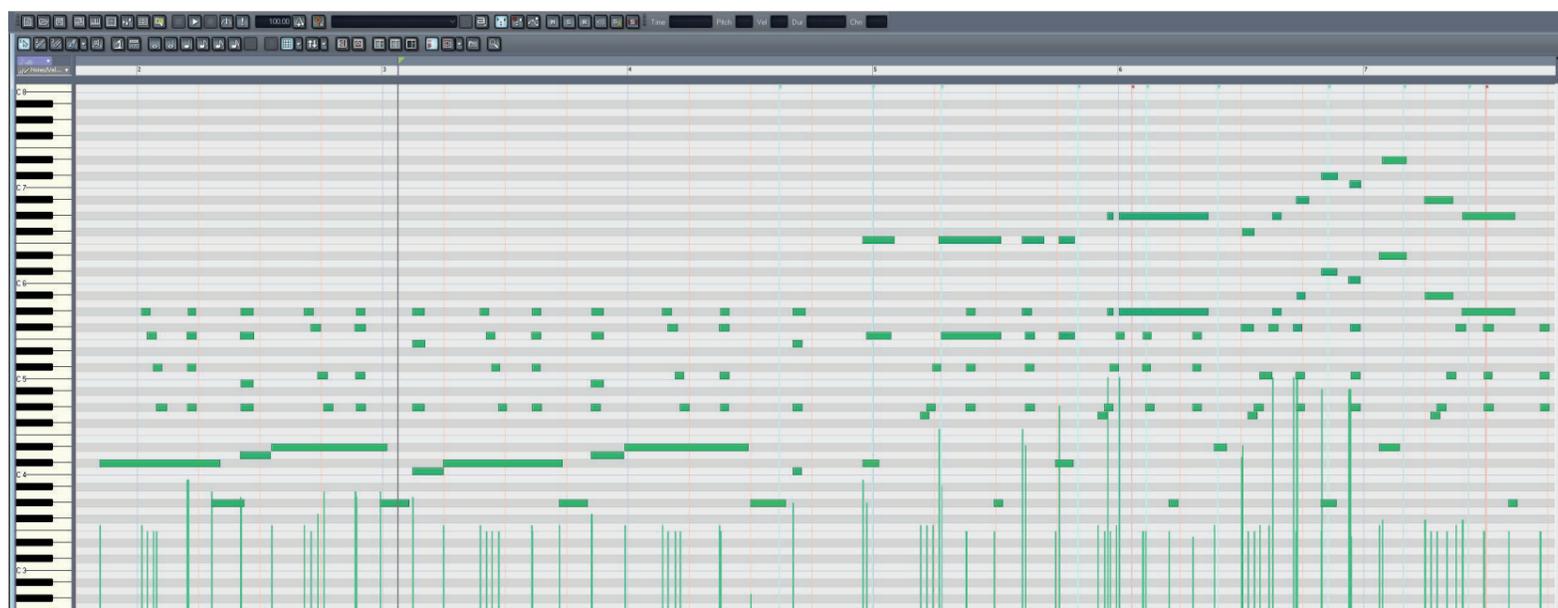




Nightingale, Image from *Birds Illustrated By Color Photography*, Vol. III, (Chicago 1898), No. 4.



Welte-Mignon piano roll. *Danse espagnole: Valenciana* by Enrique Granados performed by the author (artist roll). (Image: Sara Guastevi)



Paquita Madriguera's circa 1916 performance of Albeniz's *Serenade Espagnole*, bars 1–8, displayed as 'piano roll' notation in Sonar 8 Producer Edition.

Institute Interpretation

## NIGHTINGALE: Emulating physical Gestures of nineteenth-century Spanish pianists: restoring knowledge And Lost practices

**Abstract:** *Nightingale* transforms the traditional approach to 'historically informed performance practice' (HIPP) by developing and implementing a new methodology that links together practical evidence, historical instruments and digital technologies. Symbolically evoking the expressiveness of birdsong, this project is the first ever performance-based study of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish pianists, whose interpretations remain unexplored but that expose noticeable stylistic divergences from modern interpretations.

Das Projekt *Nightingale* erweitert den bisherigen Zugang zur «Historisch Informierten Aufführungspraxis», indem es eine neue Methodologie entwickelt und einführt, die praktische Evidenz mit historischen Instrumenten und digitalen Technologien verbindet. Das Projekt, dessen Akronym sich auf den ausdrucksstarken Vogelgesang bezieht, widmet sich insbesondere stilistischen Untersuchungen spanischer Pianisten des 19. Jahrhunderts, deren Interpretationen bislang kaum erforscht sind und sich stark von heutigen Ansätzen unterscheiden.

**Introduction:** In the twentieth century, historically informed performance revolutionised the approach to early music, becoming a popular new aesthetic trend worldwide. It had a great impact on the music scene, including festivals, concert series and musical institutions. This practice was based on the study of written texts and the use of old instruments, either originals or replicas. However, its methods present two serious problems: i) written texts alone do not enable us to imagine properly how the music might have sounded, and ii) we filter this information through our modern understanding of historical aesthetics.

**Methods:** *Nightingale* is a step forward in the study of 19<sup>th</sup>-century piano playing, through a practice-led, cyclical research process that embodies the audible evidence from a 19<sup>th</sup>-century perspective, alternating theoretical research with empirical formulations including practical experimentation – such as emulation and embodiment – and computing technologies. It advances research into the extraction of stylistic, expressive parameters from piano roll recordings such as asynchronisation or contrametric rubato, arpeggiation, agogics and articulation, and furthers the study of fingerings, pedalling and dynamics. This method has not yet been employed in the study of Spanish music, so there is no published research on it.

**Results:** *Nightingale* reveals performance practices in vogue during the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, not only in theory but documented in sound, offering a variety of new expressive choices and sparking the imagination and creativity of pianists. The results of this project will serve to invigorate lost practices, bringing to light an expressivity characteristic of 19<sup>th</sup>-century pianism in Spain, and challenging current practices.

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