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Guitar – a Sound Episode in the Output of Les Six Group

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Abstract

The article aims at presenting the guitar output of the composers who were members of Les Six group. It may trigger further, detailed research into the guitar works of composers for whom this instrument became a mere sound episode in their oeuvre. Four of the six French composers included in this group: Georges Auric, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, and Germaine Tailleferre dedicated a part of their oeuvre to the guitar literature reascent in the first half of the 20th century. Their interest in the instrument was the result of the activity of the great masters of the time, Andrés Segovia and Ida Presti. It also resulted from their specific approach to creation - among other things, a desire to oppose the previous aesthetics or to write simple and humorous music, in which the guitar proved to be an excellent medium. The article contains an analysis of selected compositions and the genesis of their creation. The analysis also focuses on the role of the guitar in French music throughout the ages and the programmatic ideas of the group known as Les Six.

Keywords: guitar in France, instrumental miniature, Les Six group, Ida Presti, Andrés Segovia.

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Place of the guitar in French music

The guitar clearly marks its presence in French music at particular moments in history. As a matter of example, the popularity of the Baroque guitar flourished during the reign of Louis XIV, who played it himself and encouraged a wide range of composers to create, including one of the most prominent artists of the time, Robert de Visée. However, in the 19th century, when most musical events were dominated by singers, pianists and orchestras, in France it was the guitar that was the favorite instrument for chamber performances, in private homes. Before the July Revolution in France in 1830, an increase of interest in the instrument was noticeable. Private guitar lessons gained popularity and pieces by great masters from Spain and Italy (Sor, Aguado, Carulli, Carcassi) began to be printed. All of them spent a part of their artistic lives in France, where they also published their compositions. One of Fernando Sor's students, Napoléon Coste, became the most played guitar composer of the period.

Interestingly, in America, it became even customary to call the classical guitar – the French guitar. This short period of glory ended abruptly in 1830. At that time the number of guitar publications decreased significantly and the instrument started to be associated mainly with popular and folk music of the Iberian Peninsula. It was not until 1920 that Manuel de Falla wrote and published the miniature *Hommage pour le Tombeau de Claude Debussy* in “La Revue Musicale”, the most popular music periodical of the time. The guitar, forgotten and unreasonably neglected, soon became an appealing and highly appreciated instrument for many composers, allowing them to discover new means of expression.

The vast majority of valuable guitar literature of the 20th century was written by composers who were not guitarists – unlike in previous centuries when composers of pieces for this instrument were almost exclusively virtuoso guitarists. In the second half of the 19th century, the development of music aimed at enriching the sound (among other things by expanding the orchestra). This had a significant influence on the marginalization of the guitar's importance in the musical world at that time. Yet, at the beginning of the 20th century, when interest in archaisms, colors and subtle timbres increased, the guitar came as a revelation in modern music and found a new place in history. The groundwork for the revival of the guitar in the 20th century was laid by Francisco Tárrega. In addition to structural changes to the instrument made by the luthier Antonio Torres, he paved the way for a new playing technique. Tárrega's pupils Miguel Llobet and Emilio Pujol also contributed to the further development of the art of guitar playing. The former, on the one hand, personally persuaded de Falla to write a composition for solo guitar, and on the other, declined the opportunity to co-write a piece with Claude Debussy, which would perhaps have revived the development of guitarism even more.¹

¹ Cit. per.: G. Wade, *A Concise History of the Classic Guitar*, Mel Bay Publications, Inc., Pacific 2001, pp. 44–46.

When outlining the 20th-century guitar literature, the name of Andrés Segovia (1893–1987), the great Spanish guitar master, cannot be omitted. Circumstances favorable to the development and growth of interest in the guitar allowed the great promoter of this instrument, as well as an excellent musician and virtuoso, to enter the major concert halls of the world. However, he was not interested in avant-garde music that was too dissonant, atonal or serial, and his musical tastes were in opposition to composers such as Schönberg, Stravinsky and Bartók.

In France, hardly any composer of the 20th century omitted to compose for guitar (not necessarily writing for guitar solo, as Boulez did); on the other hand, none devoted himself to writing for this instrument so much as, for example, Federico Moreno Torroba in Spain or Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco in Italy, who developed their unique style and enriched the guitar literature with such serious forms as sonata or concerto². It can be said that in the case of French artists the response was moderate and episodic. All this was due to many factors, among other things because there was no such great inspirer as Andrés Segovia in Spain or Julian Bream in Great Britain. It should be noted that the only known guitar virtuoso of international renown in 20th-century France was Ida Presti, who died prematurely at the age of 42. Her influence on domestic guitar music was oriented more towards quality than quantity. What should also be noted is the importance of the Radio France (ORTF) Composition Competition, which contributed greatly to the popularization of the guitar and the growing body of guitar literature³.

On the one hand, Ida Presti, with her great musical sensitivity, presented the most wonderful image of the guitar to the entire Parisian musical milieu, which undoubtedly regarded her artistic activity with due respect and attention; on the other hand, in the second half of the 20th century, no guitarist could be pointed out as having clearly inspired composers to write for the guitar. The French style of guitar compositions favored expression full of taste and deep musical thought combined with tradition, rather than dash and panache. The guitar works of 20th-century French composers are not as widely known as those of Italian or English composers, and are predominantly works by composers who were not guitarists. Among these composers, the following should be noted in particular: Pierre Boulez (*Le Marteau sans Maître* and *Pli selon pli*), Eugène Bozza (*Deux impressions andalouses*, *Trois préludes*, *Trois pièces*, *Polydiaphonie*, *Berceuse et Sérénade*, *Concertino da camera*), Maurice Ohana (*Tiento*, *Si le Jour paraît*, *Cadran lunaire*, *Anonyme XXème siècle*, *Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejias*, *Concerto Trois Graphiques*), Pierre Petit (*Mouvement perpétuel*, *Thème & variations*, *Sur les Pistes de Flaine*, *Tarantelle & Toccata*, *Concerto*), Albert Roussel (*Segovia*), Henri Pierre Sauguet (*Musiques pour Claudel*, *Soliloque*, *Trois préludes*, *Two*

² A. Gilardino, *Manuale di storia della chitarra, La Chitarra Moderna e Contemporanea*, Berben, Ancona 1988, pp. 82–84, 114–117.

³ G. Wade, *A Concise History of the Classic Guitar*, Mel Bay Publications, Inc., Pacific 2001, pp. 134–135.

pièces, Cadence, Six pièces faciles), Tristan Murail (*Tellur*). Among composers who are guitarists, mention should be made of such names as Roland Dyens and Francis Kleynjans.

This period was extremely significant for the development of guitar music. Andrés Segovia's and Ida Presti's efforts to popularize the guitar contributed to the growth of valuable literature in France and around the world. Moreover, the composers of the pieces of Segovia's new repertoire were composers who were not guitarists. At the beginning of the twentieth century, after years of marginal interest when compared to other instruments, the guitar was presented the opportunity to enter the greatest concert halls.

Les Six

The creativity of French impressionists Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel somewhat dominated, on the international music scene, other composers of the period, such as the Neoclassicist Albert Roussel (author of the miniature *Segovia* Op. 29 for guitar). Les Six was a group of composers who set themselves the task of "refreshing" French music. The group was led, in ideological terms, by Jean Cocteau, a writer, graphic artist and theoretician. He proposed to steer French music away from Wagner's monumental romanticism while contrasting it with Debussy's Impressionist aesthetics. The composers included: Germaine Tailleferre (1892–1983), Georges Auric (1899–1983), Arthur Honegger (1892–1955), Darius Milhaud (1892–1974), Francis Poulenc (1899–1963), and Louis Durey (1888–1979). The young artists wished to move away from pathos, opposed elitism in art, and therefore, with a view to creating music understandable to any audience, they promoted simple and cheerful music. Their dislike of the late-Romantic exuberant emotionality of German atonal expressionism also inspired their interest in the music of previous eras. Erik Satie is considered the forerunner of the French music revival program (he did not write for guitar, but some of his works have been transcribed). He did not belong to the Group of Six, but he was its mentor and remained close to its ideals. The official activity of the group lasted from 1916 to 1921, although its members met much earlier at the Paris Conservatory and the connection between them continued for many years to come⁴.

⁴ Cit.per: J. Bauman-Szulakowska, *Sérénité – humor – fantazja. Poetyka muzyki instrumentalnej Francisca Poulenca*, Ars Nova, Poznań 2000, pp. 7–8.

Compositions for guitar by Les Six members

Darius Milhaud – *Segoviana* op. 366

à Andrés SEGOVIA
SEGOVIANA

DARIUS MILHAUD



Sheet music example no 1: Darius Milhaud —*Segoviana* op. 366 vol. 1–4.

The “position” of the composer has an impact on the status of the instrument for which he writes. As for the classical guitar, whose solo repertoire has mainly been created by composers little known in the world literature milieu, the evolution has been somewhat hindered. In the twentieth century, with guitar virtuosos and promoters such as Segovia and Presti, the instrument earned the respect it deserved.

For the first decades since its composition in 1957, Darius Milhaud’s only work for solo guitar, *Segoviana*, Op. 366, was particularly rarely performed, and even more rarely recorded. Although the work was commissioned by Segovia himself, he himself never performed the composition in public. The piece was published in 1959 by Heugel & Cie. The complexity of the composition and virtuosic elements might have been the reason why the piece was not included in the recitals of the masters of that time.

Darius Milhaud was a very prolific composer, writing operas, ballets, orchestral music, choral music, solo music for various instruments, as well as songs for radio, movie scores and pieces for jazz bands. He pioneered the technique of polytonality and experimented with aleatoricism and electronic instruments. He frequently used elements of Latin American and jazz rhythms in his music. He probably made his first contact with the guitar in early childhood, when he could hear the Gypsies playing, as they were quite numerous in the south of France, the composer’s home region.

According to Milhaud’s wife, Madeleine,

Segovia was ready to finger the piece and Heugel [the publisher] was aware of this. He was supposedly going to publish the piece in an arrangement by the master, but he simply forgot, so Segovia was furious. He never performed the composition⁵.

⁵ J. Ferguson, *Darius Milhaud’s Segoviana: History, Style, Implications*, “GFA Soundboard” 1991, Summer, p. 16.

The question arises here: did the publisher really forget to add Segovia's fingering, or did the maestro not bother to work on the piece because he did not like it? Could Heugel's omission have influenced the artist's reluctance to perform the piece however satisfied he was with it? The most plausible and logical explanation, though, seems to be the fact that the composition did not meet Segovia's expectations. The maestro is known to have preferred more conservative music, in the romantic vein. During his career he tended to avoid modern music, as he said:

Modern music, like modern painting, is now often aggressive and incoherent⁶.

In a letter dated 1929 to Manuel María Ponce, there is a sentence that can be construed as criticism and disregard of the composers of the Group of Six, no longer existing at that time:

Szigeti [...] wants to write a suite [...]; it will be modern, but not in Poulenc's nor Milhaud's style⁷ (sic).

Segovia did not participate in the compositional process and did not even remove in his edition the passages that he disliked, as happened many times when collaborating on the compositions with other composers. It is claimed in the composer's biography that he was commissioned to write the piece for guitar by Segovia himself. Madelaine Milhaud adds:

Darius was never tempted to compose for a solo instrument, but Segovia asked him several times, until he finally gave in.⁸

The omission of *Segoviana* from Segovia's recital programs and the fact that the piece has not been disseminated by prominent guitarists explain why the composition has not been given important enough a role in guitar literature. In the past few years, this has changed somewhat. Guitarists such as Oscar Ghiglia, David Tanenbaum, Sanel Redžić, Ricardo Gallén, Otto Tolonen, Gunnar Spjuth, Emanuele Segre or Marcin Dylla have reached for this piece and even recorded it.

It is possible that with a different course of events, Milhaud would have written more compositions for guitar. As we can find out in J. Ferguson's article, he was considering writing a guitar concerto, which George Sakellariou, *Segoviana*'s premiere performer, encouraged him to do⁹.

Segoviana differs in many ways from other works for solo guitar of the period, numerous compositional ideas are often not adapted to performance possibilities. Instead of a "guitar-written" piece, we have a 61-bar fantasy that is a mixture of many stylistic features characteristic of Milhaud's music. The com-

⁶ M. Alcazar, *The Segovia – Ponce Letters*, Editions Orphée, Inc., Columbus 1989, p. 25.

⁷ G. Wade, *Maestro Segovia*, Robson Books, London 1986, p. 74.

⁸ J. Ferguson, *Darius Milhaud's Segoviana: History, Style, Implications*, "GFA Soundboard" 1991, no 2, p. 17.

⁹ Ibidem.

poser had a general knowledge of guitar music; he had attended several of Segovia's concerts and admired his playing. As Georges Sakellariou recalls:

I played for him and he was incredibly excited. He called out to his wife: - Madeleine, come and listen to *Segoviana*. He was very curious about whether it was really possible to be played on guitar. He himself had no idea¹⁰.

One aspect of *Segoviana* that is interesting in terms of performance is the numerous use of dynamic markings (throughout 61 bars, Milhaud uses over 60 markings in total, ranging from *pp* to *ff*). This suggests a very specific compositional intention – Milhaud uses dynamics to sharpen the polyphonic texture (bars 47–49), where the turbulent dialogue between two voices becomes completely clear and understandable.



Sheet music example no 2: Darius Milhaud – *Segoviana*, op. 366, bars 47–49.

The piece in question is accompanied by a performance indication - *avec fantaisie* (with fantasy), meaning that Milhaud encourages the performer to approach the composition with brilliance, color and interest. Sakellariou even implies that Milhaud wrote some passages with the idea of approaching them as improvisation¹¹. Introduced into the piece as a kind of reference to Spanish music (a reference to Segovia), they were meant to evoke associations with flamenco and jazz music, of which the composer was particularly fond. Throughout the composition, slow sections often alternate with fast aggressive virtuoso passages, such as in bar 13.

The rhythmic structure in *Segoviana* is very rich. Milhaud's use of values ranging from thirty-second to half notes is most evident in bar 43, where the composer used a slowing effect by lengthening the values from thirty-second through sixteenths, triplet eighth-notes, quarter notes, and half notes.



Sheet music example no 3: Darius Milhaud – *Segoviana* op. 366, bars 43–44.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ J. Ferguson, *Darius Milhaud's Segoviana: History, Style, Implications*, "GFA Soundboard" 1991, no 2, p. 18.

The tempo indication in *Segoviana* is closely related to the interpretive indication – *avec fantaisie*. The indication of tempo equal to a quarter note – 84 MM shows the moderate tempo at which the composition is to be played. On the other hand, the term *avec fantaisie* on the one hand gives the performer great freedom, while on the other the precise rhythmization prescribed by Milhaud encourages precise interpretation. The most sensible and compromised solution is to slow down the tempo to increase the precision of the fast passages. Milhaud himself, when listening to the first performance of *Segoviana*, stated that it should be played more slowly (at about MM 69), provided, however, that the tempo is not be excessively slow¹².

The dynamic markings added by Milhaud mean that the performer must maintain a balance between the extremes of *pp* and *ff*. This seems most important in passages where the composer uses the echo effect and when the dynamics creates voices in polyphonic passages.

In conclusion, if Segovia had decided to perform *Segoviana* in the 1960s, it is likely that today the guitar literature would include more works by Milhaud. The dynamics of this work, the ambiguous harmonic solutions, the extended tonality and rhythmic make *Segoviana* a truly original work in twentieth-century guitar literature. Importantly enough, it is a composition written by a composer of major significance in music history.

The guitar works of Germaine Tailleferre

On June 30, 2004, Germaine Tailleferre's forgotten composition had its world premiere in Weimar – the German guitar duo Chris Bilobram and Christina Altmann performed *Concerto pour deux guitares et orchestre* with the Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt orchestra conducted by Christian Schumann. The piece, composed in the 1960s on commission from French radio music producer Robert J. Vidal, had never been performed or recorded before. As we read in the editorial commentary to the CD *Composition Féminine* by Chris Bilobram, the work was dedicated to two guitarists from South America. Presumably, it was the duo Pomponio and Zarate. However, the concerto was never performed by them. As it later turned out, the score ended up in the archives of Radio France¹³. What is important, the composer considered the work a success and regretted that the premiere of the composition did not take place. This motivated several musicologists and guitarists to conduct library queries, and the lost score was finally found at the end of 2003¹⁴.

¹² J. Ferguson, *Darius Milhaud's Segoviana: History, Style, Implications*, "GFA Soundboard" 1991, no 2, p. 19.

¹³ Source: http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2005/mar05/composition_feminine.htm [accessed on November, 6, 2020].

¹⁴ Source: <http://www.classicalmusicnow.com/Tailleferre2guitars.htm> [accessed on November, 6, 2020].

The concerto lasts about 17 minutes and consists of four movements: I *Allegro moderato*, II without tempo indication, III *Lento – Tranquillo*, IV *Allegro*. In terms of form, the composition is written more in the style of a concerto grosso than a solo concerto. The guitar rarely plays solo, more frequently with harp and celesta. The piece is on the one hand very diverse, on the other slightly chaotic. It contains traditional harmonic language as well as atonal passages; cantilena-like melodic lines in the slow movements; and elements characteristic of South American popular music. Thirteen years after the composition was premiered in Weimar, NOVA Guitar Duo gave the UK premiere of the *Concerto* at the RCM's Britten Theatre in 2017.

Germaine Tailleferre's *Concerto pour deux guitares et orchestre* adds to the list of concertos for two guitars, of which there are about fifty, according to the catalog of the Italian musicologist Vincenzo Pucci¹⁵.

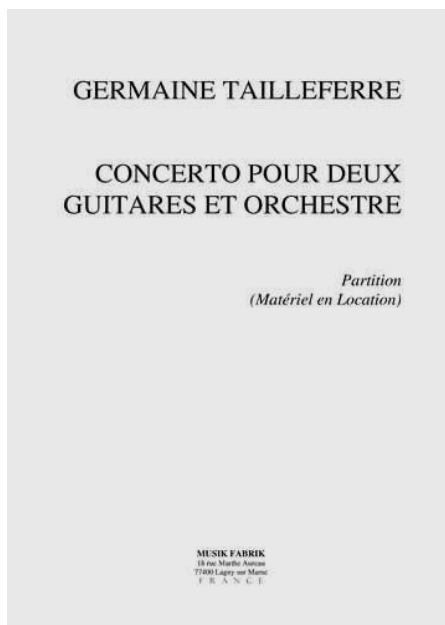


Figure 1. Title page of the score of Germaine Tailleferre's *Concerto for Two Guitars and Orchestra*.

Owing to the efforts of the artists Chris Bilobram and Christina Altmann, the concert was performed and recorded thirty years after its composition. However, *Concertino for guitar and chamber ensemble* – a piece mentioned solely in George Hacquard's book *Germaine Tailleferre: La Dame des Six* – remains

¹⁵ Source: http://www.vpmusicmedia.altervista.org/dbpocci/dbopere.php?fbclid=IwAR1Ou8jkNbgOhHx45VrEq76lueo9T1b87DcPwxSkXC89yAf0lbbyVXV_eBA [accessed on November, 6, 2020].

a mystery¹⁶. Robert Shapiro, the author of a biography of the composer, does not mention this composition in his publication, but claims to have seen drafts of the manuscript in Paris.

Germaine Tailleferre's solo piece for guitar is *Guitare*. It is a composition set in a very slow tempo – *Très Lent*, in quadruple meter, $\frac{4}{4}$. It has a homophonic texture consisting mainly of verticals chords (tetrads with a melodic line appearing in the highest voice). *Guitare* is difficult to define conclusively in terms of formal structure. The constant repetition of chords and the uncomplicated melodic line give the piece a contemplative and dreamy character. The texture in which the work is set is reminiscent of choral singing. The composition is written tonally, without key signature. The staid nature of the composition, the monotony of the chords, the non-guitar texture and the lack of proper arrangement and fingering make *Guitare* virtually absent from the recital programs of guitar virtuosos. The only guitarist who has recorded the piece is Otto Tolonen (*Guitar Recital: Tiento Francais*, Alba, 2013).

Guitare
pour guitare

Germaine Tailleferre

Très Lent

Sheet music example 4. Germaine Tailleferre – *Guitare* pour guitare vol. 1–3.

Francis Poulenc – *Sarabande* Op. 179

Among the composers of French music of the 20th century, the Parisian Francis Poulenc is considered as an artist of considerable standing. He wrote not only various types of operas, ballets, theater and occasional music, but also orchestral and choral works, many songs and piano pieces. Among dozens of his works, the *Sarabande*, written in New York in March 1960 and dedicated to Ida Presti, is the only one written for guitar. Although Poulenc was writing for one of the most technically brilliant guitarists in history, he avoids virtuosity in favor of deep expressivity in this miniature. Poulenc's *Sarabande* is a simple and concise composition. Written partly in tonal, partly in modal harmony, it evokes an atmosphere of medieval melancholy. From the opening single-voice melodic line through delicate harmonic episodes, the composer builds an almost hypnotic ambience through a repeated melodic-rhythmic motif with slight modifications. The simplicity and harmonic purity of *Sarabande* may be reminiscent of Gregorian chant,

¹⁶ G. Hacquard, *Germaine Tailleferre: La Dame des Six*, Editions L'Harmattan, Paris 1998, p. 267.

which is consistent with Poulenc's fondness, at a certain moment in his career, for sacred music¹⁷. The work closes with the consonance of six empty guitar strings, leaving a kind of understatement in the reception of this unusually charming miniature.

To Ida Presti

SARABANDE

For Guitar

Francis Poulenc

Molto calmo e melanconico

New York, March 1969
© Copyright 1961, by G. RICORDI & C. s.p.a. - Milano
G. RICORDI & CO. (LONDON) LTD. THE BURY, CHURCH STREET, CHESHAM, BUCKS.
Printed by Habitan & Co. Ltd., Amersham, Bucks., England

Sheet music example 5. Francis Poulenc – *Sarabande*, Ricordi edition

This short composition (only 29 bars), in alternating meter, has a fairly simple texture with a cantilena melodic line in the upper voice and a harmonic complement in the lower voice. Although Poulenc did not play guitar, the piece harmonizes with the nature of the instrument. The 1961 edition of *Sarabande* (Ricordi), while containing extensive fingering, hardly shows the leading of the melodic line. Even if the piece appears simple and unassuming, several world-renowned

¹⁷ J. Bauman-Szulakowska, *Sérénité – humor – fantazja. Poetyka muzyki instrumentalnej Francisca Poulenca*, Ars Nova, Poznań 2000, pp. 44–46.

guitarists have willingly included Poulenc's *Sarabande* in their repertoire. This proves that such literature is needed and appreciated. Among the performers of this composition are guitarists such as Oscar Ghiglia, Rafael Aguirre, Otto Tolonen and Narciso Yepes.

Georges Auric – *Hommage a Alonso Mudarra*

HOMMAGE
a ALONSO MUDARRA

Georges Auric

Deciso (♩=100)

Sheet music example 6. Georges Auric – *Hommage a Alonso Mudarra*, vol. 1–3.

Georges Auric became famous mainly as a composer of film, pop and theater music. Alonso Mudarra, to whom Auric dedicated his work, was a 16th-century Spanish composer known as a guitar and vihuela virtuoso. His *Fantasia X*, designed to imitate Louis XVI's harp playing, has become a permanent part of the repertoire of many guitarists¹⁸.

Auric's piece is set in a very fast tempo (*Deciso*, with MM equal to 100 for the half note), in duple meter, $\frac{2}{2}$. It has a homophonic texture and is an atonal piece with tonal passages. These passages are noticeably kept in the key of E major. In this composition there is no specific formal structure, yet it can be divided into distinctive sections. The first of them is an agitated, energetic section of scherzo nature. The melodic line here is characterized by numerous accents and *staccato* articulation, which gives the piece a burlesque and animated character. Then long rhythmic values bring a certain tranquillity, and in the following passages we gradually return to the earlier rhythmic and *staccato* articulation. The melody in the lower voice intensifies, and then we hear the second characteristic passage of the piece, the "pompous fanfares" in E major. These, after being repeated twice, pass into a quotation from *Fantasia X* by Alonso Mudarra, in *subito piano* dynamics. The contrasting dynamics and the different character of this passage give it a unique character. The piece *Hommage à Alonso Mudarra*, like Francis Poulenc's *Sarabande*, was written in 1960. It was published by both Ricordi and the Max Esching publishing house. The work was recorded by Emanuele Segre and Otto Tolonen.

¹⁸ H. Annala, H. Mätlik, *Handbook of guitar and lute composer*, Mel Bay Publications, Inc., Pacific 2007, pp. 20–21.

" IV "

p subito

Sheet music example 7. Georges Auric – *Hommage à Alonso Mudarra*, vol. 53–58.

Sheet music example 8. Alonso Mudarra – *Fantasia X Imitation de la Harpe à la manière de Ludovico*, vol. 63–65.

Summary

Four composers from Les Six Group: Georges Auric, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc and Germaine Tailleferre created works for guitar. All of the four compositions for solo guitar are miniatures, and three of them refer – more or less directly – to early music. Jean Cocteau had sought for a long time to create a brotherly group of artists who would support his ideas, but as it soon turned out, these composers did not want to be remembered only through the prism of Les Six and only one aesthetic associated with this group. Darius Milhaud jokingly referred to the group as a mixture of artists working “under influence” (Cocteau), a group of actually quite different composers who happened to be on the same concert program by sheer coincidence¹⁹. Nonetheless, for the short period of Les Six’s existence, before each member of the group took his own creative direction, these composers reshaped French music by bringing to it deliberate, refined simplicity, brilliance and humor. Tailleferre’s composition – *Guitare*, whose date of composition is unknown, is kept in a calm, melancholic character. It can be assumed that this piece did not enter the universal canon of guitar literature due to its texture incompatible with the nature and specificity of the instrument and the inability to play the melodic line smoothly. Milhaud’s *Segoviana* is an intriguing piece that poses a considerable performance challenge. It can also be a creative stimulus for an artist to discover a hitherto unknown color of the guitar. What matters is the exquisite capture of the nature of wit and whimsy, inherent in the ideas of Les Six’s music. When analyzing Auric’s work, *Hommage à Alonso*

¹⁹ J. Bauman-Szulakowska, *Sérénité – humor – fantazja. Poetyka muzyki instrumentalnej Francisca Poulenca*, Ars Nova, Poznań 2000, pp. 7–8.

Mudarra, a similar fidelity to the group's concepts is apparent. Although it is a very brief composition, it contains a remarkable variety of articulation, mood, dynamics, and a quotation from the vihuela virtuoso's unconventional *Fantasia X*. It is difficult to understand why the work of such a remarkable composer has gone unnoticed and unappreciated. Poulenc's composition *Sarabande*, in comparison to the aforementioned works, is very balanced. In this piece dedicated to Ida Presti the listener can discern deliberate staid character and simplicity in its construction referring to medieval art.

This limited number of guitar compositions, though being only an episode and a short adventure in the career of composers who were important for the history of music, is a proof that this instrument has always brought inspiration with its colorful sound. Composing for the guitar requires knowledge of the specificity of the instrument and the first attempts of non-guitarist composers are not always successful. The compositions discussed herein, with the exception of *Segoviana*, do not enjoy wide recognition and are rarely included in concert programs. The work of "researchers-instrumentalists," is vital to the development of the field and the increasing of the instrument's literature. The compositions of the members of Les Six group discussed in this article are only an example and inspiration for new research and continuous exploration, which are of great importance in the artistic activity of an instrumentalist.

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Gitara – epizod brzmieniowy w twórczości Grupy Sześciu

Abstrakt

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie twórczości gitarowej kompozytorów wchodzących w skład grupy Les Six. Artykuł może stanowić przyczynek do dalszych, szczegółowych badań nad twórczością gitarową kompozytorów, dla których gitara stała się jedynie epizodem brzmieniowym w ich twórczości. Czworo z sześciorga francuskich kompozytorów wchodzących w skład tej grupy: Georges Auric, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc oraz Germaine Tailleferre znalazło w swojej twórczości miejsce dla odradzającej się w I połowie XX wieku literatury gitarowej. Ich zainteresowanie tym instrumentem było rezultatem działalności wielkich mistrzów tamtych czasów – Andrésa Segovii i Idy Presti. Wynikło ono także z ich specyficznego podejścia do tworzenia – m.in. chęci przeciwstawienia się dotychczasowej estetyce czy woli pisania muzyki prostej i żartobliwej, w której to sytuacji gitara okazała się znakomitym nośnikiem. W artykule została przedstawiona analiza wybranych kompozycji oraz geneza ich powstania. Analizie poddano rolę gitary w muzyce francuskiej na przestrzeni epok oraz idee programowe grupy zwanej Les Six.

Słowa kluczowe: gitara we Francji, miniatura instrumentalna, Grupa Sześciu, Ida Presti, Andrés Segovia.