler. Only some slightly out of tune reeds and one or two other "totally insubstantial and weak" arguments against Casas y Soler's work were alleged. Nonetheless, to appease Roldán Gardel and Blasco de Nebra the chapter soon thereafter paid Casas y Soler for everything that he had done to date and dismissed him.

Next year Casas y Soler rehearsed all these untoward Sevillian happenings in his *Carta escrita a un amigo . . . en que le da parte de los varios sucesos que tuvo en la ciudad de Sevilla hasi en su salud como en la obra del organo que dejó construido* (Madrid: Andrés Ramírez, 1778). Fray Antonio Soler's open letter to the Seville Cathedral chapter published in this same 32-page pamphlet ardently defends Casas y Soler, while at the same time testifying to his own intimate understanding of contemporary construction techniques.

Apart from the *Llave, Satisfacción*, and two *Cartas* published at Madrid in 1762, 1765, 1766, and 1778—all musically oriented—Soler penned a still unpublished treatise on what at first blush seems a strange topic. In 1772 Carlos III was to issue a landmark pragmatic sanction unifying Spanish currency and abolishing money exchange rates previously in force. Every history of Carlos III's reign hails the 1772 pragmatic. In opposition to this impending 1772 currency unification, an anonymous Catalonian author dared "republish" at Barcelona a table of Castilian-Catalonian money exchange rates unacceptable to the Crown. Close as he was to the royal family, Soler rushed forward to vaunt his mathematical acuity. His defense of Crown exchange rates bears this self-explanatory title: *Combinación de Monedas, y Cálculo manifiesto contra el Libro anónimo intitulado: "Correspondencia de la Moneda de Cataluña a la de Castilla"*, Reimpreso en la Noble Ciudad de Barcelona: Libro perjudicial á todo el Reyno, y Corona de España: Dedicada a la Sacra, Piadosa, Cathólica y Real Magestad de Nuestro Rey, y Señor Carlos 3.^o Construida por su mui Amante Vassallo, y Religioso Cappellán el Rdo. P. Fr. Antonio Soler. Monge Profeso, Organista, y Maestro de Capilla del Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo. "vulgo del Escorial". Año 1771. Inventoried as MS H.I. 15, no. 39 [fols. 415a-434a] in Julián Zarco Cuevas, *Catálogo de los manuscritos castellanos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial*, I (Madrid: Imprenta Helénica, 1924), 360-361, Soler's attack on the "anonymous money exchange tables republished at Barcelona, prejudicial to the whole realm and the Spanish Crown" came at exactly the right moment. Dedicated to "His Sacred Majesty, King Charles III, by his loving liege and chaplain," Soler's 1771 mathematical tour de force doubtless advanced him still further in the royal favor.



His fierce pride in being himself a Catalanian added piquancy to his pricking a fellow Catalanian.

Since every self-respecting review must prove its impartiality, this lengthy review article will conclude with one cavil. Rubio strangely neglects Soler's settings of sections in Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *autos sacramentales* intended to be sung. Soler's settings of sung passages in Calderón's autos bear the following dates: *Los alimentos del hombre*, 1756; *El primero y segundo Isaac*, 1759; *Las órdenes militares*, 1760; [*La hija del aire*, comedia, 1760; *Auristela y Lisidante*, comedia, 1760; *Ni amor se libra de amor*, comedia, 1761]; *La hidalga del valle*, 1764. *Psiquis y Cupido* still further extends the list of Calderón autos set by Soler. Granted that Soler did not exceed the simplicities of Blas Tardio de Guzmán and Fray Esteban Ponce de León when setting Calderón and Moreto at mid-century in distant La Plata (Charcas) and Cuzco, still any matching of names so famous as Calderón and Soler merits more than peremptory dismissal as "children's music." Rubio owes admirers of both geniuses a tercentenary essay on "Soler's Calderón Settings" published in one of the 1981 issues of *Revista Española de Musicología*.

Soler Literature and Literary References, 1964-1979

Cervera, Ernesto. Liner Notes for Soler, 6 Quintets for Harpsichord and Strings. Montserrat Cervera & Andrée Wachsmuth, violins; André Vauquet, viola; Marcel Cervera, cello; Christiane Jaccottet, harpsichord. 5pp., 36 musical exx. Vox SVBX 5440/1-3, 1973 [3 phonodiscs].

Crouch, Margaret Long. *Llave de la Modulacion y Antigüedades de le Musica . . .* by Padre Fray Antonio Solèr: translation and commentary. University of California at Santa Barbara Ph.D. dissertation, 1978, 457 p. *Dissertation Abstracts International* 39/6 (December 1978), 3207A. Order No. 78 24176.

Two translations won Ph.D.'s for their authors in 1978. Shipley's skimpy Florida State University dissertation stopped with book 1. Crouch's translation of books 1 and 2 occupies pages 36-438 of her dissertation, her preliminary matter pages 1-36. She pads her bibliography at pages 439-445 with pompous irrelevancies, confesses her ignorance of Rubio's seminal publications by listing nothing from him except the English-translated *Classical Polyphony*, and casts double doubts over her knowledge of Spanish usage by crude citation and accentuation errors. Her reliance on León Tello's anodyne summaries lulls her into disregarding even the valid objections brought against the *Llave* by its eighteenth-century attackers.

Apparently unaware that Zarco Cuevas signaled El Escorial library call-numbers for the original manuscripts of the *Llave*, *Satisfacción*, and another Soler literary work dedicated to Carlos III, she misses any opportunity to compare 1762 imprint with its manuscript progenitor. Nowhere does she acknowledge fray Vicente Julián's index that concludes the imprint. Although a present-day indexer might choose other topics, what fray Vicente considered worthy of indexing eminently deserves mention. Crouch shirks her onerous duty when she rests content with mere facsimiles of the 1762 imprint at her pages 383, 391-408, 416-420, 422-423, 425-429, 431-434.

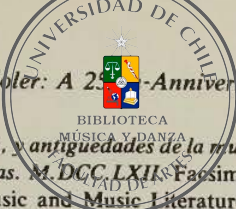
Whether Crouch's translation is in the main skilful or even adequate, will not be here argued. In her vita at page vi she lists these data: born December 12, 1937 at Williamsport, Pennsylvania; A.A., Palomar Community College, 1967; B.M., San Diego State University,



- 1971; M.A., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1973 (thesis title, "The Strophic Variation: Origin and Aesthetic in Spanish Music"); Visiting Lecturer, University of Manitoba School of Music, Winnipeg, Canada, 1977-1978.
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