

Isaac ALBENIZ

EVOCACIÓN

IBERIA book I N° 1



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# Isaac ALBENIZ 1860 - 1909

## EVOCACIÓN

de la suite "IBERIA"

There is general agreement among pianists and musicians that *Iberia*, Albeniz' "swan song", is arguably his greatest work and possibly the greatest work for piano by a Spanish composer. A richly inspirational and harmonic fabric is immediately recognisable in this *Evocación*, which acts as a prelude to the twelve works which comprise the opus. Enthused by the music of Ravel and Debussy, Albéniz transformed his earlier charming salon style, into a series of tone poems capturing the spiritual essence of Spain.

As you can see, its original title was indeed a "Prelude" dedicated to Jeanne Escudier (Ernest Chausson's wife) — a most hauntingly wistful and introspective

piece reflecting a truly nostalgic vision of Albeniz' native country.

With the exception of differing major and minor modes in this work and *El Corpus en Sevilla*, Albeniz never changes key signatures in *Iberia*, preferring the heavy use of accidentals to underline the many changes of key. Was this through negligence or by design? If the former, I humbly offer this edition which makes quite a few changes of signature, rendering, I believe, the text easier to read and comprehend by eliminating a raft of double sharps and flats.

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. I plead guilty to not having religiously copied every

relying upon present-day sophisticated pianists and teachers reading the score philosophically. Regarding use of the sustaining pedal, I quote Debussy :

“Pedalling cannot be written down — it varies from one instrument to another, from one room, or one hall, to another.”



Jeanne Escudier & Debussy playing a duet  
1893

In addition to some suggested fingerings, the appendix contains comments, afterthoughts and a vocabulary. Redistribution between the hands comes under close scrutiny to make certain passages easier or more

dot, accent, sign, pedal marking and many others. He was very zealous in having often provided many, sometimes conflicting, instructions and I have tried to simplify the music within reason

persuasive. It is possible, even desirable, to use the sostenuto pedal effectively, although this is entirely editorial.

Tempo vivace  
sf, nuovo ma non forte

Largo, assolutamente attenué

rit molto

Largo

Ped

Ped

Ped

Ped

D. Alban

Paris 9 Decembre 1905

# EVOCACIÓN

Allegretto espressivo

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto espressivo'. The word 'dolce' is written above the first measure of the upper staff. The music features a melodic line in the upper staff and a supporting bass line in the lower staff, with various dynamics and articulations.

The second system of music continues the piece. It begins with a measure number '5' on the left. The notation follows the same two-staff format as the first system, with treble and bass clefs. The melodic line in the upper staff continues with various rhythmic patterns and dynamics, while the bass line provides harmonic support.

The third system of music begins with a measure number '9' on the left. The upper staff features a more active melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The lower staff continues with a steady bass line, often using half notes and quarter notes. Dynamics and phrasing are clearly indicated throughout the system.

The fourth system of music begins with a measure number '13' on the left. It features dynamic markings 'sfz' (sforzando) and 'pp' (pianissimo). The upper staff has a melodic line with some triplet markings (1, 2, 3, 4) and the lower staff has a bass line with similar markings. The system concludes with a final measure marked with a fermata.

17

*clair*

*dolce*

21

*poco cresc.*

25

*sfz*

*ppp*

8<sup>va</sup>

(8<sup>va</sup>)

29

*sfz*

*p*

33

*pp* *pp* *sfz*

5 3 3 4

This system contains measures 33 through 36. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings of *pp*, *pp*, and *sfz*. The left hand has a bass line with slurs and fingerings 5, 3, 3, and 4.

37

*pp* *sfz* *pp* *ppp*

4

This system contains measures 37 through 40. The right hand continues the melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings of *pp*, *sfz*, *pp*, and *ppp*. The left hand has a bass line with slurs and a fingering of 4.

41

*ppp ma sonoro* *Adagio* *rit. molto*

*m.d.* *m.s.*

This system contains measures 41 through 44. It includes tempo markings *Adagio* and *rit. molto*. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings *ppp ma sonoro*, *m.d.*, and *m.s.*. The left hand has a bass line with slurs and dynamic markings *ppp ma sonoro* and *m.s.*.

45

*pppp* *tempo primo*

*p*

This system contains measures 45 through 48. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings *pppp* and *p*. The left hand has a bass line with slurs and dynamic markings *pppp* and *p*. The tempo marking *tempo primo* is present.

49 *pp* *ppp*

Musical score for measures 49-52. The piece is in D major. Measure 49 starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. The dynamic shifts to *ppp* in measure 50, which is marked with a hairpin crescendo. Measures 51 and 52 continue with the *ppp* dynamic.

53 *rit. molto* *poco meno tempo* *ppp et très souple* *bien marqué et p cependant* *Sost. Ped*

Musical score for measures 53-56. The tempo changes to *poco meno tempo* in measure 53, which is also marked *rit. molto*. The dynamic is *ppp et très souple*. The right hand contains triplet and quartet patterns. The left hand has a melodic line with slurs. A note in measure 54 is marked *bien marqué et p cependant*. The instruction *Sost. Ped* is placed below the left hand in measure 55.

57 *ppp* *m.s. sotto* *p*

Musical score for measures 57-60. The right hand continues with triplet and quartet patterns, marked *ppp*. The left hand has a melodic line with slurs. A note in measure 58 is marked *m.s. sotto*. The dynamic shifts to *p* in measure 59.

61 *ppp* *m.s.* *p*

Musical score for measures 61-64. The right hand continues with triplet and quartet patterns, marked *ppp*. The left hand has a melodic line with slurs. A note in measure 62 is marked *m.s.*. The dynamic shifts to *p* in measure 63.

65

*m.s.*

*sfz*

Measures 65-68. Treble clef: Measure 65 has a triplet of eighth notes (3, 5) and a quarter note (4). Measure 66 has a quarter note (4) and a quarter note. Measure 67 has a quarter note (4) and a quarter note. Measure 68 has a quarter note (4) and a quarter note. Bass clef: Measure 65 has a triplet of eighth notes (3) and a quarter note. Measure 66 has a quarter note. Measure 67 has a quarter note. Measure 68 has a quarter note. Dynamics: *sfz* in measure 67. Performance markings: *m.s.* in measure 66, *sfz* in measure 67.

69

*poco sfz*

*pp*

*rit.*

*a tempo*

Measures 69-72. Treble clef: Measure 69 has a triplet of eighth notes (1, 5) and a quarter note (3). Measure 70 has a quarter note (3) and a quarter note. Measure 71 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Measure 72 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Bass clef: Measure 69 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Measure 70 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Measure 71 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Measure 72 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Dynamics: *poco sfz* in measure 69, *pp* in measure 70. Performance markings: *rit.* in measure 70, *a tempo* in measure 71.

73

*dolcissimo*

*p*

*pp*

*m.s.*

Measures 73-76. Treble clef: Measure 73 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Measure 74 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Measure 75 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Measure 76 has a quarter note (2) and a quarter note (1). Bass clef: Measure 73 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Measure 74 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Measure 75 has a quarter note (5) and a quarter note. Measure 76 has a quarter note (5), a quarter note (2), and a quarter note (1). Dynamics: *dolcissimo* in measure 75, *p* in measure 75, *pp* in measure 76. Performance markings: *m.s.* in measure 74.

77

*sfz*

*m.s.*

Measures 77-80. Treble clef: Measure 77 has a quarter note (4) and a quarter note (3). Measure 78 has a quarter note (3) and a quarter note (1). Measure 79 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Measure 80 has a quarter note (2) and a quarter note. Bass clef: Measure 77 has a quarter note (3) and a quarter note. Measure 78 has a quarter note and a quarter note. Measure 79 has a quarter note (5) and a quarter note. Measure 80 has a quarter note (5), a quarter note (1), and a quarter note (3). Dynamics: *sfz* in measure 77. Performance markings: *m.s.* in measure 80.



81 *sfz*

85 *ff*

89 *fff*

[Red.]

[ halfpedal ]

94 *molto meno mosso*

[\*]

*rit. molto*

99 *pp*

*a tempo*  
*marcato ma molto dolce*

103 *sfz*

107 *p*

*poco accel.* *sfz* *rit.* *rit.*

111

[ replay silently ]

**meno mosso**  
*souple, très doux et lointain*

Musical score for measures 115-118. The piece is in a key with three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is **meno mosso** with the instruction *souple, très doux et lointain*. The dynamic is **pppp**. The score features a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it. The measure numbers 115, 116, 117, and 118 are visible on the left side of the staves.

Musical score for measures 119-122. The tempo remains **meno mosso**. The dynamic is **sempre pppp**. The melodic line continues with various fingerings (1, 2, 4, 5) and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The measure numbers 119, 120, 121, and 122 are visible on the left side of the staves.

Musical score for measures 123-126. The tempo is **meno mosso**. The dynamic is **pppp**. The score includes a triplet of eighth notes and various fingerings. The measure numbers 123, 124, 125, and 126 are visible on the left side of the staves.

Musical score for measures 127-130. The tempo is **poco sfz**. The dynamic is **ppp**. The score features a melodic line with fingerings 1, 2, 5, 4, 1, 5 and a triplet of eighth notes. The measure numbers 127, 128, 129, and 130 are visible on the left side of the staves.

131 *pppp* *m.s.*

*très lointain* *pppp* *a tempo* *p* *rall. molto* *pppp*

*quasi adagio* *pp* *pp*

*tempo primo* *sfz* *sonoro ma non forte* *pp* *rit. molto* *ppppp* *Largo assolutamente attenué*

*Largo* *pppp* *ppp*

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## Appendix

### Comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

As an interpreter-performer I often have to ask myself why a composer has chosen a particular time or key signature and sometimes the answer is not at all obvious. Now that we have the tools with which to “re-arrange” the music otherwise, my work as an editor becomes much more interesting. When these pieces were first written I like to think that the composer did not necessarily consider all the options, (at the time they had so much else to think about) and I doubt whether a colleague, editor or proofreader would have had the temerity to question a composer’s wishes. However, in retrospect I like to think that these now aged composers are approvingly viewing my modifications from above and giving the nod to my humble efforts.

- 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.
- The dynamic range is from *f* to a barely audible *ppppp*

### **Duration: 6’40**

- **35 - 42** presented in B flat
- **47 - 54** presented in B minor
- **55/67/69/77/81** acciaccaturas have been added
- **75 - 78** presented in C
- **79 - 82** presented in D flat
- **83 - 84** presented in D
- **85 - 102** presented with a blank key-signature
- **90** editorial pedal suggestion
- **114** editorial suggestion to silently replay the bass E<sup>b</sup>, changing the pedal for a “clean” sound

clair **clair**  
très souple **not metronomic**  
bien marqué et ***p*** cependant ***p*** **but well marked**  
très doux et lointain **very gentle and as from afar**

\* 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 such Steinways in the Paris *salons*. 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 prevalent.

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".