

„Hernandez y Aguado, 1973, Nr. 448 “– a great guitar, and its extraordinary history.

For more than 20 years, two friends had constructed famous classical guitars, used by top performers of the 20th century, in a small “guitarreria” close to Madrid’s well-known “rastros”, in “Ribera de Curtidores 9”. Manuel Hernandez (1895–1975) and Victoriano Aguado (1897–1982), amigos since their common work in a piano factory, established themselves as restorers of furniture, and later, starting in the mid-fifties, as “guitarreros”. Against the trends in Spain’s capital, where since the early 1960s, heavy cedar-top-guitars were “en vogue”, both followed the old tradition of instruments, as been built by Manuel Ramirez (1866–1916) and Santos Hernandez (1874–1943). They had received a lot of informations from the great virtuoso Don Regino Sainz de la Maza and Don Modesto Borreguero, the youngest member of the Ramirez “taller”. Hernandez and Aguado started guitar-making in their “ripe years”, and so the time of successful collaboration must have been limited by lifetime.

And it was around 1970, when Victoriano Aguado due to problems with the eyes and legs caused by diabetes had to give up his profession, in which he had been responsible for varnishing, designing and decorating the instruments. Hernandez’ Son-in-law, Jesús Belezar, who had worked with both friends since the late 1960s, stroke out of his own. And Hernandez needed another companion, as there were a lot of orders from all over the world.

The two friends decided to ask the Madrilenian luthier Marcelino Lopez Nieto for help, as this guitarrero also mainly worked in the traditional way. MLN agreed, and with the beginning of the 1970s helped, alongside his own work, Manuel Hernandez in the construction of the famous HyA guitars.

MLN was not only a skilled craftsman and guitarist (he had studied under the famous Daniel Fortea), but also owned a large collection of great guitars, including instruments of Vicente Árias and Francisco Simplicio. And, of course, he would have liked to see an HyA instrument among the other masterpieces. Thus, Hernandez and Aguado decided, that the guitar Nr. 448 from 1973 should come into MLN’s possession. All the important parts of the instrument had been prepared: the back with the signed longitudinal strip, the carved headstock, the neck with the HA brand, and the label, signed, dated, and numbered by Aguado. Finally, Hernandez added a hand-written dedication onto the etiqueta. Construction started, but had to be put off very soon, as a lot of clients were already waiting for their ordered instruments – and

business had to go on. Also, Hernandez had been invited by the Japanese company YAMAHA to give their builders a lecture in guitar construction, which happened in August 1973. This was the reason, that the Nr. 448 could not be finished. The current production went on, and until the end of 1974 six more guitars left the Rastro workshop. With the death of Manuel Hernandez on February, 22nd, in 1975, the HyA guitar history came to an end. Nr. 454 from 1974 was the last masterpiece. It took a lot of time in 1975 to close the guitarrería, and, finally, MLN could finish the Nr. 448 in 1976, and placed it into his collection. There the instrument rested, well preserved in the case, for the next decades.

Marcelino Lopez Nieto died in 2018, and a little later the guitar collection was sold in an auction. Part of the sale – HyA 1973, Nr.448, in “virginal condition” after a 40 year’s rest as a “Sleeping Beauty”. The guitar came to Germany, and one was soon caught by surprise concerning the enormous power and colourful sound qualities! It was the demonstration of all HyA characteristics – a stunning masterpiece, with an unusual, extraordinary history! And maybe the best conserved HyA worldwide!

P.S.: Some final words about the numbering of HyA. There must have been a first guitar, very simply made, around 1925. The regular numbers had started with Nr. 100 in the 1950s and ended with Nr.454 in 1974.

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