



Leopoldo  
de Urcullu

THÈME  
&  
VARIATIONS

pour guitare, op.10



Philomele Editions, Geneva  
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## Introduction

The Spanish guitarist and composer Leopoldo de Urcullu lived during the first half of the 19th century. The poet and guitarist Florencio Gomez Parreño, in a poem dedicated to Zelmira, one of his students, puts Urcullu, as musician, at the same level as his contemporaries Dionysio Aguado and Fernando Sor<sup>1</sup>. We do not dispose of any other biographical information.

Not more than a dozen of Urcullu's works have survived: They were published during his life time by, among others, M. Ricordi in Milan, León Lodre in Madrid, or, as the present work, by Jean Auguste Böhme in Hamburg. They include fantasies and opera arrangements, a few Spanish songs with guitar and piano accompaniment, and *La Amistad*, Introduction et Polonaise, issued already in a modern edition (Philomele Nr PE 2049).

The theme of the present Variations op.10 is attributed to Ignaz Pleyel, according to an anonymous manuscript of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century belonging to Francisco Herrera ; it is also the theme of the Nr.3 of *Six Thèmes d'Ignaz Pleyel, avec Variations pour la Guitare, de F. Molino, op.5* (Coll. Rischel & Birket – Smith, No.561)<sup>2</sup>. In Urcullu's version the harmonisation of the theme is more refined. The variations remind Fernando Sor, his harmonic progressions and, in places, the thight polyphonic writing.

The quality of the invention and of the composition, as well as the writing, technically demanding, though idiomatic to the guitar, indeed place Urcullu besides of Sor and Aguado, and justify a modern re-edition of his works. Urcullu's chronological and stylistic characteristics are probably posterior to his two colleagues, and some of his stylistic features are already close to José Broca and Julian Arcas.

The original Böhme edition, issued around 1820, has probably not

much contributed to Urcullu's glory, neither of his op. 10. It's clumsy layout crams two thirds of the note material on the first page. Much worse, the 2nd and the 4<sup>th</sup> variation have only 8+7 bars each, lacking the 3<sup>rd</sup>, respectively the 4<sup>th</sup> bar of the B section.

Given the repetitive structure of the 2 x 8 bars scheme, this can easily be corrected with modern music editing software, but it is impossible to play the variations correctly from the original edition. Thus, Urcullu's op. 10 finds here a late but merited rehabilitation.

Fingering is editorial. Added dynamics and phrasings are marked in the score by square brackets or by a slash. The following changes do not appear in the score (page/ system/bar/ beat):

- 6/5/2/1 first 1/16 of triplet :  
treble chord a-c#-f#
- 8/2/1 whole bar lacking
- 8/3/1/2 last 1/16 note c nat.
- 10/2/2 whole bar lacking

Acknowledgements are addressed to Francisco Herrera for having brought Urcullu to my attention, to Gerhard Penn for his assistance at the revision and to the Royal Library in Copenhagen for providing copies of the original edition.



## Vorw

Der spanische Gitarrist und Komponist Leopoldo de Urcullu lebte während der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Es gibt sonst keine biographischen Informationen. Der Dichter und Gitarrist Florencio Gomez Parreño hebt ihn, die Schülerin Zelmira in einem Gedicht, musikalisch auf die gleiche Stufe wie Dionysio Aguado und Fernando Sor.

Von seinen Werken sind etwa ein Dutzend erhalten. Sie wurden in seinen Lebzeiten von M. Ricordi in Mailand und von León Lodre in Madrid und von Jean Auguste Böhme in Hamburg gedruckt, und umfassen Opernausschnitte, Fantasien, Bearbeitungen von Opernausschnitten und einige spanische Lieder. Von seinen Werken sind etwa ein Dutzend erhalten. Sie wurden in seinen Lebzeiten von M. Ricordi in Mailand und von León Lodre in Madrid und von Jean Auguste Böhme in Hamburg gedruckt, und umfassen Opernausschnitte, Fantasien, Bearbeitungen von Opernausschnitten und einige spanische Lieder. Von seinen Werken sind etwa ein Dutzend erhalten. Sie wurden in seinen Lebzeiten von M. Ricordi in Mailand und von León Lodre in Madrid und von Jean Auguste Böhme in Hamburg gedruckt, und umfassen Opernausschnitte, Fantasien, Bearbeitungen von Opernausschnitten und einige spanische Lieder.

Die Variationen op. 10 sind dem um 1825 bei Jean Auguste Böhme in Hamburg erschienenen Manuskript von Ignaz Pleyel entnommen (laut eines im Besitz von Francisco Herrera befindlichen Manuskripts aus dem 19. Jahrhundert). In der Originalausgabe findet sich auch eine Polonaise *Thèmes d'Ignaz Pleyel, avec Variations pour la Guitare, de F. Molino, op.5* (Coll. Rischel & Birket – Smith, No. 561). In Urcullu's Version ist die Harmonisierung des Themas raffinierter. Die Variationen erinnern an Fernando Sor, seine harmonischen Fortschreitungen und, an manchen Stellen, an die enge polyphonische Schreibung.

Die Qualität der Erfindung und der Komposition, sowie die technisch anspruchsvolle, doch idiomatische Gitarrenschreibung, rechtfertigen eine Neuauflage von Urcullu's Werken.

<sup>1</sup> Francisco Herrera, *La guitarra*, 2<sup>a</sup> edición, 2004

<sup>2</sup> Hinweis von Gerhard Penn

# Thème et Variations

Révision: Johann Gaitzsch

## Thème

pour la guitare

Leopoldo de Urcullu

Andante

The musical score is written on a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The score includes several variations and sections, each labeled with a Roman numeral in a circle (e.g., CII, CIV, CVIII, CIX, CVII). Dynamic markings include [p] (piano) and ff (fortissimo). The score features various guitar techniques such as triplets, slurs, and accents. The main theme starts with a piano [p] marking and ends with a fortissimo ff marking. The variations include complex rhythmic patterns and fingerings.

[mf]

CVII

[p]

Var. 2

dolce

CIV

CII

CIV

CIV



CVII CIV CIX

[mf]

[dol.]

Var. 3  
minore

CII CV CVII CIX

[f]

[p]

CV

[cresc.]

CVII

f

Var. 4

CVIV

f

CVII