

A Study into the Carcassi Guitar Method in Terms of Content

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the “Carcassi Guitar Method” in terms of content. The research has a descriptive design based on the document analysis model, one of the qualitative research methods. Within the scope of the research, the edition of Matteo Carcassi’s guitar method, the original name of which was “Methode Complete pour La Guitarre”, named “Carcassi Method for the Guitar”, published by Oliver Ditson Company with the editorship of G.C. Santisteban, was obtained, and the 12 parts of the method and the subjects included in the chapters were examined by documentary scanning method. As result of the research; It has been revealed that the content of the method includes scales, cadences, etudes and pieces in all tones, exercises related to the subject are included in all parts of the method, on the other hand, the method is far from being a source of repertory due to the low number of pieces in the content.

Keywords: Matteo Carcassi, Guitar Methods, Guitar Education, Method Analysis.

Introduction

Instrument methods is a significant part of instrument education. The fact that methods are in suitable contents and that they are applied by the trainer in a correct way seems to be the key for a successful process of the work. According to Say (2012), instrument methods are the books with note samples bearing an educational path in a consistent way flowing from easy to hard and used from the beginning stage onwards in instrument teaching. Method books do not only comprise written instructions just for the guitar, but they also reflect common social and musical attitudes towards instruments (Cox, 1978, p. 3). While methods have the task of planning, assisting as a source for the teacher, they have the task of guiding and stepping as a source for the learner (Erim & Yöndem, 2007).

Nineteenth century is a period when significant developments were experienced in terms of instrument music and instrument education. It is known to us that the guitar composers focused on the guitar education and wrote the methods that are still used today in very common way. A great many methods used in the guitar education in Türkiye go mostly back to the methods and etude books by the guitar educators living in 19th century (Erim & Yöndem, 2007). Some of these composers are Matteo Carcassi, Ferdinando Carulli, Mauro Giuliani, Fernando Sor and Dionisio Aguado. The methods of these composers, which are widely used today are as follows:

- Methode Complete pour La Guitarre, Matteo Carcassi
- MetodoCompleto per Chitarra, Ferdinando Carulli
- Studio per La Chitarra, Mauro Giuliani
- Methode pour La Guitare, Fernando Sor
- Metodo de Guitarra, Dionisio Aguado

Risteski (2006) pointed out that the bases of the guitar methodology were laid with these methods.

Matteo Carcassi is an Italian guitarist and composer living in the years 1792-1853. Just like many other guitarists in this period, he lived in Paris. He started his music career with the piano and became a virtuoso shortly after he started the guitar. From the time when his guitar method and 25 etudes were published onwards, it has been one of the methods preferred the most by guitar teachers and students, and it has never lost its popularity (Alves, 2015; Uluocak, 2014; Erim and Yöndem, 2007; Halvaşı, 1992; Önal, 2021; Moore, 2009). The most important work of Carcassi, which is believed to have inscribed his name into the history, is his method called “Methode Complete pour La Gitarre”, published in Paris in 1836 (Uluocak, 2014, p. 130). It is also known that the etudes by Carcassi have taken their places in many methods and repertoires that have still been used today.

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the 12 chapters of Carcassi Guitar Method and the topics taking place in these chapters in terms of content and to be able to draw a detailed framework for this method which is still of importance in the light of the data obtained. In the review of the related literature, no study regarding the content of this method was found. It is thought that the current study is of importance in terms of forming a source of content particularly for classical guitar methods likely to be written in the future. In this sense, the study seeks for answers for the following sub-problems:

- Which parts and topics is Carcassi Guitar Method made up of?
- What are the parts and topic contents of Carcassi Guitar Method like?

Method

Research Design

In this research, qualitative research methods were based. Qualitative research could be defined as the research where such qualitative data collection methods as observation, interview and document analysis are used and a process is followed to determine the perceptions and events in a natural setting in a real and holistic way (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2021, p. 37).

The current study has a descriptive design based on document analysis model. Document analysis contains the analysis of the written materials comprising information about the target phenomenon and phenomena to be investigated (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021, p. 189).

Working Group

In the current study, the guitar method known as “Carcassi Method for the Guitar” written by the composer-writer named Matteo Carcassi in 1836 and republished by Oliver Ditson Company in 1906 in the editorship of G. C. Santisteban was investigated. The original name of the method is “Methode Complete pour La Gitarre” and it was translated into different languages by a lot of publishing houses. The language of the method investigated is English-Spanish.

Data Collection Tools

At the stage of data collection in this study, documentary scanning method was benefitted. Documentary scanning is a data collection technique out of present registry and documents. Documentary scanning comprises the processes of finding the sources for a certain purpose, taking notes and evaluating (Karasar, 2020, p. 230). The method to be investigated was obtained and the chapters and topics in the content were investigated in terms of its content.

Data Analysis

The method which is the topic of the investigation was investigated in peculiar with the topics in the contents of 12 chapters. The data obtained was expressed descriptively.

Findings and Comment

Carcassi Guitar Method is made up of 12 chapters. The chapters of the method and the information regarding the topics in the chapters are given in the table below.

Table 1 Chapters of the Method and its Topics

Chapter	Topic
Elementary Principles of Music	Staff

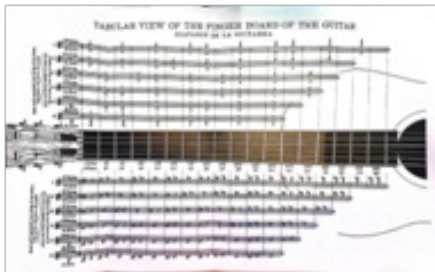
Elementary Principles of Music	Scale
	Character and value of the notes
	Time
	Intervals
	A minor
	Major tones and related minors
	Abbreviations
	Guitar Position
	Parts of the Guitar
Preliminary Instructions	Strings
	Right hand
	Left hand
	1 st position natural scale
1 st position exercises	1 st position exercise
	Exercises with sharps and flats
	Duration works
Chords	
Arpeggios	Exercises
	C major
	A minor
	G major
	E minor
Bar	Full and half bar
	Exercises
	D major
	B minor
	A major
Bar	F# minor
	E major
Appoggiaturas	C# minor
	F major
	D minor
The Grupetto	
Harmonics	
Advanced Studies	B major
	G# minor
	F# major
	D# minor

Advanced Studies	Bb major
	G minor
	Eb major
	C minor
	Ab major
	F minor
	Db major
	Bb minor
	Gb major
	Eb minor
	Melodic minor scales
Scales	Scale Studies
	Exercises
	Scales with thirds and sixths
Pieces	Di proevenza il mar
	Peruvian air
	Spanish dance

In the chapter of “Basic Principles of Music”, information was given about strings and clefs, the position of notes on the staff was shown. Full and half intervals, chromatic and diatonic scales, degrees of scales, the formula of major scale and the accidentals were given. The duration values of notes were shown together in detail. Time, measure and intervals was explained in detail and exemplified on the staff. While introducing A minor staff, the topic of relevance as well as the harmonic and melodic forms were dealt in detail. The terms of loudness and speed were explained in the topic of abbreviations. The holding position, locating right and left hands and the parts of the guitar were explained through various visual materials. The picture of the fingerboard is given in a table below.

In the chapter of “Preliminary Instructions” of the method, information particularly about producing sound out of the guitar was given. Empty strings and their note correspondences were explained, the correspondences of empty strings at the upper string were given. In the content of right hand and left hand, the position of the hand was described, fingering was explained. The expression of the writer regarding the position of right and left hands “An easy and elegant

position can be achieved as a result of proper work of both hands with an equal interest” was given. With this expression, the writer emphasized the important of the work by giving equal attention to both hands. In dealing with the topic, visuals were referred to in the first part and visual materials were not used in the content of this topic. It is thought that this would create a trouble for the students using the method. An exercise was given for both hands and then 1st position natural scale was explained.



In the chapter of “1st Position Exercises” of the method, 3 exercises were given place. Accidentals were used in one exercise. Regarding time studies, the concept of measure was explained using a great many examples in a detailed way. It was aimed by these examples to make two-party playing by means of true rhythmic counting. The writer suggests practising these exercises until obtaining a good result.

In the chapter of “Chords” of the method, the methods of playing chord sounds together were mentioned, it was pointed out that chords could be played in 3 different ways. Finger positioning of these playing methods were explained. Such topics as chord set ups, chord inversions were given place in the content of this part. The expression of the writer “Chords are a feature of the guitar and this subject deserves a lot of attention” emphasized the importance of the issue with a stress on the polyphonic structure of the guitar with which chords could be played.

In the chapter of “Arpeggios”, arpeggio playing was defined and 23 exercises, all were in C minor tone, were given place. In the content of C major, A minor, G major and E minor topics, ascending and descending scale, full cadence, exercise, etude and works were given place. Also, in this part, dots and

ties were explained 14 exercises were given place to strengthen fingers. The writer recommended to press on all notes comprising chord sounds with left hand fingers at once while playing arpeggios and to move all the fingers together while changing the chord, passing the next chord position.

In the chapter of “Bar”, types of bars were introduced and an exercise was given. No visual or explanatory information was found regarding the application of bar technique. In the content of the part, ascending and descending scales of D major, B minor, A major, F# minor and E major tones, exercises, etudes and works were given place. True application of ascending and descending legato technique was described and examples regarding the topic were given. There is a recommendation of the writer concerning the small bar use like “Even though finger positioning of small bar is given with first and second fingers in some teaching books, this finger positioning (second and third finger was used in the picture) is more advantageous compared to the other one”.

In the chapter of “Appoggiaturas”, types of appoggiaturas were mentioned and information was given about the technique of playing. The scales of C# minor, F major and D minor tones and cadences with the exercises for each tone, etudes and works were given. In addition to the tone scales, 5th position, 7th position and 9th position scales were given within the content.

In the chapter of “Grupettos”, there is detailed information about how to apply the playing of a gruppetto, gruppetto types, and about playing a trill. The topic was supported with the types of gruppetto and an etude comprising a trill. It is of attention that grupettos were considered as a separate part in this method.

In the chapter of “Harmonics”, the technique of playing harmonic was given in detail, natural harmonics were shown on the staff. The topic was supported by an etude comprising harmonic playing. Third and fourth fret harmonics were included in the diagram where there are natural harmonics. It is thought that starting to produce harmonic sounds out of these frets could be difficult for the students at beginner level.

Just before the chapter of “Advanced Studies” of the method, there is an expression of the writer as “The guitar could be played in all tones, but there are most preferred tones in the guitar, just like other instruments. It is essential that those aiming at doing advanced works in the guitar know all the tones and work on them. I give these tones in the next part since I think it is necessary for this purpose”. In this part, the scales of the tones of B major, G# minor, F# major, D# minor, Bb major, G minor, Eb major, C minor, Ab major, F minor, Db major, Bb minor, Gb major and Eb minor, their cadences, exercises, etudes and works were given. Melodic scale forms in all minor tones were also given in this part.

In the part of “Scales” the scale works in all tones were given. Minor scales were given as harmonic and melodic in these works. In what follows, extended cadences of all tones were given. In the axis of C major chord, 12 exercises were written and it was recommended to apply these exercises through all chords. In the content of dual sounds, the scale works written using thirds, sixths and octave intervals were also given.

In the chapter of “Pieces”, there are 3 pieces as “Di Provenza Il Mar”, “Peruvian Air” and “Spanish Dance” subsequently. “Peruvian Air” is in the form of an arrangement for two guitars. All of the pieces were arranged by G. C. Santisteban, the editor of the book.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, it was aimed to investigate Carcassi Guitar Method in terms of chapters and topic contents. Regarding the content;

Scales, etudes and works in all tones exist in the method. It seems to be a positive case in terms of the fact that both guitar educators using the source could reach the content of tone information by means of just one source, and guitar students using the method could work in all tones. At the same time, it is likely to say that it is an extensive source aiming at improving the guitar with a holistic perspective beyond being a book of beginner level of the method. In the study of Van der Walt (1996), it was pointed out that the subject of grace notes in the guitar methods was not mentioned adequately enough and the methods of Aguado and Carcassi methods were

dealt in a very short form, and some grace notes in Carcassi method were given in detail. Depending on the findings of the study, it was found that types of grace notes were given place in the content of the method.

It was observed that there were a great many exercises under the heading of each topic in the content of the method. Similarly, Uluocak (2012) was found in a study that the methods given place for the exercises aiming at reinforcing certain topics extensively were the methods of Carcassi and Carulli.

Upon considering the method in general sense, basic music information, basic information regarding the use of the guitar, all the tones, accidentals in the form of an increasing form were dealt subsequently and they were included in the process playing techniques within the method. It is likely to say that this case corresponds the teaching principle of from simple to hard.

In the edition of the method, which was investigated, a great many exercises, etudes and works were given place, but it was limited with 3 pieces. In this sense, it is likely to say that the method is far from being a source of repertoire. In this case, those teaching the guitar must use suitable pieces from other sources while applying this method.

In the content of the method, 12 chapters and 53 topics were determined. Upon the consideration that information at various level take place in the number and content of the topics, it is likely to say that the method is rich in terms of content.

Suggestions

Based on the study and the result obtained, it is recommended;

- to investigate the method contents of other 19th century guitar composers,
- that method writers examine this and such kind of studies in terms of content and form complete sources,
- to translate Carcassi guitar method into Turkish, republish it by including the etudes as well, in this way obtain a source that will be able to be used in an easy and understandable way in Turkish in vocational and volunteer guitar education.

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