

On the Need for a Scholarly Edition of Tárrega's Complete Works

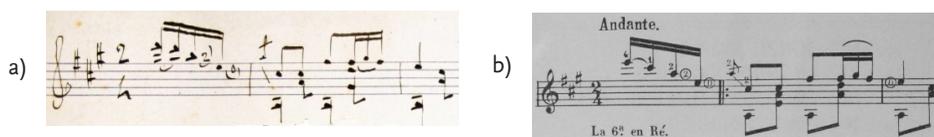
DAVID J. BUCH

IN RECENT YEARS “Urtext” editions of Turina, Villa-Lobos, and Ponce have appeared, along with facsimiles of composers’ autograph manuscripts. Yet for Francisco Tárrega, the foundational figure of what we call the “classical guitar,” the scholarship is only marginally better than it was 113 years ago, when Tárrega died. There is still no reliable complete works edition, no *catalogue raisonné*, and scant archival research.¹

The majority of readings in the first editions of both original compositions and transcriptions (most of these were published in facsimile by Chanterelle in 1992) carry no authority.² Besides some nineteen original compositions supervised by the composer before publication,³ the vast majority of these first editions were prepared by editors considerably after Tárrega’s death, and these scores are often at odds with the surviving Tárrega autograph manuscripts and the copies made by his students. Significant editorial interventions and alterations were common in this era, while fidelity to the primary source was rare. So even such well-known works as *La alborada*, *Estudio brillante de [Jean-Delphin] Alard*, *El columpio*, *Danza mora*, *Danza odalisca*, *Las dos hermanitas*, the *Jota sobre motivos populares*, *Pavana*, *Tango María*, and many of the preludes (with the notable exceptions of nos. 1–7 but unfortunately including *Lágrima*, *Endecha*, and *Oremus*) are versions prepared and

- 1 A rare example of a study based on archival research is David J. Buch, “Concepción Gómez de Jacoby: Tárrega’s Enigmatic Patron and *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*,” in *Musicological Trifles and Biographical Paralipomena* (blog), ed. Michael Lorenz, November 29, 2020, <https://michaelorenz.blogspot.com/2020/11/concepcion-gomez-de-jacoby-tarregas.html>. Even in this limited investigation, a significant number of received biographical “facts” about Tárrega were shown to be contradicted by archival documents and primary sources.
- 2 Francisco Tárrega, *Collected Guitar Works*, ed. Rafael Andía and Javier Quevedo, 2 vols. (Heidelberg: Chanterelle, 1992–2000).
- 3 *Capricho árabe*, Preludios 1–7, *La mariposa*, *Gran vals*, ¡*Adelita!*, *Rosita*, ¡*Marieta!*, *María gavota*, ¡*Sueño!* (tremolo study), *Minuetto*, *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*, *Estudio en forma de minuetto*, and the Mazurka in G.

Figure 1 Tárrega, *La alborada*, mm. 1–2: (a) autograph manuscript; (b) first edition.



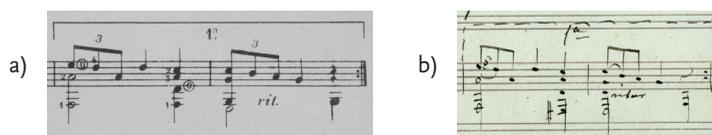
apparently altered by named and unnamed editors.⁴ One original étude (Madrid: Ildefonso Alier, no. 45, plate 6044, also reprinted by Chanterelle) claims to be based on a theme from *La traviata*, but no such theme can be found in Verdi’s opera.⁵ Even the modern reprints are not flawless. The Chanterelle reprint of Tárrega’s Preludio no. 6 (Madrid: Ildefonso Alier, plate 1053, supervised by the composer) lacks the indication to be played pizzicato throughout.⁶

Below are five representative examples illustrating the variety of significant divergences between posthumous first editions and the composer’s autograph manuscripts:

- 1 *La alborada* In both surviving autograph manuscripts, the harmony on the second beat of the first full measure is a leading-tone seventh chord against a tonic pedal (**figure 1a**). In the first edition, the harmony on the second beat of the first full measure has been simplified to a second-inversion subdominant chord; the tempo indication “Andante” has been added editorially (**figure 1b**).⁷

- 4 For examples of a named editor, see *Jota sobre motivos populares. Por Fco. Tárrega. Revisada por su discípulo Daniel Fortea* (Madrid: Ildefonso Alier, n.d., plate 5625), and the *Pavana* (Madrid: Daniel Fortea, 1930).
- 5 The initial motive bears a strong resemblance to the beginning of Azucena and Manrico’s duet “Ai nostri monti ritorneremo” in the act 4 finale of Verdi’s *Il trovatore*.
- 6 The problems with the first editions and with the Soneto edition (see below) were first discussed in Wolf Moser, *Francisco Tárrega: Werden und Wirken: Die Gitarre in Spanien zwischen 1830 und 1960* (n.p.: Saint-Georges, c. 1996). The first Spanish translation, with additions and revisions by the author, was published as *Francisco Tárrega: Devenir y repercusión: La guitarra en España entre 1830 y 1960* (Castellón de la Plana: Consejo Municipal de Cultura, 2007), then reprinted as *Francisco Tárrega y la Guitarra en España entre 1830 y 1960* (Valencia: Piles, 2009). Much of the basic biographical information and the list of works derives from Emilio Pujol, *Tárrega: Ensayo biográfico* (Lisboa: Talleres Gráficos de Ramos, Afonso & Moita, 1960; Valencia: Artes Gráficas Soler, 1978); Adrián Rius also relies on Pujol in his biography *Francisco Tárrega 1852–1909 Biography* (Valencia: Piles, 2006). But Pujol’s study makes numerous assertions of fact without evidence, and these claims, which have become received wisdom, require verification through future archival investigation.
- 7 **Figure 1a** is taken from the undated autograph score in the Biblioteca Lázaro Galdiano (shelf mark RB 15073), reproduced online at <https://bibliotecalazarogaldiano.wordpress.com/2018/10/31/serenata-espanola-de-francisco-tarrega-edicion-de-jesus-saiz-huedo/>. The first edition shown in **figure 1b** was published in Madrid by Ildefonso Alier (n.d, plate 5391). In the Galdiano manuscript, dedicated to his student Cristobál Soto, Tárrega indicates the genre as a *capricho*. In the other autograph manuscript (1891) it is a *juguete* (toy) and is dedicated to the composer’s son. Miguel Llobet’s copy of the piece, housed in Barcelona’s Museu de la Música (Fons Miquel Llobet, FA165, entitled *Scherzo para guitarra*) also has the leading-tone chord.

Figure 2 *Sueño (mazurka)*, mm. 7–8: (a) first edition; (b) autograph score.



2 *Sueño (mazurka)* At the last cadence of the first section, the first edition eliminated the slurs and the chromatic move to the dominant in the bass (F–F#–G), as well as adding an impossible low E where there is none in the original autograph score (figure 2a, possibly an engraver’s error). Compare this with the same two measures from Tárrega’s autograph score from 1897, entitled *¡Sueño! mazurka Conchita*. One clearly sees the slurs, the F#, a D, and no low E on beat one on the second measure in the example (figure 2b).⁸

3 *Tango María* The two autograph manuscripts have differences. The earlier manuscript, dated 1894, is found in Dr. Walter Leckie’s “blue” music book.⁹ It is more elaborate than the later autograph version inscribed for Tárrega’s student Mercedes Aguinaga (Barcelona, 1906),¹⁰ but both have the identical segment in the opening section (figures 3a and 3b). The posthumous first edition substantially changes this passage, both in the rhythm and the pattern of *rasgueado* and *tambura* (figure 3c).¹¹ This passage is repeated several times in the piece.

Among other changes in this introduction, the end of the first gesture in octaves has been reduced in the posthumous print, from the original four-note octave and unison to a single octave (figure 4).

4 *Las dos hermanas* The posthumous first edition is entitled *Las dos hermanitas*, meaning “the two little sisters.” In the autograph, dated 1900 in Walter Leckie’s “red” book, the title is *Las dos hermanas* (the two sisters). It has a lovely and dramatic

⁸ Tárrega, *Sueño (mazurka)*, first edition (Madrid: Ildefonso Alier, n.d., plate 5393); autograph manuscript, 1897, Fons Miquel Llobet (Arxiu del Museu de la Música de Barcelona, shelf mark ES AMDMB 4-469-7-1-FA123), <https://arxiu.museumusica.bcn.cat/improvisacion-sola-sueno-mazurka-conchita>.

⁹ A facsimile of the blue and the red books has been published as *The Tárrega–Leckie Guitar Manuscripts: Lessons with the Maestro*, edited by Brian Whitehouse (Halesowen: ASG Music [2015]). *Tango María* is found on pp. 83–84. A selection of twenty-one pieces (eleven original compositions) from these two books has been edited and published as *A Tárrega Collection* (London and New York: Ariel, 1980). Some pieces in this modern edition are flawed, as the editor omitted pitches, misread some of the notation, and left out an entire section of the *Traviata fantasia*.

¹⁰ A facsimile of this manuscript is included in Tárrega, *Originalkompositionen für Gitarre*, ed. Karl Scheit (Vienna: Universal, 1978).

¹¹ Tárrega, *Tango María*, first edition (Madrid: Ildefonso Alier, [c. 1920?], plate I. 5232 A). The controversy concerning the authorship of this piece would require a fairly detailed account and is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

Figure 3 *Tango María*, mm. 5–8: (a) autograph (Leckie, 1894); (b) autograph (Aguinaga, 1906); (c) first edition.

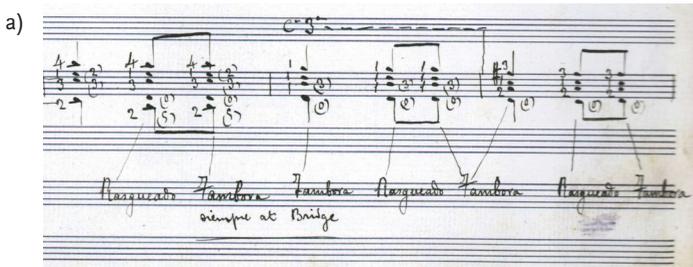


Figure 4 *Tango María*, m. 4: (a) autograph (1894); (b) first edition.

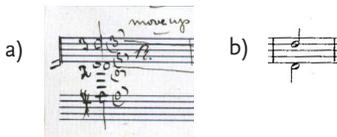


Figure 5 *Las dos hermanas*: (a) autograph, mm. 32–33; (b) first edition, mm. 20–21.



introduction that is missing from the print. **Figure 5a** shows two measures from the second strain of the first waltz. These bars are substantially different from the print (**figure 5b**).¹²

Other things have been changed in the print as well, mostly to simplify the piece. For example, the editor has eliminated the triplet at the climactic phrase of the second waltz—the only triplet in the piece. (This is a device Tárrega also used for the climactic phrase in his *Capricho árabe*.) The editor replaces the triplet with the most used ornament in the piece, an inverted mordent. Despite what one commonly hears in performances of Tárrega’s music, these are very different figures, and Tárrega is careful to distinguish them in his scores. This distinction is also emphasized in both “Tárrega” method books written by his students Emilio Pujol and Pascual Roch.

- 5 The waltz *Paquito* is a particularly egregious example of an unreliable edition. This is actually a posthumous arrangement of an earlier piece entitled *Improvisación ¡Sola!*, composed for and dedicated to Tárrega’s enigmatic patron, Concepción Gómez de Jacoby on June 29, 1897. Eliminating the dedication and renaming the piece for himself, Tárrega’s son apparently transformed what was a plaintive “valse triste” (*Sola*, meaning “lonely woman” or “loneliness” in feminine gender, is almost certainly alluding to the divorced dedicatee) into a conventional dance-like waltz referring to himself as a child. Besides erasing the original title and dedication of the piece, Tárrega junior changed many elements in this apparent “first edition,” which bears the copyright date of 1956, some sixty years after his father composed *Sola*. When one consults the original autograph manuscript of *Sola* one immediately perceives the significant differences in the printed score and the performances based on that publication.¹³ The expressive character of Tárrega’s original piece has been erased, along with the essential *crescendos*, *ritardandos*, and *a tempo* indications so typical of a slow waltz. In the final section of the print the editor has shifted one *a tempo* indication to different measures, and a repeat has been added to the score.

When the first volume of the Soneto Tárrega edition appeared in 1991,¹⁴ it seemed to offer something new—heretofore little-known manuscript readings. Yet it, too, is highly problematic. The editor claims his edition is based on “original manuscripts”—an undefined and odd locution. He provides no editorial policy, gives no identification of sources, and makes no distinction between autograph scores and copies. There are also errors, misattributions, sophomoric commentary, and few

12 Autograph, *The Tárrega–Leckie Guitar Manuscripts, 196–200*; first edition (Madrid: Ildefonso Alier, n.d., plate 6040). In the autograph, note the erasure and corrections; this and many other emendations suggest that this autograph may have been the original compositional score of the piece.

13 The autograph is in the archive Fons Miquel Llobet, shelf mark ES AMDMB 4-469-7-1-FA123, <https://arxiu.museumusica.bcn.cat/improvisacion-sola-sueno-mazurka-conchita>. For the print edition, see Tárrega, *Paquito: Vals in Do, Arreglo de Francisco Tárrega (hijo)*, no. 3 in *Cinco obras originales para guitarra*, Álbum No. 4 (Madrid: Ediciones Musicales Madrid, 1956), 6–7.

14 Tárrega, *Obras completas para guitarra: Nueva edición basada en sus manuscritos y ediciones originales*, ed. Melchor Rodríguez, 5 vols. (Madrid: Soneto, 1991–93).

Figure 6 “Exercício,” in Oswaldo Soares’s *A escola de Tárrega*, mm. 1–4.



variant readings. While this is certainly not a “complete works” edition, as the title states, the readings from these “original manuscripts” are markedly different from those in the first printed editions.

Whatever the merits of Soneto’s unidentified manuscript readings and Chanterelle’s “first edition” reprints, there have been significant developments since their publication. These developments include: (1) the availability of eleven autograph manuscripts and sixty-eight contemporary copies (including forty-eight pieces copied by Miguel Llobet) that are now housed at the archive of the Museu de la Música in Barcelona and easily accessed online;¹⁵ (2) the publication of a facsimile of two volumes of Tárrega’s autograph manuscripts written for Dr. Walter Leckie;¹⁶ and (3) the discovery of what appears to be the most ambitious composition attributed to Tárrega, a 170-measure *Serenata española* in E minor, housed in the Lázaro Galdiano Museum in Madrid.¹⁷ Moreover, there are controversies concerning pieces with conflicting composer attributions, such as *Tango María*. Some works attributed to Tárrega are clearly spurious—for example, the short arpeggio study in E minor, first published by Oswaldo Soares without attribution (**figure 6**).¹⁸ A number of Tárrega’s pieces appear to be lost. Only a close study of the sources can help resolve these issues.

Given this state of affairs, it is time for an international undertaking resulting in a truly scholarly edition of Tárrega’s complete works, with state-of-art editorial methods that include variant readings and detailed source analysis. This will certainly lead to a reexamination of the music and its historical context. A long-needed reevaluation of Tárrega’s authentic music may ensue, leading to informed performances and a serious study of the performance practice. Unreliable editions can finally be put to rest, as was done with Alessandro Longo’s editions of Domenico Scarlatti’s keyboard music.

- 15 Fons Miquel Llobet, Arxiu del Museu de la Música de Barcelona, <https://arxiu.museumusica.bcn.cat/fons-miquel-llobet>. A good deal of this material was collected by Fernando J. Alonso Mercader, particularly the scores that were originally owned by Miguel Llobet. Llobet’s personal copies seem to be the earliest surviving sources of some pieces by Tárrega that do not survive in autograph manuscripts.
- 16 *The Tárrega–Leckie Guitar Manuscripts*. The pieces in these two manuscripts have never been fully analyzed or contextualized.
- 17 *Serenata Española.- / Dedicada a D.n P. Aguilera / por su autor D.n Fran.co Tárrega*, copied by Manuela Vázquez-Barros in Seville in March, 1902. A modern edition (with many editorial interventions), including a facsimile of the original manuscript, has been published as Tárrega, *Serenata Española, critical edition by Jesús Saiz Huedo* (Madrid: Fundación Lázaro Galdiano and Asociación Cultural More Hispano, 2018).
- 18 “Exercício,” in Oswaldo Soares, *A escola de Tárrega: Método completo de violão* (São Paulo: Irmãos Vitale, 1962), 17. I wish to thank Mark Gaultier for providing information on the publication history of this piece.

Rigorous scholarly editions, when they appear, always shed new light on the music, and have many repercussions in the musical circles to which they are directed. One should recall the decisive impact of the first Bach and Mozart *Werke* editions from Breitkopf & Härtel. Even the second scholarly editions, such as the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* and the *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe* published by Bärenreiter Verlag, and the new Verdi and Donizetti editions from the University of Chicago Press and Ricordi, caused dramatic reevaluations of the sources, the music, and much received wisdom. Program notes proudly announce the use of these new editions because they provide new insights on the music, even if only on the level of detail.

To this end, I would suggest the formation of a working group of qualified scholars, editors, and performers to begin a process that would result in that undertaking. Because the guitar is the national instrument of Spain, and because Tárrega is the foundational figure of the classical guitar, this undertaking should be optimally centered in and supported by appropriate Spanish institutions. It also should be supervised by a team that includes leading Spanish scholars. Moreover, this project would require access to both public and private collections in Spain, as well as Spanish archives.¹⁹ Other countries, such as Argentina, may also prove to be important for primary sources.

This undertaking will not be easy. It will take many years, perhaps even decades. But the results will be well worth the effort. Once we rediscover the genuine sources of Tárrega's music that have survived, we will rediscover the authentic art of this most fundamental master of the Spanish classical guitar.



This article has been translated into Spanish by Daniel Vissi García and José Luis Segura Maldonado as “De la necesidad de una edición académica de las obras completas de Tárrega,” available in this issue at <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/sbs/vol7/iss1/2/> under Additional Files.

Bibliography

The following list is not a guide to research: it brings together only those editions and manuscripts discussed in the text and footnotes.

For all sources, orthography has been adjusted to follow journal style throughout.

Monographs, Articles, and Methods

Buch, David J. “Concepción Gómez de Jacoby: Tárrega’s Enigmatic Patron and *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*.” In *Musicological Trifles and Biographical*

¹⁹ These include the Fondo local de la Biblioteca Municipal de Villareal: Museo de la Ciudad de Villareal, Caso de Polo, Sala Francisco Tárrega, and the private collections of Amparo Ranch, Carmen Gimeno Barón, and María del Carmen Bas.

Paralipomena (blog), edited by Michael Lorenz. November 29, 2020. <https://michaelorenz.blogspot.com/2020/11/concepcion-gomez-de-jacoby-tarregas.html>.

- Moser, Wolf. *Francisco Tárrega: Werden und Wirken: Die Gitarre in Spanien zwischen 1830 und 1960*. N.p.: Saint-Georges, c. 1996. Translated by Antonio Gómez Schneekloth and Alfredo Brotons as *Francisco Tárrega: Devenir y repercusión*, expanded and revised by the author (Castellón de la Plana: Consejo Municipal de Cultura, 2007). Translation reprinted as *Francisco Tárrega y la guitarra en España entre 1830 y 1960* (Valencia: Piles, 2009).
- Pujol, Emilio. *Tárrega: Ensayo biográfico*. Lisboa: Talleres Gráficos de Ramos, Afonso & Moita, 1960; Valencia: Artes Gráficas Soler, 1978.
- Rius Espinós, Adrián. *Francisco Tárrega 1852–1909 Biography*. Valencia: Piles, 2006.
- Soares, Oswaldo. *A escola de Tárrega: Método completo de violão*. São Paulo: Irmãos Vitale, 1962.

Archives

- Fons Miquel Llobet. Arxiu del Museu de la Música de Barcelona. <https://arxiu.museumusica.bcn.cat/fons-miquel-llobet>.
- Papeles de música. Biblioteca Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid. Not searchable online.

Printed Scores

- Tárrega, Francisco. *Jota sobre motivos populares*. Revised by Daniel Fortea. Madrid: Ildefonso Alier, [1926?], plate 5625.
- . *Pavana*. Madrid: Daniel Fortea, 1930.
- . *Cinco obras originales para guitarra*. Álbum no. 4. Madrid: Ediciones Musicales Madrid, 1956.
- . *Originalkompositionen für Gitarre*. Edited by Karl Scheit. Vienna: Universal, 1978.
- . *A Tárrega Collection: Selected from Recently Discovered Manuscripts in Tárrega's Own Hand*. Introduction by Louis de Swart. London and New York: Ariel, 1980.
- . *Obras completas para guitarra: Nueva edición basada en sus manuscritos y ediciones originales*. Edited by Melchor Rodríguez. 5 vols. Madrid: Soneto, 1991–1993.
- . *Collected Guitar Works*. Edited by Rafael Andía and Javier Quevedo. Volume 1, *Reprints of Editions Published up to 1909*; volume 2, *63 Reprints of Editions Published after 1909*. Heidelberg: Chanterelle, 1992.
- . *The Tárrega–Leckie Guitar Manuscripts: Lessons with the Maestro*. Edited by Brian Whitehouse. Halesowen: ASG Music [2015].
- . *Serenata española*. Critical edition by Jesús Saiz Huedo. Includes facsimile of manuscript. Madrid: Fundación Lázaro Galdiano and Asociación Cultural More Hispano, 2018.

Manuscripts

- Tárrega, Francisco. *La alborada*. (1) Autograph manuscript, 1891. Location unknown. Partially reproduced in *Obras completas*, 13. (2) Undated autograph manuscript. Madrid: Biblioteca Lázaro Galdiano, RB 15073, f. 23r. Reproduced on the library's blog, <https://bibliotecalazarogaldiano.wordpress.com/2018/10/31/serenata-espanola-de-francisco-tarrega-edicion-de-jesus-saiz-huedo/>. (3) Copied (in 1900?) by Miguel Llobet as *Scherzo para guitarra*. Barcelona: Museu de la Música, FA165. <https://arxiu.museumusica.bcn.cat/scherzo-5>.
- . *Tango María*. (1) Autograph manuscript, 1894. Reproduced in *The Tárrega–Leckie Guitar Manuscripts*, 83–84. (2) Autograph manuscript, Barcelona, 1906. Location unknown. Reproduced in *Originalkompositionen für Gitarre*.
- . *Improvisación ¡Sola!*. Autograph manuscript, Valencia, June 29, 1897. Barcelona: Fons Miquel Llobet, Arxiu del Museu de la Música de Barcelona, shelf mark ES AMDMB 4-469-7-1-FA123. <https://arxiu.museumusica.bcn.cat/improvisacion-sola-sueno-mazurka-conchita>.
- . *¡Sueño! Mazurka Conchita*. Autograph manuscript, Valencia, June 29, 1897. Barcelona: Fons Miquel Llobet, Arxiu del Museu de la Música de Barcelona, shelf mark ES AMDMB 4-469-7-1-FA123. <https://arxiu.museumusica.bcn.cat/improvisacion-sola-sueno-mazurka-conchita>.
- . *Las dos hermanas*. Autograph manuscript, 1900. Reproduced in *The Tárrega–Leckie Guitar Manuscripts*, 196–200.
- . *Serenata Española.- / Dedicada a D.n P. Aguilera / por su autor D.n Fran.co Tárrega*. Manuscript copied by Manuela Vázquez-Barros, Seville, March, 1902. Madrid: Biblioteca Lázaro Galdiano, Papeles de música, RB 15073, ff. 47r–51v. Reproduced in Tárrega, *Serenata española* (see printed scores). Some excerpts are reproduced on the library's blog, <https://bibliotecalazarogaldiano.wordpress.com/2018/10/31/serenata-espanola-de-francisco-tarrega-edicion-de-jesus-saiz-huedo/>.



About the Author

DAVID J. BUCH, PhD, is professor emeritus at the University of Northern Iowa, formerly professor of music at Wayne State University, and most recently visiting professor at the University of Chicago. He has published numerous scholarly articles and books on music from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries, including studies on lute and guitar. His edition of the opera *Der Stein der Weisen* (1790), with newly discovered music attributed to Mozart, was published by A-R Editions, recorded by Boston Baroque for the Telarc Label, and staged in seven productions in eight countries. The A-R series has published four more operas under his editorship.

In 1998, Dr. Buch was named University of Northern Iowa Distinguished Scholar and received the Donald N. McKay Research Award. He plays the lute, viola da gamba, and guitar. He has performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Claudio Abbado, and as guest soloist with the Eckstein String Quartet (principals, CSO).

Dr. Buch can be contacted at buch@uni.edu.

About Soundboard Scholar

SOUNDBOARD SCHOLAR is the peer-reviewed journal of the Guitar Foundation of America. Its purpose is to publish guitar research of the highest caliber. *Soundboard Scholar* is online and open access. To view all issues of the journal, visit <http://soundboardscholar.org>.

About the Guitar Foundation of America



THE GUITAR FOUNDATION OF AMERICA inspires artistry, builds community, and promotes the classical guitar internationally through excellence in performance, literature, education, and research. For more information, visit <https://guitarfoundation.org>.