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The amount of works for violin by Spanish composers is vast, varied and unfortunately, largely a mystery. There are many pieces that should be part of the standard violin repertoire, but are not simply because of lack of exposure and lack of knowledge about them. The violin and piano works of Joaquín Nin y Castellanos (1879-1949) are one of many such examples.

In addition to providing a brief biography and overview of Nin’s general musical ideas and compositional style, this document contains an extended catalogue with all the available information on his violin works. This includes composition dates, running times, dedications, origins, stylistic characteristics, as well as violin specific difficulties and details for anyone interested in playing the pieces. At the end of the catalogue is also included a brief ranking of the pieces in order of difficulty. The pieces are all very varied in character, length and complexity, so included in the list are also performance placement suggestions.

It is my hope that by providing this comprehensive document about Joaquín Nin’s violin music, it can not only serve as an incentive and useful source for anyone interested in learning the pieces, but also as a foundation which future researchers can build upon.

THE VIOLIN WORKS OF JOAQUÍN NIN:
A CATALOGUE AND VIOLINISTIC
PERSPECTIVE

by

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Approved by

Committee Chair

To my father, grandmother, and sister, Mila.

APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

When asked to name famous Spanish composers who wrote violin repertoire, the majority of people, whether violinists themselves or not, will probably only come up with one... Pablo de Sarasate. If lucky, someone might remember Manuel de Falla for his *Suite populaire espagnole*. This is a very unfortunate truth given that there actually exists a very rich and diverse range of repertoire for violin by Spanish musicians – repertoire that is largely unexplored and underplayed, when in reality it could become a fresh addition to the seemingly static, long list of standard repertoire.

One such composer whose violin music deserves to be revived is Joaquín Nin Castellanos. Nin dedicated his successful life as a virtuoso concert pianist, and later on also as a musicologist and composer, to both the rescue of the music of past composers as well as to the preservation of Spanish folk music. In my own small way, I will attempt to do the same thing with his music. He wrote and arranged a total of seven works for violin and piano, works that are unique in sound and style, and that would serve as ideal show pieces on a recital. There is very little written about his life, career, and music in general, and virtually nothing written about his violin pieces, so it is my hope that this document will not only help bring attention and interest to these special works, but also provide a foundation which future researchers can build upon.

I will begin with a brief biography, bringing together what has been said and written about Nin's musical ideas and music. In turn, I will write a dual purpose catalogue of his works for violin and piano¹ where I draw parallels to how his violin music relates to his other compositions, as well as list and explain any pertinent details of interest to someone who might wish to perform or teach them.² Finally, in the conclusion I will talk about how this topic can be expanded and researched further.

Brief Biography³

Joaquín Nin Castellanos was born in Havana, Cuba on September 29, 1879.⁴ The following year, his family moved to Barcelona where Nin grew up and began his musical formation. He studied piano there with Carlos Vidiella and gave his first performance at the age of thirteen. He played various recitals in Barcelona, and returned to Cuba in 1901 where he performed with violinist Juan Torroella⁵ and his soon to be future wife, singer Rosa Culmell. In 1902 they married and moved to Paris where Nin continued his piano

¹ Nin also wrote a work for mezzo-soprano, violin and piano, *Le Chant du Veilleur - Estampe Hollandaise* (1933), but I will not be discussing it in this document as I am focusing on his works for violin and piano.

² Unless otherwise noted, any translations from sources not found in English are my own. (There are a number of sources that are solely found in Spanish or French.)

³ For a more detailed biography see the timeline after the prologue in Joaquín Nin's *Pro arte e Ideas y comentarios*, pp. 13-17, and Gina Lottinger Anthon's PhD dissertation, "An Introduction to Joaquín Nin (1879-1949) and his *Veinte Cantos Populares Españoles*," pp. 2-8.

⁴ At this point in history Cuba was still a part of Spain, so Nin was as much a Spaniard as if he had been born in the peninsula itself. Cuba didn't become independent until 1898.

⁵ Juan Torroella was a Cuban born Spanish violinist (1874-1938). For more information see: "Juan Torroella y Bonnin," EcuRed, http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Juan_Torroella (accessed February 2013).

studies with Moritz Moszkowski⁶ who “specialized in the understanding of Spanish music from a standard of salon virtuosity.”⁷

Nin also took the opportunity of being in Paris to enroll in composition classes with Vincent d’Indy⁸ at the Schola Cantorum. Three years later, while continuing to concertize, he began teaching piano at the Schola, being named honorary professor there and at the New University of Brussels in 1908.⁹ That same year, Nin and his family moved to Berlin upon the recommendation of the Spanish composer and musicologist, Felipe Pedrell.¹⁰ While there, Nin wrote a short book, *Pro arte* (1909), about what it is to be true musician. He also wrote for musical magazines such as the *Monde Musical*.¹¹

Nin didn’t stay in Germany for long however as his performing career kept relocating him for short periods of time to various places. In 1909 he returned to Havana to help establish a concert society which later became the *Sociedad Pro Arte Musical*.¹² Between 1909-12, he performed several concerts there with his wife and with violinist

⁶ Joaquín Nin, *Pro arte e Ideas y comentarios* (Barcelona: Editorial Dirosa, 1974), 13-14.

⁷ Linton Powell, *A History of Spanish Piano Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1980), 97.

⁸ Other Spanish notables: Isaac Albéniz also studied composition with d’Indy, and Joaquín Turina (by recommendation of Nin) studied piano with Moszkowski.

⁹ Gina Lottinger Anthon, “An Introduction to Joaquín Nin (1879-1949) and his *Veinte Cantos Populares Españoles*,” (PhD diss., Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1999), 3.

¹⁰ Nin, as will be discussed in the next section, was highly interested in the music of the 17th- and 18th-centuries, and Berlin was considered the capital of Baroque music at that time.

Felipe Pedrell (1841-1922) was a Spanish composer, musicologist and teacher from Cataluña. His music is seldom played, but he was very important for the rediscovery of 16th-century Iberian music. He was also vital to the development of Spanish national music and the revival of folksong. Some of his pupils included Albéniz, Granados and Falla. Pedrell’s *Cancionero*, a collection Spanish popular songs, was one of the key sources Nin used for his arrangements and transcriptions.

¹¹ Lottinger Anthon, “An Introduction to Joaquín Nin...,” 3-4.

¹² *Ibid.*, 3-4.

Juan Manén¹³. During these years he also performed with violinist Joaquín Blanco-Recio¹⁴ in France.¹⁵

In 1912, Nin returned to Paris where he wrote another short book philosophizing about music, *Ideas y comentarios*. This is also where he gave his final recital with Rosa Culmell in 1913.¹⁶ After that point he decided to separate from his wife and family so that he could concertize more freely, travelling extensively around the world. In 1923, encouraged by singer María Barrientos, he wrote his first composition, *Veinte Cantos Populares Españoles*, premiering it with her in recital that year. This was the catalyst for what became fourteen years of composing, editing, and arranging works for voice, piano and violin, all based on 17th- and 18th-century Spanish compositions and folk songs.¹⁷

Nin's music became very popular and was widely performed all over Europe. In recognition of his brilliance not only as a performer, but also as a composer and musicologist, he was decorated with three very high honors: the Cross of Isabel the Catholic (Spain, 1928), the Legion of Honor (France, 1929), and induction into the Royal

¹³ Juan Manén (1883-1971) was a virtuoso Spanish violinist and composer from Cataluña. For more information see:

Lionel Salter, "Manén, Joan," Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/17618> (accessed February 2013).

¹⁴ Joaquín Blanco-Recio (1884-1913) was a Spanish violinist and composer from the Basque Country. He greatly admired and shared Nin's interest in 18th-century music. For more information see: "Joaquín Blanco-Recio," Auñamendi Eusko Entziklopedia, <http://www.euskomedia.org/aunamendi/14655> (accessed February 2013).

¹⁵ Nin, *Pro arte e Ideas y comentarios*, 15.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁷ Lottinger Anthon, "An Introduction to Joaquín Nin...," 7.

Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando (Spain, 1930).¹⁸ With the immediate threats of WWII, Nin returned to Cuba in 1939 where he remained, teaching and occasionally performing, until his death on September 24, 1949.¹⁹

Nin's Musical Ideas and Music

“Rebellious to any labeling, hostile to any affiliation, and always fearless in his secure, constant and rapid ascension through the high summits of pure art.” Such were the words used by French musicologist and composer, Henri Collet to describe Joaquín Nin.²⁰ Nin's goal as a world-renowned pianist was not to bask in the glory of fame, nor to superficially please the audience, but to use his talent and popularity to propagate what he was passionate about – true musicianship and the preservation of music on the brink of oblivion.

Nin was a virtuoso pianist with the curiosity and thirst for knowledge of a musicologist, and truth seeking pensiveness of a philosopher. To him, being a true musician was an honor that shouldn't be given to someone who merely had the ability to amaze audiences with technical abilities. He considered virtuosity to be a trait falsely idolized by audiences and erroneously sought by performers; a gimmick used to wow listeners, winning applause and the undeserved label of a musician. Nin felt that this was such a great injustice to true musicians that he wrote two short books on the matter, *Pro*

¹⁸ Lottinger Anthon, “An Introduction to Joaquín Nin...,” 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

²⁰ Harold Gramatges, *Presencia de la Revolución en la música cubana* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1983), 50-51.

arte (1909) and *Ideas y comentarios* (1912). The first was dedicated “to performers as they are and as they should be,”²¹ and the second addressed the same subject but directed to all musical categories: performers, composers, professors, students, publishers, managers, etc..²² To Nin, a true musician needed to be completely at the service of the music, not of the audience. In order to be able to be at the service of the music, the interpreter had to be knowledgeable not only of everything surrounding the work (the life of the composer; their state of mind and circumstances of when the work was written, etc.), but also knowledgeable of the masterpieces of literature, poetry, painting, the beauty of nature, the mysteries of science – all this at the expense of perhaps letting a few erroneous notes slip while playing.²³ Nin was able to make such proclamations because he himself was an example of a pristine performer successfully balancing fame, virtuosity, and scholarship in the service of pure music.

As an artist, and also later on as a composer, Nin used his skills and insatiable quest for knowledge to bring to light marginalized and forgotten music. He had an acute affinity for 17th- and 18th-century music. As noted by Georges Jean-Aubry, “the past only attracts [Nin] that he may again strike from it the spark that formerly lit it and that eternally smoulders under the ashes of unmerited neglect.”²⁴ In the early twentieth century, the music of the baroque period was largely uncharted territory, to the point

²¹ Georges Jean-Aubry, *French Music of Today*, trans. Edwin Evans (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Co., Ltd., 1919), 227.

²² Nin, *Pro arte e Ideas y comentarios*, 49.

²³ Jean-Aubry, *French Music of Today*, 229-30.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 227.

where even J.S. Bach was relatively unknown in comparison to how he is today. From early on in his performing career, Nin programmed works from that era being, for example, the first to play all the piano and string orchestra pieces by the Bach family.²⁵ In his Parisian debut in 1904, he presented works by Rameau, Couperin and Chambonnières, being among the first to perform the works of these, and several other French clavecinists.²⁶

Nin was also an expert of all kinds of Spanish music as he not only championed the music of Spanish Baroque composers, but also that of his contemporaries Isaac Albéniz, Enrique Granados, Manuel de Falla, and Joaquín Turina, among many others.²⁷ To great extent, owe the revelation of Antonio Soler's keyboard pieces to him, as well as that of eight of Soler's contemporaries and immediate successors: Mateo Albéniz, Mateo Ferrer, Rafael Anglés, Vicente Rodríguez, Narciso Casanovas, Felipe Rodríguez, José Gallés and Manuel Blasco Nebra.²⁸ Once Nin started composing in 1923, he took his commitment to the preservation of early Spanish music a step further by editing and tastefully harmonizing numerous works for piano, voice and violin,²⁹ often including valuable prefaces with historical information. For piano he edited two volumes of music

²⁵ Libros Colgados, "Entevista a Joaquín Nin" <http://libroscolgados.blogspot.com/2010/01/entrevista-joaquin-nin.html> (accessed December 2012).

²⁶ Carol A. Hess, "Nin, Joaquín." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19972> (accessed September 3, 2012).

²⁷ Lottinger Anthon, "An Introduction to Joaquín Nin..." , " 6.

²⁸ Gilbert Chase, *The Music of Spain*, 2nd ed. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959), 117.

²⁹ José Subirá, *Historia de la música española e hispanoamericana* (Barcelona: Salvat Editores, S.A., 1953), 954.

by Soler and his contemporaries, *Classiques Espagnols du Piano*³⁰ (1925, 1929), making numerous emendations to the original scores.³¹ For voice he revived works of José Marín, Sebastián Durón, José Bassa, Antonio Literes, Pablo Esteve, Guillermo Ferrer, Blas de Laserna, among other anonymous composers, by giving the melodies a refined piano accompaniment and turning them into concert pieces in his *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols* (1926).³² He gathered most of these themes from Felipe Pedrell's *Cancionero Musical Popular Español* (1918-19). Nin comments in his preface to the second volume of *Quatorze Airs* that Pedrell published these melodies just as he found them, without any noted figured bass. The tune is presented "naked" as it was customary for the pre-eighteenth century accompanists to improvise and ornament below the melody according to their individual taste and talent. In instances where the composer himself was accompanying, he rarely bothered to write any of the harmonies down.³³

Nin faced a similar task with the works of mid-eighteenth century composer and violinist, José Herrando. With the help of Spanish musicologist José Subirá (discoverer of Herrando's sonatas for violin and figured bass), Nin harmonized a selection of these in his *Classiques Espagnols du Violon – Dix Pièces de José Herrando* (1937).³⁴ He notes in

³⁰ The titles of all his compositions are in French because they were published in France by the Parisian editing company, *Max Eschig*. In the case of his songs, the words are originally in Spanish, and meant to be sung in Spanish, but the French translation is also provided. Regarding the prefaces, some are only in French, and others are both in Spanish and French.

³¹ Powell, *A History of Spanish Piano Music*, 142.

³² Adolfo Salazar, *La Música de España: La música en la cultura española* (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe Argentina, S.A., 1953), 257.

³³ Joaquín Nin, *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols*, 2 vols (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, 1926), vol. 2, i.

³⁴ Nin, *Pro arte e Ideas y comentarios*, 8.

the brief preface to this collection that he wrote the bass in the style of that period, while also taking some liberties that he deemed fit well into Herrando's rich and expressive style.³⁵

Apart from restoring and creatively harmonizing early works, Joaquín Nin also compiled and "concertized" Spanish folk music. Not only did he want to save it from being forgotten, but he also wanted to demonstrate to the rest of the world that there is more to Spain's popular music than that which proceeded from the region of Andalucía. His first composition was exactly that, a collection of folk songs from the regions of Castilla, Murcia, Aragon, Valencia, Cataluña, Andalucía, Galicia and Asturias.³⁶ In his preface to the work, Nin makes sure to clarify that he does not intend them to be mere harmonizations of the melodies, but rather, stylizations for voice and piano based on popular themes.³⁷ As will be discussed in the catalogue, a number of these songs from the *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols* were later arranged for violin and piano. Nin also arranged ten Christmas carols from various regions for voice and piano, *Dix Noël's Espagnols* (1932).

As far as specific observations and comments made by others about Nin's compositions, the general consensus is that his music is a unique combination of impressionist tendencies with elements of either Spanish Baroque or Spanish folk music. Nin, like Albéniz, Falla, Turina, and the Halffter brothers, was influenced by the

³⁵ Joaquín Nin, *Dix Pièces de José Herrando* (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, 1937), Preface.

³⁶ Lottinger Anthon, "An Introduction to Joaquín Nin..." , " 47.

³⁷ Gramatges, *Presencia de la Revolución en la musica cubana*, 58.

keyboard style of Domenico Scarlatti³⁸ who used startling dissonances in his “Spanish” compositions, in imitation of the harsh percussive chords typical in flamenco accompaniment. When Nin wanted to imitate flamenco in his Andalusian songs, he used “harsh cluster, dissonant suspensions and other chords more typical of the guitar.”³⁹ He also employed hints of *alhambrismo* (exotic imitation of Moorish music) in original works such as his *Au Jardin de Lindaraja*, which will be discussed in the catalogue.

Some of Nin’s compositions purposefully evoke specific composers, such as Debussy in his *Mensaje a Claudio Debussy*, or other countries, such as Russia in his “1830” *Variaciones sobre un tema frivolo*.⁴⁰ In *Cinq Commentaires* there is even a movement where he self-proclaims to have been imitating the “Italianism of Gluck” in the way he set and harmonized one of the themes by Pablo Esteve.⁴¹ Nin also imitates Falla’s style of writing in his song transcriptions by including substantial introductions and postludes around the actual folk melody in order to create a more extended composition.⁴² As will be noted in the catalogue, another similarity in both composers’ song collections (due to this particular song genre) is that the music at times seems to bear no relationship to the words.⁴³

³⁸ Chase, *The Music of Spain*, 113.

³⁹ Richard Paine, *Hispanic Traditions in Twentieth-Century Catalan Music* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), 252-3.

⁴⁰ Fred Flaxman, “Joaquín Nin,” *Compact Discoveries*, Program 50 <http://www.compactdiscoveries.com/CompactDiscoveriesScripts/50JoaquinNin.html> (accessed December 2012).

⁴¹ Nin, *Quatorze Airs Anciens d’Auteurs Espagnols*, vol. 2, iv.

⁴² Paine, *Hispanic Traditions in Twentieth-Century Catalan Music*, 70.

⁴³ Gerald Moore, *Farewell Recital: Further Memoirs* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1978), 85.

In terms of idiomatic writing for the instruments, since Nin was a pianist, the pieces are well written for the piano, but they are nonetheless difficult to execute, requiring a good pianist who can decipher the intricate rhythms and melodic patterns.⁴⁴ For the violin, there is a broad range of complexity, especially in the song arrangements. All of the pieces were overseen by violinists who either aided in the arrangements themselves, or in the suggestion of bowings and fingerings. There are a number of elements however which feel almost more pianistic than violinistic. Everything is correct and undeniably playable, but there are certain passages that are quite difficult and awkward, requiring a violinist with prodigious bow and left hand control for an outcome that sounds anything but complicated. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Nin was indeed surrounded by prodigious violinists.

The specifics about these passages and more will be discussed in the catalogue. As a final note before continuing, it is important to mention that all of the following violin pieces, as well as all of Nin's works, have been published by *Max Eschig* (also under the label, *Editions Durand*) and are commercially available.

⁴⁴ Lottinger Anthon, "An Introduction to Joaquín Nin..." , " 10.

CHAPTER II
CATALOGUE⁴⁵

Au Jardin de Lindaraja, Dialogue pour piano et violon

Spanish title: *En el Jardin de Lindaraja, Diálogo para piano y violín*

Date of composition: 1926

Approximate duration: 6 – 8 minutes

Dedication: “To Jeanne Gautier, in remembrance of the premiere of ‘Dialogue’ in Prague”

Jeanne Gautier (1876-1960?)⁴⁶ was a French female violinist about whom unfortunately nothing is written. There are a few concert announcements and numerous recordings of her playing, but no biographical information. She made various recordings in 1929 with Nin at the piano, under the recording label, *Odéon* (including some of Nin’s own compositions).⁴⁷ She is also the violinist who provided the bowings and fingerings for a majority of Nin’s works for violin and piano.

⁴⁵ Organized in order of composition date

⁴⁶ Her dates were found under the heading: “Paris, New York, Boston... 1909.”
<http://www.straram.fr/biographie.htm> (accessed February 2013).

⁴⁷ CHARM, AHRC Research, Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music,
http://www.charm.kcl.ac.uk/discography/search/search_advanced?operatorSel_0=and¶meterSel_0=performer¶meterKey_0=artist_021864¶meterKeyTxt_0=Jeanne%20Gautier,%20violin,%20Joaquin%20Nin,%20piano (accessed February 2013).

Origin: Original composition of Nin's, written from the beginning for violin and piano.⁴⁸

Style:

As the title indicates, this piece is meant to be a dialogue between the violin and piano. Both parts are equally important, engaging and supporting each other like in any chamber music work. The general overall form of it is ABA, with the lyrical *Thème du Jardin* ("Garden Theme") being presented in the *Lento e molto espressivo* B section. This original composition is described by the Spanish musicologist, José Subirá, as a work of "great spirituality."⁴⁹

Stylistically it is depicted as combining "some touches of *alhambrismo* with an evocative nationalism in the impressionistic style."⁵⁰ Alhambrismo is an exotic imitation of Moorish music, with one of the most famous examples being Manuel de Falla's *Noches en los jardines de España* (1911-15) which combines French impressionism with Spanish alhambrismo.⁵¹ Nin begins evoking this directly in the main title, noting in the score that "the Garden of Lindaraja is one of the most beautiful gardens in the Alhambra Palace in Granada," Spain. Musically he does so by using many undulating minor scales, melismatic sounding trills, glissandi on repeated notes, etc.

⁴⁸ Subirá, *Historia de la música española e hispanoamericana*, 815.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 815.

⁵⁰ Tomás Marco, *Spanish Music in the Twentieth Century*, Translated by Cola Franzen (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 62.

⁵¹ Paul Griffiths and Christopher Webber, "Falla (y Matheu), Manuel de," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e2400> (accessed February 2013).

The impressionistic aspect can be heard in the different splashes of color and texture, ever varying throughout the different sections. The harmonies used are very evocative and unexpected at times, creating vivid images in the mind of the listener. Similarly to how impressionist painters and composers often used their art to depict nature,⁵² Nin used this style to depict the beautiful exotic garden.

Violin specific comments:

This piece has a number of difficult technical aspects (double-stop trills, an unpredictable string-crossing passage, intonation issues – especially on the perfect fourths double-stops), but in general it has many repeated patterns which make it easier to learn. It often sounds more technically involved than it actually is. As Laura Klugherz classifies it, it is “violinistic.”⁵³ Of course, much of the difficulty also depends on the tempo at which it is played. The marked metronome speed is not relaxed. The main concern one should keep in mind is not the exact numerical tempo, but making sure that the music always sounds like it is flowing smoothly and easily.

⁵² Jann Pasler, "Impressionism," Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50026> (accessed February 2013).

⁵³ Laura Klugherz, *A Bibliographical Guide to Spanish Music for the Violin and Viola, 1900-1997* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 57.

Chants d'Espagne

Spanish title: *Cantos de España*

Date of composition: 1926

Movements:

- I. Montañesa
- II. Tonada murciana
- III. Saeta
- IV. Granadina

Approximate total duration: 9 – 10 minutes

Dedication: To the wife of Paul Kochanski

Paul Kochanski (1887-1934) was a virtuoso Polish violinist. He is also known for the transcription and arrangement of many works for violin and piano, such as Manuel de Falla's *Suite populaire espagnole*.⁵⁴

Origin: Arrangement for violin and piano by Joaquín Nin, in collaboration with Paul Kochanski, of four songs from Nin's *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*.

There also exists a version for cello and piano, *Quatre Chants d'Espagne* (1927), as well as an arrangement by David Dalton for viola and piano of the "Montañesa" and "Granadina" movements.

⁵⁴ Mieczysława Hanuszewska, "Kochański, Paweł," Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/15236> (accessed January 2013).

I. Montañesa

Approximate duration: 2 – 3 minutes

Origin: The “Montañesa” from *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*.

Lyrics:⁵⁵

Segaba yo aquella tarde / *I was harvesting that afternoon*
Y ella atropaba la yerba / *and she was gathering hay,*
Y estaba mas colorada, morena y salada / *and she was most ruddy, dark, and charming*
Que en su sazón las cerezas / *like cherries in season.*

Cuatro pinos tiene tu pinar / *Your pine wood has four pines*
Y yo te los cuido / *and I tend them for you,*
Cuatro majos los quieren cortar, / *four majos wish to fell them*
No se han atrevido / *but none of them has dared.*⁵⁶

Style:

Montañesas are folk songs from the region of Cantabria, in the north of Spain.

This region is dominated by the *Picos de Europa* mountain range; hence the folk music from this area is referred to as *montañés*.⁵⁷ This particular song originated in Santander, the capital of Cantabria. Nin came upon it in Felipe Pedrell’s *Cancionero*, there titled “Canción al salir de la deshoja” (Song of the Harvest).⁵⁸

Nin clearly marks the beginning and end of the popular theme in each of the movements, as each one is surrounded by an opening and closing section. In this case, the

⁵⁵ I believe that it is important to know the lyrics even as a violinist. We can better imagine that way that we are singing the words ourselves, giving the pieces a more vocal quality and feel. Unfortunately, English translations for all of the songs have not been written. I have included the ones that do exist, and provided my own translation for those that do not.

⁵⁶ Jaqueline Cockburn and Richard Stokes, eds. and trans.. *The Spanish Song Companion* (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1992), 117.

⁵⁷ Chase, *The Music of Spain*, 233.

⁵⁸ Lottinger Anthon, “An Introduction to Joaquín Nin...,” 19.

opening and closing sections are marked *Lento*, while the popular theme is *Moderato*. The atmosphere and mood conveyed in the opening and closing are completely different, almost seemingly unrelated to the *Moderato*. The *Lento* has a very religious and pensive feel, propagated by the slow moving consecutive double-stops in perfect fourths and fifths played by the violin over the pedal of a perfect fifth in the piano. (There is a well-known montañés song, “La vi llorando” (I Saw Her Weeping), that “begins and ends with a melodic formula of Gregorian character.”⁵⁹ Perhaps Nin was trying to emulate that atmosphere.) The *Moderato*, on the other hand, has a very simple and free air to it. The melody is gently propelled forward by the piano’s emphasis with chords on the second beat of almost every measure.

For a clear and direct idea of the overall tempos and flow of this song, the best source is the 1929 recording of French soprano, Ninon Vallin with Joaquín Nin himself at the piano. Great liberties are taken with the indicated markings in the score. Nin does not follow his own specific metronome speeds, taking slower tempi in both the *Lento* and *Moderato*. The *appena ritardando* markings at the end of each strophe are also ignored, sounding like a full-fledged ritardandos.⁶⁰

As a final stylistic comment, given that the violin cannot sing the melody with the corresponding words of the popular theme, and that the melody is somewhat repetitive, the interest for the audience is maintained by changing the register where it is being played at each repetition. The louder the dynamic, the higher in register it is transferred.

⁵⁹ Chase, *The Music of Spain*, 233.

⁶⁰ Lottinger Anthon, “An Introduction to Joaquín Nin...,” 20.

At one point, it is even played using artificial harmonics, giving the melody a completely different color.

Violin specific comments:

The opening and closing sections of this movement are by far the hardest passages. Pristine intonation on the double-stop perfect fourths and fifths is difficult to achieve, especially given that the entire passage consists of these in a consecutive and legato fashion. It is quite awkward and uncomfortable for the left hand to cleanly coordinate the note changes, let alone while also vibrating. The bow also has its challenges in trying to maintain a legato sound while the left hand is fighting its battle.

Another difficult element in this movement is the use of artificial harmonics. Depending on the violin and violinist, these can be very difficult to find and control. This, like the intonation of the fourths and fifths, is something which when done correctly sounds very natural and easy. When not however, the mistakes are unfortunately blaringly obvious to even the least musically knowledgeable listener in the audience.

This movement is marked to be played in its entirety with a mute. A suggestion made by Spanish violinist Agustín León Ara⁶¹ is to remove the mute during the brief Allegro (m. 35) so that the theme can truly be played at a full forte when the Moderato returns. The mute can then be replaced during the fermata right before the concluding Lento.

⁶¹ Agustín León Ara (1936) is a world-renowned Spanish violinist and professor. He is today's top expert on Spanish violin music, holding the position of both director and violin professor at the international festival *Música en Compostela*, which focuses on the interpretation of works by Spanish composers.

II. Tonada murciana

Approximate duration: 2 minutes

Origin: The “Tonada del Conde Sol” from *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*. As Nin notes in the score, this song also can go by the name of “Punto de La Habana,” or “Paño.”

Lyrics:

Grandes guerras se publican / *Great wars are being declared*
Entre España y Portugal: / *between Spain and Portugal:*
Pena de la vida tiene / *those men risk pain of death*
Quien no se quiera embarcare. / *who do not wish to embark.*

Al Conde Sol le nombraban / *Count Sol was appointed*
Por Capitán generale. / *field-marshal;*
Del Rey se fué a despedir / *he took his leave from the King*
De su esposa otro que tale. / *and likewise from his wife.*

La Condesa qu’era niña / *The Countess, who was young,*
Todo se le va en llorare. / *dissolved in tears.*
Dime Conde ¿cuántos años / *Tell me, Count, how many years*
Tienes de echar por alláe? / *do you intend to be over there?*

Si a los seis años no vuelvo, / *If in six years I do not return,*
Os podréis niña casare. / *you may, my beloved, wed.*
Pasan los seis y los ocho / *Six years pass, eight years pass,*
Y del Conde no se oye hablare. / *and of the Count no word is heard.*⁶²

Style:

The *murciana* is a vivacious type of song and dance that, like *granadinas*, *malagueñas*, and *rondeñas*, is named after the city where it’s from, in this case, Murcia.

⁶² Cockburn, *The Spanish Song Companion*, 117.

These all evolved from the popular *fandango*.⁶³ In the preface to *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*, Nin explains that in the regions of Andalucia, Murcia and Valencia the guitar is in constant musical cohabitation with song and dance. The instrumental accompaniment of the popular music from these regions is based on the guitar, along with castanets and tambourines as accessories.⁶⁴ He then goes on to describe Murcia as full of motion, commotion, and joyful orchards.⁶⁵ All of this can be clearly heard in this *tonada* (Spanish tune or melody).

In this song, the introduction and concluding material are in the same character as the popular theme. It is all in imitation of a guitarist accompanying a singer. The piano imitates this with crisp dissonant cluster chords (such as the ones found in the first two measures), as well as with the eighth-note accompanimental pattern found in the right hand at the beginning of the popular theme. Nin makes a note in the score indicating that although the figure sounds like it was copied from the last movement of Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole, Op. 21*, Lalo is actually the one who copied it from Spanish folksongs. In the three versions known of this song (see the origin above), it is always accompanied by that guitar pattern.

The violin imitates the guitar with pizzicato, quick ricochet arpeggios, and ponticello repeated notes that sound like fast strumming.

⁶³ Israel J. Katz, "Fandango," Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09282> (accessed February 2013).

⁶⁴ Joaquín Nin, *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*, 2 vols (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, 1923), iii.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, iv.

Another stylistic element is the constant change in meter between 6/8 and 3/4 in hemiola. Once the popular theme starts, every other bar alternates between feeling in two or in three. This gives the song extraordinary rhythmic vitality and flair.

Violin specific comments:

The most important element to be careful with in this movement is the rhythmic precision and the exaggeration of the hemiolas. The tendency will be to rush, so that must be avoided at all costs, otherwise the song will lose its charm.

Also, one must make the most out of the “special effects”, i.e. the pizzicatos, ricochet and ponticello. These must all be executed cleanly and audibly. The left-hand pizzicato chords don't necessarily have to be played with the left hand as it is very awkward and cumbersome to do so, especially at a fast tempo. The main point is to have the chords sound, so if that can only be successfully done with the right hand, then so be it. (The metronome marking is very fast. It is the same marking found in the vocal score, but none of the recorded performers actually do it at that tempo. Vocal recordings, as well as the recording by violinist Manuel Guillén, go at a notably more moderate tempo allowing for the hemiolas to really be heard and felt.)

III. Saeta

Approximate duration: 3 minutes

Origin: The “Saeta” from *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*.

Lyrics:

Allá arribita arribita / *Way up there*
Hácia el monte del Calvario / *towards Mount Calvary,*
Me encontré una santa mujer / *I came across a blessed woman*
Toda vestida de blanco. / *all dressed in white.*

La dije Blanca Paloma / *I said, “White Dove”*
Me dijo Lirio morado / *She replied, “Purple Iris,*
¿Ha visto usted de pasada / *have you seen in passing*
A Jesús Sacramentado? / *the Blessed Sacrament?”*
Si Señora que lo he visto. / *“Yes, my lady, indeed I have.”*⁶⁶

Style:

As explained by Nin in the score, *saetas* are religious songs that are sung during the famous Holy Week processions in Andalusia. Saeta literally means “arrow,” which is fitting for the piercing quality that it has with its concentrated and vibrant lamentations.⁶⁷ The songs are semi-improvisational, sung very slowly and with great intensity. They are also the only form of *cante jondo* (“deep song”) that do not include the characteristic melismas present in that Andalusian style of singing.⁶⁸

Nin harmonically gives this song a religious feel using many perfect intervals in the harmonies. The opening material is very similar to the opening material of the “Montañesa.” The violin is playing perfect fourth, fifth and octave legato double-stops

⁶⁶ This is my own translation, as there is no official English translation available.

⁶⁷ Chase, *The Music of Spain*, 156.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 227-8.

nearly constantly. The popular theme is very simple, almost chant-like. It only spans the range of a sixth, with many repetitions of the pitch, E. There are no rubato markings, but it should not be played metronomically.

The popular theme is played four and a half times by the violin, and although melodically it is always exactly the same, it should always sound different. Not only is it changed in register each time, but also in color, with added double-stops or harmonics. It should sound like the violinist is improvising different ways of playing the melody. It can also be imagined as each statement being sung by a different spectator. As the procession moves forward, the saeta also gets passed along from one inspired person to another.

The accompaniment is kept very simple, as saetas are typically sung with no accompaniment at all.⁶⁹ In this case we can imagine the piano as the procession that is slowly marching by. The *pasos* (human carried floats with highly ornate religious images and statues) are very heavy, so the pace can't be hurried.

Violin specific comments:

Violinistically, this is the most difficult movement of the four. The opening section has the same left hand and bow arm difficulties as the opening and closing sections of the “Montañesa.” The second statement of the popular theme, although it is not all in fourths and fifths, is also very involved for the left-hand finger coordination. Not only is the intonation delicate, but the attempt to keep finger changes smooth, yet without clumsy slides between notes, is very frustrating. The intonation in the octaves is

⁶⁹ Chase, *The Music of Spain*, 228.

of course very transparent. And then, the extended artificial harmonics are difficult to find, tune and vibrate. In short – each repetition of the popular theme makes it increasingly harder to hide mistakes.

Musically this movement is also difficult since the melodic material is very repetitive. To aid in this, one has to avoid choosing too slow a tempo, remembering that this is meant to be sung, and that it would be impossible for a singer to do so if the tempo is too languorous. It is also advisable not maintain the tempo absolutely metronomic, especially on the repeated E's. Finally, one should take full advantage of the different colors possible when playing with mute, on the G-string, in extended artificial harmonics, etc.

IV. Granadina

Approximate duration: 2 minutes

Origin: The "Granadina" from *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*.

Lyrics:

Las fatigas del querer / *The torments of love*
Son las fatigas más grandes, / *are the greatest torments*
Porque se lloran cantando, / *for they are lamented in song*
Y las lágrimas no salen. / *and the tears do not come.*

Dame con ese puñal, / *Strike me with that dagger,*
Y dirás que yo me maté, / *and you will say I killed myself,*
Y en el color de la sangre / *and by the colour of the blood*
Verás si bien te quiero. / *you shall see if I love you truly.*⁷⁰

Style:

A *granadina* is a kind *flamenco* style song and/or dance⁷¹ which evolved in the 18th- and 19th-centuries from the *fandango*. As mentioned before, it belongs to the same group as the *murciana*, *rondeña* and *malagueña*, only that it is from the city of Granada. Nin notes in the score that this *granadina* has a double character – vocal and dance. The dance character dominates the introduction and closing sections, with a very steady and insistent rhythm. It is written in 3/8, but if not accented in the right way, it sounds like it is in 3/4. This rhythm continues through the entire movement, but the dance character is overshadowed by the vocal character in the popular theme. The melody is very

⁷⁰ Cockburn, *The Spanish Song Companion*, 118.

⁷¹ Chase, *The Music of Spain*, 226-7.

extroverted and joyful. (It sounds very much like a *copla* from a *jota*.⁷²) It should not be played strictly metronomically. In the measures where the accompaniment is not playing the repeated driving rhythm, the melody should feel free to pull and stretch the time. A prime example of this can be heard in the existing recording of Ninon Vallin singing this movement with Nin at the piano.⁷³

Both the violin and piano are imitating guitars in the opening and closing sections. Nin even notates, *come chitarra* in both parts. The violin plays strummed chords using both down- and up-bow pizzicato strokes, and the piano uses the dissonant cluster chords typical in Andalusian guitar music.

Violin specific comments:

This is the least challenging of the four movements. (As a performer, this is greatly appreciated after the difficult “Saeta” since this allows for a successful crowd-pleasing finish to the piece.) The main technical issues to be wary of are found in the pizzicato passages. In the strummed chords, the up-bow strums should be made to sound as even as possible with the down-bow strums. Within that, the strums on downbeats should of course be more accentuated, but these should be purposeful accents, not accidental technical glitches. One should also be careful not to accidentally make the open E-string sound on the chords where it does not appear. To help avoid this, it is

⁷² See the final movement of *Cinq Commentaires* for information on jotas.

⁷³ This is the same 1929 recording mentioned previously in the “Montañesa” movement. Included in that invaluable recording are the “Tonada de la niña perdida,” “Montañesa,” “Malagueña,” “Granadina,” “Canto andaluz,” and “Polo” from Nin’s *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*.

recommended that either those three-note chords not be played with too much force, or that the open E is stopped with an unused finger.

Another technical note for the opening section is that the left-hand pizzicato passages are completely optional. *ARCO ad libitum* is marked above them as not only are these passages extremely difficult to play pizzicato, but they are also quite difficult to be heard clearly at a distance if not bowed. Manuel Guillén plays these passages arco in his recording, as does Josef Suk with Alfred Holecek in an existing recording. Likewise, there exist two recordings where the passages are played using pizzicato: Yehudi Menuhin with Gerald Moore, and Andrés Cárdenes with Luz Manríquez. The conclusion is therefore that it is a decision which must truly be made by the individual performer.

Cinq Commentaires

Spanish title: *Cinco comentarios*

Date of composition: 1928

Movements:

- I. Sur un thème de Salinas (XVI siècle)
- II. Sur un thème de José Bassa (1700)
- III. Sur un thème de Rafael Anglés (1770)
- IV. Sur un thème de Pablo Esteve (1781)
- V. Sur un air de danse de Pablo Esteve (1779)

Approximate total duration: 13 – 15 minutes

Dedication(s): Each movement is dedicated to a different person. There is no mention anywhere of why or how these dedications came to be.

Origin: Arrangement by Joaquín Nin. The bowings and fingerings are by Jeanne Gautier.

There also exists an arrangement of four of the movements (nos. II-V) for cello and piano, *Quatre Commentaires* (1930).

I. Sur un thème de Salinas (XVI siècle)

Approximate duration: 2 minutes

Dedication: To Jacques Thibaud.

Jacques Thibaud was a French violinist (1880-1953) who was both famous for his solo, as well as chamber music playing. He was “was distinguished by the silvery purity of his tone and the exquisite polish of his technique, which combined with instinctive warmth of expression in performances that were refined rather than robust.”⁷⁴

Origin:

Francisco de Salinas (1513-1590) was a Spanish organist and theorist who went blind at the age of ten. He is most famous for his theoretical book *De Musica Libri Septem* (Salamanca, 1577) which contains the earliest known collection of Spanish folk songs. Curiously, Salinas didn't collect the songs for the sake of collecting and preserving them, but rather for the purpose of using them to illustrate his points in discussions about rhythm and meter. Regardless, it is considered one of the most important anthologies of 16th-century folklore.⁷⁵

This movement is an arrangement of Nin's “Tonada de la niña perdida” from his original transcription for voice and piano found in *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*. It

⁷⁴ W.W. Cobbett and Noël Goodwin, "Thibaud, Jacques," Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27822> (accessed January 2013).

⁷⁵ Chase, *The Music of Spain*, 70-72.

is a melody from 16th-century Castilla which Nin found in Pedrell's *Cancionero*, who in turn found it in Salinas' *De Musica Libri Septem*.⁷⁶

Lyrics:

So ell' encina, encina / *From beneath the live oak,*
So ell' encina
Yo me iba mi madre / *mother, I began my pilgrimage.*
A la romeria.

Por ir más devota / *So as to go more devoutly,*
Fui sin compañía / *I went unaccompanied;*
Tomé otro camino / *I left the route that I was on, and took another.*
Dejé el que tenía.

Halléme perdida / *I found myself lost*
En una montaña / *on a mountainside,*
Echéme a dormir / *and I laid down to sleep*
Al pié dell' encina. / *at the foot of an oak.*⁷⁷

Style:

Nin makes sure to clearly differentiate his material from Salinas' theme by using meter changes. Salinas' theme is always in 6/8, while all the other material is in 2/4. The movement is very sectionalized with many fermatas, ritardandos and pauses. The overall texture begins simply in both the melody and accompaniment, and then gets increasingly more active, adding voices in both parts. The harmonies in the non-Salinas' theme material are very "church-like" with many perfect intervals, while Salinas' theme is more secular. This difference can also be felt in the rhythm. Salinas' theme has a lilting dance feel, while the other music is much more vertical.

⁷⁶ Lottinger Anthon, "An Introduction to Joaquín Nin..." , 15.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 14.

This is another example of a movement where there are many unmarked tempo fluctuations. As recorded by Vallin and Nin, the 2/4 sections are taken quite a bit faster, and the 6/8 sections quite a bit slower than marked.⁷⁸ There also exists a recording by violinist Jeanne Gautier (see *Au Jardin de Lindaraja*) with pianist M. Orlov which displays the same characteristics.⁷⁹ It is interesting to compare the two interpretations as Gautier performed with Nin on many occasions, most likely getting the specific tempo suggestions on this movement directly from him.

Violin specific comments:

The intonation in the double-stop sections is quite difficult. Those sections are also quite difficult to play smoothly as they are awkward for both the left and right hands. (This is true for many of the double-stop passages in Nin's slow movements. See the "Montañesa" and "Saeta" in *Chants d'Espagne*.)

Musically this movement is also challenging because of the short phrases and constant pauses. One has to be sure to maintain the direction and motion within the phrases, as well as to give purpose to the pauses between each one. Not every pause should be the same length. Exaggerating the dynamics and color changes will also help keep the interest of the listener.

⁷⁸ Lottinger Anthon, "An Introduction to Joaquín Nin..." , " 17.

⁷⁹ "'Commentaires' (Joaquin Nin) played by Jeanne Gautier (Violin) M Orlov (Piano)," Chants du Monde Record No. 5063, YouTube video, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98OYhYGw41A> (accessed February 2013).

II. Sur un thème de José Bassa (1700)

Approximate duration: 3 minutes

Dedication: To Ángel Grande.

Ángel Grande (1895-1951) was a talented Spanish violinist who dedicated the early part of his career to touring (he premiered works by notables such as Joaquín Turina), the middle to conducting, and the end to composing. He was also very loved in England, for he introduced many Spanish works there, as well as many English works in Spain.⁸⁰

Origin:

As noted by Nin, there is no information written about the Spanish composer, José Bassa. Judging by his name, and that the words to many of his songs were set in Catalan, it is speculated that he was from Cataluña, living approximately from 1670 to 1730. He was also apparently a medical doctor.⁸¹

This movement is an arrangement of Nin's "Minué cantado" from his original transcription for voice and piano found in Volume 1 of *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols*.

⁸⁰ Cyril Scott, "Correspondence – Angel Grande," *Music and Letters* 62, no. 3 (1951): 297, <http://ml.oxfordjournals.org/content/XXXII/3/297-b.full.pdf> (accessed February 2013).

⁸¹ Nin, *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols*, volume 2, iv.

Lyrics:

Si de Amarilis los ojos disparan flechas / *If from the eyes of Amaryllis arrows shoot forth*
Que hieren con dulce rigor / *that wound with sweet rigor,*
¿De qué le sirve a Cupido la aljaba? / *What use does Cupid have of his quiver?*
¿Para qué quiere Amor el arpón? / *What need will Love have of his harpoon?*⁸²

Style:

The tempo indication of this movement says much about its style – *Espressivo ma semplice, Tempo di Minuetto*. As a minuet, it should be played in a moderate or slow triple meter.⁸³ Also, given that this one is in G minor and that it needs to be expressive, it should not feel hurried. The movement is very straightforward in its phrasing and harmonies. Nin indicates that the original theme did not have any double-stops, those were additions of his. Nin also notes in his preface to the second volume of *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols* that given that the minuet originated in France, this movement has a certain French character. That is, it is a “model of elegance and musical purity.”⁸⁴

Violin specific comments:

When choosing a tempo, one must be weary of the double-stop passages, as they are increasingly difficult to execute at too fast a tempo (specifically the portions involving eighth-note motion). The double-stop trill will require special attention for the coordination of trilling with two fingers at once.

⁸² This is my own translation, as there is no official English translation available.

⁸³ Meredith Ellis Little, "Minuet," Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18751> (accessed February 2013).

⁸⁴ Nin, *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols*, volume 2, iv.

III. Sur un thème de Rafael Anglés (1770)

Approximate duration: 3 – 4 minutes

Dedication: To Mischa Elman.

Mischa Elman (1891-1967) was a prodigious Russian violinist, considered one of the greats, touring all around the world. His popularity was all the more enhanced by his gramophone recordings, of which over two million were sold. He became a US citizen in 1923. His greatest attribute and what made him truly legendary was his “rich, sensuous and infinitely expressive tone.”⁸⁵

Origin:

Father Rafael Anglés (1730-1816) was a Spanish organist and composer who wrote mostly liturgical music.⁸⁶ He was born in Rafalés, Aragón, later moving to Valencia where he held the position of organist at the Valencia Cathedral until his death. Nin published four pieces by Anglés in his *Classiques espagnols du piano*, Vol. 2 (Paris, 1928).⁸⁷ The unedited scores of those pieces were provided by the Spanish pianist, José Iturbi, who consented to Nin’s publication of them.⁸⁸ This movement is an arrangement of the “Aria en ré mineur (vers 1770)” found in that collection.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Boris Schwarz and Margaret Campbell. "Elman, Mischa," Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/08739> (accessed February 2013).

⁸⁶ Joaquín Nin, *Classiques Espagnols du Piano*, Volume 2 (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, 1928), ii.

⁸⁷ Almonte Howell, "Anglés, Rafael," Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/00937> (accessed February 2013).

⁸⁸ Nin, *Classiques Espagnols du Piano*, volume 2, ii.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

Style:

Nin comments in the preface of *Classiques espagnols du piano*, Vol. 2 that this movement portrays a kind of “Italian Bach” influence.⁹⁰ He does not go on to explain what he deems “Italian” about it, but the violin/piano version is quite contrapuntal. The right hand of the piano has a second melody that should weave in and out with the violin part. The tempo marking is *Andante espressivo* so it should be played with feeling, but given that it is a theme from the 1700’s, the violinist should be careful to avoid playing with exaggerated portamentos.

Another performance detail to note is that in the *Classiques espagnols* score, Nin indicates several trills that should begin on the printed note, with a gradually changing trilling speed of slow to fast.⁹¹ This should therefore also be done by the violinist.

Violin specific comments:

This movement does not possess the technical difficulties found in the previous and following movements. Here the violinist is openly given the opportunity to display their expressive playing abilities (while being careful not to make it too Romantic). There are very specific dynamics marked which should be followed and clearly heard. There are also many suggestions on string usage (sul G, sul A, sul E), for added color.

⁹⁰ Nin, *Classiques Espagnols du Piano*, volume 2, ii.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

IV. Sur un thème de Pablo Esteve (1781)

Approximate duration: 3 – 4 minutes

Dedication: To Albert Spalding.

Albert Spalding (1888-1953) was an American violinist and composer. He was one of the first American violinists to gain international fame. He gave the American premiere of the Dohnányi, Elgar and Barber violin concertos. He also wrote over 120 works, including two unpublished violin concertos and a violin sonata. Spalding is said to have rejected virtuoso showmanship, concentrating on “refined and sensitive musical interpretation”.⁹²

Another interesting fact about him is that he was the son of James Walter Spalding, and nephew of Hall-of-Fame baseball pitcher, Albert Spalding, who jointly created the A.G. Spalding sporting goods company.

Origin:

Pablo Esteve (~1734-1794) was a Spanish composer from Cataluña. He was considered one of the greatest and most fecund composers of his era, writing over four hundred *tonadillas escénicas*⁹³ (also often writing his own librettos) for theaters in

⁹² Ben Arnold, "Spalding, Albert." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/44924> (accessed February 2013).

⁹³ *Tonadillas escénicas* are short, single-act Spanish comic operas that were originally performed as a kind of intermezzo between acts of a play. They usually contain between one to four characters, often servants or peasants, singing vocal solos in aria form. The style of the music however is very Spanish in its melodies and rhythms (including many traditional dances), as well as in its instrumentation (using guitar and castanets). *Tonadillas* flourished in Spain from the mid-18th- through the early 19th-centuries. (Grove Music Online)

Madrid.⁹⁴ He contributed to the development of the Spanish *zarzuela* by forging links between fashionable Italian opera and popular Spanish traditions.⁹⁵

This movement is an arrangement of Nin's "Alma sintamos" from his original transcription for voice and piano found in Volume 1 of *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols*. It was extracted from Esteve's tonadilla, *El luto de Garrido por la muerte de la Caramba*, performed in Madrid in 1781.⁹⁶

Lyrics:

¡A mi Caramba / *Oh my Caramba*
Que murió ya! / *who has died!*
¡Ay pobrecita! / *Poor girl!*
Toda bondad, / *All virtue,*
Que no tenía pecado venial. / *without venial sin.*
¡Alma, sintamos! / *Soul, lament!*
¡Ojos, llorar! / *Eyes, weep!*⁹⁷

Style:

As Nin notes in the preface to the second volume of *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols*, this movement imitates the "Italianism of Gluck."⁹⁸ It is supposed to sound like we are expressively singing a mournful aria. Since the violin can simultaneously play more than one voice at a time, Nin added an accompanimental countermelody to its line (not present in the piano and voice version) underneath Esteve's theme.

⁹⁴ Nin, *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols*, volume 2, iv.

⁹⁵ Jack Sage, "Esteve y Grimau, Pablo," Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press,
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09026> (accessed February 2013).

⁹⁶ Nin, *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols*, volume 2, 26.

⁹⁷ This is my own translation, as there is no official English translation available.

⁹⁸ Nin, *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols*, volume 2, iv.

Violin specific comments:

This movement possesses many of the same difficulties found in solo Bach. For the majority of the movement, the violin is playing multiple voices, and it is imperative that the performer bring out the melody more than the secondary countermelody. This requires superb bow control. (There are passages in this movement that are similar to the “Andante” from Bach’s solo *Sonata No. 2 in A minor*, where the accompanying voice is pulsating underneath the legato melody.)

Regarding left hand concerns, the intonation is very difficult, especially because it is written in the key of B-flat minor. There are also many uncomfortable passages requiring quick finger changing and string crossing coordination, making the maintenance of the legato quality in the line all the more complicated.

This is the most difficult movement of the piece.

V. Sur un air de danse de Pablo Esteve (1779)

Approximate duration: 2 minutes

Dedication: To Manuel Quiroga.

Manuel Quiroga (1892-1961) was a virtuoso Spanish violinist from Galicia, hailed as “the finest successor of Pablo de Sarasate.” He was internationally famous, playing concerts all over the world, but sadly his career was cut short in 1937 when he was run over by a vehicle in New York City, leaving his right arm paralyzed. He then dedicated himself to composing and painting. Many composers wrote and/or dedicated pieces to Quiroga, the most famous being Eugene Ysaÿe’s *Sonata No. 6* for solo violin.⁹⁹

Origin: This movement is an arrangement of Nin’s “A la jota” from his original transcription for voice and piano found in Volume 2 of *Quatorze Airs Anciens d’Auteurs Espagnols*. It was extracted from Esteve’s *tonadilla a solo* (tonadilla for one character), *Los Pasajes del Verano*, performed in Madrid in 1779.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Ana Luque Fernández, “The Works of Manuel Quiroga: A Catalogue,” PhD diss., Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 2002.

¹⁰⁰ Nin, *Quatorze Airs Anciens d’Auteurs Espagnols*, volume 2, vi.

Lyrics:

A la Jota que hay muchas palomas / *To the Jota, that there are many pigeons*
Que rebanan con cuanto se topan. / *that slice whatever they meet.*
A la Jota que andan con gran mundo / *To the Jota, that throughout the world there are*
Palomitas pelando palomas. / *pigeons skinning pigeons.*

¡Ay! ¡Ay! ¡Ay! Que bueno que va / *Oh! Oh! Oh! Well as it goes,*
Ninguno de ustedes se deje pelar / *don't let yourselves get skinned,*
Que luego sin plumas no podrá volar / *that consequently without feathers, you will be unable to fly.*
No, no, no, y tengan atención / *No, no, no, pay attention;*
Cuidado, cuidado lo que digo yo. / *Careful, careful that I warn you.*¹⁰¹

Style:

As the title of the version for voice and piano indicates, this movement is a *jota*.

Nin explains in the preface to the second volume of *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols* that the jota is a popular Spanish dance that originated in the region of Aragón and later spread to Castilla, Valencia, Navarra and Cataluña. The jotas in each of these regions have different characteristics (some are faster, others slower or more elegant), but they all conserve the rhythmical aspects of the original jota from Aragón.¹⁰²

Nin describes it as a type of hybrid that has strong elements of both dance and song. The dance is clearly evident in the energetic and lively rhythm, while the song is present in the *coplas* which are often very free and melismatic in character. Curiously, jotas were not to be typically found in tonadillas. Usually tonadillas had other types of popular dances, such as *fandangos* and *seguidillas*, but rarely jotas, so this is an unusual

¹⁰¹ This is my own translation, as there is no official English translation available.

¹⁰² Nin, *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols*, volume 2, vi.

example. Nin notes that this one is Castilian in character. It is more lyrical than the jotas from Aragón, Navarra and Valencia, but it is still full of charm and spirit.¹⁰³

Violin specific comments:

Much like in the *Chants d'Espagne*, Nin chooses to end this piece with a movement that is lively and bright, but not terribly difficult to play, especially in comparison to the previous movements. The main details to be careful of are to play cleanly and with sparkle, but at the same time, also with elegance. As commented before, it is a Castilian style jota so it is not as clamorous as the jotas from the other regions – it is more lyrical. Care must be taken when playing the three-note chords, to avoid them sounding brittle or harsh.

¹⁰³ Nin, *Quatorze Airs Anciens d'Auteurs Espagnols*, volume 2, vi.

Suite Espagnole

Spanish title: *Seguida española*

Date of composition: 1928

Movements:

- I. Vieja Castilla
- II. Murciana
- III. Catalana
- IV. Andaluza

Approximate total duration: 10 minutes

Dedication(s): Each movement is dedicated to a different person. There is no mention anywhere of why or how these dedications came to be.

Origin: Arrangement for violin and piano by Joaquín Nin of four songs from *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnoles*. The bowings and fingerings are by Jeanne Gautier.

There also exists a version of this suite for violin and guitar (arranged by Armin Schmidt), as well as a version for cello and piano, *Suite Espagnole* (1930).

I. Vieja Castilla

Approximate duration: 3 minutes

Dedication: To Pierre Lepetit.

Pierre Lepetit (1901-1968)¹⁰⁴ was a French violinist about whom unfortunately almost nothing is known.

Origin: The “Tonada de Valdovinos” from *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnoles*.

Lyrics:

Sospiraste, Valdovinos / *You sigh, Valdovinos,*
La cosa que más quería. / *that which I held most precious.*
O teneis miedo a los moros / *Either you fear the Moors,*
O en Francia teneis amiga. / *or you have a lover in France.*

No tengo miedo a los moros / *I do not fear the Moors,*
Ni en Francia tengo amiga. / *and I have no lover in France;*
Mas tú mora y yo cristiano / *but alas, you as a Moor and me as a Christian,*
Hacemos muy mala vida. / *make for a poor life together.*¹⁰⁵

Style:

Nin describes the region of Castilla as being majestic and noble, inspiring great respect.¹⁰⁶ This movement is indeed very noble sounding. It is based on a popular theme from the 16th-century, hence why it sounds like music from the Renaissance period. Nin comments that it was sung with the accompaniment of a *vihuela*¹⁰⁷ – an instrument closely related to the lute which was very popular in Spain during the 15th- and 16th-

¹⁰⁴ <http://hector.ucdavis.edu/sdc/MainRoll/L.htm> (accessed February 2013).

¹⁰⁵ This is my own translation, as there is no official English translation available.

¹⁰⁶ Nin, *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*, iv.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, iii.

centuries.¹⁰⁸ One can imagine the sound of the vihuela in the piano accompaniment, with the grace notes and the ringing chords of stacked fourths and fifths.

Violin specific comments:

This movement is very difficult to begin. The open A-string drone not only makes any intonation discrepancies obvious, but it also requires excellent bow control in order to cleanly begin on both strings while also making sure that the open string does not overpower the melody. (Nin even indicates that by marking the top melody in *p* and the open A in *pp*.) The passage is very exposed and great care must be taken, especially since this is not only the beginning of the movement, but also of that of the entire piece.

Other general difficulties include the intonation in the double-stops, as well as in the artificial harmonics (especially the extended artificial harmonics). Musically, it is difficult to maintain cohesion as there are many fermatas, ritardandos, and brief pauses between phrases. In order to alleviate the sensation of disjunction, one should avoid taking too much time, or the same amount of time between each passage. The movement is meant to sound noble, not pedantic, so those moments should never feel without purpose or direction.

¹⁰⁸ Diana Poulton and Antonio Corona Alcalde, "Vihuela," Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29360> (accessed February 2013).

II. Murciana

Approximate duration: 2 minutes

Dedication: To André Asselin.

André Asselin (1895-1993) was a French violinist and professor at the Paris Conservatory.¹⁰⁹

Origin: The "Paño Murciano" from *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnoles*.

Lyrics:

Diga usted, señor platero, / *Tell me, Mister Silversmith*
Cuánta plata es menester / *how much silver's needed*
Para engazar un besito / *to set a little kiss*
De boca de una mujer. / *from a woman's lips?*

Señor platero, he pensado / *Mister Silversmith, thinking*
Que usted sabe engazar; / *that you could set jewels,*
Por eso le vengo a dar / *I've come to give you*
Una obrita de cuidado / *a little task that needs some care.*

A mí un besito me ha dado / *A most alluring little kiss*
Mí novia con gran salero. / *my sweetheart gave me,*
Engazarlo en plata quiero, / *I'd like to set it in silver,*
Por que soy su fiel amante. / *since I'm her faithful lover.*

¿Qué plata será bastante? / *How much silver would it take?*
Diga usted, señor platero. / *Pray tell me, Mister Silversmith.*¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ See the caption under the picture: <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/andre-asselin-french-violinist-professor-to-the-superior-news-photo/56233727#> (accessed February 2013).

¹¹⁰ Cockburn, *The Spanish Song Companion*, 118.

Style:

This movement is stylistically very similar to the “Tonada murciana” in the *Chants d’Espagne*. It contains the constantly alternating meter between 6/8 and 3/4, creating the hemiola effect, and it also portrays the strong influence of the guitar present in the music from this region. As noted by Gina Lottinger Anthon, the introduction imitates a “virtuoso, guitar-like cadenza.”¹¹¹ In this version, the flourish is played by the violin that then proceeds to further imitate the guitar with left- and right- hand pizzicatos that set up the accompaniment for the popular theme. There are solo bass scalar passages in the piano (as well as in the violin at the end) that imitate the *punteado* style of plucking.¹¹² All of these guitar mimics should be brought out and exaggerated.

In the vocal score, Nin comments that this movement is both a dance and a song, therefore it must have both the rhythmic energy of a dance, and the melodic quality of a song. He also notes that the precise meaning and origin of the word *pañño* when applied to music is unknown. It appeared in the text of one of the most ancient songs of this genre, but the explanation of how it came to become a generic term used in titles of songs is a mystery.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Lottinger Anthon, “An Introduction to Joaquín Nin...,” 21.

¹¹² Ibid., 21.

¹¹³ Nin, *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*, Vol. 2, 13.

Violin specific comments:

This movement is not as difficult as it sounds. It goes without saying that practice will be necessary to ensure that the double-stop and sul G-string portions are clean and in tune, but those passages are violinistic, so they lie well for the left hand. The two main issues to be wary of are: the audibility of both right- and left-hand pizzicatos – their dynamic must be exaggerated in comparison to the arco portions; and the steadiness of the tempo – the tendency will be to rush, deforming the hemiola and detracting from the movement's charm and spirit. No rushing!

III. Catalana

Approximate duration: 3 minutes

Dedication: To Edouard Appia.

I could not find any information on this person. There is an Edouard Appia who was apparently a “great theorist of live art” who designed the novel staging for a modern take on Gluck’s opera, *Orpheus and Eurydice* performed in 1913 near Dresden,¹¹⁴ but I have no way of knowing if this is who the dedication was intended for. It is odd that all other dedications have been to violinists, and that this one is completely different.

Origin: The “Villancico Catalá” from *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnoles*.

Lyrics:

Eixa nit es nit de vetlla, / ‘Twas a night of vigil,
N’ha parit una doncella / He was born of a maiden.
“la mira i fa sol,” / “Look how the sun shines,”
Un infant com una estrella. / An infant like a star.
Loilà Kyrie eleison! / La-la! Lord, have mercy!
Loilà Christe eleison! / La-la! Christ, have mercy!
Loilà Christe eleison! / La-la! Christ, have mercy!

Anirem al camp, / We shall go to the field
Pomes a cullir, / to pick apples.
Pometes cullirem, / Apples we shall pick
Que de Deu serem; / to give to God;
Pometes al ram, / apples from the branches,
Que de Deu sigam. / to God they belong.

Als pastors l’angel desvetlla, / An angel wakes the shepherds,
I els hidiu la meravella, / telling them of the marvel.
“la mira i fa sol,” / “Look how the sun shines,”
Ab sa dolça cantarella. / singing sweetly.

¹¹⁴ Jacques Ranci re, “Arte del movimiento y movimiento del arte. Pol tica, est tica, acci n,” *Res publica*, 26 (2011): 20, <http://saavedrafajardo.um.es/WEB/archivos/respublica/numeros/26/01.pdf> (accessed February 2013).

Loilá Kyrie eleison! / *La-la! Lord, have mercy!*
Loilá Christe eleison! / *La-la! Christ, have mercy!*
Loilá Christe eleison! / *La-la! Christ, have mercy!*¹¹⁵

Style:

This song is a *villancico* or Christmas carol. In listening to the melody alone without the words, this is very surprising because it sounds very mournful and somber. When reading the text without the music, one would imagine joyful music in the background, but this is not the case. This is a prime example of a song where the text and the music do not complement each other in mood or character. They seem to bear no relationship to each other. This is a trait not uncommonly present in music of this genre, using Manuel de Falla's famous seven Spanish songs as another example.¹¹⁶

Nin describes the music of the region of Cataluña as being rhythmically serene and melodically simple, more voice oriented, expressing intimate emotion in a more sober manner than the more boisterous regions such as Murcia and Andalucía.¹¹⁷ He also describes the region itself as possessing a kind of mysterious allure with the "intimate and demure poetry of its mountains and valleys."¹¹⁸ These are all qualities that he has effectively evoked in this movement.

¹¹⁵ This is my own translation, as there is no official English translation available.

¹¹⁶ Moore, *Farewell Recital: Further Memoirs*, 85.

¹¹⁷ Nin, *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*, iii.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, iv.

Violin specific comments:

The popular theme in this movement is very melodious and songful, and it is written in such a way that really allows the violin to sound full and resonant. Advantage should be taken of the different string timbers to bring out diverse colors. The double-stop passages are difficult to tune (especially in the opening and later on in the perfect fourths starting in sixth position), but regardless of any temporary left-hand complexities, care must be taken to ensure the line is always kept as smooth and serene as possible.

IV. Andaluza

Approximate duration: 2 minutes

Dedication: To Paul Kochanski. (See *Chants d'Espagne*)

Origin: "El Vito" from *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnoles*.

Lyrics:

Una vieja vale un real / *An old woman is worth a real*
Y una muchacha dos cuartos, / *and a young girl two cuartos,*
Y yo, como soy tan pobre / *but as I am so poor*
Me voy a lo más barato. / *I go for the cheapest.*

¡Con el vito, vito, vito, / *On with the dancing,*
Con el vito, vito, va, / *on with the dancing, ole!*
No me jaga usted cosquillas / *Stop you teasing, sir,*
Que me pongo colorá! / *else I'll blush!*¹¹⁹

Style:

This is another movement that has both a dance and song character. The rhythm is constant and driving, while the popular theme lyrically flows above it. Nin remarks on how the meaning and origin of the word *vito* is unknown. It is thought to be purely phonetic. In Andalucía "el vito" can be used as an arbitrary name for a dance that is very lively, energetic and merry, but when used to refer to the tune, it is very specific as there only exists one melody with that name – the one heard in this song.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Cockburn, *The Spanish Song Companion*, 119.

¹²⁰ Nin, *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*, Vol. 2, 31.

Again, as this is a theme from Andalusia, the presence and influence of the guitar in the accompaniment is highly evident. The pizzicato chords in the violin, the explosive dissonant cluster chords in the piano, along with the fast repeated notes and *punteado* style articulated line in the bass make that more than clear. The virtuosic rapid scales, trills and ornaments make it so that this movement is brimming with Andalusian frenzy and fire.

Violin specific comments:

This movement provides an idyllic conclusion to the suite. It is extremely brilliant and exciting, instantly riling up the spirits of both the performers and audience. The violin part is not as difficult as it sounds, unlike the piano part which is very complex and demanding. A very good pianist is paramount. Nin wrote it for himself to play, so what he may have found effortless to execute is not the case for most pianists.

For the violin, the main challenges will be to play cleanly (i.e. making sure that the fast scales and grace notes are perfectly clear), and in tune. The intonation in the first statement of the theme (sul A) is very transparent because of the constant reference to the open E drone. The entire movement will require slow metronome practice, but it comes together more quickly than expected.

Rapsodie Ibérienne

Spanish title: *Rapsodia ibérica*

Date of composition: 1929

Approximate duration: 8 – 9 minutes

Dedication: To Mischa Elman. (See *Cinq Commentaires*)

Origin: Original composition of Nin's for violin and piano. The bowings and fingerings are by Jeanne Gautier.

Style:

As the title indicates, this piece is written in the style of a rhapsody. Rhapsodies are single movement instrumental pieces often based on popular, national, or folk melodies. They have no specific form or fixed character, feeling very free and improvisatory.¹²¹ This particular rhapsody is absolutely Spanish in spirit, but as Nin notes in the score, "Despite its national character, there are no popular songs contained in this work." All of the melodies are completely original.

There are a myriad of emotions and characters throughout the work, changing from lyrical, melismatic, or improvisatory, to rhythmically exact and steady, all within a matter of bars. The aural palette is impressionistic, often evoking a wash of sounds and

¹²¹ Wendy Thompson and Jane Bellingham, "rhapsody," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e5627> (accessed February 2013).

colors with different gestures. In listening, it often sounds similar to the music of Joaquín Turina.

There is no set form, but Nin does repeat all of the material from the opening ([1] – [6]) before the coda at the end ([20] – [26]), giving the work a sense of unity. Another detail to note is that, unlike in the arrangements of the vocal songs, the violin and piano have a much more equal role. Both instruments are equally important. The piano is even given an extended improvisatory sounding cadenza in the middle of the piece.

In terms of tempo, Nin remarks on the piano score to “Please keep in consideration the marked metronome indications.” There are many tempo changes, and he specifies approximate metronomic ranges for each one. Unfortunately these tempos are often much too fast, making it virtually impossible to play the passages cleanly and with the right character. In the one commercially available recording of this piece, the violinist Manuel Guillén takes all the tempos at a much more moderate pace than marked. It is impossible to know how Nin would have actually played it himself as he tended to completely ignore his own markings in existing recordings of him playing selections from *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols* with French soprano Ninon Vallin.¹²² In the end what matters isn’t the metronome speed, but playing with the correct character, and with precision, clarity and natural musicality.

¹²² Lottinger Anthon, “An Introduction to Joaquín Nin...”, 17, 20.

Violin specific comments:

As Laura Klugherz notes in her bibliographical guide to Spanish violin and viola music, this piece is “violinistically intricate.”¹²³ There are many quick character and stylistic changes that require precise control, especially in the bow. There are also various difficulties for the left hand, including: the highly ornate and delicate passage from [8] – [9]; the sul G passages between [10] – [13]; the short, expressive phrases in double-stops before [13] and after [15]; as well as many exposed lyrical passages in the high range of the E-string. These challenges require practice, but they also lie well on the violin, so it is a satisfying piece to learn and perform.

¹²³ Klugherz, *A Bibliographical Guide...* , 57.

Cantilène Asturienne

Spanish title: *Cantilena asturiana*

Date of composition: 1934

Approximate duration: 3 minutes

Dedication: A tribute to Carmen Forté.

Carmen Forté (1886-1964) was an Italian violinist and professor. She studied at the Paris Conservatory, winning First Prize in 1901. Her fame began in Paris and continued growing throughout the provinces. "Neapolitan of temperament, strong in her works, her tone of voice, her physique; her domestic life is hectic; her professional experience equals her effective interpersonal relationships."¹²⁴

Origin: Arrangement for violin and piano by Joaquín Nin of the "Asturiana" from *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnoles*. The bowings and fingerings are by Jeanne Bachelu.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ "Carmen Forté (1886-1962)," <http://www.archeophone.org/carmenforte/> (accessed February 2013).

¹²⁵ Unfortunately there is no information to be found on this French, female violinist. She apparently performed with Nin in Spain in 1934, as this newspaper clipping advertises: <http://hemeroteca.lavanguardia.com/preview/1934/03/07/pagina-9/33156165/pdf.html> (accessed February 2013).

Lyrics:

Fuistia la siega y golviesti / *The harvest is over and your goodies*
Non me trixiste perdones / *won't trick me into forgiving you.*
En viniendo les mayuques / *Accursed is she who came here after being seduced by you.*
Maldita la que me comes

Non te pares á mió puerta / *Don't stop at my door.*
Non piques col picaporte / *Don't annoy with your knocking*
Que la neña que non quier / *the little girl who only asks not to hear*
Por más que piquen non oye / *the sound of your knocking!*¹²⁶

Style:

As the title indicates, this is a *cantilena* from the Spanish region of Asturias. Cantilena means lullaby in Italian, and it is often used to refer to a particularly sustained or lyrical vocal line.¹²⁷ In the preface to *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*, Nin describes Asturias as serene and tranquil,¹²⁸ qualities which are both very much present in this piece (even indicated in the tempo marking, *Tranquillo*). It should be played in a very singing and warmly calm manner. In Italian, the verb *cantilenare* means “to hum.”¹²⁹ This should be taken advantage of by the violin when the mute is used in the re-statement of the popular theme, using the color change to imitate the dampened sound of humming.

¹²⁶ Lottinger Anthon, “An Introduction to Joaquín Nin...,” 25.

¹²⁷ Ellen T. Harris, “Cantilena (ii),” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04774> (accessed February 2013).

¹²⁸ Nin, *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols*, iv.

¹²⁹ Harris, “Cantilena (ii),” *Grove Music Online*.

Violin specific comments:

This piece is not technically difficult. If the suggested fingerings are followed, intonation will be more delicate as there are constant shifts involved, but it is not imperative to follow these. They are simply suggestions that can be used to imply diverse colors on different strings or varied portamenti between notes. The most important element in this piece is to always maintain a warm singing quality.

Classiques Espagnols du Violon – Dix Pièces de José Herrando

Date of composition: 1937

Movements:

- I. L’Affectueuse (vers 1750)
- II. Menuet (vers 1750)
- III. Pastorale (vers 1750)
- IV. Aria Mística (vers 1760)
- V. L’Allègre (vers 1750)
- VI. La Galante (vers 1750)
- VII. La Souveraine (vers 1750)
- VIII. La Gaillarde (vers 1750)
- IX. Mouvement perpétuel (vers 1750)
- X. Scherzetto (vers 1750)

Approximate total duration: 24 – 27 minutes (without any repeats)

Dedication: “To Jeanne Bachelu [see *Cantilène Asturienne*], in remembrance of the premiere of these pieces in Spain.”

Origin: These are a selection of pieces from José Herrando’s two volume collection of twenty-four *Sonatas a solo de violín y bajo*.¹³⁰ They were discovered by the Spanish musicologist, José Subirá, who knew of Nin’s interest in Baroque music and proposed that he write out an arrangement of the figured bass. With the permission of the Duke de Alba (the owner of Herrando’s manuscript), this collection was published.¹³¹ The bowings and fingerings are by Jeanne Bachelu.

¹³⁰ Nin, *Dix Pièces de José Herrando*, Preface.

¹³¹ Nin, *Pro arte e Ideas y comentarios*, 8-9.

José Herrando (1720-1763) was a Spanish violinist and composer. (He is in fact considered the most important violinist in 18th-century Spain.)¹³² It is thought that he received his musical training from Giacomo Facco,¹³³ winning playing positions in the most prestigious musical institutions.¹³⁴ He was also closely associated with the dukes of Alba, who became his patrons. (This is probably the reason for why the Duke de Alba around Nin's time owned the manuscript.) Herrando wrote most, if not all, of his violin compositions between 1750-60,¹³⁵ and many were of comparable difficulty and importance to those of Corelli. In a way, however, he is most celebrated for his violin method book, *Arte y puntual explicación del modo de tocar el violín con perfección y facilidad*, 1756 ("The Art and Precise Explanation of the How to Play Violin with Perfection and Ease"), the "only substantial Spanish violin tutor of the time."¹³⁶

¹³² Craig H. Russell, "Herrando, Joseph de," Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/12887> (accessed February 2013).

¹³³ In Nin's preface to *Dix Pièces de José Herrando*, he explains how there was unfortunately a severe lack of knowledge about Herrando's life. Even his birth or death dates were unknown then. What Nin wrote about him was based on what he read in sources such as the preface to Herrando's violin method book, *Arte y puntual explicación...* In that preface, Herrando claimed to have been a student of Corelli, but clearly that cannot be true since Corelli (1653-1713) died before Herrando was even born. Perhaps Herrando only meant that he was a follower of Corelli's way of teaching and playing.

¹³⁴ He was hired by the famous Farinelli for both the Coliseo del Buen Retiro, as well as for his orchestra in Aranjuez. Herrando was also associated with the Geminiani family. (Francesco Geminiani's brother, Miguel, also played violin in the Buen Retiro. And consequently Herrando most likely met Francesco on his trip to Paris when he went to oversee the printing of his method book.)

¹³⁵ Nin, *Dix Pièces de José Herrando*, Preface.

¹³⁶ Russell, "Herrando, Joseph de," Grove Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/12887> (accessed February 2013).

Style:

(Instead of writing about the style found in each individual movement, as I did in the previous pieces, I will summarize the general style here since these are all pieces from the same source and possess similar qualities.)

Nin describes Herrando's music as being "rich, exciting, elegant and ever expressive." As was common in the manuscripts of that time, only the violin part was fully written out. It was expected that the figured bass part was inherently obvious or clear to the player, so there was no need to notate it. Unfortunately, the art of being able to do that, along with the correct stylistic principles, rules and tastes disappeared over time, so it was up to Nin to attempt to recreate that to the best of his knowledge and ability. He did so tastefully, taking some liberties that he deemed possible with Herrando's musical language. He didn't simply give the piano (i.e. continuo) a plain or generic accompanimental role, but rather, a well thought out and crafted part.¹³⁷

Nin notes in the preface that the pieces in this collection can be played completely independently from one another. They are not part of a fixed cycle, so the performer is free to pick and choose which ones, how many and in which order to play them. Nin also notes that the titles given to each movement are "fictitious" and not original. Nin simply decided to give them names for the sake of making them easier to identify and classify.¹³⁸ Nin didn't mention anything about the articulation and dynamic markings, so it is not

¹³⁷ Nin, *Dix Pièces de José Herrando*, Preface.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, Preface.

clear if those are original, but regardless, they are useful for providing contrast and variety, so they should be brought out.

As a listener, there is nothing that sounds characteristically Spanish in these pieces (unlike in numerous pieces by Scarlatti, for example). They are classified as “baroque” music, but I would say that they also sound a bit like early classical music. At times they sound very similar to Telemann, C.P.E. Bach, or early Haydn.

I. L' Affectueuse (vers 1750)

Approximate duration: 2 minutes (without repeats)

Violin specific comments:

This movement is not difficult. The suggested fingerings by Bachelu make the intonation more delicate at times, but they are completely optional. The main concerns to be aware of are the exaggeration of dynamics, and ensuring that the line is always graceful and elegantly flowing as the tempo marking, *Andantino grazioso e assai mosso*, indicates.

II. Menuet (vers 1750)

Approximate duration: 3 minutes

Violin specific comments:

This movement is also not difficult. It is quite repetitive so one must be careful to provide as much contrast as possible to keep the interest of the audience. This should be done with dynamics, articulation, and varying string colors (as suggested by the fingerings). It is marked *Assai leggiero*, so it should feel very light, more so in character than in tempo. This is especially evident when paying attention to the piano part which is quite playful. The middle section in F minor should be more lyrical, as it takes on a more serious quality.

As a stylistic note, the portamento marked in the score (fourth bar of the section in F minor) should be taken with a grain of salt. Given the era in which Herrando wrote these pieces, it is quite out of context. It should be viewed more as an indication of the style in which the violin was played in the early 20th-century, where glissandi were used constantly in the music of any period.

III. Pastorale (vers 1750)

Approximate duration: 3 minutes (without repeats)

Violin specific comments:

This movement has several problematic passages with consecutive large intervallic leaps and exaggerated string crossings. Those will require careful practice in order to control the bow and make them sound effortless and elegant. As a whole, the main points of interest to bring out are the different articulations, the ornaments, and the lighthearted chirping moments (a bit reminiscent of Haydn).

IV. Aria Mística (vers 1760)

Approximate duration: 3 – 4 minutes (without repeats)

Violin specific comments:

In general, this movement is not difficult. The double-stops lie very in the left hand. The main details to pay attention to are the various tempo and pacing markings, as well as to the dynamics. This is one of the more expressive movements, so the more lyrical moments should be used to sing out.

V. L'Allègre (vers 1750)

Approximate duration: 2 minutes (without repeats)

Violin specific comments:

This movement, like the “Pastorale,” has a number of passages with exaggerated string crossings that will require attention. Otherwise, the movement is not difficult. As in other movements, the suggested fingerings make the intonation more delicate at times, but they are optional. The dynamics and varied articulations should be exaggerated for contrast.

In terms of the marked portamenti, see the stylistic comment in the “Menuet”.

VI. La Galante (vers 1750)

Approximate duration: 2 – 3 (without repeats)

Violin specific comments:

This movement has numerous 32nd-note passages which make it sound more intricate than it actually is. Most of those passages are scalar or contain violinistic patterns, so they are not difficult to execute. Metronome work will nonetheless be necessary in order to ensure that they are even and do not rush. In terms of details, again, the varied articulations and the hairpins must be exaggerated. As in the “Menuet” and “L’Allègre,” the portamenti should be omitted.

VII. La Souveraine (vers 1750)

Approximate duration: 3 minutes (without repeats)

Violin specific comments:

This movement’s difficulty is largely dependent on the tempo chosen. There are rapid 32nd-note scales that run up and then quickly leap down – those will require careful attention in order to successfully and elegantly finish each scale, while avoiding overly distorting the rhythm or tempo. In the second half of the movement, there is also an intricate string crossing passage in dotted rhythms. It will require good bow control in order to avoid the middle strings from sounding between notes.

As indicated in the tempo marking, *Allegro moderato (senza affettare)*, this movement should be played at a swift tempo, but it should not feel frantic or uncontrolled. The tempo at which the 32nd-note passages can be played cleanly and elegantly will determine the maximum speed for each individual performer.

VIII. La Gaillarde (vers 1750)

Approximate duration: 2 – 3 minutes (without repeats)

Violin specific comments:

Again, depending on the fingering chosen, this movement is not difficult. Attention must be given to playing the trills cleanly, and to exaggerating the dynamics and articulations.

IX. Mouvement perpétuel (vers 1750)

Approximate duration: 2 minutes (without repeats)

Violin specific comments:

This movement is more difficult than the others. The tempo marking is *Allegro (ma senza affrettare)*, so it should not feel or sound frantic. The most involved passages for the left hand are the ascending scales in thirds (especially the scale going up into

seventh position) and the double-stop sections. Slow practice will be necessary, especially for the intonation in those passages. Difficulties for the bow include a brief string crossing passage (four measures from the end) which is complicated to play cleanly. Again, a number of the marked fingerings unnecessarily increase the difficulty of several passages, so they should only be followed if they can be executed without sacrificing clarity and flow of the music.

There are numerous passages in this movement where the violin sounds like it is imitating a hurdy gurdy with its open strings droning. Those sections should be enjoyed and played with increased energy and enthusiasm, regardless of the dynamic!

X. Scherzetto (vers 1750)

Approximate duration: 2 minutes (without repeats)

Violin specific comments:

This final movement is not difficult. The accented notes (especially the ones that come on unexpected beats) and the dynamics should be exaggerated.

List in order of difficulty¹³⁹

1. *Cantilène Asturienne*

- For either middle level or advanced players
- Perfect as a slow encore or as a short work within the body of a recital

2. *Classiques Espagnols du Violon – Dix Pièces de José Herrando*

- For either middle level or advanced players
- Not recommended to play all ten in one performance as they are all quite similar in character and style
- Easier movements are good for middle level, short end-of-the-school-year recitals, or as accompanied etudes; more difficult movements can serve as short works within the body of a recital

3. *Au Jardin de Lindaraja*

- For more advanced players
- Good for any portion of a recital, although it's too long to be an encore

4. *Suite Espagnole* and *Rapsodie Ibérienne* (about equal in difficulty)

- For advanced players
- Nin's *Suite Espagnole* is harder than Falla's *Suite populaire espagnole*
 - It is good as a program ender if done in its entirety, otherwise individual movements make great encore pieces

¹³⁹ From easiest to hardest.

- The *Rapsodie Ibérienne* is too long to be an encore, but it works well in any other portion of a recital

5. *Chants d'Espagne* and *Cinq Commentaires* (also about equal in difficulty)

- For advanced players
- *Chants d'Espagne* makes a good program ender if done in its entirety, otherwise individual movements make great encore pieces
- *Cinq Commentaires* works well within the body of a recital if done in its entirety; individual movements could also be used as subdued, but difficult encores

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

Joaquín Nin was as absolute, well-rounded and educated musician as there ever was: A virtuoso concert pianist; a musicologist passionate about baroque music and Spanish popular music; a composer and arranger of vocal and instrumental music; a philosopher; a teacher... It is thanks to him that the names and music of many early composers (Spanish and otherwise) have not been forgotten, as well as countless folk melodies from all over Spain.

Nin's compositions and arrangements for violin and piano are very varied in style, character and difficulty. If doing a blind listening, it would often be hard to pinpoint that it is his music as he can sound like Gluck or Haydn as much as like Turina. As a violinist, I'd say that his personal style comes across the most clearly and uniquely in the folk song transcriptions and arrangements. His frequent and continuous use of perfect fourth and fifth double-stops and artificial harmonics, especially in slow movements, is quite consistent, as is his use of interesting harmonies, particularly at final cadences. It is very fascinating and colorful music, worthy of being propagated and performed with regularity.

Future Research

There are many avenues available for future research on Joaquín Nin and his music. For one, a complete and formal biography on him should be written. He led a very fast-paced non-stop life, full of rumors and dramatic moments, and there should be something that documents it all without tarnishing or diminishing his musical contributions. Secondly, an English translation of all of Nin's prefaces and philosophical writings, as well as of all the song lyrics would be invaluable. It would immensely aid the spread of interest in his music as it would make it accessible and understandable to musicians worldwide. Thirdly, for any composers or violinists interested in arranging, completing the rest of Nin's *Vingt Chants Populaires Espagnols* for violin would be an enjoyable project. And finally, an in-depth study theoretically and stylistically comparing the transcription of Falla's *Suite populaire espagnole* for violin and piano with Nin's *Chants d'Espagne, Suite Espagnole and Cantilène Asturienne* might prove to be interesting.

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