

Isaac ALBÉNIZ

EI CORPUS

en SEVILLA

FÊTE DIEU

À SEVILLE

IBERIA book 1 N° 3



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Musical Health Warning : please be aware that these editions are definitely not urtext and should be consulted together with a traditional version. They have been devised purely to help solve musical and technical problems at the piano.

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Isaac ALBÉNIZ 1860 - 1909

CORPUS EN SEVILLA

de la suite "IBERIA"

It is not often that we come across *ppppp* and *fffff* and to find them both in the same piece is unusual, to say the least. Most traditional composers would have been content with a more modest range of dynamics: but Albeniz is certainly not a "traditional" composer and in his later years, was still writing very challenging and masterful music, inspired by the sounds of Spain, his homeland. He is described as an exuberant and generous individual and these pieces reflect his attitude towards practically the only solo instrument for which he wrote — the piano.

Iberia, a suite of twelve piano pieces, was created at the age of 45 and hitherto Albeniz had not produced any work that could be considered outstanding¹. Just a few years before his death in 1909, he composed his swan-song, these "impressions" of Spain. The longest piece of the suite, *El Corpus en Sevilla* or *Fête-dieu à Seville*, was highly esteemed by Debussy and Messiaen and here we can enjoy genuinely challenging, original and inspired piano

music. With *Iberia*, Albéniz dragged Spanish music into the twentieth-century. It is orchestral in scale and has been successfully orchestrated.

In Andalusian streets, the Spanish are capable of making one hell of a din and their national festival *Corpus Christi*² is an excellent example. Here Albeniz captures the noise of

the people, the procession, the flamenco, the music, the songs, the bells and the heady atmosphere with remarkable perception and skill, superimposing the many sounds to be heard on this very special day. From the very first arresting drum



beats, *La Tarara*³ is played as a staccato march, soon to become the accompaniment to a trumpeted *saeta*⁴. The central section is a reflective song with flamenco guitar while the Giralda bells à *la Debussy* brings the work to an effective end.

When I first heard Alicia De Larrocha perform piano music by Albeniz I was amazed and impressed by the language and technical

mastery of both composer and interpreter. And when I was finally able to attempt *Iberia* myself I noticed that the music (I used the French edition *Salabert*) was often difficult to study: there were inaccuracies, many accidentals and too many instructions, coupled with sub-standard engraving ; so I decided to re-edit the music, boldly inserting changes of key signature and eliminating some of the markings in excess.

I plead guilty to not having religiously copied every dot, accent, sign, pedal marking and many others. Albeniz was rather over zealous in having often embellished many, sometimes conflicting, instructions (i.e. *pppp mais très sonore*) and I have tried to simplify the music within reason relying upon present-day sophisticated pianists and teachers reading the score philosophically.

Albéniz was an extrovert with a keen sense of humour, loved and respected by all who knew him. In this wonderful and imaginative music, he was also flamboyant with long descriptions in French and pedalling directions which sometimes seem to be a whirlwind of far-fetched impossibilities — unreasonable and endearing as they are. At first I was going to eliminate the quintuple *f* and *p*, but then thought they were rather fun and OTT. While the titles are mostly in Spanish, practically all the instructions are in French, which is not surprising as he lived for much of his life as an expat in France.

In addition to some suggested fingerings, the appendix contains durations, comments, afterthoughts and a vocabulary. Redistribution between the hands comes under close scrutiny to make certain passages easier or more persuasive. It is possible, even desirable, to use the sostenuto pedal

¹ This is Albeniz commenting on his own music written before *Iberia*: “here are among them a few things that are not completely worthless. The music is a bit infantile, plain, spirited; but in the end, the people, our Spanish people, are something of all that. I believe that the people are right when they continue to be moved by *Córdoba*, *Mallorca*, by the copla of the *Sevillanas*, by the *Serenata*, and *Granada*. In all of them I now note that there is less musical science, less of the grand idea, but more colour, sunlight, flavour of olives. That music of youth, with its little sins and absurdities that almost point out the sentimental affectation... appears to me like the carvings in the Alhambra, those peculiar arabesques that say nothing with their turns and shapes, but which are like the air, like the sun,

like the blackbirds or like the nightingales of its gardens. They are more valuable than all else of Moorish Spain, which though we may not like it, is the true Spain”.

² Corpus Christi in Seville is one of the most important days of the year dating from the early fifteenth century. The procession, accompanied by marching bands, bears a statue of the Virgin, with dances and tarascas (monsters), to the tolling of the Giralda (Seville Cathedral) bells.

³ The *tarara* was originally a children’s song and dance eventually becoming a popular song. It is possibly of Sephardic origin.

⁴ A religious Andalusian penitent lament.

FÊTE DIEU À SÉVILLE EL CORPUS EN SEVILLA

Allegro gracioso [♩=96]

The first system of the musical score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic marking. The right hand features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by eighth notes and quarter notes. The left hand provides a simple accompaniment of quarter notes.

The second system continues the piece, marked with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. It includes a fourth-measure rest in the right hand and a fifth-measure rest in the left hand. The right hand has a four-measure slur over a sequence of notes, and the left hand has a five-measure slur over a sequence of notes.

The third system is marked *sempre staccato*. It features a five-measure slur in the right hand and a one-measure slur in the left hand. The music consists of eighth and quarter notes with staccato articulation.

The fourth system is marked *simile*. It includes a *sec* (secco) marking in the left hand. The right hand continues with eighth and quarter notes, while the left hand has a three-measure slur. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

sempre staccato

20

sfz

m.s.

3

4

5

25

sfz

sfz

sfz

sfz

sfz

5

30

sfz

m.d.

p

1

2

3

35

sfz

2

3

sempre staccato

40

mf

5

45 *sfz* *p*

50 *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

M.S.

54 *sfz* *ff* *sfz* *sfz*

con Rdo.

59 *ff*

64 *sfz* *sfz*

69 *sfz* *sfz* *ff* *bruyant* *sempre staccato*

Red.

74 *8va*

79 *(8va)* *un peu large*

toujours joyeux et bruyant

83 *(8va)* *fff* *ov* *m.s.* *Sost. Ped* *Bien marquer la basse*

[combine sostenuto and sustaining pedals]

87 *loco*

8^{va}-----

91 *ffff*

8^{va}-----

95 6

(8^{va})-----

99

loco

103 *ffff*

8va -

107

3

Red.

8va -

111

6

(8va)

115

119

ffff

Musical score for measures 123-126. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The right hand features a complex, rhythmic pattern of chords and eighth notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. A fermata with a decorative asterisk is placed over the final measure (126).

Musical score for measures 127-130. The right hand continues with the complex rhythmic pattern, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The left hand accompaniment remains consistent. A fermata is placed over the final measure (130).

Musical score for measures 131-134. The right hand features a complex rhythmic pattern, marked with *pp* and *ppp* dynamics. The left hand accompaniment is present. The section concludes with a *poco rit.* marking and a fermata over the final measure (134).

a tempo un peu plus calme

doux, mais sonore et très vague, en retenant les entrées des mesures

Musical score for measures 135-140. The right hand has a melodic line with a fermata over the final measure (140). The left hand has a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. Dynamics include *ppp*, *acc.*, and *poco rit.* A fermata with a comma is placed over the final measure (140).

Fermatas with a comma indicate that a hiatus be taken between phrases

a tempo

139

cantando bene

ppp

poco affretando

rit. assai

143

a tempo

poco affretando

rall.

147

a tempo

sfz

accel.

rit.

accel.

rit.

151

simile *rit.*

155

plus lent et très, très vague

accel. poco rit.

159

ppp mais bien sonore

a tempo plus calme encore

accel. rit.

163

très doux et très lointain

très estompé

accel. rit.

167

Musical score system 1, measures 171-174. The system includes a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a steady eighth-note pattern. Measure 171 has a triplet of eighth notes in the bass clef. Measure 172 has a first finger fingering (1) in the bass clef. Measure 173 has a fourth finger fingering (4) in the bass clef. Measure 174 has a flat sign (b) in the bass clef. The system concludes with the markings *accel.* and *rit.* and a fermata over the final note.

absolument estompé - très, très lointain

Musical score system 2, measures 175-178. The system includes a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a grand staff with piano accompaniment. The piano part features a steady eighth-note pattern. Measure 175 has a triplet of eighth notes in the bass clef. Measure 176 has a second finger fingering (2) in the bass clef. Measure 177 has a first finger fingering (1) in the bass clef. Measure 178 has a triplet of eighth notes in the bass clef. The system concludes with the markings *dolcissimo*, *accel.*, and *rit.* and a fermata over the final note.

Musical score system 3, measures 179-182. The system includes a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a grand staff with piano accompaniment. The piano part features a steady eighth-note pattern. Measure 179 has a *ppppp* dynamic marking. Measure 180 has a fourth finger fingering (4) in the bass clef. Measure 181 has a triplet of eighth notes in the bass clef. Measure 182 has a triplet of eighth notes in the bass clef. The system concludes with a key signature change to three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a fermata over the final note.

Musical score system 4, measures 183-186. The system includes a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a grand staff with piano accompaniment. The piano part features a steady eighth-note pattern. Measure 183 has a *pp* dynamic marking. Measure 184 has a first finger fingering (1) in the bass clef. Measure 185 has a fourth finger fingering (4) in the bass clef. Measure 186 has a triplet of eighth notes in the bass clef. The system concludes with a key signature change to three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a fermata over the final note.

187

sfz

rit.

Tempo du commencement

191

pp *sotto voce et sec*

195

mf

199

203

ff *sec et précis*

fff *sfz* *ff* *red.*

sempre sec et précis *ff*

très bruyant *fff* *red.*

8va

(8va) *ffff* *m.s. sfz*

227

Musical score for measures 227-230. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand plays a sustained chordal accompaniment. A 'V' marking is present above the first measure of the right hand.

231

ffff

Sva

Musical score for measures 231-234. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents, and the left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. A 'ffff' dynamic marking is present. A dashed line labeled 'Sva' spans the top of the system.

235

tumultueux

(Sva)

Musical score for measures 235-238. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents, and the left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. A 'tumultueux' dynamic marking is present. A dashed line labeled '(Sva)' spans the top of the system.

239

loco

strepitoso

sfz

Sost. Ped

Musical score for measures 239-242. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents, and the left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. A 'loco' dynamic marking is present. A 'strepitoso' dynamic marking is present. A 'sfz' dynamic marking is present. A 'Sost. Ped' marking is present at the bottom.

aussi sonore que possible

élargir

243

simile

247

Spa

251

fff

rit - - ar - - dan - - do

a tempo

aisément et très léger

p

255

f *en dehors*

sfz *marcato e senza pedale*

258

sfz

sfz

Musical score for measures 261-263. The upper staff contains complex melodic lines with triplets and slurs. The lower staff provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. Measure numbers 261, 262, and 263 are indicated on the left.

Musical score for measures 264-266. Measure 264 begins with a forte dynamic (*sfz*). The upper staff features a series of chords and melodic fragments. Measure numbers 264, 265, and 266 are indicated on the left.

Musical score for measures 267-269. The upper staff shows melodic development with slurs and accents. The lower staff continues the harmonic accompaniment. Measure numbers 267, 268, and 269 are indicated on the left.

Musical score for measures 270-272. Measure 270 includes the instruction *toujours marqué* and a forte dynamic (*f*). Measure 271 features a very forte dynamic (*ff*). Measure 272 features a sforzando dynamic (*sfz*). Measure numbers 270, 271, and 272 are indicated on the left.

Musical score for measures 273-275. Measure 273 includes a fortissimo dynamic (*fff*). The upper staff continues with melodic lines, and the lower staff provides a steady accompaniment. Measure numbers 273, 274, and 275 are indicated on the left.

Musical score for measures 276-278. The piece is in G major (one sharp). Measure 276 features a piano introduction with a treble clef staff containing chords and a bass clef staff with a rhythmic accompaniment. Measures 277 and 278 continue this texture with various chordal and melodic elements.

Musical score for measures 279-281. Measure 279 begins with a piano introduction marked *sfz* (sforzando) in the treble clef. The bass clef staff has a *Red.* (ritardando) marking. Measure 280 features a *ben marcato* (well marked) instruction. Measure 281 concludes with another *Red.* marking.

Musical score for measures 282-284. Measure 282 starts with a piano introduction. Measure 283 is marked *retenez* (hold) and *fff toujours* (fortissimo always). The bass clef staff shows a *Sub.* (subito) marking. Measure 284 continues the *fff* texture.

Musical score for measures 285-287. Measure 285 begins with a piano introduction marked *fff pesant et très large* (fortissimo heavy and very large). The bass clef staff has a *Sub.* marking. Measure 286 features a *Red.* marking. Measure 287 concludes with a *Red.* marking.

Vivo [$\text{♩} = 104$]8^{va}

287

fff
sempre staccato

(8^{va})

293

(8^{va})

299

con brio
loco

fff

305

simile

311

Musical score for measures 311-316. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music features a series of chords and melodic lines in both hands, with accents (v) and slurs. The bass line has a long note in the final measure.

317

Musical score for measures 317-322. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has three sharps. The music features a series of chords and melodic lines in both hands, with accents (v) and slurs. The bass line has a long note in the final measure. The instruction *m.s.* is written above the bass line in the fourth measure, and *Sost. Ped* is written below the bass line in the fifth measure.

323

Musical score for measures 323-327. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has three sharps. The music features a series of chords and melodic lines in both hands, with accents (v) and slurs. The bass line has a long note in the final measure.

328

Musical score for measures 328-333. The system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has three sharps. The music features a series of chords and melodic lines in both hands, with accents (v) and slurs. The bass line has a long note in the final measure. The instruction *ffff* is written above the treble clef in the first measure. The instruction *Sost. Ped* is written below the bass line in the first measure. The instruction *S^{va}* is written above the treble clef in the second measure, and *Sub* is written below the bass line in the second measure. The instruction *(m.d.)* is written above the treble clef in the fourth measure. The numbers 1, 4, 5, and 2 are written below the treble clef in the second, third, fourth, and fifth measures respectively.

(S^{ra})

332 *ffff*

Sost. Ped

✻

Andante [$\text{♩} = 60$]

340 *p* *dolce ma sonoruso* *ppp* *p*

Sost. Ped

344

347 *pp* *rit. plaintif*

très lointain *rit.*

351 *pppp* *perdendosi*

355 *pppp* *en glissant sur les notes* *retenez*

dolce

Adagio

359 *pesante ma non f* *bien chanté et rit molto*

con Red.

364 *effleurer la note, la laissant vibrer* *pppp*



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Appendix

Durations, comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

- Albeniz gives no metronome speeds
- None of the sostenuto pedal suggestions are attributed to Albeniz. With practice it is possible to combine the sostenuto* and soft pedals with the left foot, judiciously coupled with the sustained pedal, producing wonderful impressionist orchestral sounds.

Duration: there are many recordings ranging from 7'15 to more than 10' !

- 47 - 82 written in B flat minor to eliminate accidentals
- 59 two chordal notes removed matching 55
- 64 bass octave added
- 99 bass acciaccatura misprint corrected (E sharp)
- 144 bass D natural not tied in the original
- 151 - 180 modulations written without key signature
- 182 there is a fermata here in the original, a possible misprint, removed here
- 199 - 222 written in E minor
- 223 - 254 written in B
- 238 final chord has a G sharp misprint, corrected here
- 255-286 modulations written without key signature
- 287 - 339 written in F sharp minor
- 271 bass B sharp misprint, corrected here
- 283, 286 bass transposed an octave lower

The sostenuto pedal was first shown in Paris at the Industrial Exposition of 1844. The idea was not immediately taken up by piano builders, but in 1874, it was perfected and patented by Steinway, soon to be fitted on all their grands and better uprights. One obvious commercial reason for not including the sostenuto pedal in musical scores must have been the thought of excluding buyers whose pianos didn't have it. Debussy and Ravel certainly played one such Steinway grand *chez* Madame de Saint Marceaux and also one bought by Winnaretta de Polignac in 1906. Apparently, in 1900 the composer René de Castéra bought a 3 pedal Steinway on the advice of Albeniz. One could say that it took over 100 years for it to become commonplace.

sec	crisp
bruyant	noisy
un peu large	slight ritardando
bien marquer la basse	hammer out the bass
doux, mais sonore et très vague, en retenant les entrées des mesures	gentle, but with tone and very vague, holding back before the following bars
cantando bene	in true singing style
plus lent et très, très vague	slower tempo and very, very vague
affretando	hurrying
lointain	distant
plus calme encore	even more calm
estompé	veiled, blurred
tumultueux	stormy
strepitoso	impetuous
aussi sonore que possible	as loud as possible
élargir	broaden
aisément	with ease
léger	light
en dehors	in relief
la partie supérieure en dehors	the upper part in relief
retenez tempo	tempo held back
pesant et très large	heavy and very broad
plaintif	mournful
en glissant sur les notes	stroking the notes
effleurer la note, la laissant vibrer	stroke the note, allowing the sound to vibrate