CGU

Classical Guitar University

# History

## VI. Romantic

Salon Music: The Poetic

# Lagrima by Francisco Tarrega

The Salon part 1: The Poetic

The 19th century saw a huge rise in the popularity of the piano. One type of setting the piano featured in was in the Salon (not where you get your hair cut!). Salons were small events or gatherings that featured particular types of pieces. These pieces were for the solo piano and fit into two categories:

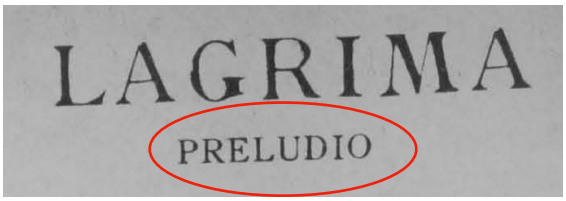
1) An emotional or sentimental work
2) A virtuosic work

Sub-genres include the opera fantasia (like Giuliani's Rossiniane) and character pieces, which portrays a narrative or situation in music.

One of the most important composers of this genre was the Polish born pianist Frederic Chopin, whose works greatly influenced Francisco Tarrega. Chopin's output consists of (among other forms) Waltzes, Mazurkas and Preludes, all of which were emulated to some degree by Tarrega.

Lagrima is one of the guitar's most iconic pieces. But what inspired its creation?

Looking at the subtitle reveals a very important and overlooked clue.




Lagrima is a Prelude, which brings with it some implications. Chopin's main body of preludes are his 24 Preludes, opus 28 (1839).

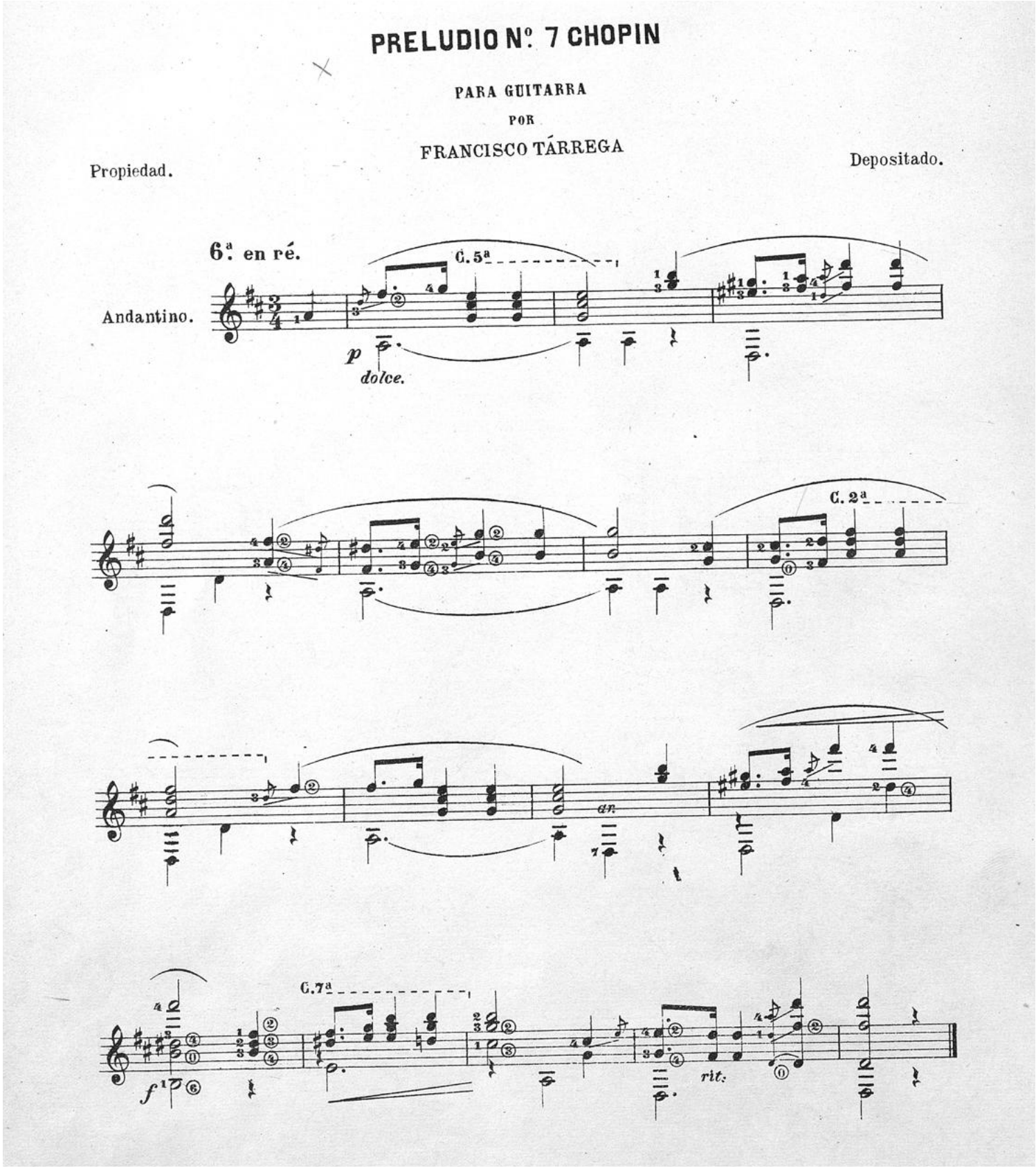
The term prelude had previously described an introductory piece (like the preludes of Bach's suites). There was a practice of improvising preludes to introduce larger works, but Chopin played a part in redefining this by writing self-contained pieces that convey a specific idea or emotion. Chopin upped the musical worth and substance of the 19th century prelude.

Franz Liszt  said "Chopin's Preludes are compositions of an order entirely apart… they are poetic preludes, analogous to those of a great contemporary poet, who cradles the soul in golden dreams…

Tarrega arranged numerous of Chopin's preludes for guitar and was no doubt influenced by them.

## *Chopin's Preludes*

Chopin's Preludes display a remarkable simplicity, sometimes using very limited melodic and rhythmic materials to create an astonishingly profound and poetic work. Below are two Preludes from op 28, arranged for guitar by Tarrega. Can you identify the elements of repetition in each prelude? How would you describe the overall sentiment of each prelude?



# PRELUDIO Nº 20 CHOPIN

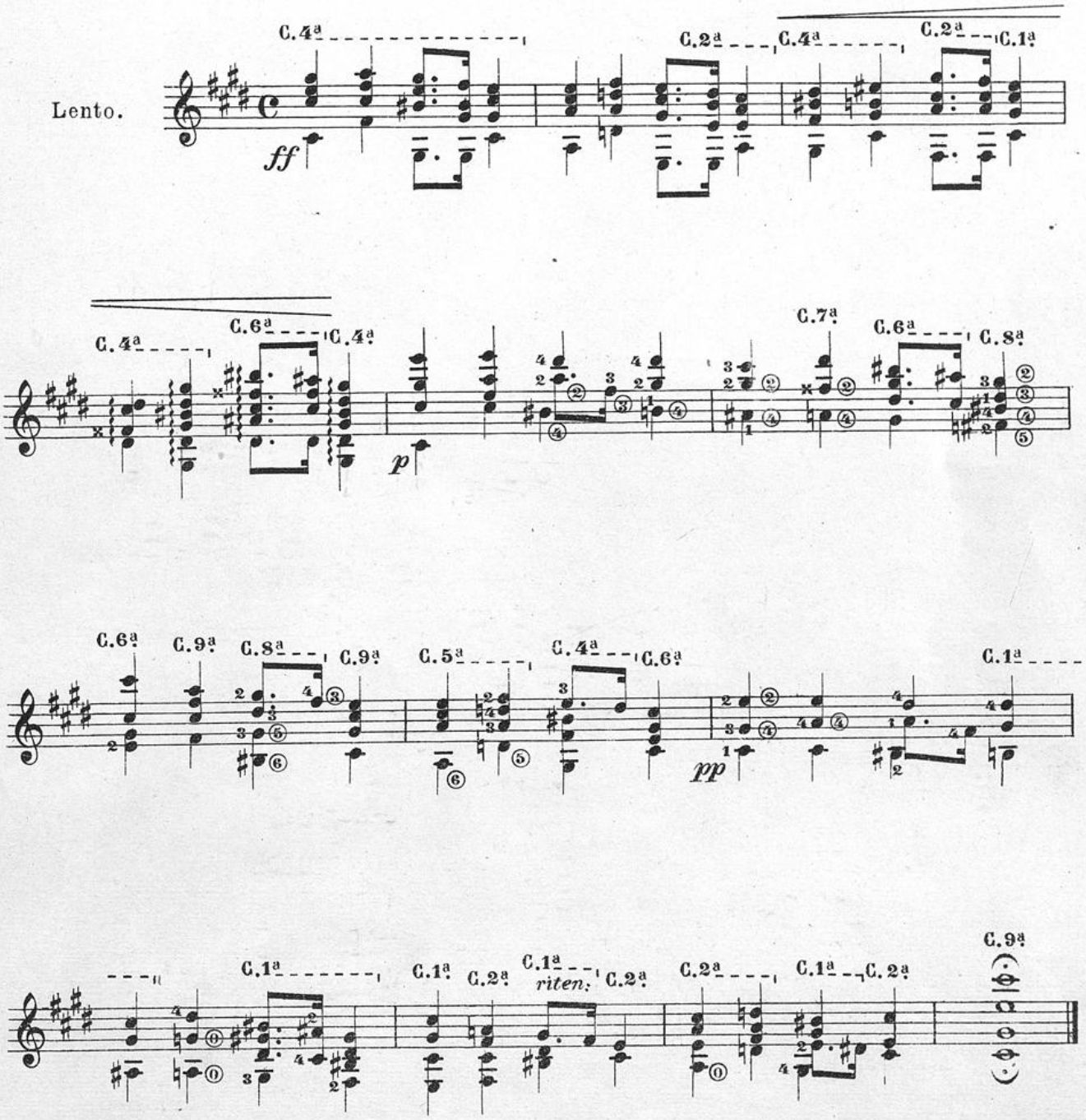
PARA GUITARRA

POR

FRANCISCO TÁRREGA

Propiedad.

Depositado.



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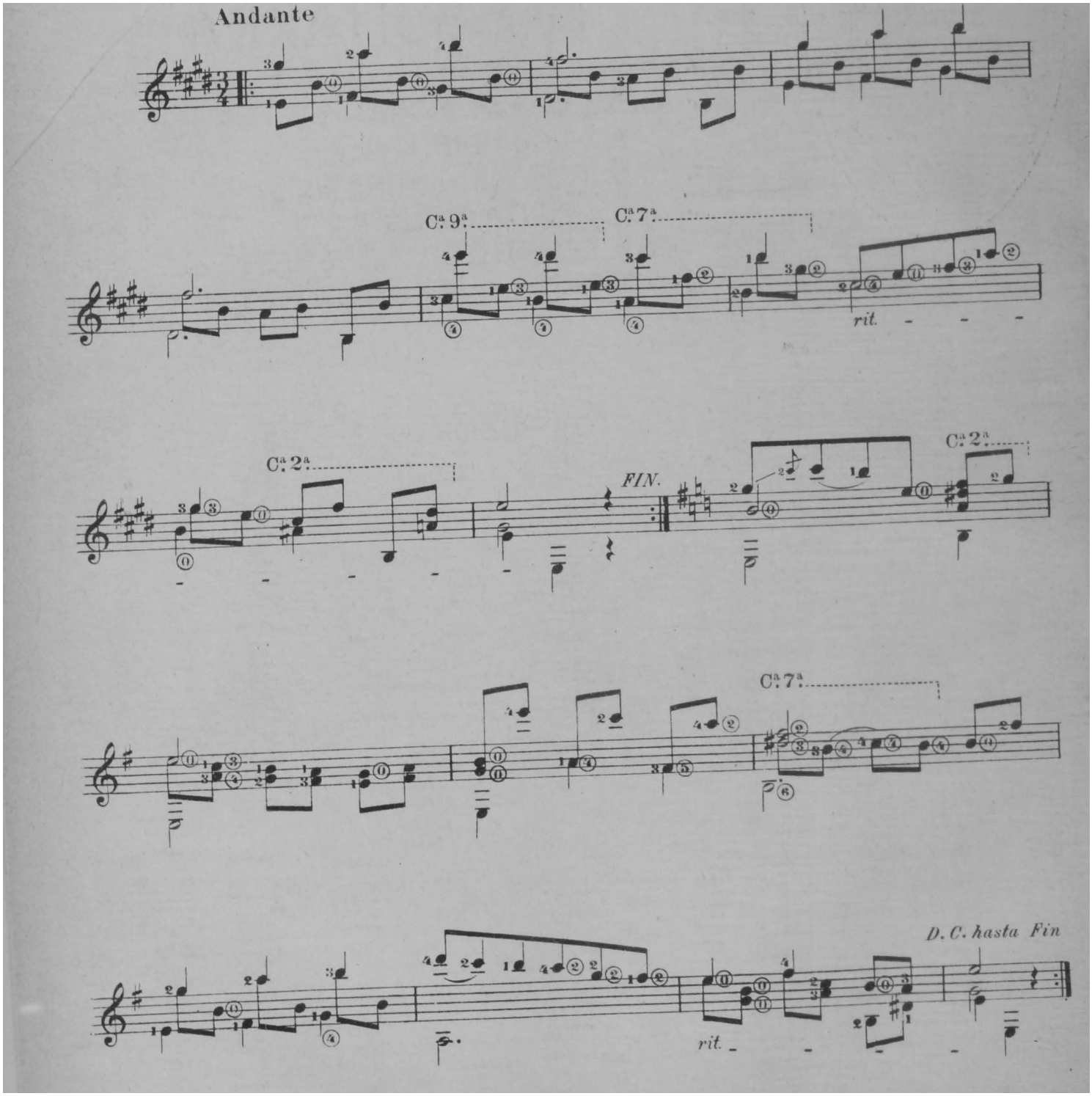
# Task 1

- Listen to Chopin's Preludes. Identify the elements of repetition (rhythm? melody? etc.) and describe the overall mood of each Prelude. Share your thoughts.

# *Lagrima*

Lagrima is likewise very simple but incredibly profound and poetic. What musical elements does Tarrega maintain throughout the work?

The word Lagrima means tear, thus conveying a specific idea or emotion. How does Tarrega capture this idea or emotion musically?



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# Task 2

- What gives Lagrima its simplicity? Does it contain repeating elements similar to Chopin's Preludes?
- How does Tarrega portray the sentiment of a teardrop in the music?
- Can you think of any other guitar pieces that could fit into this category?