

first movement, Allegro moderato, Ponce leads his two pleasing, elegant themes through the same high contrasts of mood and sudden jolts from major to minor and back that have led scholars to question Schubert's understanding of "proper" key relationships in sonata form. The Andante espressivo is more Ponce's own style, full of the tender (and, by 1929, old-fashioned) lyricism that had made his song Estrellita an international hit. Perhaps the spirit of Schubert does hover briefly in the hesitant, solemn chordal passages that dominate the movement's central portion. Schubert's influence is more strongly felt in the third movement, Allegro vivo -- più lento espressivo. The first of those two tempo indications applies to a fast but bitter-sweet opening and closing section; the other covers the movement's second section, sentimental and, again, hesitant. The final movement, Allegro non troppo e serio, is dour music with an implacable and sometimes desolate bass line. When the bass isn't forcing the music into a dark little march, the treble part becomes highly active; what initially hints at imitative counterpoint more often disintegrates into nervous tremolos. This is not highly dramatic music, but its sentiment and emotional range link it securely to the early Romanticism popular a century earlier.

SEGOVIA

SECOND SERIES FROM **PLATERO AND I** M. CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO



SONATA ROMÁNTICA MANUEL PONCE

Platero y Yo (Platero and I) exemplifies a late phase of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's style, during which he became more interested in the relationship between music and other arts. It is inspired by a book written in 1914 by Juan Ramon Jiménez (1881-1958), the Spanish poet who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1956. The poet and the composer had intriguingly parallel lives: They were both sons of bankers and overcame parental opposition to focus their lives on their creative endeavors; they were both exiled from their Fascist home countries in 1939; both found refuge in America.

"Platero y yo" is the story of a poet and his silvery gray donkey who was both traveling companion and confidant. In 1960 Castelnuovo-Tedesco conceived for Andrés Segovia a work of 28 pieces for guitar and narrator (the poem contains more than 100 chapters). A performance of the entire work would take around 50 minutes. A selection of ten numbers for guitar only, was also sanctioned by the composer as a more concise portrait of the charming animal and his master. Castelnuovo-Tedesco cautioned that in such cases the audience should know the story of Platero and his poet. Castelnuovo-Tedesco divided the series into four groups of seven

pieces, each section ending with a reflection on Platero's death. The pieces, which do not follow any order of the original chapters, range from descriptions of events in the lives of the poet and the donkey to the poet's reflections on the people and places they visit around their Spanish village. In much of the suite the music primarily supports the spoken words; there are no recurring themes or motives to represent the characters. The guitar paints musical pictures of birds, village festivals and dancing, the colors of the sky at twilight, at times using such techniques as staccato to represent trotting, harmonics in an address to the moon, habanera rhythms, and a toccata to welcome Spring. The nature of the music is as gentle as Platero himself.

In the 1920s, Ponce wrote a pair of contrasting guitar sonatas for his friend Andrés Segovia. The first he dubbed Sonata Clásica, offering it as an homage to Classical-era guitar master Fernando Sor. The second he called Sonata Romántica, and the Romantic composer he had in mind was clear from the subtitle, which in English reads "Homage to Fr. Schubert, who loved the guitar." Although this music could not quite be mistaken for Schubert, it does employ several Schubertian touches. In the



Andrés Segovia - Ponce Sonata Romántica - Castelnuovo-Tedesco Platero And I

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SONATA ROMÁNTICA MANUEL PONCE

Ponce: Sonata Romántica

- 1 Allegro moderato 7:11
- 2 Andante espressivo 5:03
- 3 Allegretto vivo - più lento espressivo 3:11
- 4 Allegro non troppo e serioso 6:02

Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Platero y yo, Op. 190

- 5 Retorno 3:44
- 6 El Pozo 3:53
- 7 El Canario Vuela 3:39
- 8 La Primavera 2:02
- 9 A Platero en el Cielo de Moguer 4:01

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Andrés Segovia - Ponce Sonata Romántica - Castelnuovo-Tedesco Platero And I



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