

LOUIS VALENTINE JOHNSON

INNOVATIVE GUITAR

ASCAP



ALLEGRETTO IN B MINOR OPUS 35 - NUMBER 22

BY FERNANDO SOR - 1778-1839

(SEGOVIA STUDY NO. FIVE)

ARRANGED BY LOUIS VALENTINE JOHNSON & CRAIG PALMER

FOR GUITAR AND VIOLIN



ALLEGRETTO IN B MINOR, OPUS 35 - NUMBER 22
BY FERNANDO SOR - 1778-1839
(Segovia Study No. Five)
Arranged by Louis Valentine Johnson

Allegretto in B Minor by our famous Fernando Sor has always been one of my favorite compositions. Sor was a Spanish virtuoso (his father was a guitarist) performer and teacher, a soldier in a Catalan regiment near Barcelona, and a productive composer who was born and/or baptized on Valentine's day, 1778. He died at the age of 61 on July 10, 1839 in Paris. This lovely piece found a position of prominence again in the Twentieth Century when Segovia titled it *Study Number Five in B Minor*, and included it in his published edition of *Twenty Studies by Fernando Sor*.¹ Segovia's book of Sor studies is used often by students and is also a professional resource for classical guitarists. Andres Segovia, Julian Bream, John Williams, Narciso Yepes, and many other guitarists have recorded this composition.

I have always been encouraged by Sor's adventurous spirit and strong statements because he addressed and practiced ideas that were often substantially different from those of his contemporaries. He implemented actions contrary to the accepted rules of his time regarding right hand fingers, use of adjacent strings, strict alternations, and the playing of scale passages with pulgar and indicio in the style of previous generations of lutenists and Baroque guitarists. Fernando Sor was one of the most daring musical personalities of his epoch.



FERNANDO SOR - 1778-1839

Sor displayed his literary talent and propensity for pointed didactics along with his philosophies of composing and performing in his c. 1850 London publication, *Method for the Spanish Guitar* translated from Spanish by A. Merrick.²

Sor wrote: *“If certain precepts are in contradiction to the practice heretofore adopted by those who, through blind submission, and a religious respect for their masters have followed their maxims examining the foundation of them, it would be wrong to suppose in me a spirit of opposition. At first I took up this instrument merely as an instrument of accompaniment, but from the age of sixteen years I was shocked to hear it said by those who professed to have but little talent, ‘I only play to accompany’. I knew that a good accompaniment supposes in the first place a good base, chords adapted to it, and movements as much as possible approximating those of an orchestral score or those of a pianoforte, this which, in my opinion, afforded a much greater proof of mastery on the instrument than all those sonatas which I heard with long violin passages, without harmony or even devoid of base, excepting the base found on the open strings. There were no masters for me, and I was confirmed in the idea that what was taken for mastery was the very cause preventing its attainment.”*

¹ Andres Segovia, *Twenty Studies by Fernando Sor*. Published by Hal Leonard Corporation, 1984, 32 pages, Winona, MN.

² Fernando Sor, *Method for the Spanish Guitar*. Originally published by R. Cocks, c. 1850, London. Republished by DaCapo Press, 1971, 48 pages, NY, NY.

A NEW INTERPRETATION

The intent of this exploration is to take Sor's piece to a different realm of variation. I recorded this composition twenty years ago, after learning and playing it for decades. My current arrangement is very different and has taken liberties with interpretation, compositional aspects, and techniques. I have no idea if Fernando Sor would agree with my changes to his piece. I comfort myself with the illusion that Sor may have approved of my work as a fellow artist and composer. After all, arranging and romantic interpretation are facets of music which walk together, hand-in-hand along the primrose path of composition.

Facsimiles of Sor's Opus 35, Studies 13-24 document the etiology of this piece, which along with other of his works are all available in various editions. Sor wrote that these compositions were very easy exercises for the guitar.

Brian Jeffery, in his book *Fernando Sor: Complete Works for Guitar*,³ provides an excellent and complete resource. Jeffery also authored *Fernando Sor Composer and Guitarist*.⁴

Musicologist, composer and professor Dr. Mark A. Radice of Ithaca, New York, wrote in his liner notes for my recording *The Blue Hour*⁵, that the studies of guitar composers such as Fernando Sor and Dionysio Aquado, both of whom were contemporaries of Beethoven, entertained views of romanticism from their late classical vantage point.

Dr. Radice wrote: "Studies of Aquado and Sor represent a late stage in the concert etude as a type of piece that can be dated as far back as the early 18th century. Clearly, these pieces rise above the level of studies intended for the practice room only—they are concert show pieces."⁶

We need not be concerned about performing an exquisite short composition because the composer called it an exercise, or a study. I have played this Sor composition in concerts, as an encore, and for the wedding of a friend. Sor's piece has always moved listeners. Argentine composer Jose Luis Merlin wrote a second guitar part to Sor's study, dedicated it to me, and turned this solo piece into a duo which we performed together often. My lifelong affinity for this beautiful work inspired me to look into its deeper possibilities.

Most guitarists play this piece romantically and slowly, in the style of some recordings of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. Often called the *Moonlight Study* by guitarists, we play it at a tempo of 60 to 100 on Maazel's metronome. Sor's notation indicates a tempo of Allegretto. I recorded this composition at c. 114. In the interest of lengthening what is essentially a two minute piece, I wrote out and repeated the first section of 16 bars with a subsequent variation of dynamic. Now we have an A1 section and an A2 section which concludes at bar 32. The arrangement then progresses into the B section written out with a repeat in the same manner. I have composed transition figures, with all due respect to Fernando Sor. The section beginning at bars 40 to 48 where Sor uses

a parallel B Major chord and modulates a brief excursion into E Minor always asked me for a tempo change, so I instituted this idea in a tempo of 68 at bar 48. There is then a gradual accelerando back to our 114 Allegretto tempo. This same change occurs again at bar 72. Here, in order to avoid the Mozart to Salieri (from the movie *Amadeus*) paraphrased comment of, “This part is played exactly like the first time, right?” We are all supposed to smile at this moment. I have utilized aspects of chordal harmony to differentiate this second slow section repetition from the previous first slow section. Sor’s facsimile presents a recurring melodic figure with polyphonic and harmonic accompaniments. I have retained those characteristics and added enhancements of rubato and vibrato as embellishments.

My arrangement of Sor’s piece is intended to be a warm and romanticized concert showpiece as indicated in the previously cited passage of Dr. Radice.⁷ In the last bars of this arrangement, I have slowed the tempo considerably and composed an ending beyond the repetitive scope of an exercise. This was done for the purposes of variation, feeling, and interest.

I have arranged this piece for chamber music performances with instrumentations for guitar and viola,⁸ guitar and cello,⁹ and guitar and string quartet.¹⁰ My arrangement for solo guitar is presently available as a sound file on my website. Each of these editions are published by Dos Almas Music. I invite you to enjoy listening to and playing this solo guitar arrangement, and to perform the chamber music arrangements. Hopefully, you will experience an emotional calm with this little beauty which will prevent you from taking your guitar and smashing it (in the style of Jimi Hendrix), as Sor was known to do when his playing was not going well.¹¹

Thank you listeners, readers, fellow guitarists, and thank you Fernando Sor.

Louis Valentine Johnson

February 14, 2019

www.louisvalentinejohnson.com

www.thepeaceconcerto.com

www.dosalmas.com

³ Brian Jeffery, *Fernando Sor Complete Works for Guitar*. Published by Shattinger International Music Corporation, 1977, 468 pages, Three Volumes.

⁴ Brian Jeffery, *Fernando Sor: Composer and Guitarist*. Published by Tecla Editions, 1977, 197 pages, London.

⁵ Mark A. Radice, *The Blue Hour*, Studies by Fernando Sor. Dos Almas Records, 1999.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Fernando Sor, *Allegretto in B Minor, Op 35, No. 22*, Dos Almas Music Publishing (Arr: Louis Valentine Johnson Editions), Grass Valley, CA.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Brian Jeffery, *Sor at 240*, published by Sound Board, Vol. 44 No. 4. The Journal of the Guitar Foundation of America, 2018, 3 pages.

Allegretto in b-minor

Opus 35

For Guitar & Violin

by Fernando Sor (1778-1839)

Allegretto

♩ = 114

arr. by Louis Valentine Johnson, ASCAP

& Craig E. Palmer, BMI

edited by Richard Altenbach, ASCAP

II

mf

mp

5

mp

9

mp

13

mp

17 **II**

p

21 **I II**

cresc.

25 **III**

mf

29 **II** **rit.**

mp

⑥

a tempo

33

mf

mf

molto rit.

37

p

vib.

meno mosso

♩ = 88

41

mf

pp espr.

45

vib. pp

accel. . . Tempo Primo

49

dolce

53

II

57

IV V

mp *mf*

61

II V VII

con vib.

a tempo

65

mp

p

69

pizz.

vib.

molto rit. ♩ = 68

73

p

ppp

rit.

77

p

f

mf

p

vib.

accel. . . . Tempo Primo

81

dolce

flaut.

p dolce

85

89

mp

vib.

vib.

molto rit.

93

pp

ppp delicato

pizz.

II V 6

Guitar

2

33 **a tempo**
mf

37 **molto rit.**
meno mosso *vib.*

41 $\text{♩} = 88$
mf I II VII

45 *vib. pp*

49 **accel.** . . . **Tempo Primo**
dolce

53 II

57 IV V *mf*

61 II V VII **rit.** *con vib.*

65 **a tempo**
mp

69 **vib.**

73 **molto rit.** . . . ♩ = 68

77 **rit.** . . . **vib.**

81 **accel.** . . . **Tempo Primo**
dolce

85

89 **vib.**

93 **molto rit.** . . . **con vib.**

Violin

Allegretto in b-minor

Opus 35

For Guitar & Violin

by Fernando Sor (1778-1839)

arr. by Louis Valentine Johnson, ASCAP
& Craig E. Palmer, BMI
edited by Richard Altenbach, ASCAP

Allegretto

♩ = 114

5 *mp*

9

13

17

21 *p*

25

29 *mf* *rit.* . . . *a tempo* *mf*

37 *mp* *mf* *molto rit.*

41 *p*

meno mosso

♩ = 88

45 *pp espr.*

Violin

2 49 **accel. . . . Tempo Primo**

53

57 *mp*

61 **rit. a tempo** *p*

69 *pizz.*

73 **molto rit.** = 68

77 *arco* *f* *pizz.* **rit.** *mf* *arco* *p*

81 *flaut.* *p dolce* **accel. Tempo Primo**

85

89 *mp*

93 **molto rit.** *pizz.* *pp* *PPP delicato*

LOUIS VALENTINE JOHNSON COMPOSITIONS

FOR SOLO GUITAR

Walking the Yuba River
Remembrance
White Bird Pass
(A Message To Mama)
Two Boys¹
To the Poets
Snake River Sunset
Wapello Morning
A Winter Day
Saigon - 1965
One
The Journey
Ragdoll
Lament at Fort Hall
September Eleventh¹
Reflections 911³
Twenty One Years²
Monkey Mind
Valentine Waltz²
Goodbye To Mexico
Pandemic Phantasma¹

Arrangements also available for

¹Guitar Duo, ²Guitar/Cello, ³Guitar/Violin/Cello
Guitar/Viola, Guitar/Violin/Cello

TRES PENSAMIENTOS LATINOS

Snowfall in El Escorial
Lullaby of Love
Malagueña California

Arrangements also available for

Guitar Duo, Guitar/Cello, Guitar/Viola,
Guitar, String Quartet, Percussion
and Castanets

THREE PASTORALES

A Soldier in Paradise
Dark Honey
The Ferris Wheel

Arrangements also available for
Guitar/Cello, Guitar/Trombone

TWO HAIKUS

If Only
Water Wind & Stone

Arrangements also available for
Guitar/Violin

FOR SOLO GUITAR

THE PEACE CONCERTO

Portraits
Song of Peace
The Question

Arrangements also available for

Guitar Duo, Guitar/Violin, Guitar/Flute,
Guitar/String Quartet, Guitar/String Orchestra,
Guitar/Viola, Guitar/Cello, Guitar/Piano

SOLSTICE

Summer
Shadows from the North
Winter

TWELVE MOMENTS

from the Peace Concerto

Valiantly Running with Fire
Sad the Death
Song of Peace
A Boy's Tears Play the Guitar
I Am Here

A Photograph of Love

A Little Boy Runs

The Journey Begins

Thoughts of the Dark Fire

Happy with Mama and Daddy

Without My Daddy

Always in My Heart

Arrangements also available for

Guitar Duo, Guitar/String Quartet,
Guitar/Violin, Guitar/Viola, Guitar/Cello,
Guitar/Piano, Guitar/Flute, Guitar/Clarinet,
Guitar/Trombone

FOR THE CHILDREN

Heidi's Song
Children Dancing
The First Night
Graduation

Arrangements also available for

Guitar/Viola, Guitar/Clarinet,
Guitar/String Quartet,
Guitar/String Orchestra

FOR GUITAR AND HARPSICHORD

THREE MEMORIES

I
Allegro Appassionato
II
Andante Espresso
III
Allegro

ARRANGEMENTS

La Hora Azul
(Elorriaga)

A Day in the Country
(Mexican Trad.)

Plegaria - (Gomez)

Mazurka - (Fortea)

Evocacion - (Merlin)

Romanza - (Anon.)

Mi Noche Triste
(Castriota)

Moderato - (F. Sor)

Estudio/Lagrima¹
(Tarrega)

Song of the Birds¹
(Casals)

Minuets I & II

Gavottes I & II
(J.S. Bach)

Allegretto in B Minor,
Opus 35 - Number 22^{2,3,4,7}
(Fernando Sor)

Toccata, Evocation, and Fandango^{1,3,5,6}
(Mark A. Radice)

J.S. Bach Prelude BWV1007

La Folia de Espana¹
(Arcangelo Corelli)

Jácaras¹
(Antonio de Santa Cruz)

Arrangements also available for

¹Solo Guitar, ²Guitar/Cello,
³Guitar/String Quartet, ⁴Guitar/Viola,
⁵Guitar/Piano, ⁶Guitar/String Orchestra,
Guitar/Clarinet⁷



INNOVATIVE GUITAR

LouisValentineJohnson.com

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