

COMPARISON OF THE *MÉTHODE POUR LA GUITARE* BY FERNANDO SOR WITH THE
MÉTHODE COMPLÈTE POUR LA GUITARE PAR FERDINAND SOR, RÉDIGÉE ET
AUGMENTÉE DE NOMBREUX EXEMPLES ET LEÇONS SUIVIS D'UNE
NOTICE SUR LA 7E CORDE BY NAPOLÉON COSTE

Sergio Rodriguez, B.M., M.M.

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2017

APPROVED:

Thomas Johnson, Major Professor
Clay Couturiaux, Committee Member
Peter Mondelli, Committee Member
Benjamin Brand, Director of Graduate Studies
in the College of Music
John W. Richmond, Dean of the College of
Music
Victor Prybutok, Dean of the Toulouse
Graduate School

Rodriguez, Sergio. *Comparison of the "Méthode Pour La Guitare" by Fernando Sor with the "Méthode Complète Pour La Guitare Par Ferdinand Sor, Rédigée Et Augmentée De Nombreux Exemples Et Leçons Suivis D'une Notice Sur La 7e Corde" by Napoléon Coste.*

Doctor of Musical Arts (Performance), August 2017, 167 pp., 2 tables, 7 figures, 7 musical examples, bibliography, 26 titles.

The nineteenth century presents a great increase in publications of guitar methods. Most authors of the time published several versions of their works. Fernando Sor, perhaps the most prominent guitar composers of the time—whose *Méthode* is regarded today as the most important of the period—only published one edition. However, Napoleon Coste took on the task to do a second account. The literature reviewed shows substantial existing information regarding background, type of text, tone, and contents of Sor's work, but comparisons to date are not substantial. Therefore, there is a need to compare these two texts side by side to yield a complete view of their pairing. The existing negative views of Coste's edition hinder the importance of Coste's work as reference to Segovia's publication of Sor studies, and as a clearer pedagogical application of many of Sor's concepts which are sidetracked by his response to criticism and his elaborations in matters beyond his main subject matter. I provide a comprehensive review of Sor's method, an outline and a consideration of his concepts. Then I offer a complete English translation of Coste's method which is inexistent until now. The comparison follows pointing at differences and similarities. Results show that Coste clarifies and complements many of the principles in less text and simpler language. He modifies certain others either to approach Sor's practice or to depart to a newer standard. He offers his own lessons and sections to apply Sor's concepts. Coste's text heads towards a pedagogical synthesis of Sor's method, but it is

incomplete because he omits some concepts without leading the readers to consult Sor. Coste's pedagogical and practical relevance is fundamental for modern standard techniques.

Copyright 2017

by

Sergio Rodriguez

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members, especially my major professor, Thomas Johnson, for their support and the opportunity they offered to bring this work to completion, as well as for the experience I received during these graduate years of study. I would like to thank Dr. Donna Emmanuel for her part as a committee member at the onset of my work, and I want to extend special thanks to Dr. Peter Mondelli for accepting to become part of my committee at a late stage of the work, and for offering invaluable input.

I also want to thank Romaine Duplenne for his generosity in making his work available.

I want to extend a special thanks to John Miller and Robert Bixler; two generous individuals whose trust, enormous parental love and support gave me the great opportunity to initiate graduate studies and offered encouragement through all these years.

I want to thank the staff at the university as well as the many people involved in many ways for graduate students to finish.

Finally, I want to give the biggest thanks to my family. I thank my wife, Lauren, for her undiminished support and encouragement through these years of study—all the hard times were finally worth a dissertation. I thank my mother, Rosalba, for supporting us through this academic process while we brought two children to life. I thank my two-year-old son, Matías, for coming to life and for giving up some of his time with Papa while he completed his work. Finally, I want to thank my newborn son, Jonathan, for his timing in coming to life, which became the final push to make graduation possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	vii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2. PURPOSE.....	4
CHAPTER 3. STATE OF THE RESEARCH.....	6
Origins and Background.....	6
Type of Text.....	8
Style and Tone.....	10
Contents.....	12
Comparison.....	15
CHAPTER 4. METHOD.....	17
CHAPTER 5. REVIEW.....	19
Comparison of Each Author’s Goals.....	19
Overview of Subject Headings.....	20
Comprehensive Review of Sor’s Method.....	21
Introduction.....	21
The Instrument.....	24
Position of the Instrument.....	24
The Right Hand.....	30
The Left Hand.....	31
Way of Plucking the String.....	34
Quality of Sound.....	35
Knowledge of the Fingerboard.....	40
Fingering along the Length of the String.....	43
Use of the Fingers of the Right Hand.....	43
Fingering of the Two Hands.....	44
The Elbow.....	45

On Thirds, Their Nature and Their Fingering.....	47
On Sixths.....	49
Application of the Thirds and the Sixths.....	51
Fingering of the Left Hand in Regard to the Melody	52
Fingering of the Right Hand	55
Harmonic Sounds.....	58
Accompaniments.....	61
Analysis of the Accompaniment of a Fragment of the Oratorio by Haydn (<i>The Creation</i>).....	64
On Fingering of the Annular.....	66
Conclusion	67
Outline of Sor's Concepts.....	70
Translation of Coste's Method.....	80
Introduction.....	80
Part 1: Position of the Instrument	82
Part 2: About the Quality of Sound and the Imitation of Some Instruments.....	90
Part 3: About the Thirds and Their Fingering.....	97
Part 4: Scale in All the Notes	101
Appendix by N. Coste.....	106
CHAPTER 6. COMPARISON	110
Conceptual Differences.....	110
Introduction.....	111
The Left Hand.....	113
The Right Hand.....	118
Way of Attacking the String	122
On Tuning of the Guitar.....	122
31 Lessons and Exercises by N. Coste.....	123
The Quality of Sound and the Imitation of Some Instruments	127
Knowledge of the Fingerboard	129
Fingering Over the Length of the String.....	129
Usage of the Fingers of the Right Hand.....	130
Rule of the Manner of Pressing Chords.....	131

Consideration about the Scales and Their Fingerings.....	131
The Elbow.....	132
Scales.....	133
About the Thirds and Their Fingering.....	134
On Sixths.....	135
CHAPTER 7. OPINION.....	138
Considerations of Sor's Concepts.....	138
Position of the Instrument.....	138
The Right Hand.....	139
The Left Hand.....	140
The Way of Plucking the String.....	143
Quality of Sound.....	144
Imitation of the Horn.....	145
Imitation of the Trumpet.....	145
Knowledge of the Fingerboard.....	146
The Elbow.....	148
On Thirds, Their Nature and Their Fingering.....	149
On Sixths.....	150
Application of the Thirds and the Sixths.....	153
Fingering of the Left Hand in Regard to the Melody.....	153
Harmonics.....	157
Accompaniments.....	160
Conclusion.....	161
CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION.....	162
Negative Differences.....	164
Positive Additions.....	165
Positive Omissions.....	165
Different Approaches.....	165
Final Points.....	165
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	166

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

	Page
Tables	
Table 1: Subject headings within Sor and Coste’s methods [emphasis added to show differences between the two versions].....	20
Table 2: Sor <i>Méthode</i> , Formula of Thirds.	48
Figures	
Figure 1: Fernando Sor, <i>Méthode</i> , Figure 7.....	26
Figure 2: Sor, <i>Méthode</i> , Figure 9.....	29
Figure 3: Sor, <i>Méthode</i> , Figure 11.....	31
Figure 4: Sor, <i>Méthode</i> , Figure 12.....	32
Figure 5: Sor, <i>Méthode</i> , Figure 14.....	33
Figure 6: Sor, <i>Méthode</i> , Figure 18.....	35
Figure 7: Sor, <i>Méthode</i> , Figure 22.....	42
Musical Examples	
Example 1: Sor, <i>Divertissement Militaire</i> , Op. 49, third movement.	38
Example 2: Nápoleon Coste, <i>Méthode Augmentée, 31 Lessons and Exercises, No. 1.</i>	124
Example 3: Sor, <i>Méthode</i> , <i>Example 18</i>	124
Example 4: Coste, <i>Méthode Augmentée, 31 Lessons and Exercises, No. 4</i>	125
Example 5: Coste, <i>Méthode Augmentée, 31 Lessons and Exercises, No. 17</i>	126
Example 6: Sor, <i>Méthode</i> , <i>Example 19</i>	133
Example 7: Coste, <i>Méthode Augmentée, 31 Lessons and Exercises, No. 6</i>	134

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Methods for plucked string instruments have been available ever since the instruments themselves have been studied and played. These historical documents provide insight into the cultural trends and performance practices of the time. Pedagogical texts for the guitar are among the most published in history. This was most evident at the turn of the nineteenth century when the publications of guitar methods increased dramatically. The spike in production was fueled by the ongoing change in the format of scores for guitar—from tablature to standard notation—which started in the middle of the eighteenth century,¹ as well as with the increased popularity of the instrument in the bourgeoisie, particularly in France. Most authors of the time, seeking new opportunities to publish as well as to revise their thoughts, published several editions of the same writings, resulting simultaneously in increased profits and advanced reputations.

Fernando Sor, the leading Spanish guitarist in the nineteenth century Parisian scene and the most prominent guitar composer of the time, wrote a *Méthode* which is regarded today as the most important of the period.² However, he only published one edition. Sor's important premises were sidetracked by his intentions to both distinguish himself from all other guitarists and to raise questions about his contemporaries and their ways of playing the guitar. Throughout his *Méthode*, he exchanged criticism with his contemporaries—both critiquing their practices and responding to their critiques. In order for Sor to have provided a better understanding of his concepts, a second, more objective edition would have been necessary, but he never attempted it.

Napoleon Coste, another reputed guitar composer of the nineteenth century, moved to Paris in 1830 and became a student, friend, and colleague of Fernando Sor. Although Coste

¹ Erik Stenstadvold, *An Annotated Bibliography of Guitar Methods* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2010), p. xi.

² Frederic Grunfeld, *The Arts and Times of the Guitar* (New York: MacMillan, 1969), p. 182.

didn't achieve the stature that Sor did during his lifetime, he was well regarded as a composer of guitar music, most notably for the seven string guitar, and "was also the first to make transcriptions for 'modern' guitar of music for baroque guitar written in tablature."³ He took on the task to make a second edition entitled: *Méthode Complete pour la Guitare par Ferdinand Sor, rédigée et augmentée de nombreux exemples et leçons suivi d'une notice sur la 7e corde; par N Coste* [Complete method for the guitar by Ferdinand Sor, edited and augmented by numerous examples and lessons followed by a note about the seventh string, by N. Coste].

Coste acknowledged in his introduction that the tone of his teacher in his method was the result of "harassment that he had to endure from ignorant colleagues who did not understand him which embittered his spirit, and it was under these unpleasant impressions that he wrote the text of his method."⁴ When comparing the two writings, it is evident that in spite of sharing most of the same headings, the two versions vary greatly. Coste's intention to clarify Sor's concepts, to add some of his own studies, and to include an appendix about the seventh string keep him from literally following his teacher's text.

Throughout the existing literature, there are only minor comments about how these texts compare. Bryan Jeffery, Sor's reviewer, simply undermines Coste's work by saying that "Napoleon Coste did a disservice to his friend's memory by bringing out a travesty of the original."⁵ His study only goes as deep as to mention that "the reader should be warned that it bears little resemblance to the original," without taking any closer look at how they truly

³ Stenstadvold. "Coste, Napoléon." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. Web. 10 Apr. 2017. <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06654>>.

⁴ Napoléon Coste, *Méthode complète pour la guitare* (Paris: Schonenberger, 2007), p. 1: "Les tracasseries qu'il est à essayer de la part d'ignorants confrères qui ne le comprenaient pas, lui aigrissent l'esprit et ce fut sous ces fâcheuses (sic) impressions qu'il écrivit le texte de sa Méthode" [All translations by Sergio Rodriguez]

⁵ Brian Jeffery, *Fernando Sor: Composer and Guitarist* (Penderyn: Tecla Ed., 1994), p. 96.

compare. I propose to fill this void in the literature with a thorough analysis of both Sor's original method and Coste's revision.

CHAPTER 2

PURPOSE

In my detailed study of Fernando Sor's *Méthode pour la Guitare* with a comparison to Napoleon Coste's later version *Méthode Complète pour la Guitare par Ferdinand Sor*, I outline the goals of each author, compare the concepts they present, and analyze the differences in terms of both content and objectives.

Fernando Sor was determined to show "his way to play his own music," but in doing so, he often detoured from purely pedagogical concepts into bitter arguments against guitarists of his time.⁶ On the other hand, Coste wanted to present the concepts presented by his teacher in a simple, straightforward manner. While he followed a more practical approach, he sometimes neglected to follow the text of his teacher accurately and thoroughly.

After identifying the goals of each author, I extract and outline the concepts and technical points that they address in each of the methods. There is some existing literature referring to individual concepts of each method, most notably of Sor's version. However, this outline is important because no one has completed an account on either of the studies and the existent references are heavily distorted by the critical view Sor had towards his contemporaries.

I then analyze the differences in terms of content and also possible points of view among the authors. Judging by the depth, extent, and order of the content, it is evident that Sor did not intend to write in a pedagogical manner. His comprehensive study of guitar playing resembles the writing of a treatise more than a method, as is clarified in the following chapter.⁷ Coste, conscious of this fact, sought to have a more pedagogical approach than that found in Sor's

⁶ Marco Riboni, "Fernando Sor E Il Méthode Pour La Guitare," in *Estudios sobre Fernando Sor*, ed. Luis Gásson (Madrid: El Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, 2003), p. 390. "La *sua* manera de sonare la *sua* musica."

⁷ Mario Dell'Ara, *La Chitarra* (Torino: EDT, 1990), p. 253. "Il suo, più che un Metodo, è un Trattato, il primo nella storia de la chitarra."

writings, and his work is subsequently closer to a method than a treatise, although his ideas are sometimes very distinct from Sor's. I aim to provide a better understanding of the two manuscripts and the techniques employed in guitar performance during this period.

CHAPTER 3

STATE OF THE RESEARCH

In order to survey the literature related to the comparison of the *Méthode* by Sor to the later version by Coste, one must start by researching the texts available that review each individual method. It is necessary to mention that there are abundant texts that look at Sor's original *Méthode*, but there is little written about Coste and his later version.

Origins and Background

The most revealing account of Sor's *Méthode* is in his biography.⁸ Jeffrey recounts the first mention of Sor's method from 1828, in which Ebers, while at the King's theater, states that Sor "is now about to about to publish a work [...] on the guitar, on the teachings of which instrument are quite original."⁹ Neither Ebers nor Jeffery say when Sor intended to publish his method. Eber's account was published in 1828 from a report of Sor's contact with the theater in 1822. However, Jeffery confirms with a second reference that the text appears as "Nouvelle Méthode de Guitare. Par Ferdinand Sor. (Prospectus)."¹⁰ In sum, we know that Sor intended to publish the *Méthode* at the latest by 1828 if not earlier, but the prints are dated 1830,¹¹ and furthermore, it was not reported in the *bibliographie* record until January 8, 1831.¹²

Sor published his text at a mature stage of his life. Dell'Ara states: "when he published his *Méthode*, Sor had already imprinted two-thirds of his entire repertoire."¹³ He had already completed most pieces of great scale, such as his Sonatas, Op. 15, 22, and 25, among others. His

⁸ Jeffery, p. 96.

⁹ John Ebers, *Seven Years of the Kings Theatre* (London: William Harrison Ainsworth, 1828), p. 163.

¹⁰ *Bibliographie de la France, ou, Journal général de l'imprimerie* (Paris, 1828), p. 385.

¹¹ Ferdinand Sor, *Méthode pour la Guitare* (Paris: L'Auteur, 1830; Facsimile reprint Geneve: Minkoff, 1981), p. 1.

¹² *Bibliographie de la France*, p. 20.

¹³ Dell'Ara, p. 252. "Quando publica il suo Metodo, Sor aveva dato alle stampe i due terzi di quella que sarebbe stata la sua opera per chitarra."

international performing career already extended through Spain, France, Germany, Warsaw and Russia. Therefore, the *Méthode* is considered “a crowning achievement.”¹⁴

Coste’s urge to publish a second edition may have been triggered by his teaching activity. His biographer informs us that “he took up the method of his master and friend for his now numerous pupils.”¹⁵ Roncet shows that Coste wanted to use his teacher’s method as material for his students, but it was difficult to do so as it was not easily applicable in the way it was written—hence the need for another version. Pujol clarifies that it may have been Sor’s original editors that demanded the added sections: “as a request from Sor’s editors, Coste adds twenty-five etudes from the former [Sor], a short explicative text, a collection of exercises, of progressive studies, some translations from tablature by Robert de Visée, and a notice about the seventh string.”¹⁶

The date of Coste’s revision is still up for debate, but most attribute it to 1845 or 1851. Duplenne argues that it was published much earlier: in 1841-1844. He lays out that “the 1845 date is defended by Jeffery, Cooper, Wymberg and Burzik while that of 1851 is supported by Ophee and Stenstadvold.”¹⁷ He adds that it was Lemoine, and not Schonenberger, who first published Coste’s method. He bases his statement on two facts: first, an account by Pujol says that “this edition was published by Lemoine and edited later by Schonenberger [*sic*]¹⁸ and second, Coste had mentioned: “he ordered, at the workshop of Lacôte, a guitar [...] with the additional seventh string [...] the instrument had the approval of the last exposition of the

¹⁴ Grunfeld, p. 182.

¹⁵ Noël Roncet, *Nápoleon Coste Composer – 1805 - 1883* (2005; Reprint, London: Tecla Editions, 2008), p. 20.

¹⁶ Emilio Pujol, “La Guitare,” in *Encyclopédie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire* (1927), p. 2013. “A la demande des éditeurs de SOR, COSTE ajouta aux vingt-cinq études de ce dernier un texte explicatif, une collection d’exercices, d’études progressives, quelque transcriptions des œuvres en tablature de ROBERT DE VISEE, et une notice sur la septième corde.”

¹⁷ Romane Duplenne, *Napoléon Coste et son œuvre pour guitare* (Ph.D. dissertation, Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2004), p. 17.

¹⁸ Pujol, p. 2013. “Cette édition fut publié par Lemoine et rééditée plus tard par Shoonenber.”

industry [...] It obtained the only medal granted to this type of construction.”¹⁹ He limits the time of the publication to 1840-1844 because “according to Haine, the consecutive national expositions took place in 1839 and 1844.” However, it is not completely clear, since the Shonenberger plate numbers “S N°1276” appear as well in the Lemoine edition, whereas the Lemoine plate numbers “15655 HL” are omitted from the Shonenberger edition.

Type of Text

There is a divergence between what Sor believed his text to be and the actual type of text that it is. In nineteenth century France, a “méthode” [method] was defined as a “manner of saying or making something with certain order, and following certain principles,”²⁰ but a “traité” [treatise] was a “work in which any art, any science is treated in a specific fashion.”²¹ In light of these definitions, Sor’s *Méthode* is more related to a text that discloses statements about guitar technique than one that shows an order or a process to attain a means to play guitar. In other words, it is more accurately defined as a treatise than a method. From the earliest accounts, those who reviewed Sor’s *Méthode* have been keen to assess it properly. Although Sor and Coste called his text a method and title it accordingly, nearly every source says it a treatise. The earliest source dating from Sor’s time states that “his method for guitar is a conscientious treatise that rests over irrefutable principles.”²² Pujol simply calls it “the treatise for the guitar [which]

¹⁹ Coste, p. 45: “Il y a quelques années, je fis confectionner dans les ateliers de Mr. Lacôte luthier à Paris, un Guitare[...]. L’addition d’une septième corde [...]. L’instrument qui eut l’approbation du jury musical de la dernière exposition de l’industrie [...]. Elle obtint la seule médaille accordée à ce genre de fabrication.”

²⁰ Académie française. Dictionnaire, [electronic resource] revu, corrigé et augmente par l’Académie elle-même. (Paris, Paul Dupont, 1835); Vol. 2. L-Z: “Méthode: Manière de dire ou de faire quelque chose avec un certain ordre, et suivant certains principes.”

²¹ Académie française. Dictionnaire, [electronic resource] revu, corrigé et augmente par l’Académie elle-même. (Paris, Paul Dupont, 1835); Vol. 2. L-Z: “Traité: Ouvrage ou l’on traite de quelque art, de quelque science, de quelque matiere particuliere.”

²² Adolphe Ledhuy and Henri Bertini, *Encyclopédie pittoresque de la musique* (Paris: H. Delloye, 1835), p. 167: “Sa méthode de guitare est un traité consciencieux qui repose sur des principes incontestables.”

summarizes and synthesizes the experiences of his talent and his work.”²³ Riboni, echoing Dell’Ara, explains that Sor “did not write a method—understood as a sort of a technical handbook more or less articulated, with all the exercises to resolve the different difficulties—but, in spite of the title, a true and proper treatise.”²⁴ Furthermore, he denotes a paradox. Sor writes about the way to play his own music following performance parameters he deems correct. It establishes an “absolute awareness of an accentuated subjectivity [...] [and in doing so] ends up becoming a scientific objective parameter hardly refutable.”²⁵ Morris distinguishes Sor’s text by stating that “it is nothing at all like any of the other method books of the day [...] [because it] reads more like a manifesto for guitarists.”²⁶

On the other hand, when Coste states the purpose in his introduction “to pull through with all practical consequences, [...] [and to] lead the student as fast as possible to execute the pieces of the great guitarist,”²⁷ he leans more towards the processes described in the definition of a method than in that of a treatise. McFadden sees Coste’s text as a method with teaching purposes when he mentions that Coste “reformats [Sor’s text], adding many more exercises and locating them in the body of the work where they might be more pedagogically useful.”²⁸ We can conclude that although Sor’s *Méthode* is not easily applied to guitar pedagogy, it is a comprehensive text in which the author discusses his fundamental theories on guitar playing.

²³ Pujol, p. 2012. “Le *Traité pour la guitare* (texte français), publié [...] résume et synthétise les expériences de son talent et de son labeur.”

²⁴ Riboni, p. 387-401: “egli[Sor] non scrisse un methodo —ossia una sorta di prontuario tenico più o meno articolato, con tutti gli esercizi atti a risolvere le varie difficoltà— ma, a dispetto del titolo, un vero e proprio trattato...”

²⁵ Riboni, p. 390: “Questa presta di coscienza di una spiccatissima soggettività —per altro assai corretta dal punto di vista strettamente epistemologico —finisce poi col diventare una sorta di parametro scientificamente oggettivo e, quindi, inattuabile.”

²⁶ Scott Morris, “A Study of the Solo Guitar Répertoire of the Early Nineteenth Century,” D.M.A. dissertation, Claremont Graduate University, 2005, p. 42.

²⁷ Coste, p. 1. “pour en tirer toutes les conséquences pratiques [...] et conduire a les élèves aussi rapidement que possible à exécuter les œuvres du célèbre Guitariste.”

²⁸ Jeffrey James McFadden, “Fretboard Harmony for University Study: Method and Historical Context,” D.M.A. dissertation, University of Toronto, 2010, p. 24.

Coste extracted most of the principles of his master in a method that contains more concrete examples and is easier to apply directly to the study of the guitar.

Style and Tone

Coste discusses the reasons for his teacher's idiosyncrasies in his original text. He is aware of Sor's defensive tone. Perhaps he witnessed the harsh argumentation among Sor's colleagues, or observed him being "very concerned with repelling the attacks that he believed needed to be fought against."²⁹ It is this belligerent tone that Coste excludes in his new version, deliberately stating the ideas in a clear, concise and unbiased manner.

With the exception of Coste's account, early sources do not mention Sor's tone or style. It is only in contemporary sources that his critical tone is mentioned. These secondary texts are helpful in preparation for the reading of Sor's *Méthode* because they inform about the specific way in which the text was written.

Nearly every recent source acknowledges Sor's critical tone towards other guitarists. Whether labelling it "fierce discussions,"³⁰ "affronts towards teachers of the day,"³¹ "displays of temper,"³² or discussions beyond the subject matter, they all agree that his tone is not friendly towards other professionals. Consequently, they conclude that the "discussion about musical and technical matters is often hampered,"³³ it leads him to "to some contradictions"³⁴ or to be "deeply involved and influenced."³⁵ Paradoxically, not everything in the text has a harsh tone.

²⁹ Coste, p. 1. "il paraissait bien plus préoccupé de repousser les attaques dont il croyait être l'objet et de rendre guerre pour guerre."

³⁰ Riboni, p. 388. "accanite discussioni."

³¹ Grunfeld, p. 182.

³² From Matanya Opee "Il tocco appoggiato. Precisazioni e argomenti storici" in Il Suvini Zerboni, April 1983. Quoted in Riboni, p. 388 "manifestazioni di temperamento."

³³ Opee in Riboni, p. 388 "è spesso ostacolato da ovvie manifestazioni di temperamento."

³⁴ Riboni, p. 389. "Porta a volte Sor ad alcune contraddizione."

³⁵ Riboni, p. 389. "finisce per esserne profondamente influenzato e coinvolto."

There exist “statements of sympathy and approval for the ‘amateur’ in music.”³⁶ Those who Sor “wants to reach”³⁷ as his audience are these beginners—not the professionals.

The authors of these sources see the style of Sor’s text as a subjective. Written in the “first person singular when dealing with matters of guitar technique,”³⁸ it is viewed as a work “inspired from within.”³⁹ It is the result of the “story of a guitarist who had to be built by himself on his own.”⁴⁰ In doing so, he uses both an “aristocratic language and a florid discourse,” which result in a “*quantity* of text [that] is much larger than it needed to be.”⁴¹ Sor tries to be detailed when he describes issues of technique, but he goes as far as including scientific statements in other disciplines thus creating even more unnecessary text. Finally, Ophee, who offers an improved translation, mentions that because of the French, Sor makes “use of double and triple negatives” as well as “extremely long sentences” resulting in very intricate prose. He also clarifies that his nomenclature for hands, frets, and strings are plain ordinal numerals and does not use 1, 2, 3, 4 for left-hand fingers; ‘*p*,’ ‘*i*,’ ‘*m*’ and ‘*a*’ for right-hand fingers; I, II, III, etc. for frets; and ①, ②, ③, etc. for strings.⁴²

There are fewer reviewers of Coste’s text, but we can note simply by reading it that it contains more objective writing. There are no hints of criticism and the concepts and examples are presented in a way that it is easier to follow. In Duplenne’s assessment, Coste’s work fills the gap between teaching and content in Sor’s text. Coste achieves it “by rendering it more concise,

³⁶ Riboni, p. 388. “Ripetuti attestati di simpatia e approvazione per il "dilettante" in musica.”

³⁷ Grunfeld, p. 182.

³⁸ Matanya Ophee, *Fernando Sor Method for Guitar, Translated, Edited, and with a Commentary by Matanya Ophee* (Columbus: Editions Orphée, 2010), p. IV.

³⁹ Dell’Ara, p. 253.

⁴⁰ Dell’Ara, p. 253. “È il racconto di un chitarrista che si è dovuto costruire da slol.”

⁴¹ Ophee, p. V. “Il propose de combler cette lacune Dans cette nouvelle Edition en la rendant plus succincte, plus progressive et plus abordable aux débutants et amateurs.”

⁴² The text in Sor has been carefully read and the modern nomenclature is henceforth used to refer to it.

more progressive, and more accessible for beginners and amateurs.”⁴³ It is important to denote that Duplenne mentions the word ‘progressive’ because as it will be demonstrated, Coste changes some concepts that are a bit antiquated from Sor’s method and adapts them to the modern way of playing.

Contents

The contents of Sor’s *Méthode* have been reviewed from many angles. Riboni presents a detailed review regarding positioning of the guitar, use of the left and right hand as well as fingering. He finds a duality between a left hand that establishes future technique tendencies and a right hand hampered by old technique traits. He acknowledges that the subjects of sound quality and tone are excluded. He disapproves of some of Sor’s explanations calling them “mechanistic argumentations.”⁴⁴ He argues that they “make concepts more obscure than clear.”⁴⁵ He is skeptical, as many, that Sor would use a table instead of a footstool to position the guitar. He quotes Aguado, who states that Sor played using a footstool – or as Dell’Ara calls in it “the Italian manner.”⁴⁶ Riboni assesses that Sor looks ‘towards the past’ on his right-hand technique due to the use of the pinky of the right hand resting on the face of the guitar, a trait almost abandoned in his time. He also observes that Sor only employs the ‘a’ finger only for four note chords, not for arpeggios.

In his more positive remarks, Riboni found a ‘logical coherence’ in Sor when he transfers a symmetrical sitting position from the piano and adapts it to guitar playing. He calls him a ‘pioneer of modern technique,’ at least in regards to the position of the left-hand thumb as being

⁴³ Duplenne, p. 19.

⁴⁴ Riboni, p. 401. “Argumentazioni macchinose.”

⁴⁵ Riboni, p. 401. “che socurano anziché facilitare la comprensione.”

⁴⁶ Dell’Ara, p. 253. “Sor era solito suonare alla maniera italiana.”

behind the neck. He observes that Sor is ‘quite innovative’ when compared to the guitarists of his time’ who used the thumb to press strings.

Dell’Ara presents a friendlier angle on the concepts critiqued by Riboni. He sees that Sor’s use of the table to position the guitar comes from a “discomfort [...] with an instrument of difficult stability.”⁴⁷ Regarding right-hand technique, he deems it a good explanation that Sor placed all right-hand fingers on the plane of the strings even though he leaves the ‘*a*’ finger only for four note chords. He points out that Sor sees the pressing of strings by the left-hand thumb as “inherited from [...] incorrect harmonic writing,” explaining that its real function is to “counteract the pressure from the other fingers.”⁴⁸ He surveys various qualities of sound: first, to produce a “vibration of the string parallel to the soundboard,’ second, the place of attack ‘to vary the sound,” and third, the imitation of other instruments as accompaniment which, Dell’Ara says, serves as insight in “both Sor’s aesthetic and the 1800’s.”⁴⁹ He outlines Sor’s recommendations for “imitative effects of French horn, trombone, oboe—the only case in which Sor uses a bit of nail—of flute, and of harp,”⁵⁰ as well as the use of the left-hand “finger over the nut” to make an

⁴⁷ Dell’Ara, p. 253. “Ma ancora una volta dobbiamo sottolineare il grave disagio [...] Alle prese con uno strumento de difficile stabilità.”

⁴⁸ Dell’Ara, p. 254. “L’uso del pollice della mano sinistra sulla sesta corda è considerato cme retafio di una scorretta scrittura armonica [...]:Sor teorizza con lucidità la funzione di questo dito, che deve agire solo dietro il manico per constatare la pressione delle altre dita sulla trasteira.”

⁴⁹ Dell’Ara, p. 254. “Altretanto razionalmente Sor spiega quale debba essere il modo di pizzicare le corder per ottenere una vibrazione delle stesse parallela alla tavola armonica, evitando suoni sgradevoli. Particolarissime sono poi le nozioni sulla ‘qualità del suono’. I suoni variano a seconda che il punto d’attacco del dito sulla corda sia più o meno vicino al ponticello. I volumi del forte e del piano vanno ricercati attentamente, spostando la mano destra e con vari modo di attacco. La parte descrittiva sugli accorgimenti per imitare gli altri strumenti è un piccolo trattato de strumentazione chitarristica che ci serve per capire più a fondo l’estetica di Sor e quella dell’Ottocento in genere.” Sor reveals the function of this finger, which must counteract the pressure from the other fingers on the fretboard (on the strings) or simply to serve as focal point of the hand. Equally, Sor explains, by reasoning, which is the way to pluck the string in order to obtain the vibration of the string parallel to the soundboard, thus avoiding unpleasant sounds. There are very particular notions regarding the “quality of sound.” The sounds vary depending of the point at which the attacked string is located far or close to the bridge. The search for forte or piano is alternated: Placing the hand with a varied way of attack. The descriptive part about accompaniment by imitating other instruments is a little treatise of guitar instrumentation that serves to understand in depth, both Sor's aesthetic and the 1800’s.

⁵⁰ Dell’Ara, p. 254. “Effetti imitativi dei corni, delle trombe, dell’oboe (unico caso in cui Sor impiega il tocco con un po’ di unghia), del flauto e dell’arpa.”

‘etouffé’ sound.⁵¹ He argues that Sor encourages learning “the scales over one octave on one string”⁵² as opposed to learning them only in first position. Dell’Ara also points out that Sor reserved the use of ‘*i*’ and ‘*m*’ to the first string when playing scales while the other strings were to be played with slurs. He notes that Sor limits the arpeggios to be played without the use of ‘*a*’ due to its ‘lack of strength.’ Dell’Ara does not issue an opinion about Sor’s use of the pinky over the top of the guitar in order to give stability to the thumb in faster movements. Furthermore, Dell’Ara argues that in the third part of the *Méthode*, Sor’s use of left-hand fingerings, which start by placing the first finger towards the lower strings and building intervals—namely thirds and sixths with the other fingers—is dependent on his compositional process. Sor also applies this theory to the building of chords. He mentions that Sor expands harmonics over the “less used frets such as the second, third, fourth.” He reproves the practice of transcription of orchestral arias of the time. Dell’Ara mentions that “guitarists loved to accompany the most famous arias, thus pushing themselves foolishly to transcribe an orchestral score for guitar,”⁵³ a view that may contradict Sor’s conception of the guitar as a small orchestra.

McFadden views Sor’s work from the harmonic perspective. He mentions that Sor’s core harmony applied to guitar is based on “the playing and recognition of two intervals, the third and the sixth,”⁵⁴ from which the diatonic scales in parallel thirds and sixths and chords are derived. He points out that Sor falls short both in his understanding of harmony applied to the guitar and his desire to express his harmonic concepts. He says that Sor mentioned the “promise of another method in harmony”⁵⁵ that was never fulfilled.

⁵¹ Dell’Ara, p. 254. “Le dita della sinistra premute sulle barrette de divisione dei trasti [...] produce i veri souni ‘étouffés.’”

⁵² Dell’Ara, p. 254. “Esercizi di scale di un’otavva da eseguirsi su ciascuna corda.”

⁵³ Dell’Ara, p. 255. “Tutti i chitarristi amavano accompagnare le arie più famose azzardandosi, a volte, a trascrivere per la chitarra la partitura orchestrale.”

⁵⁴McFadden, p. 23.

⁵⁵McFadden, p. 23. Many other accounts such as Ophee also notice this.

Comparison

There are few texts in which both methods are addressed. When comparing the two texts, McFadden considers Coste's addition partially as the result of the aesthetic changes of his time and as a completion of Sor's theories. Effects such as portamentos, use of harmonics, the added chapter on the seventh string are examples of techniques and changes in the instrument in the era of Romanticism. McFadden mentions a series of transcriptions by Robert de Visée, pointing out that they are only "simply presented and the [transcription] process remains unexplained."⁵⁶ Coste also completes theories such as that of Sor's thirds and sixths, with "an extensive etude by way of demonstration."⁵⁷

Duplenne argues that in spite of an added fourth part, the revision is more concise because "Coste left out all things other than that which concerns specifically with technique [...] as well as the explicative comments about Sor and his principles."⁵⁸ He also goes as far as to deem Coste's revision of Sor's *Méthode* "Coste's own method, due to the transformations and the several additions that his has incorporated into it."⁵⁹ Duplenne lists the chapters on tuning, exercises to know the fingerboard, an etude to apply previous exercises, an appendix on the seventh string with 15 exercises playable in both guitars with six and seven string, 6 pieces transcribed to modern notation by Robert de Visée, and a selection of 26 studies for guitar.⁶⁰ This list shows a plan that seems pedagogically organized for the learning of guitar.

⁵⁶ McFadden, p. 23.

⁵⁷ McFadden, p. 24.

⁵⁸ Duplenne, p. 19. "COSTE a supprimé tout ce que ne concerne pas la technique proprement dite [...] ainsi que les commentaires justificatifs de SOR sur ses principes."

⁵⁹ Duplenne, p. 20. "Comme la méthode de COSTE par les transformations et les nombreux ajouts qu'il lui a apporté."

⁶⁰ Duplenne, p. 20. "En effet, COSTE en plus de son introduction enrichi de cette méthode d'un chapitre sur la manière d'accorder la guitare intitulé « De l'accord de la guitare », de 29 leçons et exercices pour la « connaissance de l'Echelle diatonique du manche », d'une « étude sur le tierces et le sixtes pour servir de résumé aux exercices précédents.»"

Although there is substantial information already published regarding the background, type of text, tone and contents, the existing literature falls short when it comes to comparing the two methods. There have been some passing comments to few points of comparison, but—to my knowledge—nothing more. Therefore, there is a need to compare these two texts side by side to yield a more complete view of each one.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

Since my topic pertains to musicological research, my task begins with reading and analyzing the documents available with an emphasis on primary source material. The sources I consult, both primary and secondary, are largely European texts in French, Spanish and Italian. I have searched and obtained copies of facsimile copies of the original manuscripts as well as dissertations. I read and translated these documents into English as I began my initial review of the literature.

The primary sources at the heart of my topic: the *Méthode pour la Guitare* by Fernando Sor and the *Méthode Complete pour la Guitare par Ferdinand Sor, rédigée et augmentée de nombreux exemples et leçons suivi d'une notice sur la 7e corde*; by Napoleón Coste were both written in French, a language in which I have proficiency. Coste also includes some translations for his examples from French into Spanish, which is my native language. Sor's method has been translated into English multiple times, so I consult both A. Merrick and Matanya Ophee's published translations in addition to the original. Coste's method has yet not been published in English, so I include my own translation as the last section of chapter 5: A Review of the Methods.

I have also translated several articles and dissertations. I completed a translation of an article by Marco Riboni entitled: "Fernando Sor e il *Méthode Pour La Guitare*." I translated the fourth part of *La Chitarra*, "Metodi e Trattati," by Mario Dell'Ara from Italian. Finally, I requested a copy of a dissertation from the Université de Paris-Sorbonne, and when neither their library nor the UNT library were able to provide a copy, I wrote to the author directly, received a copy via email, and translated it from French.

After obtaining and translating these documents to complete the review of literature, I proceed to compare and contrast the two primary sources, exploring the areas that both Sor and Coste addressed as well as the areas that Coste included or removed.

CHAPTER 5

REVIEW

Comparison of Each Author's Goals

Sor and Coste had very different mindsets at the time that they conceived their writings. Sor intended to present a comprehensive view of guitar playing and technique, whereas Coste wanted to make Sor's view available for teaching. Sor insisted that his text is a guide for playing his own music, while Coste, taking a much more logical approach, established Sor's text as a standard for guitar technique. Sor, in an effort to be unique, included extensive commentaries that make the reading of his text cumbersome. Coste, in the middle of his life, lacking the stature that Sor had attained prior to writing his manuscript, leveraged Sor's text to favor of his own publication and presented obvious, more logical material: transcriptions of ancient guitar music. Perhaps Sor's most relevant point historically is that his work is comprehensive: all aspects of technique, harmony, and aesthetics are conceived together, as part of the same whole. This is very different in comparison to the modern approach where these elements are typically considered separate traits. Coste erroneously looks to the future by including music playable with an added string on the guitar: the seventh string.

Due to their distinct purposes, the methods differ greatly in their approach. Sor's *Méthode* reads as prose, taking timely, strenuous and often complicated explanations to get to the core of his materials, while Coste has a much simpler approach in his *Méthode Augmenté*. In order to make Sor's verbose text clear conceptually, I present a description of each section of his work, deliberately leaving out all criticism, excessive verbosity and explanation. Existent literature already addresses the criticism within and reception of Sor's method, most of what has been neglected in my subsequent review of concepts relevant to guitar technique. The translation

of Coste's text that concludes this chapter, on the other hand, is easy to read and understand as is and does not require an additional synopsis.

Overview of Subject Headings

Table 1 identifies the topics addressed by each author in their respective methods. I have highlighted the differences between Sor's original method and Coste's revision to show where Coste deterred from Sor's text.

Table 1: Subject headings within Sor and Coste's methods [emphasis added to show differences between the two versions]

Sor	Coste
Introduction	Introduction
Part 1	Part 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The instrument - Position of the instrument (as heading) - Right hand - Left hand - Way of striking the string 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Position of the instrument (as title) - Left hand - Right hand - Way of striking the string - Guitar tuning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of the sound - Imitating the horn - Imitating the flute - Staccato and pizzicato - Imitating the harp 	<p>31 Lessons and Exercises (Introduced by a scale exercise followed by a study on that scale)</p>
Part 2	Part 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of the fingerboard - Fingering along the length of the string - The use of the fingers of the right hand - Fingers of the two hands - The elbow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of sound and imitation of instruments (gave some examples) - Knowledge of the fingerboard - Fingering along the length of the string - Considerations about the scales and their fingerings

<p>Part 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On thirds: nature and fingering - On sixths - Application of the theory of thirds and sixths - Fingering of the left hand with regard to the melody - Fingering of the right hand - Harmonic sounds - Accompaniments - Analysis of an accompaniment of a fragment of the Oratorio by F. J. Haydn - Fingering with the ‘a’ finger <p>Conclusion</p>	<p>Part 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The thirds: nature and fingerings - The sixths - Scales on all the notes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harmonic sounds (he adds his composition Rêverie Nocturne) <p>Appendix by N. Coste: The seventh string</p>
---	---

Comprehensive Review of Sor’s Method

Introduction

Sor’s introduction may be discerned with a three-fold purpose. First, he mentions his intentions for writing this method. Second, he expresses his desire to validate his compositional style as unique by criticizing a style of writing based only on scale passages and opposing those that desire to solve technical problems by adding strings. Finally, he touches on the left-hand technique of using the thumb over the fingerboard, but neglects to share his view about this issue until later in the method.

Sor intends to present reflections about guitar playing based on his own experience and demonstrate the route that he followed to become a prestigious guitarist. When he explains that he believes this is the only way to play his compositions, Sor sets up a tacit goal of distinguishing himself from his contemporaries. He intends to write for those who consider him a phenomenon,⁶¹ and he also believes this to be an undeniable fact. He deems reasoning and musicianship more valuable than display of technical difficulties. He wants to distinguish his

⁶¹ Sor’s comment calling himself a phenomenon has been the subject of mockery in the existing literature. However, it is very plausible that he had in mind, and possibly in his hand, the method of Dionisio Aguado, who called him a phenomenon. Therefore, although there is no proof of this, I venture to speculate that he is echoing the words of his comrade and friend.

style of writing music with a homophonic texture while condemning ‘others’ who dedicate the left hand exclusively to virtuosic scale passages, thereby sacrificing the addition of basses or accompaniment other than with the open strings. He later calls this “a continual hodgepodge of sixteenths and thirty-seconds of diatonic and chromatic scales”⁶² and describes the resulting compositions as violin-like with only open strings as basses. For him, the sole pursuit of virtuosic scales results in a lack of achievement. He adds a footnote in which he recalls players trying to resolve the lack of harmony in their writing by adding more strings to the instrument rather than utilizing the strings already available. Sor disapproves of those that advocate for adding strings to the guitar, setting himself apart from the other guitarists by seeking all possibilities within the existing strings as opposed to modifying the guitar. This disapproval, ironically, would later become precisely what Coste would advocate for in his edition of the same method: adding a string. However, Sor clarifies that it is valid to add resources (i.e. strings) to the guitar once the performer has exhausted the ones already available. Perhaps this was the permission Coste needed to allow him to make his addendum on the seventh string.

Sor criticizes those who need to use the thumb to press strings in order to come up with complete chords. This again shows his urgency for uniqueness. In his view, this technique handicaps the support that the hand offers to the neck.⁶³ He also comments about players that use the instrument as purely harmonic, thus not being able to perform a melody along with accompaniment.⁶⁴ Finally, he concludes that the placement of the thumb above the fretboard only delivers poor execution.

⁶² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 3.

⁶³ See *Méthode*, p. 14, under *The Left Hand* for a full explanation on what he means by support of the neck.

⁶⁴ This is a controversial subject since it seems to be clear that what he means is that the thumb goes over the strings as widely observed in cello playing. However, the more customary use of the thumb was to press the basses on the sixth string with the thumb over the fretboard (just as country music guitarist do today), widely written about in methods. It would not leave the guitar without support as he mentions.

Sor attributes his ability to combine an accompaniment with a melody in his playing to the study of harmony, counterpoint, chord progression as well as his love and feel for music. He cites features of good accompaniment: a good bass line, good chord progression, and voice leading similar to that of the orchestra or the piano. His approach makes use of theoretical knowledge such as chords, inversions, identification of root notes in voices, [and] voice leading. Additionally, he uses a visual approach, using shapes of fingers for the chords, or as he put it “a telegraphic system, so to speak, because each position of my four fingers represents a chord to me.”⁶⁵ He offers a rhetorical example of harmonizing melodies of Italian operas which contains small melodic passages. He says that “the fingering [...] for the harmony was the basis for the fingering of the melody [...]; the latter was entirely dependant on the former.”⁶⁶ He recounts some pieces he published that did not follow this precept and should not have been printed, but he does not specify which ones. However, he urges the reader to practice good examples of accompaniment such as the ones found in his 24 lessons, Op. 31 and his 24 studies, Op. 6 and Op. 29. He proves his case by offering an example of one of his students, Miss Wainwright, who followed his concepts, learned the pieces dedicated to her, and was later able to sight read his progressive lessons without assistance creating fingerings.

At the conclusion of his introduction, Sor clarifies for whom the method is written. First he suggests that it is not to be addressed to the amateur, as it requires in-depth study, time and work and is not meant to be taken casually. However, he proceeds to clarify that in fact, amateurs are more engaged and eager to learn other sciences. For Sor, it makes more sense to address his method to amateurs that would be prone to reason rather than to those experienced players that

⁶⁵ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 4. “Ce système était pour ainsi dire télégraphique, puisque chaque position de mes quatre doigts me représentant un accord.”

⁶⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 4. “ Le doigté [...] pour l’harmonie était la base de celui qu’il me fallait pour la mélodie, [...] ce dernier devait être presque entièrement dépendant du premier.”

feel entitled to wield an authority. As for ‘professeurs’—a term understood at the time more as those musicians in active practice rather than teachers—he does not intend to write for them for “those that would not understand [...] would never admit it.”⁶⁷

The Instrument

After briefly discussing the subjects of good harmonic writing, accompaniment, and left-hand technique in the introduction, Sor addresses the construction of guitars. This chapter is mainly beyond the scope of my comparison. However, when he explains the possible causes for a string to buzz, he tacitly expresses the elements of pressing a string the right way. He says:

When I hear a string buzz, I examine [...] if the false direction that I could have given to the playing of the right-hand finger was the cause, or if, in pressing this string with the left hand, the force of the arm had not added to the pressure that the fingers produced against the thumb, and if, consequently, the neck may have yielded back, having not brought the string closer to the fret.⁶⁸

From this statement, it is plausible to conclude that for Sor, pressing a string is a compound force between the arm and the finger to hold the string down, with counter pressure applied by the thumb in the back of the neck so that the pressure of the finger on the string does not pull the neck backwards. He also comments on the direction of plucking a string with a right-hand finger as a possible cause for buzzing, but does not specify how at this point. He will do so in the right-hand section.

Position of the Instrument

In this chapter, Sor lays out the specifics for positioning the guitar. In doing so, he makes statements that have had controversial reception. He also adds examples of incorrect position.

Sor starts the chapter by offering insight into his education. He explains that he did not have a

⁶⁷ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 6. “Ceux qui pourraient ne pas me comprendre ne le diraient jamais.”

⁶⁸ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 11. “Quant à moi, lorsque j’entendais une corde friser, j’examinais [...] si la fausse direction que je pouvais avoir donnée au jeu du doigt de la main droite en était la cause, ou si, en pressant cette corde avec la main gauche, la force du bras n’avait point ajouté à celle produite par la pression des doigts contre le pouce, et si, par suite, le manche ayant cédé en arrière, n’avait pas fait rapprocher la corde des touches.”

teacher and that all concepts come from his own reasoning. Although this is not completely true as Sor was trained in Barcelona and later continued his studies at the choir of the monastery in Monserrat, Brian Jeffery, Sor's biographer, accounts that early in life, Sor "composed songs to the words from his Latin grammar class [and also] he had begun to write down music by a system which he invented, having had as yet no training."⁶⁹ This validates that Sor, as initially self-taught, took steps with mostly no early guidance that manage to establish many standards of modern guitar playing.

His first concept covers the sitting position in relationship to the instrument. It stems from his contact with the piano and piano teachers. He says:

I saw that all piano teachers agree on seating themselves matching the point that determines the middle of the keyboard. [...] I find this precept very correct because leaving both arms equally separated or brought closer to the body, no movement should be constrained. I concluded that the half of the distance of the string (the twelfth fret) must be matching my body [center].⁷⁰

The concept is self explanatory: to align the center of the guitar, the twelfth fret, with that of the player. He continues by commenting on other positions used at the time. He singles out the generic or popular sitting where the guitar goes over the right thigh resulting in a flatter positioning of the neck. This sitting position is common nowadays by popular artists accompanying songs, is utilized by flamenco players, and was also employed at the time. He says that when placing point A [i.e. the guitar waist] on the right knee, [i.e. the thigh] it will position the guitar neck too low for the left hand to be comfortable. This observation is correct presuming that the position uses both foot both on the floor. However, if this is altered to produce a sharper incline in the angle of the guitar neck, it is possible to use it with a moderate

⁶⁹ Jeffery, *Fernando Sor, Composer and Guitarist*, p. 3.

⁷⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p.11. "je voyais que tous les maitres de piano sont d'accord sur celui de s'asseoir vis-à-vis du point qui détermine la moitié du clavier, [...] je trouvais ce précepte très juste, puisque, laissant les deux bras également séparés ou rapprochés du corps, aucun mouvement ne doit être gêné: j'en conclus que la moitié de la distance de la corde (la 12e touche) devait se trouver vis-à-vis de mon corps."

comfort. This occurs when the right leg is crossed over the left or by using a footstool. Flamenco guitarists provide a perfect example of this sitting position. In sum, Sor assumes that a higher position of the fretboard is more comfortable for the left hand. This leads to his conception about guitar placement:

However, as I required more from this instrument, it was necessary for me that its position was more fixed, meaning that it could not change but through my will. For that I not found anything better than to have in front of me a table which, while presenting it aligned to the twelfth fret by one of its angles, the point B of the instrument [the lower bow] on the right knee one enabled me to press a little tilted, and the point C [upper bow] on the angle D [the table corner]: by this means, finding myself placed in the position indicated by Fig. 7, I am capable of easily traversing the neck with the left hand, which is not obliged to support the instrument, because not only it is supported by the knee and the table, but it is fixed by the weight of the right arm, that I rest entirely on point E.⁷¹

Figure 1: Fernando Sor, *Méthode*, Figure 7.



⁷¹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 11-12 (text). Image is PL II. “Cependant, à mesure que j’ai exigé plus de cet instrument, il m’a fallu que sa position fût plus fixe, c’est-à-dire qu’elle ne pût en changer qu’à ma volonté; pour cela je n’ai rien trouvé de mieux que d’avoir devant moi une table qui, en présentant vis-à-vis de la 12^e touche un de ses angles, me permit d’appuyer le point B de l’instrument sur le genou droit un peu écarté, et le point C sur l’angle D : par ce moyen, me trouvant placé dans la position que désigne la fig. 7, je suis à même de parcourir aisément le manche avec la main gauche, qui n’est point obligée de soutenir l’instrument, parceque non seulement il est soutenu par le genou et la table, mais il est assujetti par le poids du bras droit, que je fais reposer entièrement sur le point E.”

This is a controversial statement as it bases the entire position on the concept of supporting the guitar over a table. Existing literature points out correctly that Fetis, who reviewed Sor's performances, never wrote about such an odd position. Also, the composer Dionisio Aguado, who performed duets with Sor mentions in his method that "those who have heard Mr. Sor will remember that he generally would use the concave part of the guitar [...] over the left thigh."⁷² Although Sor's standard position may have been otherwise, it is possible to imagine him trying different things to gain sturdier position while writing his method.⁷³ In this statement, Sor is in essence advocating for a stable position, an angled fretboard, and the liberty of the hands to move freely at the same time that the right arm rests over the edge of the guitar. He also clarifies that the left hand should not be the support of the neck, because the right arm is holding down the guitar.

He continues:

Generally, the French and the Italians held [the guitar] in the way that line AF [the guitar neck] was always parallel with that of the horizontal plane on which the eye sees the man. This position (if I wanted to try and use it) forced me to advance the right shoulder in an awkward way: my arm, not having any support, could not to determine a fixed position for the hand. The tendons which acted continuously to maintain the arm in a position which is not natural, [...] made me experience difficulty for the movement of the phalanges, and very often I suffered pains.⁷⁴

This statement is ambiguous and reviewers have interpreted it in different ways.⁷⁵

However, the following interpretation, not included in existent reviews, seems to fit better with

⁷² Aguado, Dionisio. *Escuela de Guitarra Segunda Edición Corregida Y Aumentada*. (unidentified publisher) Paris c.1826, p. 4. "Los que hayan oído á [sic] D.ⁿ Sor se acordarán de que solía generalmente apoyar la parte cóncava [...] de la guitarra sobre el muslo izquierdo."

⁷³ I make the remark because I had the same temptation. During my master's degree, having no knowledge of this statement by Sor, I tried it. With a table of adequate height, the weight of the guitar off the leg felt proper. Also, the guitar was stable, as though it was held in place. I also have to say that it was the only time I tried.

⁷⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 12. "Français et les Italiens la tenaient de la manière représentée par la fig. 8; et que la ligne AE était toujours parallèle à celle du plan horizontal sur lequel l'oeil voit l'homme: cette position (si je voulais essayer de la prendre) me forçait d'avancer l'épaule droite d'une manière gênante: mon bras, n'ayant aucun appui . ne pouvait point déterminer une position fixe pour la main ; les tendons qui agissaient continuellement pour maintenir le bras dans une position qui n'est point naturelle, telle que l'angle BCD, me faisaient éprouver de la difficulté pour le mouvement des phalanges, et bien souvent même j'éprouvais des douleurs."

⁷⁵ See Matanya Ophée, p. 101, numeral AC, for a complete collection of interpretations.

his intentions. The line ‘which the eye sees the man’ is the line between the two eyes. He observes that making them parallel with that of the guitar neck results in a steep incline of the shoulders which are being forced into an unnatural position. He also points out that the high guitar neck makes its body low, causing the right hand to meet the strings by bending up because the palm is positioned lower, thereby causing tension in the phalanges in order to reach the strings. He continues with the principle that the forearm and the palm should be aligned because it is in the nature of the hand: “the line CD formed by the forearm indicate its continuation DE like the natural indication of the right hand.”⁷⁶ The core of the principle is that the guitar should not be too inclined and that the best use of the right hand comes out of a natural line between the forearm and the hand.

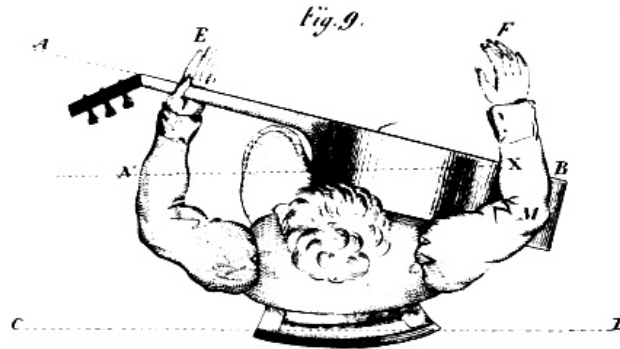
He then makes an observation of the guitar position from above:

I established as a principle that my left arm was not to have other than the hand in front of the line AB (Fig. 9), while my right was to have half of the forearm, line AB could by no means be parallel with line CD, prevent myself from moving my right shoulder, and that the parallel to CD could be only NB. Thus placed, I found that while letting the right-hand F drop down naturally, it would be found exactly lined up with the strings. Thus, according to its form and the different length of the fingers, I could take advantage of the dimensions which nature gives the hand, instead of modifying them to adapt to the given distances, and in order that the point X, in the middle of the forearm, would serve me as a point of support, I had only to make a movement with the elbow to engage the outer forearm of lever XM in direction opposite to the direction which I wanted to give to the inner forearm of lever XF.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 12. “Que la ligne CD, formée par l'avant-bras, indique sa continuation DE comme direction naturelle de la main droite.”

⁷⁷ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 12-13. “J'établis pour principe que puisque de ma gauche je ne devais avoir que la main au-delà de la ligne AB (fig. 9), tandis que ma droite devait y avoir la moitié de l'avant-bras, la ligne AB ne pouvait nullement être parallèle à la ligne CD, si je voulais m'empêcher de déplacer mon épaule droite, et que la parallèle ne pouvait être que NB. Ainsi placé, je trouvai qu'en laissant pencher naturellement la main droite F, elle se trouvait exactement vis-à-vis des cordes; que d'après sa forme et la différente longueur des doigts, je pouvais tirer parti des dimensions que la nature lui donne, au lieu de les modifier pour les accommoder aux distances convenables; et que le point X, moitié de l'avant-bras, me servant de point d'appui, je n'avais qu'à faire un mouvement avec le coude pour faire agir le bras de levier XM en sens opposé à la direction que je voulais donner à l'autre bras de levier XF.”

Figure 2: Sor, *Méthode*, Figure 9.



The concept above describes the standard placing of the hands in relationship to the fretboard and the placing of the guitar in relationship to the chest of the performer. The picture in this case is crucial in understanding his intentions. He mentions that the left hand surpasses the line of the fretboard. However, the picture shows that the left hand surpasses the fretboard only up to the knuckles which, along with the fingers, are ahead of the fingerboard. The palm of the hand remains mostly underneath and before the line; the entire hand is not surpassing it as implied in his statement. He continues with a brief note about the guitar not being parallel to an absolute horizontal line. Since the angle of the guitar is only in relationship to the player, who seems to be parallel to that line, Sor seems to say that the guitar neck angles outward. Sor conceives the concept of both arms from the symmetry of the human body and uses it to create a foundation for the position of the guitar. Hence, he considers regarding the right arm: the forearm rests at the edge of the guitar, half way between the elbow and the wrist, using the elbow as lever for the hand and fingers to meet the strings naturally. It is necessary to clarify that the picture is not an absolute reference. In this case, it is clearly visible that the waist of the guitar goes over the right thigh: a position he condemns earlier in the introduction. Nonetheless, the concepts stated are still valid in a standard position.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ A position with a footstool or an A frame could apply these concepts to conceive a standard technique.

The Right Hand

Sor's conceptions regarding the use of the right hand give insight about the way that he played. Although they do not set up a standard of modern playing, they are useful in historic performance practices. In order to explain his playing, Sor departs from the fact that the strings are all in the same plane, hence his necessity to find a straight line somewhere among the fingers to play the same plane which originates at the nut and the bridge. He brings the comparison between the strings of the keyboard and the strings of the guitar once more; he imagines the strings "plucked by quills, like old clavichords and virginals."⁷⁹ He sustains that there is a straight line intersecting the fingertips of 'p', 'i' and 'm.' Therefore, he says that the point of contact of the forearm with the guitar is half way between the elbow and the wrist, using the elbow as lever for the hand and fingers to meet the strings naturally. As for the 'a' or 'ring' finger, what he calls 'the fourth,' it is used to only to "play a four-voice chord" that has an intermediate string between 'p' and 'i.'⁸⁰

Sor proceeds to describe the position regarding the fingers:

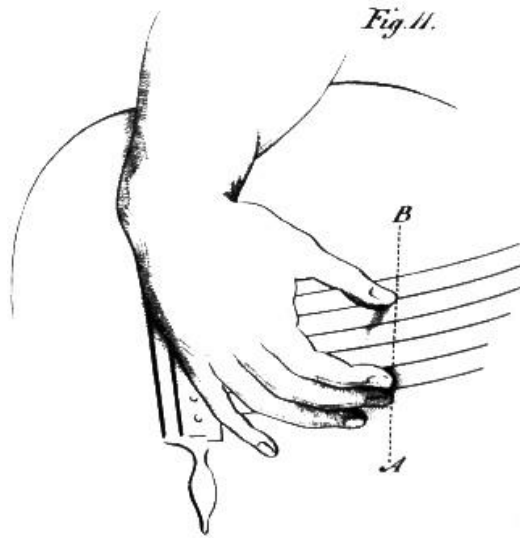
The fingers, when matching the strings, should not be curved more than those represented by the Fig. 11, that the act of striking the string should only be the action of closing the hand, without closing it entirely, that the thumb should never move towards the palm of the hand, but to act with its immediate finger as if it were going to form with it a cross, placing itself as the top part of the cross, and that to preserve line A B parallel with the plane of strings, it was necessary for me to somewhat raise the hand on the side of the little finger.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 13. "Pincées par des plumes, comme les anciens clavichords et épinettes."

⁸⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p.14. Here is his complete statement: "I would only employ the annular to play a four-voice chord in which there is an intermediate string between the lowest bass and the next note up." "J'emploierais le quatrième seulement pour faire un accord à quatre parties dont celle qui se trouverait la plus immédiate à la basse laisserait une corde intermédiaire."

⁸¹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 14. "Que les doigts vis-à-vis des cordes ne doivent point être plus courbés que ceux représentés par la fig. 11 (Pl. IV); que l'acte d'attaquer la corde ne doit être que l'action de fermer la main, sans pourtant la fermer entièrement."

Figure 3: Sor, *Méthode* , Figure 11.



Although he touches briefly on movement, he explains he is only describing the stationary set up. His concept and image convey that he uses the ‘*i*’ and ‘*m*’ fingers with very little curvature at the starting position. Then he describes the motion to pluck the string as the ‘motion closing the hand without closing it entirely.’ He portrays the initial position of the thumb following his notion of alignment to ‘*i*’ and ‘*m*,’ which causes him to raise the hand from the back. Although the fingers ‘*p*,’ ‘*i*’ and ‘*m*’ are in a straight position, the action of plucking, particularly ‘*p*’ and ‘*i*’ make an ‘x’ shape. It is possible to conclude that for Sor, the ‘*p*’ finger plucks downwards to the outside of the palm.

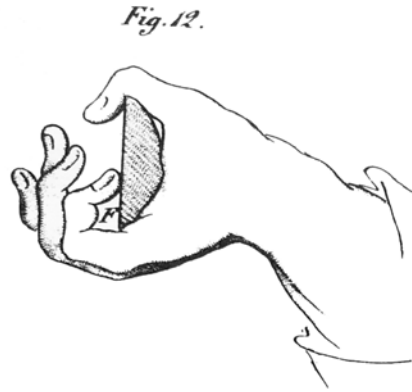
The Left Hand

Sor starts by acknowledging that his position regarding the left hand is more detailed than the position of the right. He points out techniques that he sees in his contemporaries that advocate for different use.

This has made me make many more remarks about the left hand than the right: I saw that the majority of guitarists had only half of the hand in front of the neck, then the hand supported the neck with the top of the angle formed by the thumb and the index (Fig. 12). In this position it was necessary for me to give to finger 1 an excessively violent contraction to press string ① (point F) on fret I. As this did not allow the end of my fingers to fall perpendicularly on the strings, I was compelled to exert more effort to

press them, and consequently, it was almost inevitable that the adjacent string would be touched and thus a sound which I might need would be choked off. That when I had a note to make, a semitone higher than that which was within the range of my finger 4, all the hand had to be moved, which I could only do by also moving the forearm.⁸²

Figure 4: Sor, *Méthode*, Figure 12.



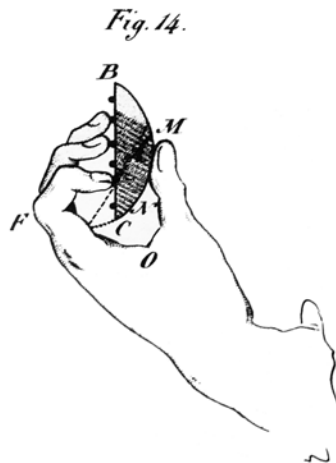
This criticism, which he addressed first in the introduction, now contains many implied concepts. First, he advocates for avoiding strong contractions in the fingers. He also suggests that in order to avoid touching strings involuntarily, which may mute open strings, the fingertips must land perpendicularly to the fretboard. Finally, he sees that the fourth finger is capable of stretching and reaching beyond the four-finger position with good use of the left hand. To explain this subject further, he continues with an abstract geometrical explanation in which he essentially reasons that it would be easier to reach the somewhat equal distances, like the ones found from fret to fret, by giving the fingers a point of support using the hand like a fixed compass rather than like a stick. He argues that the point of support in the compass allows it to measure and copy distances, whereas a stick forces one to guess the distance. It is possible to infer that for Sor, the point of support of the fourth finger to reach the next fret is the thumb. He

⁸² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 14. “Je voyais que la plupart des guitaristes n’avaient devant le manche que la moitié de la main, puisqu’elle le soutenait avec le sommet de l’angle formé par le pouce et l’index (fig. 12); que dans cette position il me fallait donner à l’index une contraction excessivement violente pour presser la chanterelle F à la première touche; que le bout de mes doigts ne tombant point perpendiculairement sur les cordes, je devais faire plus defforts pour les presser, et que, par conséquent, il était presque inévitable de toucher la corde voisine et d’étouffer un son dont je pouvais avoir besoin; que lorsque j’avais une note à faire, un demi-ton plus haut que celle qui était à la portée de mon petit doigt, il me fallait déplacer toute la main, ce que je ne pouvais faire qu’en déplaçant aussi l’avant-bras.”

emphasizes this idea because the use of the thumb over the neck does not permit an easy reach over the next fret. He sees that as the fourth finger does not have the necessary support and it would behave akin to reaching to an equal distance with the stick. Once he establishes a need for a point of support, he proceeds to offer the concrete concepts from above, as well as those regarding the use of the thumb:

I would therefore start by assuming as an established principle, that [the thumb,] being shorter than the other fingers, and being able to easily exert a force in the opposite direction, it could come to their encounter, and offer a point of support to the neck, of which the cut-away profile is represented by segment A (Fig. 14), so that it did not yield to the pressure of the fingers on the strings. The fingers must fall perpendicularly, the position of the index [i.e. finger 1] F gave this direction to the external phalanges. By deploying the finger indicated, I could reach point B without the least difficulty. By placing the end of the thumb M on point N, I could place that of finger 1 on C without being obliged to contract the joints in a way as violent as if the neck was supported on point O. And finally, using the thumb as it is used on the piano, as a pivot on which the entire hand changes position, and which is useful to it as a guide to find the position from which it had departed.⁸³

Figure 5: Sor, *Méthode*, Figure 14.



⁸³ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 15. “Je commençai donc par supposer comme principe établi, qu’étant plus court que les autres doigts, et pouvant faire aisément son jeu en sens opposé, il pouvait venir à leur rencontre et offrir un point d’appui au manche, dont le profil coupé est représenté par le segment A (Pl. IV, fig. 14), pour que celui-ci ne cédât pas à la pression des doigts sur les cordes: ces doigts devant tomber perpendiculairement, la position de l’index F donnait cette direction aux phalanges extrêmes; en déployant le doigt indiqué, je pouvais, sans la moindre difficulté, atteindre le point B; en plaçant l’extrémité du pouce M sur le point N, je pouvais placer celle de l’index sur C sans être obligé d’en contracter les phalanges d’une manière aussi violente que si le manche était appuyé sur le point O; 5 et finalement, en me servant du pouce comme on s’en sert sur le piano-forté, comme d’un pivot sur lequel toute la main change de position, et qui lui sert de guide pour retrouver celle qu’elle avait quitté.”

His arguments can be summarized as follows: the thumb, a short and strong finger, should offer support against the back of the neck as a contrary force opposite to the other fingers. Bend the first joint so that the external phalanges press the strings perpendicularly with the tips, adjust the thumb lower pressing towards first strings in order to avoid violent contractions, and finally, use the thumb as a pivot and guide to move from one hand position to another.⁸⁴

Sor offers an ideal placement of the thumb in relation to the other fingers. When observing the thumb position from above, he says ‘always place the thumb in the middle of the width of the neck opposite to the finger which corresponds to the second fret,’ referring to whichever finger is placed in second fret of a given hand position. As for the use of the thumb in barring, he says to ‘move it [lower] only for the bar.’ This comment restricts the use of a lower thumb pressing lower strings as mentioned earlier. He continues to assess the use of pressure of the thumb in the neck: ‘I aimed only to support [with finger 1] the end B [same of his fig. 14] and that of the thumb’ and clarifies to ‘not to press the thumb against the neck in any other case.’ He reasons that the thumb works as an ‘obstacle’ and that along with the arm, it should merely encounter the guitar neck rather than press onto it. He clarifies that “the thumb does not seek the neck, but rather it is the neck which meets the thumb.”⁸⁵

Way of Plucking the String

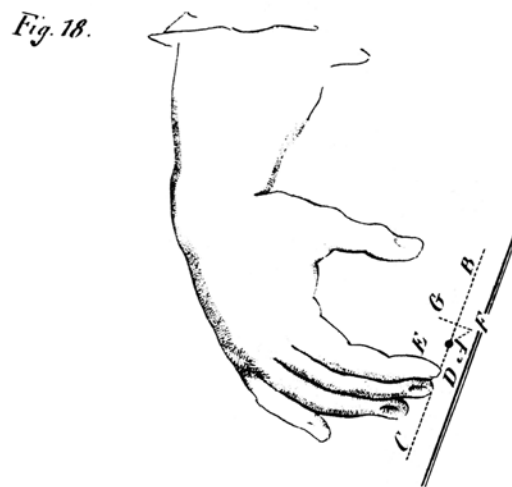
Sor analyzes the physical implications of string vibrations. His logical observations lead him to conclude that the isolations of the string producing sound happen in a somewhat straight line. He observes that for the string motion not to clash with the fretboard producing noise, “the

⁸⁴ At this point, he is not specific as to whether he refers to a change of hand angle within the same fret or moving from fret to fret. However, this can be applied in both cases.

⁸⁵ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 17. “Placer toujours le pouce à la moitié de la largeur du manche, en face du doigt qui correspond à la deuxième touche; de ne le déplacer que pour barrer, [...] je retirais le pouce vers le bord A [...] je ne visais qu’à l’appui de son extrémité B et à celui du pouce; et de ne presser dans aucun autre cas le pouce contre le manche, [...] le pouce ne cherche pas le manche, mais que ce soit le manche qui rencontre le pouce.” The figures 15 and 16 are profile illustrations of the guitar neck and the use of the thumb. They only reflect point A and B as the lower and upper edges of the neck respectively; therefore they do not appear here in this text.

isolations must occur parallel to the soundboard.” He observes that “by giving to [his] finger the shape of a hook the action of striking the string would pull it [...] The reaction would carry it necessarily towards [...] the fingerboard” thus producing noise. Therefore, he concludes that the correct finger position to put strings into motion is “to have the fingers curved as little as possible,”⁸⁶ as his figure 18 shows.

Figure 6: Sor, *Méthode*, Figure 18.



He supposes that such posture communicates the energy to the strings upwards thus making the string vibrate parallel to the fretboard. Finally, he clarifies that although the finger has a round tip that would cause a disturbing movement for the string, that such reaction is “much smaller and does not represent any obstacle” for the good production of sound.⁸⁷

Quality of Sound

After briefly suggesting that sound quality is a result of the craft of the instrument and the strings that fit best on it, Sor begins his discussion on this subject by connecting it to the resistance of the string. He also addresses ways to imitate different instruments. He relies heavily

⁸⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 18. “Je ne devais jamais m’écarter, d’avoir les doigts aussi courbes que possible.”

⁸⁷ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 18. “En donnant à mon doigt la forme d’un crochet (fig. 17), l’acte d’attaquer la corde serait celui de la diriger vers le point B; la réaction la portant nécessairement vers le point C, elle rencontrerait le manche [...] les oscillations doivent se faire en direction parallèle au plan de la table ainsi qu’à celui du manche [...] l’espace dans lequel ces oscillations auront lieu est bien moins grand, et ne rencontrant aucun obstacle.” The image has been rotated from its original position for better viewing.

on the compositional process and language qualities of instruments such as the horns, trumpets, oboes, flutes and harps, proposing that their imitation can bring variations of color to the guitar. He mentions a few ways that help in conveying instrument imitations through means of technique.

He starts by observing that the resistance of the string varies depending on how far or close to the bridge it is plucked and that the force of the plucking should be adjusted accordingly. This variation of tension should be advantageous to the player rather than a detriment. To achieve full control over the dynamic range, he advocates that the player must set up a standard positioning of the right hand. He establishes “the tenth part the length of the string, starting from the bridge, as a default position for [his] right hand.” He also “desire[s] to benefit from this difference that the string presented [...] by striking it at different places.” He gives two examples. In the first one, he recommends plucking the string “at the eight part of [the string’s] length” to produce a “mellow and sustained sound” as “the result of a friction, and not of a pluck.” He suggests varying from the standard position in the opposite way, in order to produce a “sound that is stronger, [when he] strike[s] the string a lot closer to the bridge than usual.”⁸⁸

He adds an explanation about strumming with the thumb. He advocates doing this parallel to the soundboard, controlling the volume by means of speed rather than force. He does not only “depend on the pressure of the thumb against the strings to obtain the quantity of sound,” but also ‘momentum’ and ‘mass.’ In order to produce clean strumming, he advocates “leaving the wrist free” so that the mass of the arm does not increase the force of the strum

⁸⁸ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 19. “J’ établis pour place ordinaire de la main la dixième partie de la longueur de la corde en partant du chevalet. [...] Je voulais tirer parti de cette différence que la corde me présentait en l’attaquant à des endroits différents, et j’ établis pour place ordinaire de la main la dixième partie de la longueur de la corde en partant du chevalet. [...] Lorsque je veux que le son soit plus moelleux et plus soutenu, je l’attaque à la huitième partie de sa longueur, [...] pour que le son soit le résultat d’un frottement, et non pas d’une pincée; si je veux, au contraire, qu’il soit plus fort, je l’attaque plus près du chevalet que d’ordinaire, et c’est alors qu’il me faut faire un peu plus d’effort en l’attaquant.”

making it too harsh, but doing it by “by increasing speed by traversing the line which I make beginning at a point much further away from the sixth string.”⁸⁹

Sor enters the realm of timbre, a vast aspect in guitar performance. He presents these technical concepts heavily from a compositional approach, but they are not extensive. He mentions that “it is necessary that the passage is laid out as it would be in a score for the instruments which I want to imitate.” In doing so, he tacitly encourages players to learn how composers write appropriately for the imitation of each instrument. The first instrument he chooses is the horn. In order to resemble its sound, in addition to recommending appropriate writing such as the use of fourths and fifths, he employs the darker sound found in strings ② through ⑥ beyond the fifth fret. He says:

I must avoid producing a silvery and flashy sound. For that purpose, I do not take any note with the left hand on the string to which it first belongs, but on the adjacent string immediate after it, so that I do not use any open strings. I would never employ string ①. I would stop the E on ②, the C on ③, etc, and I would strike the string a little further away from bridge, at about the sixth part of the total length of the string.⁹⁰

In the third movement of his *Divertissement Militaire*, Op. 49, Sor writes an example regarding the imitation of the instruments. Again, he presents sound effects achievable through technical means. He focuses on only one sound characteristic of the trumpet: the loud brilliant sound. After providing musical examples, he states his concept:

While strongly striking string ① close to the bridge to draw a little nasal sound from it, and while placing the finger of the left hand which must stop the note, in the middle of the space between the fret that determines the pitch and the preceding one, I will obtain a strident sound of a very short duration which will closely imitate the piercing tone of this

⁸⁹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 19. Sor’s explanation includes physical notions; please refer to it for the full explanation. I quote what is relevant to present his concept. “Je ne fais jamais dépendre la quantité de son, dans ce cas, de la pression du pouce contre les cordes[...]je laisse le poignet libre, et j’augmente de vitesse en parcourant la ligne que je fais commencer à une distance bien plus éloignée de la sixième corde que celle où je tiens ordinairement le pouce.”

⁹⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 20. “Il faut que le passage soit disposé comme il le serait dans une partition pour les instruments que je veux imiter. [...] Je dois éviter de produire un son argentin et clinquant; pour y parvenir, je ne prends aucune note avec la main gauche sur la corde à lequel el appartient la première, mais sur son immédiate; de sorte que je n’en attaque aucune à vide [...]je n’y emploierais jamais la chanterelle; je ferais mi avec la 2^e, ut avec la 3^e, etc.; et je les attaquerais un peu plus loin du chevalet que la sixième partie de la distance totale de la corde.”

instrument. To obtain it, it is necessary that I make sure that I press the string well against the fingerboard for each note which I will strike, but as soon as the note has been struck, I must decrease all the pressure.⁹¹

In essence, he suggests plucking a loud nasal sound close to the bridge while pressing in the middle of the space between the frets so that it makes a short buzzing sound. This position of the left-hand finger leads Sor to a concept he did not address in his left-hand section. He makes a side comment: ‘the fret closer to which my finger would have to be placed in all other cases,’ referring to the fret immediately ahead of the finger pressing the string. This shows that for Sor, the normal way of pressing a string is by positioning the finger close to the fret. He limits this idea to the first string, but he does not appear to adhere to that strictly.

Example 1: Sor, *Divertissement Militaire*, Op. 49, third movement.

TROMPETTE .

Guitar1: 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Guitar2:

Guitar1:

Guitar2: [sic] etc.

Sor writes an example in which he uses this sound effect shortly after the publication of the method. He writes repeated fast notes and closed arpeggios—both common in the style of

⁹¹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 21. “En attaquant fortement la chanterelle près du chevalet pour en tirer un son un peu nasal, et en plaçant le doigt de la main gauche qui doit faire la note, au milieu de la distance entre la touche qui la détermine et la précédente, j’obtiens un frissement de très courte durée qui imitera assez le soft aigre de cet instrument: pour l’obtenir, il faut que j’aie un grand soin de bien presser la corde contre le manche à chaque note que j’attaquerai.”

trumpet writing and easily adaptable to the use of the sound effect in the treble strings—and labels it ‘TROMPETTE’ to indicate the application of the technique stated above (Example 1). Sor writes the first guitar part (Guitar 1) in a way that the effect is easily applicable. This technique presents greater challenges to parts previously written without the explicit intention to apply the technique.

Although Sor deems the oboe’s cantabile passages ‘impossible’ to imitate, he chooses slurred thirds as the musical element that belongs to the language of the oboe. In his view, this is the vehicle with which to imitate the oboe on the guitar. Since Sor has in mind the imitation of the interval of the third, and as such implies that two oboes would play them, it is evident that he is considering an orchestral setting. This is the only instance in which he resorts to the use of the nails to convey his desired effect. By plucking with the nail very close to the bridge, the guitar makes a nasal tone that, he believes, can be associated with the sound of the oboe. He says: “I strike the string as near as possible to the bridge, but I curve my fingers and I employ the little of nail which I have in the strike. This is the only case where I believe to be able to use the nails without any disadvantage.”⁹² He cites small dynamic and timbre range as an example of a reason why not to play with nails.

Sor’s only concept regarding the imitation of the flute refers to the compositional process alone. He brings about the fact that the guitar is a transposing instrument that sounds an octave lower than notated. Therefore, he sees that the closest that the guitar comes to imitate the flute is to write the passages an octave higher and not as the guitar would play them.

He proceeds to define staccato and describe the use of pizzicato. He clarifies that these articulations reduce the already quiet nature of the guitar sound and regrets not having a way to

⁹² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 21. “J’attaque la corde le plus près que possible du chevalet, mais je courbe mes doigts, et j’emploie le peu d’ongle que j’ai pour les attaquer: c’est le seul cas où j’ai cru pouvoir m’en servir sans inconvénient.”

increase it. Therefore, it leads him to ‘rarely use them.’ He defines staccato as the blocking “of the continuation of sound” and describes the way of doing pizzicato by “not pressing as firmly as usual but firm enough so that [the sound] does not become a harmonic note.”⁹³ Finally, he clarifies not to involve the right hand in these techniques.

Although the harp is related to the guitar, he uses “chords that cover a great distance” as his choice for the imitation of the harp, clearly suggesting arpeggios. He recommends plucking the strings “half way between the twelfth fret and the bridge”⁹⁴ to better copy the harp’s sound. After describing all the imitations, Sor concludes the chapter recognizing that these effects are ‘exceptions’ to the basics of playing; he emphasizes that those basics should still be the main focus of the performer in order to control the effects.

Knowledge of the Fingerboard

After a brief philosophical distinction between the musician as the reader of ideas and the player of notes as the reader of symbols, Sor outlines his theoretical pointers necessary to understand the fretboard specifically for the use of scales. He employs a single procedure to understand where these scales are placed regardless of the scale. Finally, he tries to set up fingering principles applicable to playing scales, which he demonstrates by issuing fingerings of all the modes played along the fretboard on each of the individual strings.

⁹³ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 23. Here is the complete paragraph: “Les sons étouffés, je les emploie rarement; j’ai toujours trop regretté qu’il n’y ait pas un moyen de donner plus de son à l’instrument, pour m’occuper des moyens de lui en ôter; cependant comme ces sons, employés à propos, peuvent produire un bon effet, j’ai tâché de les distinguer des sons secs; ceux-ci n’ont d’étouffé que la continuation, au lieu que les premiers le sont dans l’acte d’attaquer la corde. Pour étouffer les sons je n’ai jamais employé la main droite; j’ai placé les doigts de la main gauche de manière à prendre la corde sur la touche qui détermine la note, en la pressant moins fort qu’à l’ordinaire, mais non pas assez légèrement pour qu’elle puisse rendre un son harmonique.”

⁹⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 23. “Pour imiter la harpe (instrument plus analogue), je construis l’accord d’une manière à embrasser une grande distance, comme dans l’exemple treizième, et j’attaque les cordes à la moitié de la distance entre la douzième touche et le chevalet.”

The pointers he outlines are the knowledge of the semitone as the distance between two consecutive frets, the knowledge of the names of open strings, and finally, the recognition of all natural notes on the frets in between two adjacent strings.

To validate the method he chooses to derive scales, he first presents all twelve major ones within an octave in the first position of the guitar without fingerings. His intention is to show where the notes are in the first frets and to demonstrate that each major scale has the same intervallic structure. His method focuses on playing the notes by “finding the frets in all the keys”⁹⁵ in tones or semi-tones rather than following alterations of flats or sharps. He says that “once the first note is determined, I only have to observe the proportion of the intervals, since the flats or sharps of which the clef is accompanied do not have other goal that to preserve the same proportion in all the tones.”⁹⁶ He describes the scale structure as the sum of two equal groups separated by a whole step. He relies on these groups, namely, the two tetra-chords,⁹⁷ as basis to build any scale and any mode on the fingerboard. He finds it more advantageous to apply the same order of whole and half steps to any note than to conceive them as the specific collection of sharps or flats.

In an attempt to extract some fingering principles from the scales that set up the hand in a comfortable position, he restricts the use of the fourth finger beyond the fourth fret and higher than the fourth string in a first finger position. Here is the complete quote on the matter with its corresponding illustration:

For example, I want to traverse the full extent of the instrument: Having four fingers in front of the fretboard, and my little finger [the fourth] being shorter with regard to its

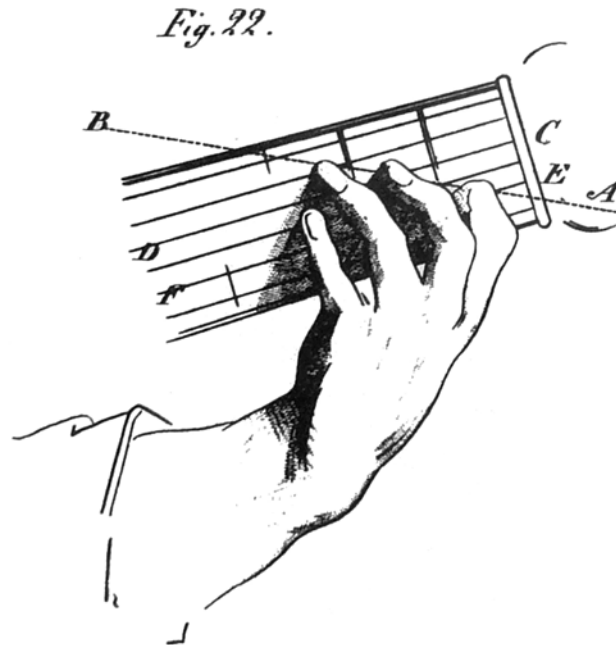
⁹⁵ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 26. “Me fera trouver les touches dans tous les tons.”

⁹⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 26. “Une fois la première note déterminée, je n’ai qu’à observer les proportions des intervalles, et comme les bémols et les dièses dont la clef est accompagnée n’ont d’autre but que de conserver la même proportion dans tous les tons.”

⁹⁷ This is a word that he seems to avoid to maintain distance from the *harmonistes*, a goal that he expresses throughout.

neighbor than any of the others, I could not employ it to continue line A B (Fig. 22) for not being parallel with the strings, but it [finger 4] can serve me to continue the lines CD, EF, I consider it as very useful means to preserve me in position, that can be made without the hand being displaced, all the notes that the third finger would do by having to move.⁹⁸

Figure 7: Sor, *Méthode*, Figure 22.



In essence, the fourth finger should not press beyond the fourth fret and the fifth string at the first position—boundaries explicitly shown in the diagram by the AB line—because Sor finds it too short to use beyond those points. His discourse limits its use only up to the fourth string and fourth fret, suggesting the need to shift the third finger to the fourth fret to press. He makes this comment specifically in regards to scales.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 27. “Par exemple, je veux parcourir toute l’étendue de l’instrument: ayant quatre doigts devant le manche, et mon petit doigt étant plus court à l’égard de son voisin qu’aucun des autres, je ne puis pas l’employer pour continuer la ligne AB (fig. 22) n’étant point parallèle aux cordes; mais pouvant m’en servir pour continuer les lignes CD, EF, je le considère comme un moyen très utile pour me conserver en position, puisqu’il peut faire, sans que la main soit déplacée, toutes les notes que le troisième devrait faire en la déplaçant.”

⁹⁹ The image is misleading as it presents the fingers showing a C chord position. This has caused discussions such as the one found in Ophee’s translation: in his note BJ on p. 106, he renders the concept “patently false” when applying it to chords. However, Sor’s words are clear that this restriction is to be applied to the use of scales and not necessarily to the use of chords. For a further discussion, please refer to the opinion chapter.

Fingering along the Length of the String

Sor presents examples of all the modes played over each of the strings and finds it very useful to “be accustomed to traverse all [strings] in their length considering the open ones as different roles: that is as first, second, third, etc., of the scale.”¹⁰⁰ He also mentions obvious scale technique principles such as “always using the immediate finger for a semitone and never for a whole tone”¹⁰¹ and to skip to the next finger for playing whole tones. Then he clarifies that the fingerings presented in all modes are “not the only ones” he employs, and recommends fingering three notes covering two whole notes by placing the stretch “between the first and second finger, rather than the third and fourth.”¹⁰² He also argues that they are not only beneficial for the knowledge of the fingerboard but also for the development of intervallic solmization rather than the harmonic based method.

Use of the Fingers of the Right Hand

Sor limits his assessment of the right hand to its positioning and economy of use. He recommends lowering the palm to find strings ① and ② with ‘*i*’ and ‘*m*’ so that the thumb is able to move freely in front of the rest of them. His reasons are “to use as little fingers as possible,” but to employ them to help “express musical accents.”¹⁰³ He offers seven progressive arpeggio exercises and recommends becoming confident with the first before attempting subsequent ones, as training responsiveness in the right-hand fingers helps make the latter ones easier to play.

¹⁰⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 28. “De s’habituer à les parcourir toutes dans leur longueur, en considérant la corde à vide sous différents rapports : c’est-à-dire comme tonique, ou première intonation de la gamme, comme 2^o, 3^o, etc.”

¹⁰¹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 27. “Employer toujours le doigt immédiat pour un demi-ton et jamais pour un ton, et de faire suivre aux doigts l’ordre indiqué par les touches.”

¹⁰² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 28. “Faire l’écart de 1 à 2 plutôt que de 3 à 4.”

¹⁰³ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 29. “Ce doigté non seulement a pour but d’économiser autant que possible le nombre de doigts, mais celui de faire que mon opération soit l’expression de l’accent musical.”

Fingering of the Two Hands

When expressing formulas to finger both hands, Sor fingers the left-hand positions based on chord shapes. As for the right hand, he offers a four-finger ‘*p, i, m, a*’ arpeggio as an example of what not to choose, and recommends excluding the ‘*a*’ finger which he generally rule out. He argues that such an arpeggio that “would make [him] use the ring finger, and quite often, would be obligated (while being the weakest) to mark the accentuated parts.”¹⁰⁴ He also cites textural reasons for avoiding such chords. For him, repeated notes are only “a way to make up for the duration of sounds” and therefore, they are only a tool to “complete the harmony” of a melody, as opposed to being the object of the musical goal. He negatively describes them as a “*batterie* [...] a thing that does not say anything by itself.”¹⁰⁵ Finally, he reasons that although arpeggios may form melodies in the higher notes, they are merely accompaniment lines, akin to the ones played by second violins.

He then presents specific reasons and preferences on how to play scales. He sees the guitar as being capable of making singing passages effectively only by slurring scales rather than using any right-hand finger alternation. For him, ‘*i-m*’ passages are not as effective as the violin in its portrayal of scales. He recommends to “attack the first of the tied notes [...] with] the external phalanges [that] can fall perpendicularly; their sudden pressure [...] increases the

¹⁰⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 30. “La raison en est que non seulement il m'aurait fallu employer le quatrième doigt, mais très souvent l'aurait été obligé (lui étant le plus faible) de marquer les parties accentuées.” Sor refers indiscriminately to the fingers of the right hand as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and fourth fingers. I have issued the standard modern fingering of ‘*p*,’ ‘*i*,’ ‘*m*,’ ‘*a*’ in the translation for the sake of clarity.

¹⁰⁵ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 30. Here are the passages in context: “Parceque [*sic*] je ne considère la multiplicité de notes, dans la tenue d'un accord, que comme un moyen de suppléer à la durée des intonations [...] la partie intermédiaire marquerait des fractions de chaque temps de la mesure par des intonations qui complètent l'harmonie. [...] tout ce que l'on appelle batterie, [...] elle ne parviendrait à m'offrir qu'une chose qui ne dit rien par elle-même, un accompagnement.”

vibration furthermore.”¹⁰⁶ He also sees disadvantages of position when playing a scale involving all six strings because he either has to move the right arm upwards or bend the wrist beyond a comfortable position. Both cases, in his view, make his “hand be completely out of range from the strings [...] thereby increasing the difficulty to retake my convenient position [and would] make pull-off action [by the right hand]”¹⁰⁷ while plucking the strings. He accepts that he consciously renounces such possibilities that could be trained, recommends raising the hand by moving the elbow up rather than bending the wrist, and ultimately recommends studying Aguado’s method to anyone wishing to accomplish plucking all notes of a scale.

The Elbow

The concepts that Sor expresses on the use of the left elbow extend to the left hand and fingers. He also describes a process to form bars. In this section, Sor tacitly forgoes some of the rigidity of the left-hand concepts presented earlier to show the full extent of his left-hand technique. He lists some precepts in order to define the roll of the elbow, states his concepts, and argues in favor of his choice over others. He finishes the section by defining what he addresses in these two parts and then presents one final goal of the method.¹⁰⁸

He observes that the alignment of the forearm extends out to the fingers by the nature of joints and that the phalanges must fall perpendicular to the strings. He also mentions that lateral movement of the elbow supports the fingers, especially 1 and 4, in pressing strings high and low. Moving the elbow inward, for example, supports the fourth finger reaching the ⑥ string at fret V. Moving it outward supports the first finger reaching the ⑥ string at fret I. By recognizing the

¹⁰⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 31. “J’attaque la première des notes liées; et comme je tiens les doigts de la main gauche dans une position telle que les phalanges extrêmes des doigts puissent tomber perpendiculairement, leur pression subite fait que, outre l’état de vibration dans lequel la corde se trouve, le choc avec la touche dont le doigt la fait approcher avec violence, augmente encore cette vibration.”

¹⁰⁷ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 32. “Ma main se trouvait tout-à-fait hors de la portée des cordes [...] et par là augmentant la difficulté de reprendre justement celle qui me convenait.”

¹⁰⁸ He refers again to figure 8, which he relates to the Italian guitarist. He argues that their position weakens the fingers.

role this lateral movement of the elbow plays in positively supporting fingers, he implicitly forgoes his concept of the fourth finger not playing on strings ⑤ and ⑥ beyond the IV fret presented in the scales, at least for the use of chords. After all, chords or scales present the same discomfort he intends to avoid with this concept. He refers to plate 37 as an examples of moving the elbow inwards to help the fourth finger reach the G# at string ⑥. He comments briefly how the fingers can serve as pivots for the inward-outward elbow movement. In sum, he recommends that the position of the elbow should be, at least in neutral use, “perpendicular to the fretboard” so that the fingers are parallel to the frets, and “the external phalanges fall perpendicularly to the strings.”¹⁰⁹ He refers to his figure 8 to make the argument that such a position results in the fingers “folding at an oblique angle” which “remove the force from [the] fingers”¹¹⁰ making it impossible to compensate with force.

Sor addresses the subject of bars in an orderly manner akin to the description of a process. Here is the entire text:

Most of passages that seem difficult cease to be so when the elbow takes a convenient position. For barring, I must vary [it] according to the position in which I bar. Since the goal is to give the first finger a direction parallel to the frets, and the phalanges only allow movement towards the thumb, I place it facing the second finger. I must necessarily close the angle formed by the forearm and the [guitar] neck, and consequently bring the thumb towards the first finger so that it forms a parallel line to the fret; this line that is much more over all its points allows the finger to press the strings a bit laterally.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 33. Here is the translation in context: “La position que je lui donne ordinairement est perpendiculaire au manche. [...] Les articulations des phalanges font plier les doigts dans la même direction qu’ils ont étant déployés, et cette direction étant la continuation de l’avant-bras, ne peut être que perpendiculaire, ainsi que celle des phalanges extrêmes en se pliant vers les cordes.”

¹¹⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 34. “Tombaient sur les cordes en direction oblique, [...] Cette inclinaison ôtait de la force à mes doigts.”

¹¹¹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 34. “La plupart des passages qui paraissent difficiles cessent de le paraître dès que le coude prend la position convenable. Pour barrer, par exemple, il me faut varier selon la position à laquelle je barre; car le but étant de donner au premier doigt une direction parallèle aux touches, et le jeu de ses phalanges ne lui en permettant d’autre que vers le pouce, que je tiens en face du second doigt; il me faut nécessairement resserrer l’angle formé par l’avant-bras et le manche, et par conséquent remonter le pouce vers le premier doigt pour que celui-ci forme une ligne parallèle à la touche; cette ligne l’est d’autant plus dans tous ses points que le doigt presse les cordes un peu latéralement.”

In essence, Sor recommends positioning the elbow under the bar, placing the first finger parallel to the fret as the thumb faces the second finger from behind the neck, bringing the elbow closer to the body which allows the thumb to face the first finger and also be parallel, and finally, laying the first finger slightly on its side to form the bar. Sor deems it necessary to close the angle of the forearm in order to cause the thumb to have the most possible contact with the back, allowing the first finger to lay on its side on the fretboard.

Sor concludes the chapter with the recognition that, except for modal scales on each string, his focus has been more on position and technique than music matter. He suggests that his ulterior goal is for students to desire “to read what [he] must do, and in the absence of a teacher, become himself his guide,” rather than “being interrupted at each moment during the lesson for observations.” He reasons that it is only in this manner that both student and instructor utilize the knowledge properly and make the teaching/learning experience more enjoyable. Finally, he encourages students to accept their teachers’ concepts when they are based on reasoning rather than just mere authority.

On Thirds, Their Nature and Their Fingering

After a brief discussion of the intervals on all the strings leading to the building of thirds, Sor takes his principle of the movable proportions for scales and applies it to playing scales in thirds. He proposes a fingering formula that matches the intervals of the scales on strings ① and ② and briefly points out the differences among strings ② and ③. Finally, he offers examples on how this movable method applies to the use of thirds through the entire range and discusses the use of thirds that may require different fingerings based on context.

Sor reiterates that a fourth separates all strings except the major third between ② and ③ and concludes that pressing two adjacent strings at the same fret replicates the interval among

them. He then builds the major and minor thirds among these by “raising the lower [...]note] by a semitone [or] raising one fret further up” respectively.¹¹²

In order to support his argument that these concepts on thirds follow the process he proposed for playing scales earlier under the heading “knowledge of the fingerboard,” Sor presents a C major scale, decides to focus on fingerings rather than alterations, and discusses all modes in thirds. When he mentions that the a C major scale allows him to produce “a scale in thirds in all the tones, without being concerned about the notes being made, or the sharps or flats,”¹¹³ he validates again his need to use shapes as parameter for deriving the fingerings in all the modes rather than memorizing alterations. He offers the following formula for thirds:

Table 2: Sor *Méthode*, Formula of Thirds.

Fingers	1 ½ step 2 whole	1 whole 3 whole	1 whole 3 ½ step	1 whole 2 whole	1 ½ step 2 whole	1 whole 3 whole	1 whole 3 ½ step	1 2
Thirds	Maj	Min	Min	Maj	Maj	Min	Min	Maj

In the top row, he presents the fingering followed by the distances that each of the fingers have to move upwards to reach the next third until the completion of an octave with a major scale. Below, he offers the quality of the interval. He argues that since there is no change of pattern regardless of the starting point, the thirds are faster to find. He moves to the fingering of the thirds over strings ② and ③ which have a major third when open. He argues to “pay attention to the distances that must be traversed with finger two, which never abandons the third string,”¹¹⁴ and completes the minor third with the first finger and the major third with the third finger. Then he introduces the E flat major scale which has a different set of alterations and follows the

¹¹² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 37. Here is the passage in context: “Si de ces deux cordes je montais la plus basse d’un demi-ton, en la pressant à la touche immédiate, je produirais une tierce majeure; et en la pressant encore à une touche plus éloignée, je produirais une tierce mineure.”

¹¹³ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 37. “Faire la gamme en tierces dans tous les tons, sans m’occuper des notes que je faisais, ni des bémols ou dièses.”

¹¹⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 38-39. “Porter l’attention vers les distances qu’il faut parcourir avec le second doigt, qui n’abandonne jamais la troisième corde.”

patterns. He says to not be disturbed “by those notes that need to be flattened, [...]see that G is the third degree of the transposed scale [...] while following the order intervals [...]the] fingering will produce [...] the modified notes.”¹¹⁵ He mentions that in all strings third or higher, “their nature, [of thirds] and the disposition of the hand indicate the fingering, [...] employ adjacent fingers for minor thirds only in rare instances.”¹¹⁶ He advises becoming familiar with all the fingerings of all the modes in the examples of strings ① and ② in order to have all the pairs of strings a fourth apart. He takes the scales in thirds a step further by traversing the complete fingerboard up to the twelve fret. He mentions that “once I was accountable for this fingering, I did not have the least difficulty establishing the fingering for the scales in thirds in all the tones over the entire range of the instrument.”¹¹⁷ Finally, he offers a couple of examples of using the fingering of thirds in context. First, he shows a 1-4 finger combination to press a minor third in the melody to make an easier time for finger 2 to hold a bass. Second, he shows a 1-2 finger combination that holds two consecutive minor thirds on the basses to allow finger 4 to hold a melodic note through the movement of the two thirds.

On Sixths

Sor consciously avoids heavy theoretical language in his chapter on sixths. He employs the distance between the strings and the placement of the two half steps as the only theory necessary for anyone to work with the interval of sixths. He chooses the same processes from the thirds to apply them to the study of sixths. He adds some comments about using good technique while playing, and he mentions exercises as being his core harmonic legacy.

¹¹⁵ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 39. “Des notes qu’il faut faire un demi-ton plus bas,[...] je verrais que sol est la troisième de la gamme transportée; [...]en suivant l’ordre des intervalles [...] mon doigté me fera produire les notes convenablement modifiées.”

¹¹⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 39. “Leur nature et la disposition de la main m’ont toujours indiqué le doigté, [...] n’employer que dans des cas très rares deux doigts immédiats pour une tierce mineure.”

¹¹⁷ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 39. “Une fois m’étant rendu compte de ce doigté, je n’éprouvai point la moindre difficulté pour établir celui des gammes en tierces dans tous les tons et dans toute l’étendue de l’instrument.”

In his attempt to leave out as much theoretical jargon as possible, Sor begins with a vague recognition of the existence of thirds and sixths within blocked chords.¹¹⁸ In order to complete his theory of chord fingering that started with the use of thirds, he assesses that “all that was missing [is] to establish [a system] one for sixths.”¹¹⁹ Then he chooses the first four strings of the guitar as the only necessary elements to develop the fingering of sixths. He shows that “by leaving an intermediate string, these four strings already form [...] two major sixths.”¹²⁰ He uses the same procedure already discussed in the subject of thirds: playing the two of them at the same fret produces a major sixth, and playing them while raising the lower note a semi tone produces a minor sixth. In order to make fingering of sixths easy to find, he recurs to two theory tricks. First, one must “know that the octave encloses two intervals of half [steps],”¹²¹ and then, one must observe whether one or both are within the interval of the sixth. “Those [sixths] enclosing only one [half step] will be major, and those enclosing the two will be minor.”¹²² He offers two examples of C major scales in sixths over the first four strings in which all minor sixths have a 1-2 fingering while all major sixths utilize 3-4. He either finds the scale degree of the lower note and the type of sixth, or follows the same process with the upper note. He finds that these are the only necessary steps to traverse the entire fingerboard in scales of sixths.

Sor concludes that “all my fingerings depend of the exercise of thirds and sixths” and finds this exercise indispensable in order to achieve the ulterior goal of playing with ease. He

¹¹⁸ I chose the term ‘vague’ because he does not specify the quality of the chord, or where in the chord it is formed.

¹¹⁹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 40-41. The entire passage says: “Having established my system for the thirds, I only yet missed to establish one for the sixths, to have a valid rule for fingering all imaginable chords.” “Ayant établi mon système pour les tierces, il ne me fallait donc plus qu’en établir un pour les sixtes, pour avoir une donnée positive pour le doigté de tous les accords imaginables.”

¹²⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 41. “En laissant une corde intermédiaire, ces quatre cordes forment déjà par leur manière d’être accordées, deux sixtes majeures.”

¹²¹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 41. “Il sait que l’octave renferme deux intervalles de moitié moins grands que les autres.”

¹²² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 41. “Celle qui renfermera un seul des deux intervalles mineurs sera majeure, [...] et celle qui en renfermera deux sera mineure.”

defines a performance of “good taste” as one that “appears to be done without difficulty.”¹²³ He connects good taste to a technical trait which prevents against lifting the left-hand fingers beyond the point of letting the strings vibrate because it toils the execution. Finally, he reckons that the exercises for this section encompass “all [his] method regarding harmony.”¹²⁴

Application of the Thirds and the Sixths

After clarifying some discrepancies found in his examples, Sor recommends his exercises and emphasizes the importance of embracing these intervals to improve guitar execution. He reduces the application to a chord progression in which he describes his line of thought to discover the chords. Finally, he concludes that sixths and thirds are the core of his mastery of the guitar.

Sor acknowledges that the fingering in some of the exercises differ from the fingering in the table. He argues two reasons for this change: to “avoid as much as possible the transition of one string to another with the same finger, and above all to reduce hand shifts.”¹²⁵ Sor then urges embracing his method because these exercises allow players to perform his music, as well as to “finger all difficult music of the guitar.”¹²⁶ He proceeds to show the application in a chord progression and notates his thought process. He accounts for thirds and sixths when appropriate, but his process is not limited to them exclusively. He starts to create fingerings for chords by considering thirds and sixths, but continues with open strings and octave intervals. He also prioritizes fingering in first positions first, then moving higher in the fingerboard if necessary. As the chord progression reaches a higher register, he tacitly follows higher notes with last fingers,

¹²³ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 42. “De l’exercice des tierces et des sixtes dépend tout mon doigté [...] exécuter ma musique sans faire apercevoir une difficulté dont le bon goût proscrit de faire parade.”

¹²⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 42. The passage reads: “The plates XVII and following contain exercises that, well studied, enclose all my method in regards to harmony.” “Les Planches XVII et suivantes contiennent des exercices qui, bien étudiés, renferment toute ma méthode à l’égard de l’harmonie.”

¹²⁵ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 42. “J’ai tâché d’éviter autant qu’il était possible la transition d’une corde à l’autre avec le même doigt, et surtout que j’ai économisé les déplacements de la main.”

¹²⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 43. “On peut doigter toute la musique de guitare la plus difficile.”

i.e. 3 and 4, and fingers the lower notes of the chord with the first fingers, i.e. 1 and 2. He concludes that “the entire key to possessing the guitar (as an instrument of harmony) consists in the knowledge of thirds and sixths.”¹²⁷

Fingering of the Left Hand in Regard to the Melody

Sor sets out to explain why the fingering of the melody is dependent on the fingering of the harmony. He provides examples of each of the twelve keys with the fingering of the first chord and the major scale within range of that position. He also gives an example of one melody in different keys and with varied harmonization. Finally, he offers an example of a melody as a case study. He concludes that understanding melodies and how to finger them helps with the skills to play the instrument.

The main reason that he considers the fingering of the melody subject to that of the harmony is that he sees that the chord can be extracted from the scale. Therefore, there are notes available nearby for a potential melody when the accompaniment chord is in position. He uses the C chord in first position along with its corresponding scale. The fingering that he uses for the chord determines the range of the scale; in this case it expands a twelfth. He explains that “having the left hand ready to stop the chord, all the scale is under the fingers without needing to shift.”¹²⁸ For the D-flat major scale and one of the options of the E-flat scale, he uses the C scale shape order as basis. In the D-flat major scale, he transposes it a half a step up and adds a half bar shaping a C major “movable chord”¹²⁹ that produces the pattern along with adjusted fingerings. For the D major scale, he chooses to change the established movable shape in order to take advantage of the open strings. He uses the first inversion chord, which allows the fingering

¹²⁷ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 45. “Toute la clef de la possession de la guitare (comme instrument d’harmonie) consiste en la connaissance des tierces et des sixtes.”

¹²⁸ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 46. “Qu’en ayant la main gauche disposée pour faire l’accord, toute la gamme se trouve sous les doigts sans qu’il soit nécessaire de la déplacer.”

¹²⁹ Ophee, Matanya, *Method for Guitar*, p. 114, numeral DM.

of the D scale to cover the same range as the C major scale. He recommends open strings as well as the use of the second fret position as needed for the scales of D, A, and G major. The alternative options presented in the E-flat, G, A-flat, and A aim to cover a different scale range under different chord shapes. For the scale of F-sharp, also presented enharmonically, he recognizes the need to “deviate from the general rule of fingering”¹³⁰ by extending fingers 1 2 and 4 over two major seconds. For the F major scale and all scales between G and B, he adds options which shift the scale under the chord in order to cover more range. G major is unique in that he includes options under a dominant chord and a chord he calls a ‘grand chord,’ which is played in all sixth strings with longest scale expanding two octaves plus a fifth. The A scale is the first in which he recommends the use of hand positions other than the first. Also, for A, B-flat, and B scales, he finds different positions that can be used with fingers ‘124’ or ‘134’ in more than one string.

In regards to the harmonization of melodies, Sor argues three facts. First, he recognizes that melodies are random in nature: i.e. random length, shapes, and starting point. Second, he clarifies that a melody has the same expressivity when it has the same harmonization regardless of having different notes at the moment of a given transposition. Finally, he compares melodies of the same nature—even the exact same pitches—that “can express a great number of different things”¹³¹ due to any two added harmonies. Such comparison leads him to identify the musician as an artist that can express musical ideas. Sor makes a difference among those who play notes and those who make music. He mentions that a music reader “must be called a note player, not a musician, since music is the science of sounds, and I will never call a musician those whose ear would be the only guide for the musical part of his solfeggio, but those whose solfeggio would

¹³⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 48. “Je me trouve obligé de m’écarter de la règle générale du doigté.”

¹³¹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 50. “Peuvent exprimer un grand nombre de choses différentes.”

be the art to classify, to rectify the ideas in which must guide the ear.”¹³² In other words, true artists are those that have a preconceived musical idea to support the ear rather than those that simply read notes or play notes by ear without having musical thoughts.

By looking at the shape of a melody and observing its construction, Sor discusses concrete clues that lead to the choice of a fingering. He mentions possible chord shapes, stepwise motion, or sequences to determine fingerings. For melodies depicting chords shapes, he observes if the “notes form part of a detailed chord,” and “place[s] down this chord.”¹³³ He also lays out examples for ascending and descending sequential patterns and offers example 70 as model.

In an attempt to harness common notes within a position, he argues two facts. First, he chooses a range of either minor or major sixths among the first two strings and between fingers 1 and 4 as a parameter and presents concrete models of fingering in examples 70 to 74. He reiterates the importance to get used to this position at the end of the chapter. Second, he finds that “it is very useful to benefit from one position to produce the greatest number of notes”¹³⁴ in fast passages. He then shifts to focus on cantabile passages. He sees that the “notes where the vibrations could be prolonged further,”¹³⁵ i.e. open strings and first positions, are the main priority for passages with longer notes. He argues that the thickness of the lower strings contribute to decreased resonance, thereby making the lower strings less suitable for melodies. He suggests that sympathetic resonance also helps sustain the sound and provides his *L’encouragement*, Op. 34 as an example. He argues that these concepts are valuable “to acquire that which is good to possess and it is within the field that I have believed is pertaining to the

¹³² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 51. “Ils devrait s’appeler notiste [*sic*] et non pas musicien, puisque la musique est la science des sons, et que je n’appellerai jamais musicien celui dont l’oreille serait le seul guide pour la partie musicale de son solfège, mais celui dont le solfège serait l’art de classer, de rectifier les idées qui doivent guider l’oreille.”

¹³³ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 51. “Dès que je vois des notes me formant un accord détaillé, je plaque cet accord.”

¹³⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 52. “Il est très utile de profiter d’une position pour produire le plus grand nombre de notes qui s’y trouvent.”

¹³⁵ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 53.

guitar”¹³⁶ In other words, Sor is concerned with expressing holistic knowledge. He makes a side note issuing his opinion about players and emphasizes again the significance of achieving artistry through “thorough study.”

Fingering of the Right Hand

In his explanation of the use of the right hand, Sor limits its application almost exclusively to the use of ‘*p*,’ ‘*i*,’ and ‘*m*’ fingers. He specifies their use and his reasoning behind his choice of fingering. He also explains the reasons for the limitation of the ‘*a*’ finger. He includes details of left-hand techniques that support the right hand. He touches briefly on the choice of nomenclature as well as his choice behind the use of the ‘last finger’ of the right hand.

When Sor states “the ‘*i*’ underneath the ② string, the ‘*m*’ underneath the ① [or] if melody goes lower than the first open string, [...] move ‘*i*’ and ‘*m*’ to ③ and ② strings,”¹³⁷ he implicitly follows his explanation of the use of thirds because these intervals appear in their most basic form on consecutive strings. He continues to assign the ‘*p*’ finger for all basses as well as for “notes that do not belong to the bass but determine an accentuated part of the measure, or the start of a beat.”¹³⁸ He also suggests utilizing ‘*i*’ and ‘*m*’ for melodies doubling intervals of sixths. He implicitly suggests doing this even if they are a string apart.¹³⁹ He says to “extend the middle finger away from the index, [...] to raise the palm by lowering of the elbow without bending the

¹³⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 53. As already explained by Ophee, Sor’s nomenclature for ‘*i*,’ ‘*m*,’ and ‘*a*’ fingers are the same as for the left-hand: first, second and third. Here is his literal quote in French, which differs from the translation above in text but agrees with the meaning based on context. “D’acquérir, qu’après être bien sûr de posséder tout ce qui est dans le genre que j’ai cru particulier à la guitare.”

¹³⁷ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 54. “Le premier au-dessous de la deuxième corde, le second au-dessous de la première [...] Si la mélodie est plus basse que la note de la chanterelle à vide, je passe mon premier et second doigt à la troisième et deuxième corde.”

¹³⁸ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 54. “Des notes qui n’appartiennent point à la basse, mais qui déterminent une partie accentuée de la mesure, ou le commencement d’une fraction aliquote.”

¹³⁹ Sor never mentions it. However, he must have in mind the interval of sixths played on a pairs such as ①-③, or ②-④, etc. Otherwise this will be a redundancy of the explanation to play consecutive strings.

wrist.”¹⁴⁰ However, he prefers to pluck the middle voice with ‘*i*’ if it has more movement, in which case the thumb takes the role on the lower note of the sixth, even down to string ③.

He proceeds to explain how to play scalar passages. He acknowledges that he has “heard many guitarists [...] that make them with surprising neatness and rapidity while alternating ‘*i*,’ and ‘*m*,’ or ‘*a*’ fingers.”¹⁴¹ However, in searching for combinations with the most independence, he determines that moving ‘*m*’ makes “the lower part of the hand [...] react,” and having this extra movement in the air is enough reason for him to deem it invalid. He explains that “moving ‘*p-i*’ alone, makes the upper part [of the hand...] react”¹⁴² thus having the reaction in the part of the hand directly involved with the playing while maintaining the lower part steady. Therefore, he concludes that the best option to play scales is ‘*p-i*.’ He offers Op. 31, No. 19 and Op. 35, No. 5¹⁴³ as exercises related to developing this technique. He follows up with a description of the advantages behind his choice. He finds that ‘*p-i*’ makes it easier “to find basses rapidly” if necessary, while also allowing him “to maintain a perpendicular line.”¹⁴⁴

He makes a parenthesis to detail consecutive slurs in the left hand that support the work of the right hand. He mentions to “finger three notes at once, [...] make the finger take shape of a

¹⁴⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 54. “J’écarter un peu mon second doigt du premier, je remonte un peu la main (non par la contraction du poignet, mais en baisant un peu le coude).”

¹⁴¹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 54. “J’ai entendu plusieurs guitaristes [...] qui les font avec une netteté et une vitesse surprenantes en employant alternativement le premier et le second ou le troisième doigt.”

¹⁴² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 54. “J’ai trouvé que dès que le second doigt est en jeu, [...] c’est la partie inférieure de la main qui agit, et que dès que je mets en mouvement le pouce et l’index seuls, c’est la partie supérieure qui agit.”

¹⁴³ Sor mentions it is his ‘fifth study’ (Sor, *Méthode*, p. 55) and that this study is for ‘*p*,’ ‘*i*,’ fingering in spite of not being for scales. Ophee mentions that ‘it must be an error’ and offers, through J. Kloe’s help, the possibility that this is Op. 6, No. 4 (Ophee, Matanya. *Method for Guitar* p. 117). Another closely related study is the first two sections of Op. 6, No. 10 which use a similar writing pattern as Op. 35, No. 5 but with more separation between ‘*p*’ and ‘*i*.’ Other remote possibilities could be Op. 29, No. 16 (‘*p*,’ ‘*m*,’ ‘*i*’) which is the fourth study of this opus, but extends the numbering (16) from his previous part op. 6 which has 12 studies; or Op. 35, No. 19 (indicated ‘*p*,’ ‘*m*,’ ‘*i*’).

¹⁴⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 55. “Il m’est plus facile de trouver vite la corde basse dont je puis avoir besoin immédiatement après le trait avec le pouce [...] car je conserve toujours la ligne AB, fig. 4 (Pl. IV) [*sic*].” The figure is No. 11 on IV.

hook, withdraw it towards the palm (without varying the position of the whole hand),”¹⁴⁵ and repeat with the other fingers.

He continues with two examples that have the exact same notes but are musically different.¹⁴⁶ He explains how he follows the music with the fingering, advocating for different fingerings when he says “the way of writing indicates the fingers to use.”¹⁴⁷ He shows to pluck ‘i’ for an inner accompaniment. In the second example the moving note is a middle syncopated voice, not an accompaniment. He justifies plucking it with the thumb to enhance the voicing in the performance. Sor then comments that he writes down the same fingers numbers for both left and right hand, except for the thumb, for which he uses an ‘x’ symbol.¹⁴⁸

For his last concept in this chapter, Sor states ‘never to be sure to preserve my fingers exactly in regard to their respective strings’ in fast passages. Therefore, he explains that the ‘last finger,’ i.e. the pinky, offers stability of the hand by holding it on the bridge where ‘the thumb moves from the basses to the intermediate strings while the other fingers are busy.’ He argues that it “holds the hand in position” when it is placed “perpendicularly on the soundboard,” and adds that he “stops using it” when it is not necessary because it allows “the least possible arch.”¹⁴⁹ It is worth mentioning that he does not deepen his position regarding the use of nails

¹⁴⁵ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 55. “Je doigte les trois à la fois; le doigt qui produit la plus haute, que j’attaque avec la main droite, au lieu de la quitter en s’élevant, prend la forme d’un crochet, et en se retirant vers la paume (sans varier la position de toute la main).”

¹⁴⁶ Please see Sor, *Méthode*, plate 27, ex. 74.

¹⁴⁷ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 55. “La manière de l’écrire indique le doigté que j’emploie si c’est dans une phrase d’harmonie.”

¹⁴⁸ Ophee mentions that Sor picked up this system from Russia, where it was ‘in wide use;’ see his p. 118.

¹⁴⁹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 56. Here is the entire paragraph for reference: “Le petit doigt me sert quelquefois en l’appuyant perpendiculairement sur la table d’harmonie au-dessous de la chanterelle, mais j’ai grand soin de le lever dès qu’il ne m’est point nécessaire. La nécessité de cet appui vient de ce que dans les passages qui exigent une grande vélocité du pouce pour passer des notes de la basse à celles d’une partie intermédiaire, tandis que le premier et le second doigt sont occupés à compléter la fraction de la mesure en triolets ou autrement, je ne pourrais jamais être sûr de conserver mes doigts exactement vis-à-vis de leurs cordes respectives; alors le petit doigt me tient toute la main en position, et je n’ai à m’occuper que de la marche du pouce; mais dès que ma main peut conserver la position convenable sans cet appui, je cesse de l’employer, pour que l’élévation de la partie inférieure de la main me permette d’attaquer les cordes avec les doigts le moins arqués que possible.”

beyond the comments made earlier in the method. Regarding the ‘a’ finger, Sor dedicates a section later in the method.

Harmonic Sounds

Sor’s assertions on the subject of harmonic sounds can be divided in two parts: the first relating to natural and the second relating to artificial harmonics. He approaches the first part boldly and extensively. He offers a definition, properties, and descriptions of his experiences as to where they are positioned along the neck. He issues rules to perform them correctly, observes their availability in regards to the scale, and offers both a table and a list of harmonics in order of appearance. In contrast, in the second part Sor dwells between the acknowledgement that artificial harmonics exist and the inconvenience of having to play them. He describes their difficulties, ineffectiveness, and their consequent results. In an attempt to compare artificial harmonics on the guitar to those of the violin he only runs into more disadvantages. He offers a few examples and some compositional suggestions and concludes his remarks acknowledging that other composers and performers are better at them. He offers a final comment on notation and concrete examples for their use in his music.

Sor defines harmonic sounds as “the result of the different intonations produced by the vibrations of a resounding object.”¹⁵⁰ He describes certain partials heard on specific strings on a piano and mentions that lower sounds produce more audible partials. He offers a side definition of harmonic sounds from Spain called *fûtés* [*sic*] or fluted sounds. He refers to them as short harmonic sounds “accompanied by a noise from the impact of the fingers with the strings when it

¹⁵⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 56. “Le résultat des différentes intonations produites par la vibration du corps sonore.”

encounters resistance of the string to its passage.”¹⁵¹ However, he mentions that they are not related to the flute due to the harsh nature of their sound.

He believes that harmonics are mostly used on the twelfth frets which produces the longer, more pleasant sounds. Less used are those on the seventh and even less on the fifth frets, both of which produces shorter, less pleasant sounds. He then discusses the reasons behind the reduced length of harmonic sounds as they are higher in pitch. He starts by imagining the placement of a bridge at each nodal point and describes that at the third of the string’s length, the longer side gives the perfect fifth above the open string, and that at the fourth of the string, the longer gives the fourth. This leads him to think that “the part of the string which gives the harmonic is not that which I attack with the right hand, but that which is in between the left hand and the nut,”¹⁵² and concludes erroneously that this shorter side of the string is the only part producing the harmonic. He also argues that the reduced distance of the short part of the string is the reason for the decrement of sound duration as the pitch ascends.

He then approaches the physical aspects of playing harmonics. He says that releasing the finger too soon from the string “would not produce the generating sound, but would prolong the upper partial harmonic associated with that position.”¹⁵³ In other words, releasing the finger too quickly makes other sounds. Therefore, he offers three ‘rules:’

1: Do not press too lightly at the chosen point, but in a way that that the string is felt well under the finger. 2: The plucking of the right hand must be immediately followed by that one of leaving the string to vibrate freely by lifting the left hand. 3: The closer to the nut the sound to be produced needs to be, the stronger the plucking must be, and the more

¹⁵¹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 57. “Et sortant toujours accompagnés du bruit produit par la violence que le doigt fait à la corde qui s’oppose à son passage.”

¹⁵² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 57. “La partie de la corde qui me donne le son harmonique n’est point celle que j’attaque avec la main droite, mais celle qui est entre ma main gauche et le sillet.”

¹⁵³ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 57-58. Here is the whole part in context: “Je voyais que le même doigt de la main gauche qui avait déterminé la partie aliquote de la corde était un obstacle à la vibration, et que l’intonation une fois déterminée, si la corde était immédiatement abandonnée, elle ne produirait point dans sa vibration le son générateur, mais elle prolongerait celui que la partie aliquote aurait produit.”

pressure needed from the left-hand finger to produce the harmonic, without reaching the frets.¹⁵⁴

Sor points out that not all the notes in the scale can be played on natural harmonics and, in spite of the possibility of playing all notes with artificial harmonics, he disregards them for having “little chance to thrive.”¹⁵⁵ He cites difficulties such as finding the precise point to pluck and mute the string, moving to change position of the right hand, and finally practicing a technique which is not very effective musically and only serves to produce one note. He deems them ineffective because the sounds from artificial harmonics are not prolonged, and the player needs to play slow and with low volume to achieve them.

Sor then considers the artificial harmonics in the violin as more favorable, but they are ‘inconvenient’ in his view for having to “reduce the distance between left-hand fingers 1 and 4 as the left hand approaches the body of the instrument.”¹⁵⁶ In other words, gradually reducing the distance among the left-hand fingers as they play at higher positions is, in his view, a disadvantage. He says that although it is possible to train the progressive shortening among the fingers, it may not be accurate to do it when the harmonics move randomly. Towards the end of the chapter he comes to terms with the artificial harmonics. He commences the subject cautiously as he offers the end of Op. 16, No. 4 as an example. This variation ends with two dyads, one of them in artificial harmonics. He mentions that it is easier to perform them in a slow piece. He urges to see what one could observe as movable frets, that is, counting the pressed note

¹⁵⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 58. “1° de ne point presser trop légèrement la corde au point déterminé, mais d’une manière qui me la fit bien sentir sous mon doigt; 2° que l’acte de l’attaquer avec le doigt de la main droite devait être immédiatement suivi de celui de la laisser vibrer en liberté en levant celui de la main gauche; 3° qu’à mesure que les sons à produire exigeraient une position plus rapprochée du sillet, l’acte d’attaquer la corde devait être plus violent, et la pression du doigt de la main gauche plus forte, sans obliger cependant la corde de se rapprocher de la touche.”

¹⁵⁵ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 58. “L’invention ne pouvait guère prospérer.”

¹⁵⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 59. “L’inconvénient d’être obligé de raccourcir l’écart des deux doigts à mesure que ma main approchait du corps de l’instrument.”

as fret 1 and counting from that note to determine the harmonic. He does not offer any insight as to how to use the right hand to play them.

He offers concrete examples for the availability of natural harmonics. He finds all harmonics on the open strings in a table. He does so by posing the question: “Can one find all the pitches on a string?”¹⁵⁷ to which his explicit answer is: “I can find in one string any pitch which I would miss in the other.”¹⁵⁸ However, he tacitly answers that it is not possible by listing all the harmonics he finds, placing all the found pitches in ascending order and not including all notes. He then presents the harmonic series of the D and F tuning of string⁶ arguing that using the same places to stop the strings allow him to “play duet, or even three part harmonies.”¹⁵⁹ He makes a side comment on notation, mentioning that he writes a harmonic by writing the “string to attack, and the number that indicates the fret on which to press,” and offers two examples: his Op. 29, No. 21 and his Example 78. He finishes the chapter with the acknowledgment that others have ‘surpassed’ him in achieving better results with this technique.

Accompaniments

Sor elaborates on the substance of accompaniments by observing how its different parts relate to various elements of music. He does so with technical terms he prefers to avoid. He also compares accompaniments to piano reductions, adds an explanation of the fully diminished chord, and finally, defends his transcriptions by offering a couple of examples concluding that his intentions behind his accompaniments are to be close to the text.

He first defines accompaniments as a homophonic texture, “a bass, and at least two parts

¹⁵⁷ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 59. “Est-ce que dans la vibration du corps sonore on ne trouve pas toutes les intonations de la gamme diatonique?”

¹⁵⁸ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 59. “Je puis trouver dans l’une quelque intonation qui me manquerait dans l’autre.”

¹⁵⁹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 60. “Jouer en sons harmoniques à deux parties, et même à trois.”

of harmony, and they represent at least three instruments.”¹⁶⁰ He finds that understanding the proper representation “gives the expression of what it represents”¹⁶¹ and for him to know what the notes mean, he observes their placement in the beat which unveils their function. Therefore, for Sor, musical expression lies in the understanding of function. This understanding leads him to see arpeggio patterns as representative of more than one instrument or function. He issues the function of downbeat to the basses, which he also sees as the ‘musical accent.’ These occur more frequently as the music is slow regardless of the availability of other notes, and are these are to be ‘plucked together along with the basses.’ Sor describes some standards of meter. In a 4/4 measure, the first and third beats are stronger and second and fourth weaker. In cut time the first beat is strong and the second weak. He emphasizes that ‘the bass is more marked’ than the ‘upper voices of the harmony’ because it supplies the same function of the accompaniment of a solo in an orchestra: a sense of beat. He reaches further in his comparison of guitar accompaniments to the orchestra saying that although there are less notes with the guitar, ‘the accompaniment would be the same.’ He compares orchestra, piano reduction, and guitar to a full size portrait, tableau portrait, and a copy respectively; the overarching details still remain.

He chooses the piano reduction of *Là ci darem la mano* from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* as a case study for his transcription process. After describing the lines, he offers these tips: “to employ figures of the same values to preserve the identity of the movement, then to observe the thirds or sixths that are in the chords, to take them as basis for fingerings.”¹⁶² For passages that he deems complicated, he considers simplification, slight inversion or alteration of chords (vii⁶

¹⁶⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 61. “Tout accompagnement suppose d’abord une basse et au moins deux parties d’harmonie; il représente donc trois instrumens [*sic*] au moins.”

¹⁶¹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 61. “Donner à l’accompagnement l’expression de ce qu’il représente.”

¹⁶² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 63. “D’employer des figures de la même valeur, pour conserver l’identité du mouvement ; ensuite, de voir quelles sont les tierces ou les sixtes qui se trouvent dans les accords, pour les prendre pour bases de mon doigté.”

for V^{4/3} inversion). For sections that are not possible on the guitar, Sor chases the notes that underscore more color. This passage contains two lines moving in contrary motion in thirds. He opts to preserve the lower section of thirds moving upwards while preserving only the melody of the higher descending voice in thirds. Ultimately, he finds a place to add notes for resonance.

Sor dedicates the latter part of the chapter to address a couple of subjects of criticism. The farthest Sor goes in advocating for technical knowledge of music comes after seeing his accompaniments under scrutiny, alleging that ‘he plays only to accompany himself.’ He defends his works behind transcriptions stating that the arranger “possesses a theoretical knowledge of the instrument under consideration as an instrument of harmony.”¹⁶³ He presents an air by Mozart, *Voi che sapete che cosa’è amor*, as an example that mere scale knowledge alone is insufficient for transcription. The implicit example features many secondary dominants and diminished chords. Sor sees fit to explain the fully diminished chord as a chord claiming functional meaning only when it is resolved. He also addresses a comment referring to his accompaniments as ‘being too demanding,’ to which he responds that his main intention is ‘loyalty to the text’ in transcriptions from the orchestra or the piano, tacitly exempting his own compositions from such criticism. He offers an air from *La Molinara* as an easy accompaniment. He argues that some pieces of music are more appropriate and the transcriptions can be made simple with ‘knowledge and tact.’ He tells us that even hard pieces, such as Haydn’s fugue on a double subject, the *Creation*, are playable, but others, such as Mozart’s overture, *Mystères d’Isis*, are not. Finally, he asserts that the ultimate goal from an accompaniment is to ‘provide harmonic support’ and therefore be ‘inherently simple.’ Sor’s defensive tone and his explanations sets him

¹⁶³ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 64. “Je ne joue que pour m’accompagner. Si l’on joue des accompagnemens [*sic*] déjà faits, cela suppose une connaissance théorique de l’instrument envisagé comme instrument d’harmonie.”

up for the daunting task of transcribing a section of the *Creation* by Haydn to which he dedicates a great deal of this method.

Analysis of the Accompaniment of a Fragment of the Oratorio by Haydn (*The Creation*)

Sor's main goal in this peculiar task is to offer a thorough descriptive example of the practical application of his theory of sixths and thirds. To prove that a successful fingering of his music lies in addressing these intervals, Sor underscores that all other notes are fingered around a sixth or a third and adheres only to this theory rather than taking the harmonic path. Some of his examples present obvious advice, while others portray his overarching fingering principle of the harmony as basis of the melody upturned. Sor argues that a better understanding of guitar composition is necessary to produce more relevant works and ends by expressing that vehicles such as piano music and composition are examples of good composing habits.

Sor chooses to do an accompaniment and its fingering for the second number of the Oratorio by Haydn. In doing so, he does not offer notes on transcription. He is only concerned with the issue of fingering. Specifically, he puts heavy observance on the main thirds within chords. He also offers alternatives to overcome the passages that are not possible to play on the guitar. A side note appears in a couple of places in which he chooses to "slide [...in order] to produce a note slurred."¹⁶⁴ There are repeated examples to reaffirm the use of his theory of thirds and sixths. In the notes referring to the pick up of measure 8,¹⁶⁵ he mentions that "as one of these intervals, [B-G#], already lies within the domain of my four fingers as defined in my theory of thirds and sixths, I have to take the top D with finger 4, and finger 1 must naturally be on B."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 64. "Je glisse pour faire le mi dont la tierce majeure sol dièse exige le second, que je glisse encore pour faire le si lié."

¹⁶⁵ Sor considers the pick up as measure 1. The numbering I refer to here is taken from Ophee's count.

¹⁶⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 68. Here is the passage in context: "J'examine quels sont les deux intervalles de tierce renfermés par les trois premières notes, et je vois que ce sont des intervalles de tierce mineure. Mes quatre doigts en renferment un; or je n'ai qu'à prendre ré avec le quatrième doigt, et le premier doit naturellement se trouver sur si."

In sum, he chooses fingerings around the most axial sixth or third, and bases the fingering of the other notes around them.

Some of the pointers that are obvious in nature are: analyzing the choice of fingering as preparation for the forthcoming ones (measure¹⁶⁷ 12), pointing out to use a short rather than a long bar to save effort (m. 13), using the same left-hand position for a descending arpeggio figure, preserving fingers in contact with the string while shifting to save on finger movement (m. 14), caring for the sustain of the melody by holding it as other fingers find accompaniment notes (m. 16), using shifts as more preferable to stretching (end of m. 16). At this point, the accompaniment starts and the previous measures make a repeated variation. He emphasizes that what he has written up to now can “prove that the knowledge and the exercise of thirds and sixths form the secret of all his playing.”¹⁶⁸ He also urges to anyone “that devotes to the study of guitar, to try to acquire this knowledge,” which he regards as “knowledge of harmony.”¹⁶⁹

He closes this section by looking up to the piano as an instrument that instills strong harmonic elements. He coins the piano as the ‘first instrument of harmony’ and recounts the experiences of students under his tutelage that had excelled at achieving at guitar playing better just for having background as pianists. He raises criticism of M. Carcassi for having “the harmonic voices of the harmony [...] not complete; the author, almost always removes that which is preferable.”¹⁷⁰ He poses a question: “Must a guitarist be a harmonist?” and answers “I do not desire it at all, but it would be desired that it would be because the guitar is an instrument

¹⁶⁷ Henceforth ‘m.’

¹⁶⁸ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 72-73. “Ce que j’ai écrit jusqu’ici doit lui prouver que la connaissance et l’exercice des tierces et des sixtes font le secret de tout mon jeu.”

¹⁶⁹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 74. “Je ne cesserai d’exhorter ceux qui voudront s’adonner à l’étude de la guitare, de tâcher d’acquérir cette connaissance. Un guitariste-harmoniste aura toujours un avantage sur celui qui ne le sera pas.”

¹⁷⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 75. “Lorsque les parties d’harmonie ne sont point au complet l’auteur supprime presque toujours celle qui doit l’être de préférence.”

of harmony.”¹⁷¹ Such an answer places him at odds with his own statement at the introduction of his method. Finally, he expresses disdain over the lack of quality of easy pieces, genres such as the variation, and teaching that promotes them, which he terms ‘vain stupidity’ as compared to the same easy repertoire in the piano, which in his view is “almost always correctly composed.”¹⁷² He blames forces such as the push from publishers to composers to create easy pieces and driven by the need to sell publications for financial benefit of both printer and creator: a surface excuse he repeatedly mentions as “one must make a living,”¹⁷³ which he himself sees as a deep reality, stating: “it is necessary that I make a living.”¹⁷⁴ He ponders extensively on the consequences of caving into this forces. He sees that the end results are ‘incorrect or incomplete,’ works that consequently become popular, offering a poor pedagogical standard for students truly desiring to learn. He expresses hope that students have better resources beside his music as models to follow in the future.

On Fingering of the Annular

Fulfilling an earlier promise, Sor includes a small chapter to talk about the ring, annular or ‘a’ finger on the right hand. He clarifies that there are no uses of the ring finger in the transcription of the Creation accompaniment other than the ones described on the earlier chapter of the right hand. Then he proceeds to describe the finger characteristics, the technique behind using it, and a few of its shortcomings. He also presents a couple of examples for using it.

He describes the finger as both weaker and as the one having to bear more resistance because the positioning of the hand makes it closer to the bridge. Sor sees these conditions as the

¹⁷¹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 75. “Qu’un guitariste soit harmoniste? Encore une fois, je ne veux rien du tout; mais il serait à désirer qu’il le fût, puisque la guitare est un instrument d’harmonie.”

¹⁷² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 75. “Est écrite correctement, presque toujours bien composée.”

¹⁷³ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 77. “Il faut vivre.”

¹⁷⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 79. “Il faut que je vive.”

reason for the finger to “curve it more in the attack of the string.”¹⁷⁵ As a general rule, he mentions that the ring finger must play “in a succession of chords where the high part contains a melody.”¹⁷⁶ He proceeds to offer an example indicating which chords use the ring finger, expressing that “when the higher note does not find accompaniment by three others, to use only three fingers.”¹⁷⁷ In other words, he does not employ the ‘a’ finger unless there is a four note chord.

He expresses a few reasons behind his choice to avoid the ring finger. He sees that using it goes against his precepts to “preserve the hand still and not make the action of tearing off the string.”¹⁷⁸ In order to solve the problem, he needs to “move it a bit from its normal position and give it another movement.”¹⁷⁹ He further explains that in order to generate the space necessary to do so, these adjustments affect the position of the hand as well.¹⁸⁰ He describes the adjustment: “lift the part of the hand that is close to the little finger, so that, with the tip of the middle as pivot, the thumb and index finger are brought as closer to the strings by the same distance that the annular and the little move away from it;”¹⁸¹ in other words: rotate the forearm inwards while using the middle finger as pivot, bringing the thumb closer as annular goes farther. He sees that this adjustment is necessary as the “three principal fingers remain in place.”

Conclusion

In his conclusion, Sor presents his beliefs in a holistic vision of what a method should be regarding content, approach and philosophy. He defines various similar titles that represent

¹⁷⁵ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 79. “Je le courbe davantage dans l’acte d’attaquer la corde.”

¹⁷⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 79. “Dans une suite d’accords dont la partie supérieure formerait une mélodie.”

¹⁷⁷ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 80. “Lorsque la note supérieure ne se trouve point accompagnée par trois autres, je ne me sers jamais que de trois doigts.”

¹⁷⁸ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 80. “Conserver la main tranquille, et de ne pas faire l’action d’arracher les cordes.”

¹⁷⁹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 80. “Je l’en éloigne un peu, mais je lui donne un autre mouvement.”

¹⁸⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 128, note HI. Coined by Ophee. “The idea is to give the annular finger a bit more distance.”

¹⁸¹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 80. “Je la sépare du côté du petit doigt, de manière que, l’extrémité du médius pouvant être considérée comme le centre de ce mouvement, le pouce et l’index se rapprochant des cordes autant que l’annulaire et l’infinus s’en éloignent, ce rapprochement compense l’éloignement de la main.”

different tools of learning. After presenting his view, he justifies the lengthiness of this work, pairing it to the vision laid here in this last chapter. He presents examples of easy music and levels of difficulty, arguing his music is not too difficult and that there is not much beyond ‘a couple of scales’ necessary to perform it well. He then offers final tips, informing us that his method is the result of his desire to correct his own mistakes.

Sor questions why many methods have more examples than texts. They ask to play specific techniques in the examples, such as appoggiatura, mordents etc., without addressing the technique behind it. In doing so, he believes, authors disregard the ways to play in accordance to what he sees as “natural processes.”¹⁸² He argues that the text is necessary because it “instructs in all manners of employing resources [...] to do what I see written without effort”¹⁸³ and speaks of ‘the knowledge’ rather than of ‘the beliefs’ of the author. Those that desire to learn should get “acquainted with the reasons behind the established principles,”¹⁸⁴ rather than finding simplistic, well marketed methods. He argues that in existing methods, even from the title, there is a lack of consistency in what authors offer. Then Sor sets out to define “method [as a] treatise of reasoned principles on which the rules which should guide the operations are based; exercises: pieces of music, the purpose of each one is to familiarize us with the application of the rules. The exercises are the practice of the theories established by the method; lessons [as] pieces of music of which each should not have for a goal the exercise of only one rule, but also those rules employed in the preceding lessons, and even to initiate the student in some exceptions; studies [as] exercises of

¹⁸² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 81. Here is the passage in context: “Ultimately, nature must have a process that answers to that which we call fingering of the instruments.” “En fin, la nature doit avoir un procédé qui réponde à ce que nous appelons doigté sur les instrumens [*sic*].”

¹⁸³ This quote is made from a couple of texts, here are both in context. Sor, *Méthode*, p. 81: “The author [...] tells me how I should do there to execute without effort, that which I see written.” “L’auteur [...] me dise comment je dois m’y prendre pour exécuter avec moins de peine ce que je vois écrit.” Sor, *Méthode*, p. 82: “The text must tell me how I must do it; it must instruct me of all the ways to use my resources.” “Le texte doit me dire comment je dois le faire; il doit m’instruire de toutes les manières d’employer mes moyens.”

¹⁸⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 82. “J’ai cru de mon devoir de lui faire connaître toutes les raisons que j’ai eues pour établir les principes fondamentaux de la mienne.”

the exceptions and the rules whose application present more difficulties.”¹⁸⁵ He justifies the lengthiness of his writing by arguing rectitude of intention in following the approach that he sees necessary to teach well.

He responds yet again to the criticism that his music is too difficult to play. He belittles the reasons arguing that the challenge lies “in a couple of scales known to all guitarists.”¹⁸⁶ Surely he refers to that of the scales in thirds and in sixths. He also argues that the reasons of such criticism lies in the lack of good habits that will in turn make the music hard to play. He comes back to the issue of having the palm behind the neck as being the source or wrist pain. He offers two examples of music that could only be played when the left-hand thumb keeps lower behind the neck, and the palm underneath the fretboard, rather than behind it. He points to his Op. 41, *Les Deux Amis*, in the secondo guitar and the twenty four exercises in his Op. 35 as examples of music that are not too hard. He admits that there is a gap in difficulty between the twenty four exercises in Op. 35 and the twenty four lessons in Op. 31, but he explains that if the teacher pays thorough attention to the student through the learning process on the first set of exercises, “the lessons would become easier.”¹⁸⁷ He ends the chapter with a self reflecting assertion that the method comes as “the result of many years of observations and reflections over mistakes for which I saw the need to correct”¹⁸⁸ over the years. Finally, he offers the following

¹⁸⁵ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 82-83, footnote (1). “Méthode. Traité des principes raisonnés sur lesquels sont fondées les règles qui doivent guider les opérations. [...] Exercices. Morceaux de musique dont chacun a pour but de nous rendre familière l’application des règles. Les exercices sont la pratique des théories établies par la méthode, [...] Leçons, Morceaux de musique dont chacun ne doit pas avoir pour but l’exercice d’une seule règle, mais aussi celles employées dans les leçons précédentes, et même d’initier l’écuyer dans quelques exceptions [...] Études. Exercices des exceptions et des règles dont l’application présente plus de difficultés.”

¹⁸⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 84. “Tout le secret de mon jeu consiste en deux gammes en usage chez tous les guitaristes.”

¹⁸⁷ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 85. “Mais aussi après avoir appris les exercices elles deviennent plus faciles.”

¹⁸⁸ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 85. “La méthode [...] est le résultat de beaucoup d’années d’observations et de réflexions: j’ai fait des méprises auxquelles je suis redevable d’une foule de réflexions que peut-être je n’aurais jamais faites sans la nécessité de me corriger.”

twelve final remarks¹⁸⁹ that encourage the player to 1: strive for music rather than for virtuosoism; 2: pursue proficiency rather than force in the performance; 3: use bars occasionally; 4: find fingerings under the finger range and avoid unnecessary stretches; 5: strive for ease rather than difficulty in playing; 6: issue the work to the stronger fingers first; 7: use finger preparation such as in descending scales; 8: keep left-hand wrist from lateral movement; 9: if the fourth finger stops string ① stop any other string with the longest finger (i.e. the second); 10: use strong fingers in stretches rather than weak ones; 11: if the fingertips must follow the line of the frets rather than the strings, as in the B7 chord, do so with the elbow and not the wrist; 12: “have much of reasoning, and none of routine.”¹⁹⁰

Outline of Sor’s Concepts

The outline below are the core concepts that Sor expressed in his *Méthode*. The wording differs from Sor’s in an attempt to make each concept explicit and concise. Please refer either to the section above or to Sor’s text for a comprehensive reading. Concepts are generally technical in nature, but some can only be applied through composition, are philosophical, or refer to transcription or notation. Most concepts are derived from extensive discourse in Sor’s *Méthode*, but a few are implied or derived from examples. Concepts that are not technical in nature or explicitly discussed in Sor’s text are noted accordingly.

Introduction

- Compositional concept: exhaust all the possibilities of the guitar as it is made before adding new strings.
- Using the thumb to press strings around and on top of the neck to complete chords handicaps the support that the hand offers to the neck and delivers poor execution.

¹⁸⁹ The remarks are presented here in a concise form. As with all the other concepts, they are analyzed and quoted when necessary. Please check them in the entire form in the original text of the *Méthode*, p. 86-88.

¹⁹⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 85. “De tenir le raisonnement pour beaucoup, et la routine pour rien.”

- Compositional: study harmony, counterpoint and chord progression to have capability to combine an accompaniment with a melody.
- The fingering for the harmony is the basis for the fingering of the melody; the latter is entirely dependant on the former.

The Instrument

- Implied concept: pressing a string is a compound force between the arm and the finger to hold the string down; counter pressure needs to be applied by the thumb in the back of the neck.
- Implied: use the right direction in the plucking of the right-hand finger.

Position of the Instrument

- Align the center of the guitar, the twelfth fret, with that of the player.
- A higher position of the fretboard is more comfortable for the left hand.
- Using a comfortable, stable position and an angled fretboard gives the hands liberty to move freely (Sor suggests a table).
- The guitar should not be too inclined.
- Implied: the left hand surpasses the fretboard only up to the knuckle.
- The guitar neck angles outward.

Right Hand

- The right arm rests over the edge of the guitar, half way between the elbow and the wrist, using the elbow as lever for the hand and fingers to meet the strings naturally.
- The right hand is best used with a natural alignment between the forearm and the hand.
- The ring finger best used only to “play a four-voice chord.”
- The fingers should be placed with very little curvature
- The motion of plucking the string is the motion closing the hand but not entirely.
- Place the thumb ahead of ‘*i*’ to form a cross and pluck ahead of ‘*i*’ and ‘*m*.’

Left Hand

- Bend the first joint and land with the fingers perpendicular to the fretboard to avoid touching and involuntarily muting sounds of open strings.
- The fourth finger is capable of stretching and reaching beyond the four-finger position.
- The thumb, a short, strong finger, supports the neck from its back as a contrary force opposite to that of the other fingers.
- Adjust the thumb lower and press towards first strings in order to avoid strong contractions in the fingers.
- Use the thumb as a pivot and guide to move from one position to another.
- Place the thumb in the middle of the width of the neck opposite to the finger which corresponds to the second fret.
- Withdraw the thumb when the first finger is doing a bar.
- When barring, press with the thumb so that finger 1 holds point B (higher part).
- Do not use pressure in any case other than barring.

Plucking the String

- The correct finger position to put strings into motion is to have the fingers curved as little as possible (fig. 18).

Quality of Sound

- Set up a standard default position of the right hand at the tenth part the length of the string, starting from the bridge.
- Make a sound with friction of the tip, and not of a pluck at the eight part of the string's length to produce a mellow and sustained sound.
- To produce a sound that is stronger, strike the string a lot closer to the bridge than usual.
- Strum with the thumb parallel to the soundboard.
- Leave the wrist free to help control the force, mass, and momentum of the strum.
- Implied: in order to know what to instrument to imitate, the player must know the compositional rudiments of orchestral instruments.

- Strum parallel to the soundboard and control the force by means of speed by striking the string from farther away, leaving the wrist free so that the weight of the arm does not make a harsh sound.

To Imitate the Horn

- Pluck away from bridge, at about the 1/6 part of the total length of the string.
- Avoid silvery and flashy sounds. It helps to finger notes in strings other than the first position of string ①.

To Imitate the Trumpet

- Pluck a loud nasal sound close to the bridge while pressing in the middle of the space between the frets so that it makes short buzzing sound.
- Implied: for Sor, the normal way of pressing is when the finger is holding the string close to the fret.

To Imitate the Oboe

- In slurred thirds, strike the string as near as possible to the bridge, but curve the fingers and employ the nails.

To Imitate the Flute

- Compositional: write passages an octave higher to imitate the pitch.

Staccato and Pizzicato

- Staccato: shorten the duration of the sound; Sor does not describe how.
- Pizzicato: at the place that determines the note, press light enough to not to touch the fret, but firm enough to avoid the harmonic sound; Sor mentions he does not use the right hand.

To Imitate the Harp

- In arpeggios that travel a wide distance, pluck the strings half way between the twelfth fret and the bridge.

Knowledge of the Fingerboard

- Each fret makes a semitone.
- Know how the guitar is tuned in the open strings.

- Then connect these open strings by finding the intermediate sounds between the open strings, know the intervals of the diatonic range.
- By observing the proportion of the intervals, follow the structure of the major scale preserving the distances of tones and semitones rather than learning all the sharps and flats; Sor offers examples of each major scale ascending chromatically from c to b.
- Due to its shortness, do not employ the fourth finger at the fourth fret of a given position finger higher than the ④ string; this is an inconsistent/refutable principle.
- Perform a semitone with adjacent fingers, and for a whole tone skip a finger in between; these are obvious fingering concepts.

Fingering Along the Length of the String

- Know how to traverse the length of the string using all the modes; follow indicated exercises which also help with solmization.
- Always use the immediate finger for a semitone and never for a whole tone; skip to the next finger to play whole tones.
- Cover two whole steps by stretching fingers 1 and 2 rather than 3 and 4.

Use of the Fingers of the Right Hand

- Use the fewest fingers possible; help express musical accents with fingerings.
- Lower the palm to find strings ① and ② with 'i' and 'm' and allow the thumb to move freely in front of the rest of them.
- Treat the seven exercises progressively: become confident with the first one before attempting subsequent ones as training responsiveness in the right-hand fingers helps in making the latter ones easier to play.

Fingering of the Two Hands

- Compositional: left-hand fingering is based on chord shapes.
- Exclude the 'a' finger for arpeggios: it is the weakest, often has to carry accents, and Sor believes there is no need for additional notes in the harmony.
- Slurring the notes of the scales is more effective than switching fingers for the purpose of the quality of singing passages; pluck the open string and slur the rest by pressing with external phalanges perpendicularly on the string. The sudden pressure will maintain the vibration on the string.

- Implied: it is better to keep the right arm in one position, with the exception of ‘i, m’ alternations for scales covering all 6 strings which it is better to move the elbow up (see Aguado’s method).

The Elbow

- The neutral position of the left elbow is perpendicular to the neck; it determines the direction in which the fingers stop the strings because the joints follow the direction of the forearm and fold the fingers in that direction.
- About fingers: phalanges must fall perpendicular to the strings.
- Lateral movement of the elbow supports positioning of the fingers on the fretboard.
- Use fingers as pivots for lateral movement of the elbow.
- For bars, position the elbow under the bar, place the first finger parallel to the fret as the thumb faces the second finger from behind the neck, bring the elbow closer to the body which makes the thumb face the first finger and be also parallel, and finally, use the first finger slightly on its side to bar.

On Thirds, Their Nature and Their Fingering

- Know how the open strings are tuned.
- Apply the principle of following the structure of the major scale by shapes to scales in thirds.
- Follow the formula of thirds (below) to determine fingerings for strings ① and ② Table 2 reprinted here for reference):

Fingers	1 ½ step 2 whole	1 whole 3 whole	1 whole 3 ½ step	1 whole 2 whole	1 ½ step 2 whole	1 whole 3 whole	1 whole 3 ½ step	1 2
Thirds	Maj	Min	Min	Maj	Maj	Min	Min	Maj

- For strings ② and ③, use the second finger over string ③ through the entire scale to guide the fret distances. Use the first finger for a minor third, and third finger on string ② for a major third.
- On pairs from string ③ and higher, the nature of thirds and the disposition of the hand indicate the fingering.
- Employ adjacent fingers for minor thirds only in rare instances.

On Sixths

- The first four strings already form two major sixths when the intermediate string is skipped.
- Like thirds, playing two strings at the same fret produces a major sixth and playing them while raising the lower note a semi tone produces a minor sixth.
- Observe whether one or two of the half steps of the major scale within an octave are contained in the sixth: if it contains only one it is a major sixth, if it contains two it is a minor sixth.
- Implied from scales in the first four strings: when playing scales in sixths, use a 1-2 finger combination for the minor sixths and a 3-4 combination for the major one.
- In Sor's own words: "all my fingerings depend of the exercise of thirds and sixths."

Application of the Thirds and the Sixths

- Embrace the intervals of thirds and sixths to improve guitar execution as they are the core of Sor's guitar mastery; his exercises enable players to both perform his music and finger all difficult guitar music.
- Avoid the transition from one string to another with the same finger as much as it possible.
- Above all, reduce hand shifts.
- Implied: finger chords starting with thirds and sixths, then continue with open strings and octave intervals.
- Implied: prioritize fingering in first positions first, then move higher up the fingerboard if necessary.
- As chord progressions reach a higher register, Sor tacitly follows higher notes with last fingers, i.e. 3 and 4, and fingers the lower notes of the chord with the first fingers, i.e. 1 and 2.

Fingering of the Left Hand in Regard to the Melody

- Compositional: use the fingering of the harmony as the basis for the fingering of the melody.
- For scales in first position, use open strings as needed.
- For scales without notes on first fret, move to second fret position as needed.

- From examples: move the hand position to any fret beyond the reach of the chord to increase the register of the scale; match two strings with the same finger position.
- From examples: use inverted chords as necessary as a basis to determine the scale; may use longer range of scales.
- Philosophy: an artist has a preconceived musical idea behind his ear as opposed to one only who reads notes or plays notes by ear without having musical thoughts.
- Observe the melodic construction to determine the fingering: chord shapes, stepwise motion, or patterns.
- For fast passages: use one position to produce the greatest number of notes.
- For cantabile passages: remain in open strings and first positions as these positions offer the more resonance, the thickness of the lower strings produces dry sounds.
- Philosophy: do thorough study to acquire that which is good to have within the field of the guitar.

Fingering of the Right Hand

- Pluck 'i' underneath the ② string, pluck 'm' underneath the ①, and if the melody goes lower than the first open string, move 'i' and 'm' to ③ and ② strings respectively.
- Use the 'p' finger for all basses as well as for 'notes that do not belong to the bass, but determine an accentuated part of the measure, or the beginning of a beat.'
- Also use 'i' and 'm' to pluck non-adjacent strings; do so by extending 'm' away from 'i' and raising the palm by lowering the elbow without bending the wrist.
- Pluck the middle voice with 'i' if it has more movement; in this case, the thumb takes the role on the lower note of the sixth even down to the ③ string.
- Since the 'm' finger makes the lower part of the hand react and it is best to have the reacting parts directly involved with the movement, the best option is to play scales with 'p-i' as they offer the most rapidity; use Op. 31, No. 19 and Op. 35, No. 5 as exercises to train this combination.
- Play left-hand slurs as support for right-hand scale combinations:
 - Finger three notes at once.
 - Make the finger take shape of a hook.
 - Withdraw it towards the palm without varying the position of the whole hand

- Repeat with the other fingers.
- Notation: use the same fingers numbers for both left and right hand, except for the thumb, for which he uses an 'x' symbol.
- Archaic technique: the right-hand pinky offers stability of the hand by holding it on the bridge so as to 'be sure to preserve my fingers exactly in regard to their respective strings.'

Harmonics

- Harmonics are mostly used on the twelfth fret which produces longer, more pleasant sounds; less used are those on the seventh and even less on the fifth frets, both of which produces shorter, less pleasant sounds.
- Do not press too lightly at the chosen point; press in a way that that the string is felt well under the finger.
- Releasing too quickly makes other sounds.
- The plucking of the right hand must be immediately followed by lifting the left hand to allow the string to vibrate freely.
- The closer to the nut the sound to be produced needs to be, the stronger the plucking must be, and the pressure needed from the left-hand finger increases accordingly to produce the harmonic without reaching the frets.
- Composition: write artificial harmonics slow and with low volume to make them playable.
- When using harmonics in the style of the violin (pressing with first finger and producing the node with the fourth finger on the same string), gradually reduce the distance between left-hand fingers 1 and 4 as the left hand approaches higher pitches.
- Not all notes are found in natural harmonics.
- Notation: write the string to attack and the number that indicates the fret on which to press.

Accompaniments

- Compositional: Accompaniments have a homophonic texture (bass with one or two accompaniments).
- Music expression lies in the understanding of the elements of music.

- Basses represent the function of downbeats and therefore, the musical accent; they appear more frequently in slower pieces.
- Upper parts represent the upbeats and may be plucked with along with the basses, however, they do not carry as much weight as the basses regardless of their place in the measure.
- The guitar represents a small orchestra and fulfills the function of an orchestra doing a solo accompaniment.
- Transcriptions: use figures of the same values to preserve the identity of the movement; observe the thirds or sixths in the chords as basis for fingerings.

Plucking of the Ring Finger

- Because the ring finger is weaker and closer to the bridge, it finds more resistance from the string; curve it more in the attack of the string and give it more movement.
- Use it in a 4 voice texture: a succession of chords where the high part contains a melody and is accompanied by 3 voices; use 'p, i, m' only for 3 voice textures.
- Exception to keeping the hand still: rotate the forearm inwards while using the middle finger as pivot, bringing the thumb closer as annular goes farther to open room for different plucking.

Conclusion

- A method should instruct the physical techniques necessary to enable the player to express what is written in the music without effort.
- Strive for music rather than for virtuosoism.
- Pursue proficiency rather than force in the performance.
- Use bars occasionally.
- Find fingerings under the finger range and avoid unnecessary stretches.
- Strive for ease rather than difficulty in playing.
- Issue the work to the stronger fingers first.
- Use finger preparation such as in descending scales.
- Keep left-hand wrist from lateral movement.

- If fourth finger stops string ①, stop any other string with the longest finger (i.e. the second).
- Use strong fingers in stretches rather than weak ones.
- If the fingertips must follow the line of the frets rather than the strings (i.e. the B7 chord), do so with the elbow and not the wrist.
- ‘Have much of reasoning, and none of routine.’

Translation of Coste’s Method

Complete Method for the Guitar by Fernando Sor, Edited and Augmented with Numerous Examples and Lessons, Followed by a Note about the Seventh String by Napoleon Coste

Introduction

It would be difficult to find in history the exact origin of the guitar. The Hebrews used an instrument of eight strings that had its form and that was called MACHEL. However, if we compare it to the design that we see now, the neck was very short and was made by a very small number of frets. It was on the guitar that the Persians, the Arabs and the Moors sang their vague poetry.

About the rest, without looking up the authors, we would limit ourselves to mention the account of an already respectable antiquity, Grégoire de Tours. It has been said in his chronicles that at the baptism of Clovis, at the church of St. Rémy de Reims, the music played in front of the King has caused him such admiration that in a peace treaty that he had with Théodoric, King of Ostrogoths, there was an article that demanded this Prince to send a good player of guitar along with a body of music of Italy. (*Encyclopédie pittoresque de la musique.*)

The guitar only had 4 strings at the beginning: *E, B, G* and *D*. The fifth *A* was added about two centuries ago and the sixth *E* only some fifty years later.

Of all the fretted plucked instruments such as the theorbo, the lute, the sistrum, etc.; the guitar is the only one that has continued to be played. It is only the guitar, because of its gracious

form, the softness of timbre, and mostly, because of the ingenious manner in which it is strung, that renders proper execution of counterpoint to follow the progressive movement of modern music. Therefore, instruments that remained tall, defective by the way they were strung, were not good at rendering certain effects and didn't lend themselves to modulation.

Around mid-seventeenth century, the guitar was in great favor in the most brilliant courts of Europe. The great King himself would not forego finding relaxation there. Robert de Visée, his master, expressed himself in a collection of pieces he composed for His Majesty and published in 1686 with the following dedication:

... Very happy if I could, by all my means, entertain YOUR MAJESTY in these moments, where she [the guitar] releases important sounds that kept her seamlessly occupied for the well-being and the resting of her subjects...

The amateurs are not, without doubt, angry of knowing each one of his productions that we could compile, and play [transcribe] according to the modern notation of writing music.* They will find these pages interesting as part of their study.

After Robert de Visée, one can distinguish few artists in this genre of composition. So when Sor appeared two centuries later, he caused a sensation in the musical world. He surprises and delights with the charm and the novelty of his creations that will remain as models of science and good taste.

The success of this great artist did not keep him from the gaze of envious critics. The harassment that he had to endure from ignorant colleagues who did not understand him embittered his spirit, and it was under these adverse perceptions that he wrote the text of his method, in which he was very concerned with responding to the attacks that he believed needed to be fought, rather than developing his own concepts and making them available.

*The way of writing music for guitar was through tablature with letters of the alphabet.

This big defect, from a pedagogical point of view, is being felt by the judgmental editor that renders Sor's work today.

To cleanse foreign theories so that it is clear to understand; to deepen, and to study the high ideas of the master for the well understanding of all practical consequences; to smoothen out through new examples, and through numerous gradual lessons, the difficulties of the art and lead the student as fast as possible to execute the pieces of the great guitarist; those are the goals that we propose ourselves when we present this work to the beginners and the approval of artists.

N. Coste

[Page 2 not present. Shonenberger edition has a page before page 1 with a woman holding a guitar and the illustrations of Sor's method around her. The reprint by Lemoine (15655. HL) omits this illustration page.]

Part 1: Position of the Instrument

Left Hand

No instrument requires such rigorous position and at the same time has such elegance.

The flexibility and ability of the fingers are dependent on this way of holding [the guitar].

We will try to demonstrate the conditions in which one must place oneself to obtain good results.

1. Sit down on a common chair with the left foot over a stool 12 cm high (for the women, it must have a few centimeters more).
2. The left knee will form a right angle with the body whereas the right knee will move apart to make room for the box of the instrument.
3. The guitar will rest in between the knee and the body and it will be inclined towards the chest without ever being pressed.

4. Keep yourself straight, shoulders horizontal, and avoid all contractions and contortions that always render a ridiculous execution, at the same time keep them free to obtain easy freedom of movements.
5. Raise the fretboard until the tuning pegs reach shoulder height.
6. Have the elbow near the body towards the chest.
7. Bend the forearm in a way that the inner part of the hand comes to position itself against the neck on the side of the first string. (*A Fig:2.*)¹⁹¹

Fig 2



8. Place the thumb in the middle of the neck in front of the second finger and in the direction of the frets
9. In this position, extend your fingers on the neck, bending them around it. The first phalange of each finger must fall securely over the fingerboard and make hammer-like action on the strings in order to press them.
10. The fingers, equally spaced, must cover 4 frets unless moving forwards or backwards, which will be required.

¹⁹¹ The original presents all of the figures on the page immediately following the title page. I have added Coste's figures here within the text in their original form. The same figures are used in Sor's text, but some have different letter indicators.

11. The first finger is extended over the strings, ready to bar and to contract itself without moving the palm from being parallel to the fingerboard, and without changing the position of the thumb. This last finger [the thumb] will only affix the hand to the fingerboard without gripping tightly, causing the other fingers to loose force or dexterity.

Right Hand

Rest the forearm over the edge of the instrument. (See fig: 5.)

Fig. 5.



Advance it until the end of the little finger [the pinky] can be placed over the top of the guitar a few centimeters after the strings so that the curve made by the wrist **D** is above the plane of the strings.

The little finger is rarely placed on the top when executing certain non-legato [plucked] scales and arpeggios, and even so, one must place it very lightly.

Bring the fingers, Index and Middle, almost perpendicularly to the strings for plucking (fig: 5.)

The Thumb will surpass the index, advancing towards the fingerboard and over its joint to attack the string, it will create a circle where the string is the tangent. In other words, after making the string vibrate by attacking it with the part of the finger closest to the nail, it will regain its position with a rotational movement.

The Ring finger, being very weak, has to be avoided, unless there is no other way to complete a chord and in certain arpeggios where its usage is absolutely necessary.

The action of attacking the strings is none other than to close the hand without closing it completely.

Way of Attacking the String

Assume the thickness of the string **A** (*fig: 7*), the finger attacking transmits its impulse [to the string] towards **B**. The counteraction will take place towards **C**, and once the alternation is established, the oscillations must be done parallel to the plan of the top and of the fingerboard.

Fig. 7



Of the Tuning of the Guitar.

The guitar is tuned in fourths and thirds. This tuning allows it to accommodate any harmonic combinations. (*See the etudes at the end of this work.*)



If you are not familiarized with the intonation of the open strings, one can tune through unisons proceeding like this:

After having tuned the fifth string *A*, with a tuning fork or another instrument, one should press the fifth fret for *D* to adjust the fourth string. In the same way, proceed to tune the third

string using the unison by pressing at the fifth fret on the fourth string *D*. For the second string *B*, the interval separating from the third string is only a major third, it is the fourth fret on the last string that makes the unison. The interval that separates the *B* from the first string is an interval of a fourth; one must operate as on the preceding string; in other words, press the *B* at the fifth fret to have a unison with the first string *E*.

Strings ⑤ ④ ④ ③ ③ ② ② ①¹⁹²

Frets 5th 0 5th 0 4th 0 5th 0 0 0

A defective tuning through this method may hinder a satisfactory tuning of chords. In order to rectify as much as possible, it is possible to use octaves in the following way:

or use fifths by playing them together:

Then [tune] the open strings, when one has become familiar with their intonation by habit.

¹⁹² Coste used ordinal numbers, here, they are in the new standard notation.

However, one must know well the diameter and intonation of the strings to put them on the guitar. These are things of such importance that we cannot avoid giving some instructions in this regard.

In order for the top not to be too exhausted and that it may vibrate with freedom, one must use strings that are a bit thin. This thinness must be exaggerated for certain strings. In this way the second string *B*, must be closer to the thickness of the *E* string than that of the third string *G*, and the fifth string *A* must, in this way, be closer to the thickness of the fourth string *D* than that of the sixth string *E*, which must be wound with a very thick line compared to that of the *A* and the *D* string which has the finest line possible.

The stronger the strings of a guitar are, the less sound the instrument has; because these strings are not in accordance with the degree of tension that they ought to have, they vibrate with difficulty and paralyze the instrument.

In order to find the complete justness of a string before putting it on [the guitar], one must grab it by each end with the thumb and the index and make it vibrate with the ring finger. If the vibration separates it in two well-defined parts, it must be just.

31 Lessons and Exercises by N. Coste

No. 1: Knowledge of the diatonic scale over the fretboard.

The musical notation for Exercise No. 1 is as follows:

String	6th String	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	1st
Notes	E2, F2, G2	A1, B1, C2	D2, E2, F2	G1, A1, B1	C2, D2, E2	F2, G2, A2
Fingering	0, 1, 3	2, 3	0, 2, 3	0, 2	0, 1, 4	0, 1, 4

The 5th fret and 10th fret are indicated above the staff. An asterisk (*) is placed at the end of the staff.

*“See the article titled *Of the quality of Sound.*” [Coste’s footnote]

No. 2: Lesson 1: Hold the sound during all its value.

No. 7: Ex. A and B: Many passages and scales [Spanish says strums] are plucked with thumb and index only.

No. 8: See the about the way to attack the chords in the second PART, page 19.

No. 9: Lesson

No 10: Andante

No. 11: Exercises: hold the first three notes of the measure [Coste's footnote under measure 5]; hold [Coste's note above measure 7].

No. 12: Lesson

No. 13: Lesson: On the sixth string [Coste's footnote under measure 13].

No. 14: Exercise on the scale

No. 15: Scale

No 16: Exercise on the scale

No. 17: Lesson: Scale: (A B C) This kind of slur is called *Portamento* or *Carry Voice*. It is played by gliding the finger over the same string, holding down always so that it makes a fast chromatic scale.

A The forth finger glides from the fourth to the 12 fret [footnote under measure 29].

B The same finger glides from the fourth to the tenth fret [footnote under measure 34].

C The first finger flides from the first to the tenth fret [footnote under measure 35].

No. 18: Scale

No. 19: Exercise

No. 20: Lesson: Andante

(1) While all the fingers of the left hand press down the strings to determine the sounds, the thumb of the right hand, placed at the fourth part of the length of the string, plucks lightly,

running through each open string until the first one (*see the article Considerations about strumming, Fourth Part, page 21*) [footnote under measure 24].

(2) *See the article: Of the Harmonic Sounds, Fourth Part, page 39* [footnote under measure 29]

Bar over the seventh fret and don't do more than touch the strings without pressing them [additional footnote under measure 29].

No. 21: Exercise on the scale

No. 22: Scale: In the first two measures, the left hand must cover 5 frets.

No. 23: Etude

No. 24: Lesson: Andante

No. 25: Scale

No. 26: Lesson: Andantino

No. 27: Lesson

No. 28: Scale

No. 29: Lesson

Part 2: About the Quality of Sound and the Imitation of Some Instruments.

We establish the tenth part of the length of the string from the bridge as the normal place for the right hand. It is there that the resistance of the string is strong enough so that the impulse of the finger is transmitted without much effort. There, one obtains a clear and quite prolonged sound. When one wishes for a softer, more sustained sound, one plucks the string at the eighth part and also at a fourth of its length, while making use of the curve A B that forms the inner part of the first phalange (*fig: 8*).

Fig. 8



The goal is to produce a sound as a result of friction and not of a pinch. If, on the contrary, one desires that the sound is stronger, one must attack the string close to the bridge and apply more force there.

The pressure of the fingers in the left hand must be sufficient at the time of plucking, otherwise the strings will render a creaking sound and a defective tone.

The imitation of some instruments is never the sole sovereign effect of the manipulation of the sound; the passage also must be written how it should be in a score for the instrument it wishes to imitate.

To render the effect of the horn, one must use a phrase of two parts that produces fifths, thirds and sixths (examples 1 and 2). One must avoid sounds of the open strings, pluck them at the sixth part of their length, and make them vibrate strongly by the action of the left hand (*etude 15*).

Ex: 1.

Ex: 2.

The trumpet parts have a musical way rarely expressed by other musical instruments. What is contained in the particular character of the trumpet expresses a warlike-martial thought. Also, its disposition and limits of intonation resemble those represented in the third example. Having the sounds organized in small phrases in the manner of the fourth example, making a strong plucking on the first string near the bridge to achieve a nasal sound, and placing the fingers in the middle of the frets so that the string plays a bit over the fingerboard and makes a vibration, obtaining a curly sound [he likely means buzzing] of very short duration: this would imitate enough of the timbre of the trumpet. One must be careful of pressing the string well over

the fret on each of the notes plucked, and of decreasing this pressure immediately after the production of sound.

Ex: 3.

Ex: 4.

The imitative phrases of the oboe are much more difficult to render because this instrument is not as limited to their formulas and effects as the preceding ones. One should only attempt [to imitate the oboe] in small passages of thirds that insert slurred notes along with short notes.

Ex: 5.

“Since the oboe has a very nasal sound,” says *Mr. SOR* in the first edition of his method, “Not only do I attack the string close to the bridge, but I also curve my fingers and use the bit of nail that I have for this case to pluck them: this is the only case where I believe I can use [nails] without inconvenience. In my life, I have not heard a guitarist where his playing was bearable if he played with the nails.”

One writes guitar music in G clef, the register of this instrument is well near that of the cello. For example, the E written on the first string is [diagram of E as highest space on treble clef], in reality, the E [diagram of second ledger line above the bass clef] or [diagram of first line of the treble clef]; the third open string is the unison of the fourth [string] of the cello, and if one wants to execute exactly the same written part for the flute or the cello, it must be transposed to the higher octave.

Ex: 6.

Ex: 7.

Finally, to imitate the harp, a very analogous instrument to the guitar, a chord must be build in a way that covers a great interval, as shown example 8; pluck the string midway between the bridge and the twelfth fret, and give the texture and the color to the musical phrase appropriate to that instrument and that resembles being in their exclusive domain (*Example 9*).

Ex: 8: sixth string in D.

Ex: 9: Andante Largo.

Employ the different qualities intentionally, do not abuse them, so that they produce an excellent effect and spice up the execution of the artist who knows how to profit from them.

Knowledge of the Fingerboard

Each string possesses twelve semitones over the entire length of the fretboard. The four fingers placed over the same string, each one on each fret, cover a minor third or three semitones. The guitar is tuned in fourths, with the exception of the second and third strings which are a third apart. It results that after having gone through all four chromatic sounds produced by the successive position of the four fingers starting by the first fret (without disturbing the hand), the fifth sound will be the open string that follows immediately higher, with the exception of the third string in which there are only 3 frets in which to play to arrive at the intonation of the neighbor string *B* [the second string].

The student must learn to recognize each chord, third, fifth, and octave. Although it is not the easiest, let's take *Re* [D], the fourth string, as tonic. Place the first finger at the fourth fret and you have the major third. With the hand covering only 4 frets, let your fourth finger fall over the seventh fret and you obtain the fifth *La* [A]. Glide the fourth finger over the twelfth fret, and you have the octave.

Ex: 10.

Repeat this operation with all the strings. Once all the intervals are known to you, it will not be difficult to fill them with diatonic and chromatic sounds.

Fingering Over the Length of the String

It is very useful to perfect the knowledge of the fretboard to get used to traveling the strings throughout their length. Use the open string as tonic, the first pitch of the scale, and also as second, third, fourth, etc. while making the following exercises.

Ex: 11.

Usage of the Fingers of the Right Hand

In the article *The Right Hand*, we have explained the reasons that brought us to exclude the use of the ring finger or the fourth finger [i.e. 'a'] almost constantly; to play example 12, two fingers are enough: the thumb and the index.

Ex: 12.

Here, the three fingers are use in their natural order:

Ex: 13.

All the following arpeggios are self explanatory and do not need further explanation. In No. 2, we find the first special feature: in the first and third measures, the time is determined by a movable bass with the thumb, while in measures 2, 4, and 5, the fifth becomes the middle voice of the bass that precedes them.

Ex: 14.

Quartet reduce to arpeggios - Textual reduction of a Trio

In a passage of three real voices, each finger is assigned to each of the parts:

Ex: 15.

Rule for the Manner of Pressing Chords

For the execution of chords, it is necessary to press equally with all the fingers of the left hand, putting them very close to the inner fret. Prepare the fingers of the right hand against the chords before plucking in the following order: thumb, index, middle, and ring—whenever the last one is necessary. After making the strings vibrate to make the chord, it is necessary to keep the hand still, without turning it or lifting it, as people with bad habits do.

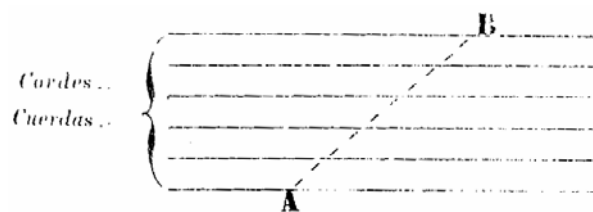
Ex: 16.

If the second lowest note of the chord is found in the neighbor note of the bass, or if the chord surpasses four notes, the thumb must glide from the bass to the next note (No. 1). If the chord has six notes, the thumb will pluck three of them (No. 2).

Ex: 17.

When two lower strings are adjacent, and the other are distant [i.e. with a string in between], one must pluck in the indicated manner (No. 3 and 4).

In certain exceptional cases that require energy, the thumb will pluck all the six strings describing the movement of the line *Fig. AB.*



Ex: 18.

The student must play the exercises very slowly from the beginning with the goal that the fingers acquire perfect equality and get accustomed to play with the best sound possible.

Consideration on the Lines [i.e. Slurred Scales] and Their Fingerings

When one must play a passage [slurred scale], one must never forget that they may be accompanied with harmony and that it must be fingered accordingly:

Ex: 19.

If the student, instead of using the fourth finger for the D and the G, would get use to, along with most guitarists, the use of the third finger for these two notes, one would find very awkward to play the following passage:

Ex: 20.

In the passage for example 21, one only has to pluck the first of the tied notes, while ascending, hold the fingers of the left hand in a position so that the last phalanges of the fingers can fall vertically to the strings, and produce the sound by hammering by striking them confidently: *Ex. 48.* When descending, prepare the note that you must tie and pluck that one. When you are about to hit it, withdraw the finger pressing, then give a strong impulse to the string that it may vibrate again by the left-hand action alone; this would produce the sound that you had prepared.

Ex: 21.

One must pluck all notes (*détaché*) because there is not a brilliant execution without this, but only consider it as auxiliary to the musical thought to which calls for relief [accentuated nuance] and mordents. A long passage with all detached notes is very flat and dry.

Ex: 22.

It would be in lack of taste to not to insert tied notes. Here is how you must execute them.

Ex: 23.

A passage of rattle-like notes [*redoublées*], rapidly detached, and accompanied with harmony is sometimes an excellent effect (see *Ex: 24*). The fingering of this is, for the right

hand, to attack only the double harmonic strings with the thumb as well as the first note of each group of triplets. When doing it, follow the order: thumb, middle, and index (*see Studies No. 13 and 20*).

Ex: 24.

Part 3: About the Thirds and Their Fingering

The [intervals of] thirds are major or minor, augmented or diminished, but since these last ones are rare, we are not going to occupy ourselves with them.

The major third embraces two whole steps or five frets; the minor third three half steps or four frets.

One presses the major third on a chord by holding two frets, and the minor third three frets, except for when they are being held on second and third strings.

Ex: 25.

On the second and third strings (*tuned by a major third*), the major third is made in the same fret and the minor third is made over 2 frets.

Ex: 26.

As long as the thirds follow each other on the same string, they are chained together consecutively by gliding one and two fingers without leaving the string (*Ex. 27 and 28.*)

In the example 28, the scale must be done entirely on the second and third strings, the second finger glides five times over the third string, while the first and third follow on the second string, alternating one another depending on the third (major or minor).

Ex: 27.¹⁹³

Fingers	1 ½step 2 whole	1 whole 3 whole	1 tone 3 ½step	1 whole 2 whole	1 ½ tone 2 whole	1 whole 3 whole	1 whole 3 ½ step	1 2
Thirds	Maj	Min	Min	Maj	Maj	Min	Min	Maj

In Example 29 in *E-flat*, having being obligated to take the *B* from the third string, where one finds its lower third *G* on the fourth string, the next major third is placed at the first fret with a bar. From there on, the second finger will glide over the third string without lifting it. The fingering changes from that of the previous scale only in the key signature of the clef, which changes the nature of the intervals.

Ex: 29.

Ex: 30: Order of the Major and Minor Thirds in the Range of the Scale

In order to become entirely knowledgeable about the thirds and, above all, to be able to play them over all the tones, there are some exercises prescribed here. This is made by taking an open string considered first as a tonic, then as second degree, then as third, etc. This note will serve us as point of the departure for each and every tone of a scale that will be played.

Ex: 31.

Once the student has learned to play the scales from Ex. 31, it will be easy for him to play those from the Ex. 32.

Ex:32.

It suffices now to notice some exceptions for the fingerings.

¹⁹³ The numbers indicate which fingers to use when playing a major scale on strings separated by fourths. The ½ and whole steps are the indication for each finger to move to the next third. Coste took this from Sor's method; although described, neither offered a corresponding example.

The minor third that is generally played with first and third fingers must be done sometimes with the first and fourth if the accompaniment requires that a bass must be held by the second finger; and with the second and the fourth if the bass must be held by the first [finger].

Ex: 33 and 34.

When playing thirds found in the basses, it is sometimes necessary to use the fingering 1 and 2 for a minor third. If the fourth finger is needed at a far distance from the first, because the third finger is shorter and more appropriate than the second, it works better if the second separates from the first than the third separates from the fourth: Etude No. 17.

Ex: 35, 36 and 37.

About Sixths

All blocks of chords contain at least a third and a sixth. The exceptions are chords by fourths and fifths that do not have a suspension note that resolves on a third.

Ex: 38.

Two consecutive strings form a fourth and a major third. Those making a major third [G, B], form a fourth with each of their nearest neighbors [D-G, B-E].

Ex: 39.

While leaving a string in between, these four strings form, due to their tuning, two major sixths.

*Ex:*40.

Consequently, whether we play them open or press down on the same fret, they will always produce intervals of major sixths. By raising the bass a semi tone, meaning moving it [the bass note] forward a fret beyond the alignment, we form have a minor third.

Ex: 41.

The study of sixths is of the utmost simplicity for whoever knows a bit about music as the science of sounds. Such a person knows that the scale contains within the octave two intervals half the size of the others. These intervals are between the third and the fourth notes, and between the seventh and the eighth. The sixth must embrace six notes, and must consist of either one of the two smaller intervals depending on the scale that makes it. Therefore, by having the scale as point of reference, one cannot miss the quality of the sixth: the one containing only one of the smaller intervals (the semitone) is major; that containing two of them will be minor. (1)

(1) The same that the minor third [illegible] ... that contain a minor interval, and the major third that [illegible] ... see *Ex. 3*.

Ex: 42.

One can play a long series of sixths only by the action of the fingers without having the left hand do any small movement.

Ex: 43.

In order to traverse the entire extension of the fingerboard with sixths, the same rule of chain sequence applied in the thirds must be observed: glide either one or two fingers from one interval to another without leaving the string. See *Ex: 44* from the sixth to the tenth interval and from the eleventh to the twelfth. The following exercises will teach the practice of thirds and sixths.

[*Ex: 44* not numbered]

Exercises for the Thirds

Exercises in Sixths

Study on the Thirds and Sixths

This serves as summary of the preceding studies.

Allegretto

The student will find in Ex. 45 the application of the fact that all chords contain at least one of the intervals treated earlier. In effect, pick any random third, add to it any interval, and the chord formed to which more sounds could be added will take its name from the intervals that make it and can be used in a line of chord progression (see Study No. 14 for the selection of chords).

Ex: 45.

Part 4: Scale in All the Notes

Conceived within the Perfect [Root Position] Chord

The curved lines or ties on the notes over the staff indicate the position for each of the notes of the root position chord on the scale. The dotted lines show which strings to use.

Ex: 46.

All students that have learned solfeggio and are familiar with the principles of music must know that in order to transform major into minor, either three flats must be added to the clef or cancel three sharps. And, such transformation must be done on each scale, aiming to play them in the minor mode. But this key signature is merely fictitious because in the ascending minor scale, only the third is lowered by a semi tone, while the remaining notes are obtained from the major mode.

The goal of these scales is not precisely one of training the fingers. The author [Sor] had a more profound thought. He wanted to start the student in the fingering of melodies, and to prepare them to the execution of his works, where the melody and the harmony are inseparable.

The study of examples 47, 48, 49, 50, and 51 will familiarize the students with melodic passages and will prepare them in the execution of ornaments, giving with this the necessary flexibility and lightness to the left hand (see the demonstration of *Ex: 21*).

Ex: 47 – 51.

Example 52 is a passage that starts with open note strings *D*, *G*, and *B*. The entire first measure must be done without displacing the hand and by covering a major third, i.e. five frets. The fingering indicates the way of execution.

In Example 53, the first part of the run must be done at the third fret without displacing the hand, covering five frets, then moving the first finger to the seventh fret where the position will contain a minor third. The slurs over the notes help indicate the evenness in the execution, and those underneath, the manner of articulation.

Ex: 53.

I cannot recommend enough a principle that is one of the essential conditions for a good performance: the left hand shall never vary its position while traversing the fingerboard; it must remain at the ninth fret, and in all other positions, it must be at the first,¹⁹⁴ with the thumb around the middle and facing the second finger. The first finger dominates the six strings and is ready for barring. The other fingers are equally spaced; embracing four frets and must press the first phalange confidently and very close to the strings so that their tip makes the smallest path when pressing them.

While placing the first finger over the second string in the first fret, you will find the fourth finger stretching over the fourth fret at the first string. You will already have the minor sixth. By extending the fourth finger by one more fret, you will obtain the major sixth. By

¹⁹⁴ Likely referring to the first string.

conserving the same sound as point of departure, the run of the melody can vary a lot; change the order of intonation of the first note relevant to the scale and provide endless combinations.

Ex: 54.

In a fast passage, the hand must generally keep one fixed position until the passage has an open string (if the tone includes it), which allows the movement of the hand without having to break the continuity of the run.

Ex: 55.

However, in a melody, one must preferably use the first string whenever possible. A G natural also goes better at the third fret on the first string than at the eighth fret on the second [string.] And this is much more reasonable than playing it over the third string at the twelfth fret. The sound there [on the first string] is much more prolonged than on the two strings, this is the reason why everyone will understand this truth: each string offers the same intonation, but the longer one will vibrate for a longer time.

About Harmonic Sounds

Called as such are the sounds formed by the contact of a body with certain points of a tightened string that is put in vibration.

These sounds are found in different nodes of vibration of the string, that is, at the middle, the third, the fourth, and other relative subdivisions of the sounding body. They are located at the third, fourth, fifth, seventh, ninth, and twelfth fret over the fretboard.

To obtain them, set the end of the finger down over the string without pressing, but only to prevent the vibration under the finger once it is plucked. Leave the finger over the string only until the sound is well formed, then you can let it vibrate with all liberty; the effect will be achieved.

The closer you come to the nut, the more the harmonic increases in pitch. This would prove that the part found between the finger and the saddle is the one that produces the sound. The same phenomenon is made in the other half of the string: The more you move the left hand away from the twelfth fret, making it closer to the bridge, the higher the sounds become. Besides, one uses the last tones only a few times, considering that is the exact reproduction of those found over the fretboard, at the same distance of the middle of the length of the string (*twelfth fret*).

The harmonic sounds that are the best are those found at the twelfth, seventh, and fifth frets. The others only occur on a good instrument set with adequate strings.

Not all fingers are equally well suited to produce harmonic sounds. The ones that produce them best are the third finger of the left hand and the thumb of the right hand. The harmonic sounds are produced an octave above the written note.

Harmonic Sounds Produced in the Same String Be the D Fourth String

At the 12 th fret	the 8 ^{ve}	D
At the 9 th	the double 10 th	F#
At the 7 th	the double 5 th	A
At the 5 th	the double 8 ^{ve}	D
At the 4 th	the double 10 th	F [#]
A bit above the 3 rd	the triple 5 th	A
A bit below the 3 rd	the triple 7 th min	C ♯

See table *Ex: 56*.

Ex: 56 Table of Harmonic Sounds

Relationship between the Clefs

[Three unnumbered staves showing real vs. transposition pitches in the open strings of the guitar]

[Three unnumbered staves showing actual open string pitches and their corresponding twelfth fret harmonics. The bottom staff has a treble clef, but the notes correspond to the bass clef.]

One can play entire passages in harmonics of 2 or 3 voices without the need of natural sounds. (*Ex: 57*) The first staff indicates the final result and, the fingerings of the left hand in the second.

Ex: 57

Ex: 58 Bis

Some authors write the harmonic sounds as the natural sound indicating the fret and string over the note that they would be pressed.

Ex: 58

The *F* is made on the seventh string, but if missing, it can be replaced by [making it on] the fourth string *D*.

Ex: 59

Other authors do not give any indication of fingering and are content with placing an '*h*' over the notes and enclosing them with a dotted line.

Ex: 60

One can also make harmonic sounds with double use of the fingers. Press the fingers normally and leave always an interval of twelve frets between the left hand that is holding the fret and the index of the right hand that makes them there by setting itself lightly over the string that is plucked by the thumb. This way, one can make a passage of semitones, something that would be impossible doing it using the preceding way.

Ex: 61 [Referring to the numbers below the score] Frets over which the index [first finger of the right hand or '*i*'] must set.

One can also employ the method that is derived from the violin. It consists of placing the first finger over the note desired (i.e. the octave lower) and then stretching the fourth finger until the fourth¹⁹⁵ above the note held by the first finger. Place the finger over the string at the upper fret of this fourth, pluck and the sound will be formed. (*See Example 59 extracted from the Molinera variations by Sor*)

One must make a sober usage of harmonic sounds. Use them on small phrases in dialogue with the natural sounds of the instrument, and mostly choose those that come up with the most clarity.

Reverie Nocturne [Nocturnal Meditation]

The numbers placed under the harmonic sounds indicate the frets over which the harmonics must be performed.

Piece of Study of the Harmonic Sounds

Appendix by N. Coste

Seventh String (1)

[(1) note reads 'see the instrument illustrated on the ...']¹⁹⁶

A few years back I asked at the workshop of Mr. Lacôte, Paris guitar maker, to fabricate a guitar in which the construction would be studied in such a way to provide [the guitar] with bigger volume, and above all, with beautiful sound quality. This test gave me a positive result in this sense. I have obtained almost twice the sound of the ordinary guitars, and the quality in this one is incomparably beautiful. The addition of a seventh string completed the system of the instrument that got the approval of the jurors of the last exposition of the industry presided by

¹⁹⁵ He is referring to the fourth of the length of the string.

¹⁹⁶ The rest of the text is missing; it is illegible in the documents I obtained.

Mr. Aubert, member of the Institute &a. &a. The guitar obtained the only medal issued to this genre of craftsmanship. I have given the name of Heptachord to this new guitar.

Being longer than the other strings, the seventh string is placed at a distance outside the fingerboard and does not change the way of playing in anything. Without plucking it, it makes the instrument vibrate with more power. It offers a way of writing harmony to whoever wants to use it. Without it, the harmony becomes very weak, because one must replace the absent tonic with another sound [above]. For example, some artists, with the goal to produce a loud final chord, have employed the following harmony:

[shows D6 chord in first position]

It is only an inversion so foul that the third is doubled at the bass and the treble.

Giuliani and Legnani, the two more skillful guitarists of the Italian school, have made use of that. However, I would not doubt that if they had the resource that I was able to create for myself, they would have not lacked to use it as such:

[shows D root position chord]

This one has the double advantage of making a good harmony and a beautiful sonority.

The *D* minor chord is made with difficulty in the guitar. Any attempt to produce it is deaf and does not match the preceding one, which is clear and vibrant.

[shows A7 to D chord progression]

Moreover, to avoid parallel octaves among the outer parts, the leading tone of the chord that resolves in this must be accompanied of the upper third or the double fifth. On the contrary, with the help of the seventh string, it gives a more even sound, a better voice leading, and is easily obtained.

[shows A7 , D , D chord progression]

One could come up with a couple of analogue examples.

My distinguished colleague SOR was so very annoyed with the absence of a lower bass *D* that he hardly wrote for this tonic without lowering the sixth string a whole tone. However, this alteration of the string deprived the author of the capability of modulation and limited the harmony to a narrow circle.

These were reasons that compelled me to add a string to the guitar. I have calculated its length so that it can be lowered, if needed, by a major third, and that its harmonic sounds are in keeping with those of the other strings. In this way, in the following passage taken from ‘*Tournoi*’ (*Coste, Op: 13*) the sixth *F-D* that begins the second measure is made by barring the seventh fret at the fifth and seventh strings [see last example on Coste’s page 45].

It is not only in *D* major or minor. In *G* major and minor the seventh string is of great help. Also, when lowering a whole tone, it can equally be used in *C* major and minor, as well as in *F* major and minor. Lower it one more tone, and it will have the same advantages in *B* major, and minor. Lower it yet another semitone, and will serve you equally in *B \flat* and *E \flat* . When one knows the usage in one tone, it is easy to use it in others without complication. The following exercises have the dual goal to offer an application of principles that have guided me in this innovation and to fill the void that its absence keep alive in the ordinary guitar. Their study is necessary to quickly get familiar with the seventh string, and also to easily employ it in music that has not been written in this manner.

15 Studies for the Seventh String

Six Pieces

Taken from the book published in 1686 and dedicated to Y.M. LUIS XIV, by Robert de VISÉE, teacher of guitar of this prince; *Magazines written with arrangement in ancient tablature.*

By N. Coste

26 Studies for the Guitar

By Ferdinand SOR

Magazines fingered and classified after the traditions of the author

By N. COSTE

CHAPTER 6

COMPARISON

Conceptual Differences

Although they are both versions of the same document, Sor and Coste's texts differ in approach, content and focus. In this section, I present the type of difference, contradiction, or varied point of view on any given subject, following the order of Coste's text.

In his search for a comprehensive understanding of technique that comes from "reasoning from experience,"¹⁹⁷ Sor aligns with the aesthetics of the *Enlightenment*. When Sor explains that his method comes from "the correct manner to play his own music," he views himself introspectively. He often desires to "instruct and inspire goodness."¹⁹⁸ These are characteristics of the philosophical trends of the late 1700's. His text aims to become a statement in all matters concerning guitar, including many subjects related to it: anatomy, geometry, singing, etc. In this respect, it heads in the same direction as Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* and other such literary giants: manifestations of works inspired in "knowledge, which empower an individual to act in accord to rational self interest."¹⁹⁹ These trends which define Sor's text fade out when the so-called age of reason comes to an end.

Coste's version of the method comes to fruition as a product of the financial and societal trends of mid nineteenth century. As his biographer informs us, he is fulfilling the pedagogical need he has for his students, presenting the concepts he considers worth teaching. Coste's transformation of Sor's method to make it practical serves "the huge growth in the population of cities [that] gave rise to a new class of domestic music consumers."²⁰⁰ This "musical

¹⁹⁷ Grout and Palisca, p. 420.

¹⁹⁸ Taruskin, Richard, *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* Oxford University Press 2010, p. 460.

¹⁹⁹ Taruskin, *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* Oxford University Press 2010, p. 461.

²⁰⁰ Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century* Oxford University Press 2010, p. XXI.

dissemination” is the result of the industrial revolution of an ever wealthier bourgeois class that “not only wielded a distinct political and economic power, but also had certain collective needs, desires, and ideas.”²⁰¹ Coste transforms Sor’s *Méthode* into a valuable resource to this new emerging population of domestic musicians, making his profound premises of guitar technique simpler and more accessible to the amateur and beginner.

Introduction

Right from the introduction, Sor presents a secure tone of confidence as he lays out his purpose, his presentation validating his style while distinguishing it from other composers, and starting his journey in technical matters.

Coste’s introduction, on the other hand, starts with an apparent vague approach to the history of the guitar, although he acknowledges it by mentioning to have written about some period in history “without looking up the authors.”²⁰² He describes the evolution of the guitar in order to imply a much broader scope: “of all the fretted instruments such as the theorbo, the lute, the sitrum etc., the guitar is the only one that continued to be played.”²⁰³ Coste informs us that the guitar “only had [the first] four strings at the beginning.”²⁰⁴ Then he denotes the addition of a couple of strings within a span of fifty years. On the other hand, Coste must have pondered the fact that although there were fretted instruments with a greater number of strings, they all fell out of use. It happened specifically, he informs us “because of the ingenious manner in which it [the guitar] was stringed, which renders it proper to the execution of counterpoint.”²⁰⁵ Equally, he may have observed that although the guitar did not have a bigger number of strings, it was still

²⁰¹ Taruskin, *Music in the Nineteenth Century* Oxford University Press 2010, p. XXI.

²⁰² Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 1. “Sans chercher dans les auteurs.”

²⁰³ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p.1. “De tous les instruments à touches divisées, telles que: la Théorbe, le Luth, le Sistre &.a; la Guitare est le seul que l’on ait continué à jouer.”

²⁰⁴ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p.1. “La Guitare n’avait d’abord que quatre cordes.”

²⁰⁵ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p.1. “Et surtout par la manière ingénieuse dont elle est accordée que la rend propre à l’exécution du contrepoint.”

relevant. These two observances—one could assert—likely led Coste to add his contribution in his addendum on the addition of the seventh string; Coste’s deliberate choice puts him diametrically opposed to the premises made by Sor in his introduction to ‘exhaust all the possibilities of the guitar as it is made before adding new strings.’

Not only does he add an addendum that he hopes will have forthcoming implications, Coste also wants to assure that the most relevant of the pedagogic teachings of his time are expressed in clear terms so that the guitar repertoire has an important reference that serves as basis for the upcoming works. He briefly surveys the repertoire specific to the guitar and concludes that the highest bastion since De Visée is his teacher Sor.²⁰⁶ Furthermore, he sees Sor’s own struggles to become relevant in the midst of a bitter environment created by ‘ignorant colleagues.’ Such peers were certainly not oblivious in the subject of guitar as they published their views in their own works, but rather unaware of Sor’s importance, which Coste recognizes. He also sees that Sor’s personality trembles under the criticism and ultimately hampers his ability to deliver his method effectively. He recounts an ‘embittered’ Sor that “was very concerned with responding to the attacks that he believed needed to be fought, rather than developing his own concepts and make them available.”²⁰⁷ He informs of his ultimate intentions explicitly: to deepen and clarify the ideas for practical application, to discover—through progressive lessons and examples—the difficulties of the art, and to shorten the path for students to accomplish Sor’s techniques and to fulfill his ultimate goal, to play his compositions.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ It is not that unfair of a statement. Although there are others around De Visée’s time such as Corbetta, Sanz, and some close to Sor’s time such as Molino Carcassi, Carulli, they are not as significant for the modern guitar technique as Sor is. Certainly, Coste’s opinion of De Visée, besides being personal, it is only being presented favorably in the opinion of King Louis XIV.

²⁰⁷ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 1. “Il paraissait bien plus préoccupé de repousser les attaques dont il croyait être l’objet et de rendre guerre pour guerre, que de développer se préceptes et de les mettre à la portée de tous.”

²⁰⁸ “Elaguer de théories étrangères au but qu’il s’agit d’atteindre; approfondir et étudier les idées des élevées du maître pour un tirer toutes les conséquences pratiques; aplanir au moyen d’exemples nouveaux et de nombreuses

The Left Hand

Coste's initial attempt at being assertive pedagogically leads him to diverge dramatically from Sor's text. Straight from his lengthy introduction, Sor shows concern for people playing badly by using the left-hand thumb over the fretboard. He also expresses philosophical and educational values. In contrast, Coste presents his goals and the reasons for them in a one page introduction, and then he proceeds right into the position of the instrument; the one subject from which the 'flexibility and ability of the fingers' come. Then he issues his first of eleven points in a bulleted list: 'Sit in a common chair [with] the left foot over a stool 12 cm. high.' Although Aguado informs us that Sor commonly used this position to play, he never mentions it in the method. His figures and his text only mention his most controversial technique statement: to place the guitar over a table. One could argue that Coste is disregarding Sor's teachings. However, we know from Aguado's account that Sor used a footstool. Sor's wording informs us that he has "not found anything better than to have in front of me a table."²⁰⁹ This leaves open the possibility that perhaps he was never too satisfied with the common use of a footstool.²¹⁰ Whatever the case, the first hint of a technical statement made by Sor is in his first section called *The Instrument*. There he addresses the buzzing of a string. It is evident that there are more basic technical implications, at least for beginners, that come before the pressing of a string. Therefore, Coste takes the pedagogical approach and delivers it, even when it is not present in Sor's text.

Coste's second concept tells us that "the left knee will shape a right angle with the body, whereas the right knee will move apart to make room for the box of the instrument."²¹¹ He

leçons élémentaires graduées, les difficultés de l'art et conduire les élèves aussi rapidement que possible à exécuter les œuvres du célèbre guitariste."

²⁰⁹ Please refer to footnote 71 and the corresponding figure.

²¹⁰ Guitarists typically all feel the same in regards to the footstool because hours of practice leave discomfort in the back. Some withstand it, as I do; others use modern devices to find comfort.

²¹¹ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 3. "Le genou gauche formera un angle droit avec le corps, tandis que le genou droit s'écartera pour faire place au coffre de l'instrument."

describes the standard classical guitar position of modern times. He is certainly not the only one asserting this position since Carulli and later Carcassi share the same position. However, it is also quite different from Sor description. In his Fig. 7, Sor tells us that the lower bow of the guitar rests on the right thigh. This is largely due to his choice of placing the guitar on a table because the left thigh is not supporting the guitar. It is a position that some modern guitarists have adopted,²¹² but it is not the standard of playing.

Coste's third item tells that "the guitar will rest in between the knee and the body and it will be inclined towards the chest without being pressed ever."²¹³ It speaks about two or three points of contact of the guitar with the body. He implies in his first item above that the two contacts are the legs, here he clarifies that it is the thigh, likely the right one, that it is the place in which it rests. These observations seem to be completions to Sor's urge for a stable position. However, they highly differ in the means with which it is achieved.

Coste's fourth concept, a warning against 'ridiculous execution,' is likely to have roots in Sor's comment against the 'Italian manner,' that is, in his criticism of aligning the shoulders with the inclination of the fretboard. Coste also concurs with of Sor's 'pains and difficulties' experienced in this position. Coste tells us to keep the shoulders "free to obtain easy freedom of movements."²¹⁴

Coste's fifth point about the specific height of the neck is one that is never mentioned by Sor except to say that it should be neither too high nor too horizontal. Coste comes up with a clever way to indicate the height while the amateur experiences the position. "The tuning pegs at

²¹² I recall my masters' professor, Adam Holzman, who sat lower placing the guitar farther towards the right to achieve this position. Eliot Fisk, his mentor, does so with the help of an A frame albeit higher. All guitarists using this devise can achieve the position. Duo Historico, a Danish duet dedicated to nineteenth century music performance do so also with the help of a strap.

²¹³ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 3. "La Guitare reposera entre le genou et le corps et sera inclinée vers la poitrine sans la presser jamais."

²¹⁴ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 3. "Elles lui ôtent [*sic*] la liberté et la facilité des mouvements."

the height of the shoulder' seem to be a low position for today's standards. However, the instrument of the period was of smaller box and measurements and may well be one of the variables that make the height to be comfortable.

Coste's sixth point states "have the elbow near the body towards the chest."²¹⁵ Since he indicates the right arm should be positioned over the guitar, we may infer that the description is intended for the left elbow. It is not clear as to how much distance to maintain between elbow and chest, but seems to be intended for the basic starting position, near the first frets. Although it is such a simple statement, it is not as precise since it does not offer a specific range or type of movement to do in order to shift. He may be indicating that the elbow goes towards the chest with the goal of setting up the fingers available towards the higher strings.

On the same subject, Sor points out that the left arm serves as a facilitator for the encounter of the thumb with the back of the neck. He also offers an upper view of the body in his fig. 9, where both arms are held away from the chest with hands outstretched horizontally towards the front. This specific position is likely not intended for playing, but it may help to imagine that the arm will drop towards the chest in order to for the palm to press the strings. Sor lays out more specifics regarding the straight alignment of the palm and the arm. Then he dedicates an entire section to the use of the elbow. It is in this section that he portrays the full extent of his left-hand and arm technique. He mentions to "bring the elbow closer to the body," specifically for the use of bars. In this case, it is with the intention of the thumb "facing the first finger" in order to support it. In sum, Sor mentions more specifics about position and function, but Coste in his simpler version, neglects these details.

²¹⁵ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 3. "Ayez le coude au cops vers la poitrine."

Coste's seventh point suggests "that the inner part of the hand comes to position itself against the neck on the side of the first string."²¹⁶ His fig. 2 shows roughly all the palm beyond the fret. Sor uses the same figure to describe other subjects such as position of the thumb in the middle of the neck as well as its position corresponding to the second fret without any mention of the use of the palm. Sor addresses the position of the palm in relation with the neck in his fig. 9. He coincides with Coste mentioning that the "left arm was not to have other than the hand in front of the line of the fretboard."²¹⁷ However, the figure shows that the left hand surpasses the line of the fingerboard up to the knuckles. This view confirms the hand location for playing, and it is possible that if taking them literally in their statements, they played with a more pronounced curvature on the left wrist.

Coste's eighth point further clarifies the position of the left-hand thumb: "place the thumb in the middle of the neck in front of the second finger and in the direction of the frets."²¹⁸ This statement describes the position both in relationship to the neck and the fingers. For the first part, both Coste and Sor choose a point that is the middle of the neck. However, Coste's second part is more useful because he issues the longitudinal position of the thumb in relations to the other fingers of the left hand. Sor first mentions in the left-hand section that the thumb goes in the second fret of an implicit first position. He only refers to it back again in the section dedicated to the elbow in which he mentions that the thumb is placed "opposite to finger 2"²¹⁹ then being placed in front of the first finger for barring. The main takeaway is the organization around a simple concept. Sor exposes closely related topics sparingly over several sections

²¹⁶ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 3. "La partie antérieure de la main vienne se placer contre le manche du côté de la chanterelle."

²¹⁷ "J'établis pour principe que puisque de ma gauche je ne devais avoir que la main au-delà de la ligne AB [the line of the fretboard]." Refer to footnote 77 above.

²¹⁸ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 3. "Placez le pouce sous le milieu du manche en face du second doigt et dans le sens de touches."

²¹⁹ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 34. "Je tiens en face du second doigt."

whereas Coste summarizes it in a single statement; Sor covers deeper knowledge but it is not as easily accessible.

In his ninth point, Coste describes a process that the fingers follow in order to press correctly. He mentions to first extend and then bend the fingers on the neck. Then instruct in using them to fall securely, ‘aplomb,’ and to fall in a ‘hammer like’ fashion on the strings. In other words, use the fingers to press perpendicularly on the strings. Although Sor does imply the same concept, he never mentions it explicitly. He comes closest to doing so when he makes remarks showing the disadvantage of using the left-hand thumb higher.

Coste’s tenth point refers to the extent and reach of the left-hand position, but the most specific description he gives is “the four fret extent.” He fails to offer any details of how to reach beyond, or behind, the standard position. Sor mentions that the reach of the position is achieved by stretching the fourth finger. He also clarifies the role of the thumb as pivot and guide to reach other positions. In this statement, Coste falls short of the details that Sor offers, especially in regards to the role of the thumb as detailed in Sor’s text, and does not fulfill his goal to clarify ideas of his maestro. However, in Coste’s defense, one could argue that the stretch of the fourth finger is an early advanced technique that does not need to be addressed unless the student has enough strength to make a relaxed left hand in any position that supposes a stretch such as the first four-finger position.

When Coste states that “The first finger [...] is ready to bar and to contract itself without moving the palm from being parallel to the fingerboard, and without changing the position of the thumb,”²²⁰ first, he offers a new view of the palm as being parallel to the frets, a statement that is not found in Sor’s text. Moreover, he presupposes that the left-hand fingers have a free range of

²²⁰ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 3. “Le premier doigt étendu au dessus des cordes es toujours prêt à barrer ou à se replier sur lui même sans que la position de la main cesse d’être parallèle au manche ni que le pouce varie dans sa position.”

movement while the palm and the thumb are in a relative steady position. The statement is somewhat refuted in Sor's concepts. He advocates for the support of the larger muscles by the movement of the left elbow for the fingers to reach higher or lower strings. This in turn makes the thumb, as Sor puts it, a movable 'pivot.' Moreover, Sor advocates for moving the thumb lower, near the edge of the first string, for bars. Coste clarifies that the thumb's role is to "fix the hand without gripping the fingerboard,"²²¹ but he does not specify, as Sor does, in which case it applies. Sor is specific to mention that it is in the case of the bar where some force must be used. Coste is likely to be nonspecific. However, it leaves the door open for a modern approach of technique in which the larger muscles contribute largely to the necessary force of the bar, without the need of the thumb for gripping on the back of the fretboard.

Coste's short handling of Sor's left-hand concepts can be considered prove of the great detail of the Maestro in this subject. The fact that Coste did not itemize with clarity the great insight of Sor regarding the left hand, speaks not only to Coste's lack of detail but also the difficulty in the read of his method.

The Right Hand

If the left-hand exposition was considered the standard of modern technique, the section on the right hand from both authors fall in the category of ancient techniques, largely due to a strong adherence from Coste to follow Sor's remarks.

Coste uses a simple first statement: "rest the forearm over the edge of the instrument." Coste uses Sor's figure 11 within his figure 5, albeit with slightly different nomenclature. He then describes a process in order to find the correct placement of the arm: "advance it until the end of the little finger [the pinky] can be placed over the top of the guitar a few centimeters after

²²¹ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 3. "Ce dernier doigt ne fera que fixer la main sans serrer le manche."

the strings so that the curve made by the wrist D is above the plane of the strings.” This first indication refers only to the positioning of the arm and hand.

Sor reveals his right-hand concepts over several sections of his method and introduces them with the warning that he makes few remarks on the subject. He first addresses the placement of the arm in the position of the instrument when he issues a placement of the forearm: ‘half way between the elbow and the wrist.’ Then he suggests to “drop the hand naturally,” making a tacit remark similar to Coste’s conception: to rest the arm on the edge. However, Coste asks the player to determine the position by following a process, while Sor issues a specific point in which to place it. This means that the position can vary greatly from one conception to another. Moreover, if one considers differences in sizes into account, such as the nineteenth century guitar being much smaller than the modern, as well as obvious variances in that of the performer, there may be a great difference between resting the halfway point of the forearm on the edge and finding the place where the arm ultimately rests when the pinky touches the guitar top. The wrist position following Sor’s instructions could be quite different depending on sizes considered above, but Coste’s end result would likely be closer in position regardless.

Sor further elaborates on the role of the right elbow as lever to move the right hand towards the strings. However, the next near evidence regarding arm position appears in tacit hints found in the section titled use of the *fingering of the right hand*. There he issues ‘i’ and ‘m’ for the second and first hand respectively, with the thumb moving freely over all other strings. However, these are only hints because he does not address the point of contact, nor does he restrict the position of the wrist in order to make such a place known. The takeaway from here is that Coste again is closer to what it is likely to be: an area determined entirely by the approach of the left-hand fingers to the strings. Sor fixes the arm at a point, but his explanations of finger

positions show that he does not mean it as precisely as he initially describes them. Sor himself acknowledges the movable reality of the right arm when he redirects readers to Aguado regarding plucked scales. Perhaps what is being missed is the pedagogical aspect. Beginners of guitar start at a standard relatively fixed position, but in the process of setting up the right-hand fingers, they learn to place the hand, rather free from fixed positions. As they become acquainted with the standard right-hand placement, players most explore how the movement of the right hand empowers the right-hand fingerings.

Coste advises the use of the little finger with caution. He mentions to use it ‘rarely’ in plucked string ‘scales and arpeggios.’ This is in line with Sor’s use of the pinky when he recommends using it over the top of the guitar ‘sometimes’ as means of stability for plucking fast ‘*p*’ string crossings.

Coste relies heavily on the image in his figure 5 to describe how to use ‘*i*’ and ‘*m*.’ He advises to pluck while using them ‘perpendicularly to the strings.’ Sor refers to the same image to describe the slight curvature of the fingers, and to ‘preserve the line parallel to the plane of the strings.’ This is a point that Coste omits, presumably for being an obvious fact, since it would not be possible to pluck if you are not in alignment with the line describe by Sor.

They both move on to describe the position of the thumb as it relates to the other fingers. Coste informs us to “surpass the index, advancing it towards the fingerboard, over its joint.”²²² Sor employs different wording to describe a similar resulting shape. He asks to make a cross shape with the index and the thumb. Coste adds a couple of pointers not found in Sor. First is a description of the movement of the thumb as ‘a circular motion’ as it plucks the string and then regains the initial position. Second, he mentions the point of contact of the thumb with the string

²²² Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 3. “Le Pouce dépassera l’index en avançant dans la direction du manche; et dans son articulation.”

as the ‘part of the finger closest to the nail.’ In the latter, Sor offers a couple of tacit hints pointing out the place in which finger contacts the string. The first one comes in the next section titled *Way of Striking the String*. There he mentions the round tip of the finger as a possible cause of disturbance for string vibrations, which implicitly indicates that he may have an initial contact from the strings farther than Coste’s recommendation. The second is addressed specifically for dolce sounds: in the section dedicated to the *Quality of Sound*, he depicts the contour of the fingertip in figure 19, arguing that the friction of the tip produces mellow sounds. It is implicit that at least in this particular case the contact is far from the nails, surely a difference with Coste’s comment. However, it is certain that Coste refers to standard sounds.

Coste agrees with Sor in the first assessments of the annular finger when he deems it “weak and to be avoided, unless there is no other way to complete a chord,” but in trying to elaborate he may have left the door open for those *batterie* which Sor despises greatly. He adds that “certain arpeggios where its usage is absolutely necessary.”²²³ Unfortunately, no example is given in this regard. Coste’s last remark is a quote from Sor regarding the movement of plucking as the action of closing the hand but not entirely.

The authors views of the right hand are fairly similar. Sor is more detailed, but his approach presents restrictions; specifically for the use of the arm. Coste is not as detailed, leaving some concepts without consideration. However, while Sor restricts the point of the arm, Coste, in presenting a process, allows the player to find a freer position. Both authors show the transitional stage of using the little finger as support only when needed. They also see the ‘a’

²²³ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 3. Last two quotations: “L’Annulaire étant très faibles il faut éviter de s’en servir autrement que pour le complément des accords et certains arpèges où son usage es d’une nécessité absolue.” This comment brings to mind arpeggios such as the one found in Villalobos Etude 11, which certainly falls in this category.

finger similarly. Coste's elaboration creates more possibilities for its usage. This is likely the resulting technical trend from an expansion in the language of mid-nineteenth century repertoire.

Way of Attacking the String

Coste uses Sor's figure 18 in his figure 7, with fewer letter indicators, to paraphrase the same terms in Sor about the transmission of the energy to parallel oscillations of the strings. However, Sor reiterates the amount of finger curvature he already addressed in the *Right Hand* section. Here he restates with slight different wording "curve the left-hand fingers as little as possible."²²⁴ Additionally, he argues that it is this 'little curvature' is what effectively communicates good string oscillations. Coste relies solely on the figure and leaves it to the student's subjective understanding, missing the opportunity to offer the same connection that Sor raises.

On Tuning of the Guitar

Coste's stark different approach in this subject underscores his desire to make this edition of the method accessible for beginners with an understanding of music notation as it applies to guitar. Right from the title, he directs readers to the place where the tuning is addressed. Sor approaches the names of the open strings as well as the frets and their function in his section titled *Knowledge of the Fingerboard*. However, he does not direct it towards the application of the tuning as Coste does, but rather it is his starting point for the discussion on the location of all major scales. As coined by Duplenne, this section is an entire new addition by Coste, not found in Sor's method. In this comparison, it is possible to see that although this is a new section, it does intersect with certain statements by Sor.

Coste's addition on tuning can be divided in two parts. In the first part, he asks for a reference such as a tuning fork to tune string ⑤. Then he suggests tuning by unisons, pointing

²²⁴ See footnote 81 above for translation.

out their place on the fingerboard. He encourages to proof the resulting intonation by then tuning octaves or fifths.²²⁵ He ends the first part by asking the player to ‘become familiar’ intonation of the open strings by ear. In the following section, Coste directs our attention to the thickness, and hardness of the string and the relationship with the amount of sound. He sees that closer thickness of string ② to ① and ⑤ to ④. Although he does not offer a direct reason for his preference, he mentions that hardness of strings produce less sound. Perhaps he believes that thicker means harder. Whichever the case is, he advocates to remain in the “degree of tension that they ought to have” in order not to “paralyze the instrument.”²²⁶ He determines this ‘justness’ by plucking the string in the air with the ‘a’ finger and observing two defined parts. Sor briefly addresses quality of strings in the section titled *The Quality of Sound*. He mentions aspects such as the appropriate thickness, but Sor does not elaborate on the specifics. He states that, according to luthiers, the guitar can be built according to the string preference of the performer. Tuning parameters are very common on all guitar methods of the period. It is possible to imagine Coste’s need to make it available in this ‘augmented’ edition.²²⁷

31 Lessons and Exercises by N. Coste

In this practical part, Coste honors the second part of his title. These ‘numerous examples’ are a complement to Sor’s method. While they are sometimes in opposition to Sor’s premises, they are not beyond of the normal way of playing the guitar: they focus on many of the techniques exposed by Sor and also some that Coste sees appropriate to contribute.

The first exercise is a diatonic scale in which Coste presents the same notes and fingerings as Sor’s example 18, which belongs to the section he called *Knowledge of the*

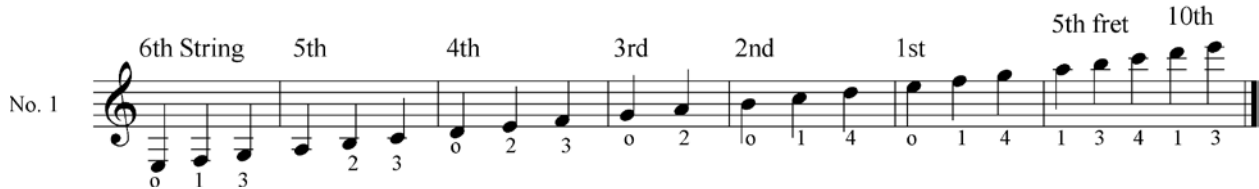
²²⁵ See *On the Tuning of the Guitar* in the translation.

²²⁶ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 4. “Attendu que ces cordes n’était plus en rapport avec les degré de tension qu’elles doivent avoir elles vibrent difficilement et paralysent l’instrument.”

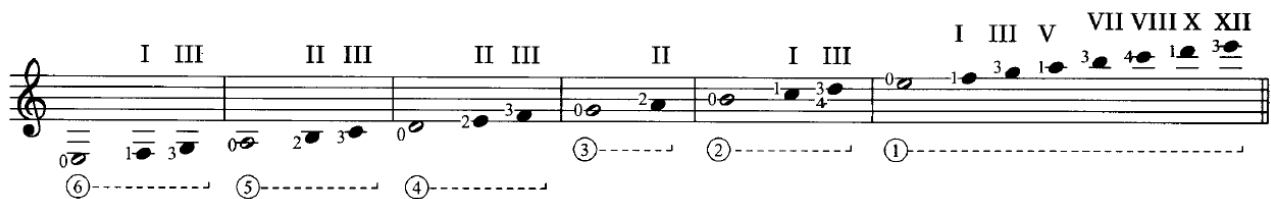
²²⁷ Coste’s advice on how to select strings is beyond the scope of this work.

Fingerboard. This is the only one that roughly belongs to Sor's text; all other examples are Coste's compositions.

Example 2: Npoleon Coste, *Mthode Augmente, 31 Lessons and Exercises, No. 1*.



Example 3: Sor, *Mthode, Example 18*.



Coste's example implies a different rhythm and meter. Since Coste and Sor have different purposes in presenting these similar scales, their interpretation differs greatly. Coste starts these *lessons and exercises* with the intention of issuing routine drills for practice. He uses equal values to express the steady rhythm even if the implied meters are irregular: 3/4, 2/4, and 5/4.²²⁸ Coste is trying to denote the open strings with the beginning of the measure. This is expressed by Sor with stemless half notes and the resulting implicit irregularities in the measure counts. Even though Sor issues the same fingerings, his goal with the example is to show the distance of natural notes among the frets. Coste adds a footnote to his example in which he asks the reader to consult the section called *Quality of Sound*. This advise may reinforce the fact that he recommends drilling this exercise to achieve good sound.

Number 2 is an exercise in holding note values, specifically for the bass. Number 3 is a lesson that applies the last concept and exercise in a musical example. Sor's Example 20 shows a

²²⁸ Although there is a pattern of two 3/4 measures, one of 5/4 with a repeat, it is surely not conceived as such.

Coste moves to offer Examples 7 A and B in which he nears Sor’s usage of ‘*p*’ and ‘*i*.’ Example 8 is another scale exercise in which he does not display any fingerings. However, Coste directs readers to check the section titled *Rule for the Manner of Pressing Chords* in the second part. From the lesson in No. 9 until the exercise on the scale in No. 14, the right-hand fingerings disappear. Exercise 15 is another scale in which he combines Sor’s use of ‘*p-i*’ with the alternations of ‘*i-m*’ which seems to be in line with his choice. In this case, ‘*p-i*’ combinations are for lower strings up to string ③. The ‘*i-m*’ combinations are for string ② and ① as well as for their higher positions. Both exercises 14 and 16 exhibit a scale pattern accompanied of sustained basses. The example No. 17²³⁰ uses a slide as follows:

Example 5: Coste, *Méthode Augmentée, 31 Lessons and Exercises, No. 17.*



Coste first defines *portamento* as a kind of slur. Here, he is in line with Sor’s use of slides ‘in order to produce a slur,’ but Sor’s examples move an interval of a third at most. Coste’s examples at measures 34 and 35 show not only an expansion of the interval that the slides travel, but also the language of Romantic music being expressed through proper names of an articulation from the mid-nineteenth century. In his example No. 20, Coste focuses on a couple of passages of ascending scales in sixteenth notes and adheres to Sor’s advice to pluck the first and slur the rest of the notes. In the third last measure, he adds a comment regarding the plucking of harmonics: “bar over the seventh fret and don’t do more than touch the strings without

²³⁰ The measure number is added. There are three more cases of portamentos within this example.

pressing them.”²³¹ Coste’s intention in Example 22 is to use an extended left-hand position covering 5 frets. It also presents the first minor scale (Dm). Coste targets the dexterity of the left hand to find notes underneath a sustained note in the top voice in his Example 23. It appears first on the tonic of the key, D, then moves to A after a brief transition. In the final part, the sustained notes to control are two in the melody. Coste combines arpeggios and scales in example 24. He only issues left-hand fingerings. Example 26 is the first one introducing three defined voices. In No. 27, Coste works on two voices with arpeggio figurations. For No. 28, Coste issues the second minor scales in the key of G, but presents it in a melodic minor fashion. In No. 29, Coste issues a small lesson to practice the scale previously treated.

The Quality of Sound and the Imitation of Some Instruments

Coste’s last point in the previous section regarding the strength of the strings as a factor in the quality of sound is, to some extent, Sor’s first point of this section. For Sor, the quality of sound starts with the craft of the instrument and installing the appropriate set of strings. Once this slight difference is underscored, the rest of the entire chapter is, for the most part, similar with the accustomed synthesized text and certain omissions.

Both authors choose the tenth of the string as standard place to pluck and they also argue the same musical reasons: manageable tension and lengthy sounds. Sor explains that the tension varies according to the place in which the string is being plucked; his explanation allows a logical understanding on how the timbre changes come to be. Coste simply repeats Sor’s words about plucking at the eighth part of the string, and calls for a friction-like motion for mellow sounds as opposed to using a position close to the bridge with more force for bright ones.

²³¹ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 10. “Barrez sur la 7eme touché en ne faisant que toucher les cordes, sans les comprimer;” the Spanish text has the same meaning.

Coste adds a comment on the need to make “sufficient pressure of the left-hand fingers to avoid buzzing” which could hinder the quality of sound. At this point, Coste omits the explanation given by Sor on the subject of strumming chords.

Both authors warn that for the imitation of instruments to take place successfully, the effects must happen in passages proper to the language of those instruments. They also recommend mellower tones plucked at a sixth of the string, avoiding first positions with the left hand, as well as open strings.

Coste underscores that the ‘warlike martial’ character is the most characteristic passages for the trumpet. Sor describes it in terms of its musical effects and dynamics. Both authors employ the same technique: pluck near the bridge to make a nasal sound, and lightly press strings in the middle of the fret to make a buzz.

Both authors agree that it is in passages of slurred thirds where the oboe can be properly imitated. Coste quotes Sor regarding the imitation of the oboe; he includes Sor’s exception for the use of nails for plucking in this particular section.

Coste omits the explanation on the imitation of the flute, presumably because the only concept expressed by Sor is a compositional one. Instead, Coste opens a parenthesis to join Sor in the next discussion. He address the issue of guitar as a transpositor instrument.

Coste skips Sor’s explanation of pizzicatos and staccatos; perhaps he read Sor mentioning that he rarely uses them or perhaps it is due to the fact that Sor looks down on techniques that decrease the *already decreased* sound of the guitar. He finishes this section with the imitation of the harp. He roughly copies Sor’s text advising to pluck at a fourth of the string for large arpeggios that cover wide intervals.

Knowledge of the Fingerboard

Both Coste and Sor aim to outline the knowledge necessary for this section with slightly different explanations. Sor tailors his approach with the introductory discussion about the distinction of musicians that are readers of musical ideas rather than readers of notes.

Coste starts imprecisely stating that the entire fingerboard has ‘twelve frets.’ However, the guitars of the time including the ones in Coste’s iconography show that they were built with more than just twelve frets.

In regards to tuning, Coste states that the guitar is tuned in fourths except second and third strings. Sor simply recommends knowing the open strings. They also describe fretboard distances differently; Coste explains that a hand position covers a minor third, or three semitones, while Sor simply describes the distance between the frets as a semitone. Coste suggests playing the four chromatic sounds in first position arrives to the sound of the next string, while Sor recommends recognizing the natural sounds in between adjacent strings. Sor issues a technique: the fourth finger should not press beyond the fourth fret and the fifth string at the first position, but he does not follow consistently.

For the next point, Coste exchanges Sor’s first position for triads along the string: he advocates recognizing the third, fifth and octaves of chords along the length of the string. He claims that “it would not be difficult to fill them in with diatonic and chromatic sounds.” It is a minor comment to connect to Sor’s first position scales, perhaps to make it simpler at first because Sor’s concept is difficult for beginners.

Fingering Over the Length of the String

Sor explains scales with intervallic distances—whole or semi tones—in first position, and does not advocate for memorizing sharps or flats. He then observes their proportions to transpose

them using major scales in his example 16, “Arrangement of the Diatonic Scale.” At this point, he does not present the scales with chords as he does later in the method, suggesting that perhaps he includes them in this way with purely theoretical intentions. Sor gives an example of all the scales in first position, but he doesn’t issue any fingerings. He advocates, rather, a set of rules: use adjacent fingers, stretch 1 and 2 rather than 3 and 4 to play adjacent frets, and skip fingers when skipping frets.

Coste aligns with Sor in his recommendation to use open strings as either tonic, second, or third, etc. He presents the same scales and fingerings as Sor. He does not, however, present the accompanying example; perhaps he didn’t see the significance this theoretical concept. The scale exercises that both Coste and Sor include, on the other hand, build knowledge of the fingerboard and also develop solmization.

Usage of the Fingers of the Right Hand

Coste must have seen fit to omit Sor’s concepts from this section since he had already set up the process he chose to define the right-hand position. He reiterates that the ring finger is ‘excluded almost constantly.’ He then refers to the fingers according to the examples. In Example No. 1, he calls for the use of ‘*p-i*.’ For Example No. 2 onward, he suggests to use the ‘three fingers in natural order.’ From this point, he reorganizes Sor’s following heading titled *Fingering of the Two Hands*. Coste sees that there is a continuation of the right hand examples and place them next. He deems that the examples, which are Sor’s, are self explanatory. As for Sor’s remaining part, Coste issues a new title called *Consideration of Scales and their Fingering*.

For the seven examples mentioned above, Sor is committed to economy of motion in the right hand. First, he establishes that good arpeggios are those played within chord shapes. Then he points to the right hand, arguing that the setting of ‘*p, i, m*,’ presented in the examples follow

his musical style because the fingerings tailored to the musical accents of the examples. He offers another example that does not suit his language, arguing that not only they are void of content but also the ‘a’ finger, which is to be avoided, would be obligated to carry strong parts of the beat.

In sum, the appearance of the examples in Coste’s method follows Sor’s order, but they appear under different headings. To find them easier to play, he recommends learning them progressively.

Rule of the Manner of Pressing Chords

Coste presents this new section on a subject which is only treated briefly in the beginning of Sor’s *Quality of Sound*. He contributes several concepts: play chords with the left-hand fingers pressing with equal force; place the left-hand fingers very close to the inner part of the fret; prepare the right-hand fingers; maintain the position of the left hand after plucking for ringing; glide the thumb over the basses if there are more than 4 strings; prepare the right-hand fingers; maintain the position of the left hand for ringing; glide the thumb over the basses if there are more than 4 strings; if there are intermediate strings that do not sound, leave them in between ‘i’ and ‘m;’ for six string chords, the thumb plucks the string. In regards to this last item, Sor is more specific in his instructions that the strum of the thumb occurs parallel to the soundboard and that a free wrist is key to control the force, mass and momentum of the strum.

Consideration about the Scales and Their Fingerings

Coste chooses a different title for the section Sor called *Fingering of the Two Hands*. He sees that certain traits or slurred scales need a specific fingering because of the potential harmony accompanying the scales.

For Sor, the main focus is on the singing capabilities: that is, the ability to sound legato. He sees slurs as more advantageous than right-hand alternations of any kind.

At this point, it is possible to observe a thread Coste tries to connect to one of Sor's fundamental concepts: the melody is dependent on the fingering of the harmony. Coste first uses strums to denote chords sustained as the arpeggio continues. Then he offers sustaining bass notes in examples 19 and 20 in which there are notes ringing as accompaniment.

Both authors offer the details on how to perform slurred passages: attack the first of the notes to tie and exert sudden pressure with the external phalanx falling perpendicularly. Sor also considers for scales of 6 strings to be disadvantageous because of the right-hand fingering.

Coste offers his own attempt at to connect guitar technique with musical ideas. In his example 22, he mentions that a brilliant execution of this passage requires an '*i-m*' alteration because these fingering are auxiliary to the musical thought.

Both authors point out a repeated note passage which is accompanied by harmonic sounds on the first part of the beat. Coste recommends plucking the accompaniment with thumb and then following the '*p, m, i*' order in the fingering for the rest of five written notes.

The Elbow

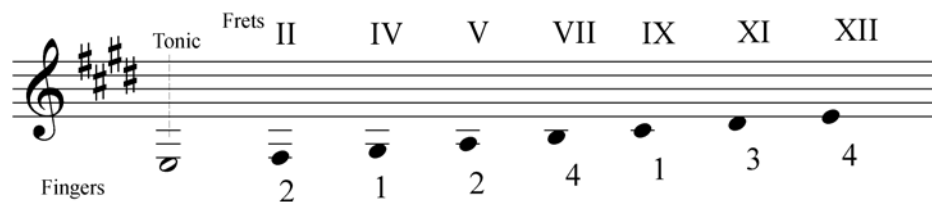
Another section not included by Coste is the section Sor called *The Elbow*. In this section Sor looses some of the earlier restrictions to show the left-hand technique in full display. He goes into the specifics of barring. Coste only mentions it 3 times: two refer to the first finger as being ready to bar, and one in regards to stopping harmonics under the same position. Sor expresses the roll of the lateral movement of the elbow in supporting the fingers moving horizontally on the frets. Coste only mentions this once in his sixth point of the left hand as being near the body. Sor

closes the chapter encouraging readers to become self guided as they read his writings. There is a gap in Coste's writing in this subject.

Scales

In this parenthesis from the continuum of the comparison, I observe how the practical aspects of playing scales differ greatly in both authors. Sor presents the study of scales as a harmonic exercise: "In order to improve the knowledge of the fingerboard, it is very useful to be accustomed to traverse the strings in all their length by considering the open strings under different rolls."²³² All the scales presented are all the different modes following the given fingering as shown in example 6.

Example 6: Sor, *Méthode, Example 19*.²³³



On the other hand, when Coste presents his scale exercises for the first time, he pursues the implications on technique more than the harmonic knowledge. He simply mentions: "knowledge of the diatonic scale over the fingerboard,"²³⁴ and shows a scale played in first position until it reaches the first string where it continues ascending through the string along the fingerboard until the scale reaches the frets near the box of the guitar. This motion is the default result of continuing with the scale until it is comfortably played without pursuing complex harmonic knowledge.

²³² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 28. "Pour se perfectionner dans la connaissance du manche, de s'habituer à les parcourir toutes Dans leur longueur."

²³³ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 9: illustrations and musical examples. No barlines or measure numbers were given. The major scale is the first of a series of scales all over the note 'E' on each of the modes.

²³⁴ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 5.

Example 7: Coste, *Méthode Augmentée, 31 Lessons and Exercises, No. 6.*²³⁵

The image shows two staves of musical notation for guitar. The first staff is on a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It contains a sequence of notes with fingerings: 1, 3, 2, 3, 2, 1, 4, 0, 1, 3, 1, 3, 4. A bracket below the staff indicates the 5th fret. The second staff is also on a treble clef and contains a sequence of notes with fingerings: 1, 3, 4, 3, 1, 4, 3, 1, 3, 4, 1, 3, 4, 1, 3, 1, 4. A bracket below the staff indicates the 10th fret. A dashed line extends from the 10th fret marking across the bottom of the page.

About the Thirds and Their Fingering

Coste recognizes the existence of all thirds, and mentions that the theories only use major and minor. He proceeds with the distance of thirds along one string, then moves to the harmonic thirds in consecutive strings. He presents his examples 25 and 26 which are not present in Sor's method. Here he shows pairs of consecutive thirds, one major and a minor, or vice versa, in three pairs of strings: ⑤-④; ②-① and ④-③. He points out the differences among the thirds. He mentions that a major third covers three frets and a minor third covers two. Then presents the same concept on a different pair of strings: ③-②, whose thirds are on the same fret for major and cover two frets for minor.

Sor, on the other hand, leads his presentation of scales directly into the scales in thirds as a continuation. He also explains the tuning of strings and their relationship to the resulting thirds. For strings separated by a fourth, the major third is pressed on adjacent frets while the minor third is a fret apart. On thirds played on strings ②-③, major thirds are on the same fret, and minor ones on adjacent frets. This corroborates his usage of shapes and their order of appearance rather than the knowledge of sharps or flats. The material that begins this heading is the same by both authors, but it changes in how it flows from the preceding heading. Coste simply refers to

²³⁵ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 5.

the thirds as a distance, while Sor gives a natural continuation from the explanation of scales along the string, leading into the use of the scales as part of the scales in thirds.

The rest of the examples are identical in both versions. Both authors point out the use of the second finger without leaving the string for thirds played on strings ③-②. They also mention the different fingering of thirds based on the disposition of other notes. They present the same examples showing thirds pressed with fingers 1 and 4 on strings ①-② while finger 2 is used for the basses. They both also have examples of thirds being pressed with fingers 1 and 2 on strings ④-⑤ while finger 4 is holding a note on string ①.

On Sixths

Coste only adds two small examples: No. 38 and 41. In the first one, he demonstrates Sor's words referring to suspension chords as containing neither the interval of a third nor a sixth. In example 41, he exemplifies how a major sixth is found on the same fret on strings ④-② and minor thirds on adjacent frets by raising the bass. Coste's text resembles Sor's except for Sor's last paragraph. Coste refers only to the last example of the chapter, observing that there are some common fingers among the scales in sixths on strings ①-③. Sor, on the other hand, assures that in order to make the playing his music easily, the performer must be acquainted with exercises of thirds and sixths because "his fingering is the direct result" of these concepts. Coste simply dives into the exercises without further emphasis or explanation. He offers the sixth of Sor's exercises on thirds as the starting point. The change does not adhere to any pedagogical reasoning. The only possible logistical reason I speculate is that it might have to do with the placement on the plate: the publisher may have chosen to place them in that order because exercises 1 and 2 cover a total of six lines, whereas 1 and 6 only cover 5. He might have used exercise 3 for that purpose. The fact that they presented out of order, without any numbering or

explanation, undermines Sor's intent to present exercises in order of difficulty. Coste places a composition in two parts: *Intro – Allegretto*, as the application of thirds and sixths. It is located after the last of the studies of sixths. He does, however, omit the composition Sor included for this section. Paradoxically, the Sor etude, titled *exercise*, is a slightly easier etude than that offered by Coste. The pieces differ in the realization of the accompaniment. Sor chooses an Alberti bass that accompanies a simple melody in first position throughout the majority of the piece. Coste, on the other hand, does away with the Alberti, and ventures into higher positions in thirds, sixths, and also scales, thus creating a piece of greater difficulty, especially for the beginners.

Coste ends the section with a paragraph after the exercises referring to example 45—a chord progression also presented by Sor in his text. This is his only reference to Sor's subheading, *Application of the Theory of Thirds and Sixths*. He mentions that one can add any note to any third, and the name is the result "from the intervals that make it."²³⁶ This comment is directed towards figured bass, or chord nomenclature. Sor, on the other hand, speaks to the reach of his theory as being useful in fingering any passage, not only his own. He then follows the same example with a thorough explanation of how thirds are axial to the fingering; that is, the thirds are fingered first, and the other intervals are fingered around them in the chords presented.

Coste changes Sor's heading *Fingering of the Left Hand in Regard to the Melody to Scale in All the Tones Conceived Within the Perfect Chord*. He starts by describing the forthcoming examples, which are Sor's. Coste mentions that the notes of the chord are indicated with dotted lines in the scale. He then explains the necessary changes from major to parallel minor scales. He makes a marginal point that these are 'fictitious' changes because in the ascending mode the scale

²³⁶ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 33.

is the same except for the third step which is lowered a semitone.²³⁷ He then continues to describe Sor's goal with these scales, pointing out that the examples train students in "the fingering of melodies, and prepare [students] for the execution of his works, where the melody and the harmoni are inseparable."²³⁸ Coste's statement is different from what Sor says, but not what Sor does. Under this heading, Sor restates his thought that the fingering of the melody is dependent on that of the harmony. However, in the section *Analysis of an Accompaniment of a Fragment of the Oratorio by F. J. Haydn*, in his choice of fingerings for m. 16, Sor contradicts himself by finding the fingering of a harmony based on a set melody. Therefore, we can conclude that Coste is more accurate in his conception to consider both elements, melody and harmony, in the creation of a fingering. In Sor's defense, we can say that he views this process of fingering in a compositional way, but that performers and transcribers may not always be obligated to abide by it.

²³⁷ He is referring to the melodic minor.

²³⁸ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 33. "Il a voulu initier l'élève au doigté de la mélodie et le préparer ainsi à l'exécution de ses Ouvres où la mélodie et l'harmonie sont inséparables."

CHAPTER 7

OPINION

Considerations of Sor's Concepts

What follows in this penultimate chapter is a series of general comments over the techniques expressed in Sor's concepts. They are my own thoughts on the subject at hand, and while they are informed, in my view, as a guitarist with twenty first century training that has studied the writings of the nineteenth century composer and guitarist, the most representative for the guitar in his time, and presented in an objective perspective, I do acknowledge that they are opinions and therefore, should be considered accordingly. They may be subjected to further study, but that is certainly not the subject of this one. They follow the order in which the concepts were stated in his text.

Position of the Instrument

When reviewing the concept of position in relationship to the instrument, it became evident to me that I have never had a chance to discuss this in a guitar lesson, perhaps mainly because it is an issue that is, or should be, addressed at the beginners level. Whatever the case may be, it seems to me that guitarists in the twenty first century play with the current position mainly as a result of tradition as well as for the fact that the instrument is now larger in size than the one existing in the nineteenth century. As a consequence, performers have had to adjust the guitar, moving it to the right side in order to gain a better reach with the left hand. However, it is important for brand new students and beginners to take into account the principle of symmetry to acquire a proper technique that follows relaxed positions; or in Sor's words, 'without constraints.'

Sor attributes the lowering of the neck to placing the guitar over the right thigh in the generic position. It is obvious that even from that position, the player could angle the guitar neck a bit higher, which would render Sor's reasoning invalid. However, this position allows the neck to move lower with greater ease than in the classical guitar position which leaves no room for the neck to go low. Also, due to the weight of the arm and the necessity of holding the guitar, the generic position brings the guitar neck farther from the hand, making the hand move forward more than within comfort in order to meet the neck.

When Sor speaks about the manner of holding the guitar over the table, he makes an observation that surely comes from the experience of teaching beginners, who hold the neck with the left hand instinctually. However, Sor's point is something that all new beginners of guitar must learn from their first lesson in order to avoid dependencies and future misplacements of the fingers: the angle should not be too high.

When Sor describes the sitting position from above and indicates that the left hand should go beyond the fretboard, he is not precise as to where exactly it should be. In the picture, however, he is somewhat accurate: the picture shows that the hand surpasses the fretboard up to the knuckles which, along with the fingers, are ahead of the fingerboard. The palm of the hand remains mostly underneath and before it. Notice that when playing, nearly every situation of the left hand uses the knuckles as shown in the picture. Even in the case of wide stretches between fingers 1 and 4 where the wrist bends and moves beyond the line, the palm and part of the wrist go underneath the knuckles as a consequence but do not surpass it.²³⁹

The Right Hand

When Sor explains the right forearm should contact the guitar half way between the elbow and the wrist, I have a few observations: it is possible to apply this position with the

²³⁹ The exception to this is in rare cases where the thumb passes to press strings.

smaller instrument that Sor had. However, he advocates for right-hand stability later in the method. Placing the middle of forearm at the edge means that any action of the fingers has a direct reaction at the muscles of the forearm. This reaction causes the hand to bounce thereby hindering its stability. Therefore, in order to gain a steadier position, the point of contact should be close to the elbow. It also helps with a bigger modern instrument which, with the added height, makes the pull from the elbow greater. Having the elbow close to the edge ensures that the bouncing that occurs in the arm resulting from the contraction of the muscles against the edge is less evident.

Sor's concept of using his ring finger only to play four note chords is one that looks to the past rather than establishing a modern standard. Sor does not use this finger even in four string arpeggios: he plucks the first two strings with the thumb, and the other two with 'i' and 'm.'

When Sor uses the analogy of plucking the strings of the guitar as 'old clavichords or virginals' would do, he enters the predicament of alignment. Opee says Sor is "describing a three dimensional position in a two dimensional drawing."²⁴⁰ Although his principle of strings on a plane is correct and his goal of evenness in plucking is conclusive, he dismisses the fact that you can reach the plane of the strings without needing to form a straight line across the tips of all the fingers. In other words, the fingers 'p,' 'i,' 'm,' and 'a,' are capable of shaping a position in order to reach all the strings in a plane. Moreover, with good technique, attacking the string in the same way with each finger, they are able to achieve evenness.

The Left Hand

Sor describes the consequences of holding the thumb up above the fretboard by arguing that in such a position, the fingers will be constrained. Although his point is valid because the first finger would have a harder time pressing the first string, it is important to realize that the

²⁴⁰ Opee, p. 102, numeral AF.

finger feels a bit constrained even when playing the first string with a normal hand position, especially in cases such as the G7 chord. It also makes it more difficult for finger 1 or 4 to be less constrained when using the modern instrument which has a wider neck. In sum, the line between the constraints he describes and the contractions of the first finger within the normal position is very fine. Finger 1 has to contract in order to press with the tip and maintain a position perpendicular to the fretboard. Likewise, finger 4 must contract in order to reach the first string when finger 2 or 3 are on the fifth or sixth string.

When Sor brings about the subject of the compass and the stick, he makes the conclusion that he needs a point of support. However, he only mentions the thumb as support for the hand later when he gets more specific. It would be more direct to say that finger 4, as the weakest of the fingers, needs the support of the bigger muscles such as those in the arm and even in the back of the player. If the thumb is used to press the basses over the neck, finger 4 is left to rely on its own force in order to move to the next fret and subsequently loses precision to measure equal distances.

Sor describes that the left-hand thumb should follow the height of the fingers in order to avoid contractions. It means, as he describes, that the thumb should be lower if the fingers are pressing at string ① or ②. It seems to be a reasonable principle, and although it is used in practice, it is not always the case. For example, when playing any descending scale over four strings, the tendency of the thumb is to go in the opposite direction of the fingers. It means that as we descend in register and the fingers go up the strings, the thumb moves down allowing the fingers to go up the fingerboard.²⁴¹ His argument also becomes invalid when fingers such as 3 or

²⁴¹ This statement might sound contradictory for non-string players. A descending scale moves from the ① to the ⑥ string. However, string ① is at the bottom of the fretboard, close to the floor, and string ⑥ is upwards close to the ceiling. So, moving up the number of strings is descending in the scale, but moving upwards against gravity.

4 press on strings such as ⑤ or ⑥. In this case, the thumb acts as a pivot to allow the arm and back to facilitate such a position.

Sor derives guitar principles from piano playing, specifically in regards to the use of the thumb. When he talks about using the thumb as a pivot, he relates it to playing scales in the piano. He sees that crossing fingers over the thumb to play scales can be similar to using the thumb in the guitar: the thumb can work as a pivot “to change positions” in guitar performance as well. The hand shifts as a consequence of the lateral action of the wrist. However, he does not specify that this resource is only available for immediate positions, that is, to change the left-hand position from any given fret to the two in closest proximity: the ones right before and after. For example, the thumb is certainly the pivot for immediate shifts: when fingers 1 and 2 are contracted, 3 and 4 are extended, then they shift to an opposite position where 1 and 2 are extended, 3 and 4 are contracted. The best examples are chord changes such as C to G, or G7 to B7 in the first position. For broader shifts of position, the thumb usually accompanies the other 4 fingers anywhere in front of fingers 1 and 2.

When Sor describes the placement of the thumb, he relates it to the fret. However, since the hand position can take place at any fret, his statement is only a generality. It is more precise to say that the thumb is placed opposite to finger 1 and 2, and I would add that it should be placed anywhere within that range. The reason is that the metacarpal muscles that control the thumb are directly behind to the fingers 1 and 2, which is what give us humans an opposable thumb. In some extreme instances, such as wide stretches, the thumb supports the hand somewhere in between fingers 2 and 3. Positioning the thumb only opposite to the finger 2 would add a degree of tension since the thumb really only reaches there when there is more than

small action from the muscles to do so. It also restricts the use of the thumb in practice, when in actuality it is quite movable.

Sor mentions that “it is the action of the arm leading the hand beyond”²⁴² He touches on the subject of the action of the big muscles in the playing of the left hand. He goes only as far as to mention that they lead the hand. Although he is conscious of this fact, he does not elaborate on the issue. The arm and even the back play a big role in the support the left hand. The arm is in charge of the lateral move of the elbow, which helps with the changes within the same position, such as the G7 to B7 discussed above. The shoulder and the back have main rolls when the left-hand shifts from position, such as from first 1 to any other fret.

The Way of Plucking the String

When Sor speaks about the ways of plucking the string, he doesn't consider that good sound may be one with extra noises such as buzzing or, as Ophee put it, the pizzicato effect; he is addressing only the standard sound. He rejects a perpendicular action of the finger and assesses that these effects will only be avoided by plucking the strings with almost straight fingers. He does not take into account that it is possible to make the fingers pluck the string by moving the tip or the nail more towards the bridge than perpendicular. This type of plucking is well known today for the first 3 strings which allow the nail to slide back as it traverses the strings; it is combined with a more perpendicular plucking for the wound metal strings ④⑤⑥ that produce a screeching if the tip of the nails traverse them for a long period of time.

Although Sor makes his observation regarding resistance on a string clear, he does not say why the force to strike the string needs to be changed. There are only 4 variables: volume, duration, pitch and tone. Only two can be valid reasons since pitch would change the string

²⁴² Sor, *Méthode*, p. 17. “Que ce fût l’approche du bras qui, conduisant la main au-delà.”

length and does not change by plucking alone, and tone will change as the plucking moves near the bridge, regardless of the force. Let's explore the two remaining options. In order to make an equal volume, the string remains the same until about the last 3 inches from the bridge. At this point the volume decreases a little, as the metallic sound increases exponentially. It is important to say that he was using different kind of strings, as well as fingertips instead of nails. Perhaps he felt the need to pluck harder as he approached the neck in order to maintain equal volume or duration. As for increasing the duration of sound by plucking harder, it may be arguable that it prolongs the sound. However, as you get into the last two inches near the bridge, the sound does not increase its duration dramatically whether it is plucked softly or loudly. It simply decays faster when plucked louder resulting in very similar lengths of sounds.

Quality of Sound

When Sor addresses the issue of quality of sound, he states that the “if the instrument was to return to me all the gradations of piano and forte, I could not expect these nuances to be dependent on the hand alone [...] I desired to benefit from this difference that the string presented to me by striking it at different places.”²⁴³ He disregards the fact that he is also changing the timbre of the sound. He mistakenly associates *piano* with mellow, and *forte* with metallic. When he talks about strumming a chord with the thumb parallel to the soundboard, and reducing its mass by relaxing the wrist, he does not specify how to do the strum. It is possible to conceive the strum by moving the palm laterally so that the thumb, with some adjusting, moves somewhat parallel to the soundboard. If the strumming happens as a consequence of forearm rotation, it is more difficult for the thumb to adjust its strum parallel to the soundboard. Many strumming situations happen with the latter or with strumming such as with ‘i,’ ‘m,’ or ‘a’

²⁴³ Sor, *Méthode*, p 19. “Je crus que pour que l’instrument me rendit toutes les gradations de piano et forte, je pouvais ne pas faire dépendre ces nuances seulement de la main [...] Je voulus tirer parti de cette différence que la corde me présentait en l’attaquant à des endroits différents.”

fingers, which are locked to the hand and open outwards for strumming, thus making it virtually impossible to strum parallel to the soundboard. This means that it may not be so crucial to strum parallel as he advocates; the force and mass is more important as he also pointed out.

Imitation of the Horn

When Sor talks about imitating the horn, he is referring to the imitation of one particular sound: the horn fourths and fifths played in mellow tone. However, horns have two distinctive tone qualities: open tones and closed tones.

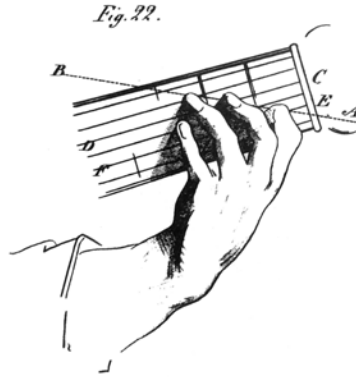
Imitation of the Trumpet

When Sor explains his way to imitate the trumpet, he has, at least to my knowledge, not previously composed music that employs such a technique. Likely, Sor decided to write about the effect, and create it as he wrote about it on his method. In order to make use of his ‘*trompette*’ effect, he composes his duet, Op.49, *Divertissement Militaire*. He publishes the work in 1832, over a year after the publication of the method. The effect appears in the Guitar 1 part, which is easily played and allows an easy application of the technique. After a review of the repertoire prior to 1831, there is no evidence the use of the ‘*trompette*’. Because of these facts, it is possible to speculate that Sor writes this effect as a thought that he has through his career. It comes from his understanding of the guitar as an orchestral instrument, but only came to the concrete form of the sound effect at the writing of the method. It did not develop as a practical use that came to completion in the method. Therefore, it is a concept that has more theoretical forthcomings than practical ones. Perhaps one could try certain sections in some pieces, such as Op. 3, Variation 5, but it may not be completely applicable. It is clear that for Sor the guitar is a small orchestra and that many instruments can be represented, or rather, imagined. However, the actual portrayal of the sound of an instrument is not as easily achievable.

Knowledge of the Fingerboard

When Sor gives advice about the knowledge of the fingerboard, he advocates for one single method that can be applied to any given note to find its major scale. He suggests to find the notes of the scale by knowing the order of tones and semitones in the structure rather than finding them out by means of flat or sharps: basically a movable intervallic method. However, there is a void in the theoretical pointers that he did not address, at least regarding the scales that ascend or descend among consecutive strings. The void means that he leaves unexplained the intervallic relationship among two consecutive strings within a given hand position, and how it affects the fingering of a scale. The intervallic relationship in a four-finger hand position is a major second between the fourth finger of the lower string and the first finger of its higher consecutive string. It remains the same among all strings except between the ③ and ② strings. This exception happens because all the strings are separated by an interval of a perfect fourth except among strings ③ and ②, which are separated only by a major third. This smaller interval makes a minor second among the same fingerings within the same fret distances in the strings mentioned above. This small variation means that replicating fingerings from any consecutive strings into ③ and ② strings cannot follow the same fingering pattern. Perhaps this is what leads Sor to present examples of fingerings along the fingerboard rather than in finger positions; that is, to preserve the 4 fingers in one fret and move up and down the strings.

In a tacit attempt to keep the left hand free of tension, Sor restricts the use of the fourth finger beyond the fourth string at the fourth fret when playing a scale along the fingerboard in a single string. The restriction is traced by the line AB in his figure 22.



This restriction implies that any scale in a first position containing a G# or higher on the ⑥ string or a C# or higher on the ⑤ string would not be held by the fourth finger, at least not in first position. However, when he presents his scales on the ⑤ and ⑥ string his concept becomes somewhat inconsistent in the fingering of scales. He offers, for instance, the fingering for the Aeolian mode on the ⑥ string as shown in the example.

Frets	II	III	V	VII	VIII	X	XII
Fingers	1	2	4	1	2	4	

He issues the fourth finger to the V fret, which is inconsistent with the principle of the fourth finger mentioned above, at least if the principle applies to a second finger position, i.e. consecutive fingers starting at the second fret. His fingering choice makes one shift to the fifth fret and leaves the last note without fingering. However, one could issue a different fingering for this scale that adheres better to his principle and provides a fingering for all the notes as shown in the following example.



This specific change trades off the addition of the fingering of the last note with an extra added shift to the tenth fret. In spite of this added shift, the principle of not using the fourth finger in the larger frets is kept, and the entire octave can be played. Since he left the possibility of other fingerings open, similar changes can be made for all other examples without specific fingerings. The key is to follow comfort of the left hand, which is the main goal behind his principle.

He also makes a strict assessment about using adjacent fingers to play only half steps, leaving out the possibility to stretch fingers to play whole steps. However, later in the method he loosens his view by allowing the first and second fingers to cover a whole tone when there are two in a row, using the fourth finger to play the second one.

The Elbow

When addressing the position of the left elbow, Sor makes raises his most lucid concepts thus far. However, he does not—at this point—address the roll of the left wrist, which should generally go straight. Beginners should train this position; they have a tendency to bend it as a result of insufficient bending of the left-hand fingers. Using a bent wrist impedes the proper application of Sor’s concepts. Sor also disregards the use of the wrist in relation to the use of bars; the subject that ends the elbow section. In this case, the wrist only bends a little. Sharper angles are mostly used for extra large stretches of the fingers.

When Sor is describing the process to follow regarding bars, it is not evident why he needs to change the angle of the forearm and the fretboard from a square angle to a position

where the elbow is closer to the body; he limits himself to only express that it is needed. Perhaps he is after the concept of arm weight that helps the finger in the application of force in the bar. Some guitarists argue that the weight relieves the thumb from making all the force necessary for the strings on the bar not to buzz. He also seems to doubt that the position of the thumb facing the second finger would be better than it facing the first. In practice, the thumb should be in the area between first and second finger. Again, extreme extensions of the hand and surely other exceptions force the thumb to find positions outside this range.

He then expresses the goal and desire for students to read his concepts in order to “become their own guide rather than being interrupted at each moment during their lessons with observations such as *bend the left arm; do not contract the thumb; your fingers of the left hand do not fall perpendicularly enough; those from the left hand are too hooked; your guitar is too turned; you do not attack at a convenient point, etc.*”²⁴⁴ Here Sor shows his most mundane discomfort with the perils of teaching: students take long to acquire the basic fundamentals of technique and instructors find themselves hopelessly repeating themselves trying to instill them in their students.

On Thirds, Their Nature and Their Fingering

When Sor addresses his chapter of thirds he consolidates his use of a movable pattern to be applied to play scales in thirds. He sees that “since [he] considered the notes on the musical reference, [he] finds thirds much sooner than if [he] considered them from the mechanic reference.”²⁴⁵ Perhaps he has musical tools such the musical sonority, or perhaps harmonic

²⁴⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 35. “De devenir lui-même son guide, que d’être interrompu à chaque instant pendant la leçon par des observations telles que arquez le bras gauche; ne contractez point l’épaule ; vos doigts de la main gauche ne tombent pas assez perpendiculairement; ceux de la main droite sont trop crochus; votre guitare est trop tournée; vous n’attaquez pas la corde au point convenable, etc.”

²⁴⁵ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 35. “Dès que je considèrerais les notes sous le rapport musical, je trouverais mes tierces plus promptement qu’en les considérant sous un rapport mécanique.”

reasons, but he does not state what musical elements he uses. However, earlier on, while referring to the playing of scales, he advocated for the same finger shapes that he proposes now. Therefore, he uses a mechanical process to be able to come up with the thirds. It seems that he is trying to have a purist vision of his mechanical technique.

His pedagogical attempt to first play the scales in thirds over strings ① and ② to be followed by the entire range of the guitar does not leave him to give much thought to the placement of scales. He only goes as far as to say that it is easy once you know them on a pair of strings. However, they seem to be more complicated, as many thoughts are left unanswered. On what basis does the player pick the fingering before changing to the next set of strings? Often 3 thirds must be played on one pair of strings before moving because of the flats. Sor does not address the subject of shifting.

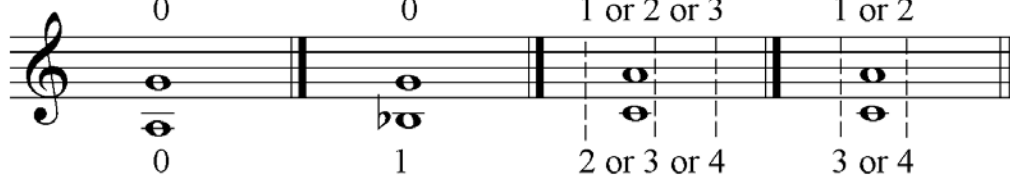
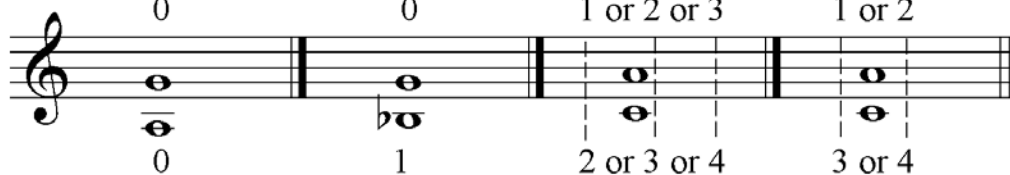
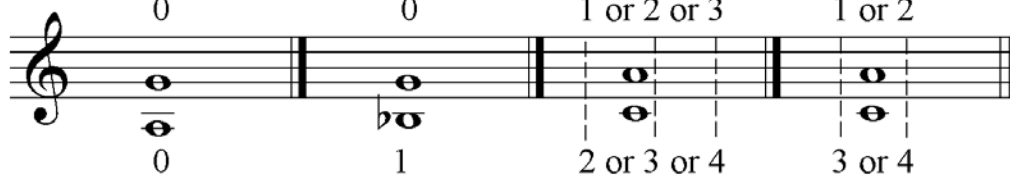
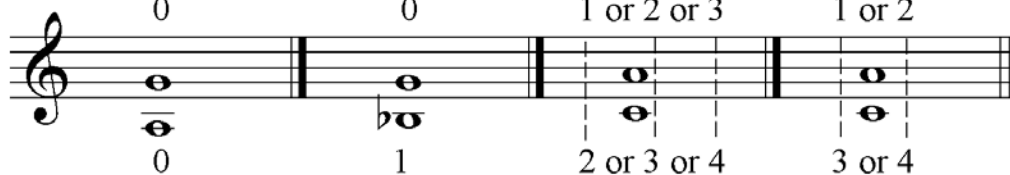
On Sixths

Sor approaches the use of sixths similarly to techniques used in the playing of scales and in the playing of thirds. He realizes that an in-depth discussion on the subject inevitably leads him to more theory he wants to address. However, he cannot avoid mentioning that in order to determine the quality of the sixth one must find the semitones of the scale and decide whether one or both of them appears in the interval in question. He does not go further into explaining how to find them, but such a method involves discerning to a certain degree the sharps or flats of the scale in question, or at least a knowledge of each scale on the fretboard which requires some theoretical thinking. In sum, there has to be theoretical knowledge involved in the conception of sixths, which he desperately wants to avoid. Such conceptions are not apt for the pure beginner, but for a musician well acquainted with scale degrees.

Sor offers an example of his fingerings in diatonic sixths on a C major scale over the first four strings and concludes that “consequently, I traverse the fretboard in sixths with all the tones.”²⁴⁶ The statement implies that these set of fingerings can be used for the upper strings. However, except for two sixths formed from string ⑤ in all the sixths examples, he does not present any other cases. He also does not comment on the existent differences in regard to fingering among the lower strings.

After observing the examples, it is possible to conclude that Sor mostly uses this interval as a melody in the middle and upper registers. They form lower voice doublings with the melodic line. Perhaps Sor does not address all the existing intervals of sixths in the guitar because he avoids melodies with a lower sixth accompaniment. However, they do exist, and I believe the opinion below offers a similar insight into the sixth on those strings.

Sor’s starting point is open strings. Therefore, we can consider as starting point the two minor sevenths in the last four strings, one among strings ⑥ and ④ and the other one among ⑤ and ③. Therefore, a major sixth sounds when pressing the lower string of the group in the first fret, and a minor sixth sounds with its next higher fret. Consequently, the major sixth can move upwards in the fret board while being pressed with adjacent fingers a fret apart, and the minor sixth can be comfortably performed with a finger in between. See example

Open strings	Maj. 6 th lower string pressed	Maj. 6 th adjacent fingers	Maj. 6 th skipping fingers
0	0	1 or 2 or 3	1 or 2
			
0	1	2 or 3 or 4	3 or 4

²⁴⁶ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 42. “Alors je parcours musicalement la gamme en sixtes dans tous les tons.”

The scales in thirds on strings separated by fourths use the same set of fingerings and ordering as that for the scales in sixths in the lower strings just a string apart. Sor never points out that the similarity in fingerings allow the principles applied to the playing of scales in thirds to be applied to the scales in sixths. He also does not contemplate the striking similarities of fingering sets among both scales of thirds and sixths. For instance, when comparing two major scales both in thirds and sixths, it is evident that first step of both scales share the same quality, and therefore the same fingering. This pattern is only disrupted at the seventh scale degree which varies the fingering.

Scale in Sixths

I II IV VI VIII IX XI XIII

Scale in Thirds

≠

It is evident that both scales share the same upper line and that the fingering is the same. Although the lower voice is different, it only differs at the seventh scale degree where it changes from the second finger in the scale in sixths to the third finger in the scale in thirds. This is only one of many examples of similarities among these scales.

Sor rarely employs the scale of sixths in the lower strings in his music, a fact that may validate this omission in his method. Perhaps this leads him to leave unexplained how to best

change from string to string in sixths through the register, just as he did for the exposition of the interval of thirds. However, the interval itself could be of use in a more complete understanding of the guitar register, therefore, worth considering.

Application of the Thirds and the Sixths

Sor starts out with an explanation about the discrepancies on table fingerings and his actual examples. He argues his reasoning is to create fewer hand shifts and avoid moving fingers from one string to another. However, these reasons seem to be in contradiction with each other. If one plays thirds or sixths with the fingers he suggests, there are as many shifts as there are intervals. On the other hand, the only way to avoid shifts is to move fingers from string to string after playing two consecutive intervals at most. Although the changes obey fingering limitations specific to each case, his reasoning consists of contradictory arguments that are far from supportive to his changes.

Sor bases the conclusion of guitar mastery as depending only on the knowledge of thirds and sixths in a chord progression in which he writes down his thought process. Although his method follows thirds and sixths closely, he also observes the interval of the octave in between strings ② and ⑤, and between ① and ③; it also may extend to string groups ② and ④, ③ and ⑤, and ④ and ⑥. Open strings also play a fundamental role in his process of conceiving chords.

There are also implications that Sor does not take into account such as the difference in sound of the same interval played on different strings, or the combination of thirds with higher fingerboard positions and open strings. These subjects could have opened a more specific and actual view into his performance practice.

Fingering of the Left Hand in Regard to the Melody

When Sor chooses to offer examples of harmonized melodies he runs into the issues of

transposition. Although he uses the same shapes in certain scales, namely D-flat and E-flat, he does not mention the fact that this can be applied as needed in any scale because the shape of the chord and the avoidance of open strings make the transposition possible.

Perhaps his biggest leap in making rule exceptions comes with the key of F-sharp. He covers two major thirds on strings ② and ① with the first, second and fourth fingers for a total of a major sixth. It is a recourse that may present less difficulty in a smaller nineteenth century instrument than in a modern guitar in which this extension is beyond the comfort of the closed finger position. It is no surprise that he applies this in the key of F sharp major, a scale that, if used, can produce a piece of greater difficulty than in other keys. However, it is practical for playing certain passages in an accurate way.

When Sor engages in a quest to separate the artists from the player of notes, or what he calls the *notiste*, he issues the preconception of musical thoughts as one of the characteristics of a true musician. It perhaps obeys the traits of the style of the music that belongs to his time. It is worth mentioning that this preconception is related to the style of the music, something that was very well defined in Sor's time. It is the same set of tools that musicians use today to approach a performance of a piece from the Baroque period differently than one from the Romantic or Modern eras.

When Sor employs concrete examples of fingerings in melodies, he only offers some keys in the examples. He first offers a few sequential passages in examples 65 – 69, which are only presented in C major. He then presents applications on examples 70 – 74, which only engage—one would say—some of the most common keys on the guitar: G, D, C, A, F, E-flat, and Gmin. Some other suitable keys for the guitar like E, and E minor, B minor, and A minor,

are left without an example. Although attempting to present every key with an example almost seems futile, it would be more practical to have those examples as well.

He argues that the ranges of the major or minor sixth among the two first strings are the most common in melodic passages. He does not mention that within that finger span it is possible to find the octave on the third string. Surely, he might have noted that such an interval was also popular among melodic passages.

When he argues that cantabile passages are better played in first positions and on longer strings that allow greater resonance, he disregards the warmer tone quality that thicker strings and higher positions offer. Guitarists such as Andres Segovia emphasized these positions for cantabile passages. There are qualities such as warmer tone and wider vibrato that can be suitable for singing melodies.

Sor pleases to consider his left-hand chapter as holistic knowledge of the guitar, but in doing so, he makes it clear that this is not a method intended for the beginners after all, but rather one written in great detail for the more advanced player.

When Sor touches on the subject of unaccompanied scales, he bases his assertion on the fact that the 'a' finger moves when the 'm' plucks thus deeming the 'i-m' combination less desirable. However, regardless of whether the 'lower part' or 'higher part' react, he acknowledges disturbances anyway. The point does not have much relevance except for the fact that the reaction is not directly involved in the playing. However, if the reaction in question is involuntary, it may be better to leave it away from the fingers plucking the strings. In that order of ideas, it might be better to pluck 'i' and 'm.' In an ideal situation, the more stable the right hand, the better it is in order to control the playing. Moreover, the pinky can maintain its own independence while 'i' and 'm' are playing. The easiest control to gain as a beginner is that of

the thumb first, followed by the index finger. The middle is a longer finger that requires more thought and awareness from the player to obtain a stable right hand when playing alternating ‘*i-m*.’ Sor’s own description, especially the one regarding the reaction produced by the thumb, might speak to his own deficiencies. He also must have had greater dependency in the fingers which led him to dislike playing ‘*i*’ and ‘*m*’ or perhaps did not manage to fully master great control of the hand when playing with ‘*m*’ and ‘*a*.’ Therefore, he chooses ‘*p-i*’ as the better option. Finally, Sor also misses a very similar alternating movement used for playing ornaments in the piano: the most common combinations for trills are the second and third piano fingerings which correspond to the ‘*i-m*’ alternation, or the first and third which correspond to ‘*p-m*.’²⁴⁷ In sum, a performer’s ability to achieve any skill comes down to thoughtful training. Lute players use the ‘*p-i*’ combination successfully, but also the alternation of ‘*i-m*’ is the standard way in modern guitar. There are other forms such as the ‘*a-m-i*’²⁴⁸ and ‘*i-a*’ patterns²⁴⁹, which are new approaches to playing these passages.

Sor’s goal in showing his preference for right-hand fingering is to emphasize the voicing. He chooses ‘*p*’ for the inner voices in which more accent is desirable and ‘*i*’ as fingering for an inner accompaniment which is less likely to produce an accent, but the accomplished guitarist should be able to voice correctly regardless of the finger used. In other words, either ‘*p*’ or ‘*i*’ should be able to convey the harmonic layers of the voice thus underscoring the musical accent.

Sor offers the use of the pinky on the soundboard for reasons of stability, but in doing so he shows an adherence to the older methods, which is seen today as being ‘backward looking.’ In

²⁴⁷ According to a professional pianist, the piano fingering 1-2 which corresponds to guitar ‘*p-i*’ is actually avoided in trill combinations for various reasons, including the difference in length of the fingers as well as the joint structure which results in instability with this combination.

²⁴⁸ Check Matt Palmer, *The Virtuoso Guitarist Volume 1*.

²⁴⁹ I bring this from a personal conversation I had with Mike Morey. He was able to play fast scales. I listened to some flamenco music he played, and I observed that he used the ‘*i-a*.’ Surprisingly, his reasoning was related to some of Sor’s logic. Mike said that ‘these fingers are very close in length, thus allowing him to achieve evenness easier.’ His scales were outstanding.

my view, Sor resolves his weaknesses in right-hand stability with the traditional tools to his avail. Resting the little finger on the top of the guitar is a practice that was fading out in his time. It is true that Sor, being the first true standard of modern technique, is not really able to do so for the right hand, but deeming him archaic is to undermine his importance. However, when he states that “raising the lower part of the hand [that] enables me to attack with the fingers arched as little as possible,”²⁵⁰ he implicitly accepts that he must curve his ‘*i*’ and ‘*m*’ fingers. Doing so opens the door for some tough technical compromises he needs to make in order for this choice to work. Moreover, using the little finger on and off the soundboard might indicate that Sor’s forearm position may not be as fixed as he expressed towards the end of the heading titled *The Fingering of the Two Hands*. There, he argues for one position when considering playing scales in ‘*i-m*’ alternations through traversing all six strings. He also advises consulting Aguado in this regard. Sor is struggling with the disadvantages of having to rely on a source of support to play scales when the arm, as he admits, must move in order to achieve them. Ultimately, his technical view of the right hand may not be solely archaic, but rather transitional towards modern standards.

Harmonics

When Sor approaches the subject of harmonics, he recommends pressing the string ‘not too lightly,’ but without making the string touch the fret. The suggestion of pressure goes beyond what modern technique uses. Today, the simple contact with the string is enough to perform a harmonic correctly. If there is a need for a louder sound and the right hand makes the string move, the left-hand finger producing the harmonic should stay in contact with the string. If the

²⁵⁰ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 56. “Mais dès que ma main peut conserver la position convenable sans cet appui, je cesse de l’employer, pour que l’élévation de la partie inférieure de la main me permette d’attaquer les cordes avec les doigts le moins arqués que possible.”

left-hand finger separates from the string because the right-hand finger pushes it, there will be noise produced by the impact of the string on the left-hand finger.

When Sor explains the subject of artificial harmonics, he does so from the theoretical stand point rather than the practical. It is true that by 1828 he had published his *Pièces de Société*, Op. 33 in which he uses natural harmonics extensively. However, the artificial ones are, as he mentions, ‘mostly avoided’ in his repertoire.

Sor’s reasoning behind the duration of harmonics seems flawed. He argues that the part of the string behind the left-hand finger stopping the strings is the one producing the harmonic while the other section is not.²⁵¹ Although he is correct in fact that the part behind the left-hand finger towards the nut produces sound, the part remaining also produces sound by creating the remaining partitions of the string. He makes this assertion while trying to find reasons behind the decrease in volume as the harmonics rise in pitch. He fails to see that the string takes more energy as it generates vibrations among more nodes, and that this causes the amplitude of the wave to be smaller and subsequently generate less sound.

When Sor talks about playing the harmonic he states: “If the string is immediately abandoned it would not produce the generating sound, but would prolong what the fractioned part would have produced.”²⁵² This text is vague: the generating sound could refer to the sound of the open string or the sound of the harmonic. Whichever the case is, he sees that lifting the finger too soon hinders the generating sound by making the ‘fraction’ prolonged. This fraction is also vague: it could refer to the harmonic in question. However, if that is the case, Sor would contradict himself saying that it is a bad thing to prolong the harmonic that the finger is actually trying to produce. If Sor refers to the actual fraction of the string, then he is referring to the

²⁵¹ The text in question is from footnote 152. The ‘*partie aliquote*’ is translated by Harrison as ‘aliquot part’ (see p.24); by Ohpee as ‘upper partial’ (see p.55).

²⁵² Quoted in Footnote 153.

sound of the fret. However, after attempting it, it does not actually sound. If Sor is referring to upper partials, as Ophee translated, then Sor is the least evident with his text, but may lead us in the direction of performing other sounds. If the finger withdraws right at the moment of plucking the string, the nodal point at which the finger is located vibrates. The string then tries to make the sound of the open string, along with the harmonic in question and even some other partials. This analysis leads me to change my own vision of playing harmonics. I used to think that they are released immediately upon plucking. However, as Sor teaches us, it is only soon after plucking, that the 'pure' harmonic is achieved. The release becomes quicker as the harmonic goes up the string. Finally, it is worth mentioning that harmonics improve volume and sound as the right hand plucks them proportionally closer to the bridge as they go higher. This in turn may show one advantage of artificial sounds over the natural ones which Sor could not see. The right hand does not need to adjust to find the better sound. Both fingers, the one plucking and the one stopping the string just move at the same time to produce the harmonic.

When Sor observes the artificial harmonics from the violin he finds that even when one acquires the technique to play them, they would still be hard to play if they appeared randomly. However, as in any passage of music, it requires some practice. From this point of view, once you learn a piece of music and practice it repeatedly, the occurrence of artificial harmonics may not be random thereby making them more possible than what Sor seems to acknowledge. He insists that he has practice them but still shows his lack of favor from them. The times that were to come after Sor's existence would prove marvelous sections employ this technique

Analysis of the Accompaniment of a fragment of the Oratorio by Haydn (The Creation)

When Sor issues the transcription of the second movement of the creation, he presents his choice of fingerings as they are conceived from the necessary thirds and sixths. He tries to meet

scale fingerings and principles that he issued earlier. However, some sections do not allow this to happen. His discussion for the fingering of measure 16 leads him to find the fingering of the melody and then having to adjust the accompaniment notes. In this process, the fingering of the melody becomes the basis for the fingering of the harmony, which is the opposite of what Sor calls for in his text. Sor might have conceived the statement largely as a compositional concept. However, when it comes to arrangements or transcriptions, the melody is the most important element and the accompaniment becomes dependent on it. Secondly, Coste tweaks Sor's concept to state that the melody and the harmony mutually dependent on each other.

Accompaniments

When Sor offers his transcription of the aria from *Don Giovanni*, he speaks of a sustaining E that he puts in between the thirds. He refers to it as 'the resonance of the E at the beginning of the measure.' I see it as non-existent both in the piano reduction he offers and also in the orchestral score. Such a note performed by a woodwind player is very likely to carry only the hall resonance, but it is likely that the player would see fit to take a breath before the descending thirds, thus not making it necessary to add extra E notes to compensate for the loss of resonance. It further goes against the principle he mentioned in the paragraph above to 'preserve the rhythm.' Sor simply sees necessary to have a note in question for means of resonance.

Sor embraces the subject of accompaniments, implicitly explaining why he was disapproving earlier in the method in regards to arpeggios as the only means to prolong the sound. For him, an arpeggio is meaningful as the representation of music functions, that is, basses as downbeats and other parts as weak beats, or even representing other instruments. It may be rather far fetched to think that a small orchestra could play an arpeggio with separate instruments, especially textures in sixteenth notes. However, if one thinks of a waltz arpeggio, it

is very easy to observe a bass represented in first beat and other instruments in the weak beats. Whichever the case be, his ultimate criticism is the lack of expression in arpeggio figurations.

Conclusion

The review of literature shows that historically, Sor's method has, thus far, been considered a treatise. However, Sor's believe of what his method actually is, does not differ in the least from the actual definition of a treatise. In fact, he confirms in his conclusion what a method should be. He defines method as a treatise.

When Sor considers if his method would have been one of only exercises, he mentions that it would put students at a position of ignorance, "hindering [their possibilities of] knowing the instrument."²⁵³ Such an assertion puts him again at odds with Coste's intention of rendering a leaner approach to the text and focusing more on the examples. However, history shows that it was Coste who would lead Segovia to publish his famous *Sor Studies* and likely not Sor himself. If that were the case, Segovia likely would have observed Sor's Op. 60 as pedagogical means to bring the students from the very start into Sor's pedagogical work. I mention this because of my experience with such studies. I remember trying to play Segovia's first Sor Study, Op.6, No. 8, and finding it quite difficult and wondering if all studies would be so hard. Only later—in my doctoral degree—did I come to find out that Sor, after his method, revised a link between a complete beginner level and his lessons on Op. 35. When Sor asserts that "the twenty four exercises [Op.35] are what one can write the easiest in this genre,"²⁵⁴ he was not foreseeing the Op. 60 mentioned above. It is my assumption that as he kept a teaching activity in Paris, he must have seen the need to teach complete beginners thus enticing him to write something even easier.

²⁵³ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 83. "L'empêcher de connaître l'instrument."

²⁵⁴ Sor, *Méthode*, p. 85. "Mes vingt-quatre exercices sont ce que l'on peut écrire de plus aisé dans ce genre."

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The comparison made above brings me to conclude that although the texts differ occasionally, they are both valuable. When Sor chooses reason as his overarching principle to portray his precepts, he sets up standard modern techniques, specifically for the left hand. However, in his desire to incorporate a complete knowledge of various arts other than the guitar, he unintentionally distances his method from beginners. Therefore, those students desiring to learn about his ways are obligated to ponder extensively on the reading of his method, which may deter them from focusing on its application. Consequently, they may choose to dive into the exercises without a full understanding of his concepts, thus undermining the text; after all, their main goal is to improve by practicing guitar. At this point, the revision of Sor's text finds its value.

The flow of societal trends and events make Coste's version a natural product of historical development. The growth in population as well as an increased means to afford leisure activities such as guitar playing made it necessary for a more practical text to exist. Besides merely an increase in the number of people, the population at large was also more capable of reading as literacy rates increased.²⁵⁵ The result is that more potential readers could access these texts. These conditions added to Coste's desire to make Sor's text more accessible, leading him to fill a clarifying role with his revision. He heads towards a pedagogical summary and, in some specific cases, synthesis of Sor's concepts. He offers a text with more practical implications, acting, in some cases, as a window that opens towards Sor's practice, rather than his theory. He accomplishes this by taking liberties based on his experiences and understanding of Sor as a

²⁵⁵ Mondelli, Peter, *In 19th Century Music. Sociability of History in French Grand Opera: A Historical Materialist Perspective*, p. 49.

player and as a composer. This is particularly evident in the subjects regarding the position of the instrument, the conception of scales viewed from practical perspective, and the conception of fingerings regarding the melody. He also gives a few examples of his own that hint toward a renewed aesthetics. He intends to update the practical implications with music current of mid nineteenth century language. This is presented in his example of the application of thirds and sixths, and also in the *Reverie Nocturne*.

The fact that the literature has thus far devalued Coste's method speaks to the lack of understanding of the roles of his text within a historical context. It is true that Coste's text differs from Sor's method to a moderate extent. However, deeming it completely different is an overstatement. Coste's version does differ to some extent, but his goal is never to undermine Sor's concepts to the point of bearing little resemblance. Coste deters from Sor mostly for a few reasons. His method first attempts to understand and portray Sor's practice, but it also serves as Coste's platform to show his art. In this sense, Coste uses Sor's work and reputation to show a bit of himself and his contributions; it is Coste's personal work as well as Sor's second version. Coste's identity is not only reflected in his artistic contributions, but also in his pedagogical ones. He first adds the section on tuning. He selects Sor's studies and also informs us that they are "fingered and classified according to the traditions of the author."²⁵⁶ He wants to exemplify himself as musicologist and performer by offering a transcription from tablature. Finally, in an attempt either to understand the future of the guitar, or to comment on the possibilities of guitar transformation, he offers the appendix on the seventh string. Instrument transformation was a continued trend not only in guitar construction but also in other instruments. Luthiers such as Jean-Baptiste Villaume attempt "improving the viola acoustically by lengthening or enlarging

²⁵⁶ Coste, *Méthode Augmentée*, p. 2 after p. 52.

the body,”²⁵⁷ and Frederick Blühmel and Heinrich Stötzel who simultaneously create “a tubular valve and a the box valve”²⁵⁸ for the cornet and eventually the rotary valve.

Coste’s text does present some differences. The following bulleted lists highlight the negative differences, positive additions, and different approaches between the methods.

Negative Differences

- Not as precise in the use of the elbow; this is a big omission as later in the method, he omits the heading and contents entirely.
- Misses Sor’s explanation of the stretching of the fingers beyond the position and role of the thumb; speaks to the lack of detail.
- Omits little curvature of the fingers of the right hand to contact the plane of the strings.
- Omits the imitation of the flute, which is largely a compositional concept by Sor.
- Omits the explanation of pizzicatos and staccatos, presumably because they are techniques that further diminish the sound as Sor mentions.
- Claims the entire fingerboard has only 12 frets; Sor mentions the distances among the frets rather than number of frets, which is more accurate.
- Coste understands of thirds and sixths as harmonic intervals; Sor views them as deriving from scales.
- Changes the order of exercises of third and sixths.
- Lacks emphasis on the thirds and sixths as basis for understanding the guitar.
- Omits Sor’s etude.
- Omits the section on accompaniments and transcription of Haydn’s Oratorio where Sor states his understanding of musical elements as part of the musical expression.

²⁵⁷ David D. Boyden and Ann M. Woodward. “Viola.” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed April 20, 2017, under Viola.
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29438>.

²⁵⁸ Edward H. Tarr. “Stölzel, Heinrich David.” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed April 20, 2017, under Stölzel [Stoelzel], Heinrich David.
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/26842>>.

Positive Additions

- Adds a specific range for the height of the neck.
- Includes a better explanation of the position of the right forearm with less restrictions, which in turn allows greater possibilities.
- Incorporates a section on playing of the chords that is viewed from the left-hand perspective as well as for the right; Sor only addresses the right hand, although more specifically.
- Adds a section on tuning of the guitar.

Positive Omissions

- Reiteration of right-hand restrictions in the *Use of Fingers of the Right Hand*.

Different Approaches

- Coste has a more practical approach to scales.
- Coste uses portamento as such while Sor uses it to slur notes.
- Coste understands the fretboard starting from the triad along the string.
- Coste's application of the scales includes playing on all the strings, recommends 'i-m' but does not disregard Sor's use of 'p i.'

Final Points

- Segovia has an empowering force on Sor's etudes.
- Summary of concepts to help guitarists become more aware of their position and techniques.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Original Methods

Coste, Napoléon. *Méthode complète pour la guitare : rédigée et augmentée de nombreux exemples et leçons, suivis d'une notice sur la 7e corde*. 1851; Facsimile reprint Paris: H. Lemoine, 199-.

Coste, Napoléon. *Méthode complète pour la guitare : rédigée et augmentée de nombreux exemples et leçons, suivis d'une notice sur la 7e corde*. 1851; Facsimile reprint Paris: Schonenberger, 2007.

Sor, Ferdinand. *Méthode pour la Guitare*. Paris: L'Auteur, 1830; Facsimile reprint Geneva: Minkoff, 1981.

Translations of Methods

Sor, Fernando. *Method for Guitar*. Trans. and ed. Matanya Opee. Columbus: Editions Orphée, 2010.

Sor, Fernando. *Sor's Method for the Spanish Guitar*. Trans. A. Merrick. Mineola: Dover Publications, 2007.

Bibliographies

Bibliographie de la France, ou, Journal général de l'imprimerie. Kraus reprint, Paris: vol. 1828 & 1831.

Stenstadvold, Erik. *An Annotated Bibliography of Guitar Methods, 1760-1860*. Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2010.

Biographies

Jeffery, Brian. *Fernando Sor: Composer and Guitarist*. Penderyn, South Wales: Tecla Editions, 1994.

Roncet, Noël. *Napoléon Coste: Composer, 1805-1883*. 2005; Reprint, London: Tecla Editions, 2008.

Books and Articles

Clark, Walter Aaron: "Fernando Sor's Guitar Studies, Lessons, and Exercises Op. 6, 29, 31, and 35, and the London Pianoforte School." In *Estudios sobre Fernando Sor* [Studies about Fernando Sor], ed. Luis Gásser. Madrid: El Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, 2003.

Dell'Ara, Mario. *La Chitarra*. Torino: EDT, 1990.

- Ebers, John. *Seven Years of the Kings Theatre*. London: William Harrison Ainsworth, 1828.
- Grunfeld, Frederic V. *The Art and Times of the Guitar: An Illustrated History of Guitars and Guitarists*. New York: MacMillan, 1969.
- Ledhuy, Adolphe and Bertini, Henri. *Encyclopédie pittoresque de la musique*. Paris: H. Delloye, 1835.
- Mondelli, Peter: "The Sociability of History in French Grand Opera." In *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pg. 37-55, 2013.
- Palmer, Matt. *The Virtuoso Guitarist, Volume 1: A New Approach to Fast Scales*. M.P. Music Co. 2011.
- Plantinga, Leon. *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth Century Europe*. New York, W. W. Norton & Co. 1984.
- Pujol, Emilio. "La Guitare." In *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du Conservatoire*. 1927.
- Riboni, Marco. "Fernando Sor E Il Méthode Pour La Guitare." In *Estudios sobre Fernando Sor* [Studies about Fernando Sor], ed. Luis Gásser, 387-401. Madrid: El Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, 2003.
- Taruskin, Richard. *Oxford History of Western Music Volume 3: Music in the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford University Press, New York. 2010
- Taruskin, Richard. *Oxford History of Western Music Volume 2: Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century*. Oxford University Press, New York. 2010

Dissertations

- Aguado, Dionisio: *Nuevo Metodo para guitarra*. Paris: Schonenberger, 1820.
- Duplenne, Romane. *Napoléon Coste et son œuvre pour guitare*. Ph.D. dissertation, Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2004.
- McFadden, Jeffrey James: *Fretboard Harmony for University Study: Method and Historical Context*. D.M.A. dissertation, University of Toronto, 2010.
- Morris, Scott: *A Study of the Solo Guitar Répertoire of the Early Nineteenth Century*. D.M.A. dissertation, Claremont Graduate University, 2005.
- Sor, Fernando: *The complete works for guitar in facsimiles of the original editions*, London. Tecla, 1982: <<http://fernandosor.free.fr/op49/sorf-op49-divertg2d.gif>>.