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# Perspectives on Gerhard

Selected Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>  
International Roberto Gerhard Conferences



Edited by

MICHAEL RUSS and MONTY ADKINS



# Perspectives on Gerhard

Selected Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> International  
Roberto Gerhard Conferences

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## About the editors

**Michael Russ** is Professor Emeritus at the University of Huddersfield. Russ's published work has largely focused on analytical, theoretical and historical questions in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century music. He is the author of a book on Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, analytical articles on Gerhard, Bartók, Musorgsky, Ravel and Webern and articles on theoretical and analytical topics. Russ holds degrees from Sheffield (BMus), Belfast (Master 's by research on the work of Roberto Gerhard) and Ulster (PhD on the analysis of post-tonal music). He was given a Distinguished Teaching Award by the University of Ulster in 1996 and won a Westrup Prize for Musicology for the most outstanding article in the journal *Music and Letters* in 1994 and in 2008 in recognition of his work in research and development of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education was made a National Teaching Fellow.

**Monty Adkins** is Professor of Experimental Electronic Music at the Centre for Research in New Music, University of Huddersfield. Adkins has published over twenty articles relating to the aesthetics of electronic music and sonic art. He is the co-editor of *The Roberto Gerhard Companion* (Ashgate, 2013) and in 2012 directed an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant to research the electronic music of Roberto Gerhard held at the Cambridge University Library. Adkins holds degrees from the University of Cambridge (MA Hons), University of Birmingham (MA) and University of East Anglia (PhD). His current research is focused on sonic art held in the British Music Collection.

## About the authors

**Diego Alonso Tomás** completed studies in Music at Real Conservatorio Superior de Música de Madrid and Musicology at Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Currently he is a doctoral candidate at Universidad de La Rioja under the supervision of Dr. Pilar Ramos. He is writing his dissertation about the influence of Schoenberg's music and aesthetics in Gerhard's music of the 1920s. Other research interests include 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>th</sup> century music and the projection of national, social or cultural identity through musical means. In 2010 and 2013 he was a visiting student at Humboldt University in Berlin under the supervision of Dr. Hermann Danuser. In 2011 he researched at Cambridge University under the supervision of Dr. Nicholas Cook. From January to July 2012 he was a visiting scholar at Goldsmiths, University of London under the supervision of Dr. Keith Potter. In early 2014 he was granted with a research scholarship by the Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung Berlin, where he is researching at the moment. He has presented his research results in conferences, colloquia and seminars in Spain, Germany, England and Italy, including the three International Roberto Gerhard Conferences held up to now. He is co-author of *The Roberto Gerhard Companion* (Asghate, 2013).

**Carlos Duque** was born in Madrid and attended the *Real Conservatorio Superior de Música*. He studied analysis and composition with Carmelo Bernaola, Arturo Tamayo, José Luis de Delás and Rhian Samuel. He completed his PhD in Composition at City University (London), with a thesis entitled 'Compositional Techniques, Borrowed Materials and Electronic Metamorphoses. Symphony No. 4 'New York' by Roberto Gerhard'. In 2012 he was a Research Fellow at the University of Huddersfield working on the electronic music of Roberto Gerhard. His concert music has been performed across the UK, France, Spain Germany, the USA and Japan. In addition, he is a television and film composer, having worked for Spanish TV companies, including TVE (Spanish National Television), T5, TVG and Antena3. His electroacoustic music is recorded on the CD 'Time' (Cronos Digital Records, 2004). He is musical adviser for Radio Clásica, a division of Radio Nacional de España, and is Head of the MA for film and television music at the *Centro Superior Katarina Gurska* (Madrid).

**Desirée García Gil** has a PhD in the History and Sciences of Music with specific reference to the lyric songs of the composer Frederic Mompou. She is part of a research group 'Music in Contemporary Spain', which focuses on the study and analysis of the

work of Catalanian composers in the first half of the 20th century as well as musical and cultural identity and the artistic exchanges between Spain and France during this period. The research group has received funding from the Ministry of Education in Spain and the Agence National Recherche of France. Her research has been published by the University of Granada, Centre of Musical Documentation of Andalusia, Musicologia Spanish Society and Review of Musicologia and Musiker.

**Mark E. Perry** serves as assistant professor of ethnomusicology and historical musicology at Oklahoma State University. He holds a Ph.D. in music from the University of Kansas, and his dissertation explores Catalan nationalism in relation to the early works of Roberto Gerhard. His research interests include Spanish music, Roberto Gerhard, minimalism in music, Lejaren Hiller, Electronic Dance Music, and the sardana. Active as a scholar, he has presented papers at national and international conferences such as the American Musicological Society, Society for American Music, Society for Ethnomusicology, and International Council for Traditional Music. He has been invited to present his research at the Universiteit van Amsterdam, Katholieke Universiteit (Leuven), and the Arnold Schönberg Centre (Vienna). Engaged in publishing, he has contributed to the *Roberto Gerhard Companion* (Ashgate, 2013) and many articles to such important music dictionaries as *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* and the *Grove Dictionary of American Music*. He has also served as the recording review editor for the journal *American Music*.

**Magda Polo Pujadas** was born in Manlleu in 1965. She received her PhD in Philosophy of music in 1997 at the University of Barcelona. Her doctoral dissertation was on the pure music and programme music in Romanticism. She taught at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Universitat de València, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Universidad de Carabobo, Universidad de Cantabria, Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna and at the ESMUC (Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya). She has been director and creator of various music shows: Babylon (2010), Scriptum (2010), Sinestàtic (2011), Musical dripping (2011), Ad libitum (2011), Antídote (2012) and Volaverunt (2012). She is tenure at the University of Barcelona and she teaches History of music and Aesthetic of music. She is the author, among other titles, of *L'estètica de la música* (UOC, Barcelona, 2007), *Historia de la música* (Publican, Santander, 2010, 2012, 2014), *La música de los sentimientos Filosofía de la música de la Ilustración*. (Editum, Murcia, 2010, 2011), *Música pura y música programática en el Romanticismo*

(Auditori, Barcelona, 2010 and 2011), *Les Vienes de Wittgenstein* (PAM, Barcelona, 2011), *Filosofía de la música del futuro* (PUZ, Zaragoza, 2011) and *Pensamiento y música a cuatro manos. La creatividad musical en los siglos XX y XXI* (Editum, Murcia, 2014).

**Josep Maria Mestres Quadreny** was born in Manresa in 1929. He is a Catalan composer. He studied science at the University of Barcelona and composition with Cristòfor Taltabull. His music is distinguished for a spirit of innovation and for the incorporation of new techniques, including the use of special instruments. His field of interest is vast and includes many works from those that are uniquely interpreted by the public to those composed by computer. He has worked with artists such as Miró, Tàpies, Villèlia and T. Codina. He has made musical for the theater, movies, and, with Joan Brossa, diverse works for musical theater, ballet and opera. He joined the Círculo Manuel de Falla in 1952, and in 1960 founded the Música Oberta as a member of Club 49 for the promotion of new music; in 1968 he founded the Catalanian Co-Op for Contemporary Music, in 1973 the Musical Laboratory of Electro-acoustic Phonos and in 1976, the Instrumental Group of Catalonia, together with Carles Santos. He has taught courses on the New Music of Darmstadt and he has worked on the Jerusalem Testimony. He has been invited to the course on Contemporary Music of Latin America in Brazil. Today, is a member of the Delegate Commission of Patrimony for the Miró Foundation, the Junta Rectora of the City Orchestra of Barcelona, and the Commission of Cultural Relations for the Centre of Catalanian Studies at the University of Paris in Sorbona. He is also the director of the 'Música d'avui' book collection and president of the Phonos Foundation.

**Ana Vega-Toscano** is a pianist, journalist, composer and teacher. She completed her musical training at the Madrid Royal Conservatory and the Complutense University in Madrid. She studied composition with Cristobal Halffter and Carmelo Bernaola and electronic and computer music with Jean Claude Risset, Jorge Antunes and Adolfo Nuñez. As a soloist she has given recitals in Spain and toured Europe and America. She has recorded for European and American broadcasters (BBC, WDR, ORTF, RAI) and released a number of recordings including: *Piano in the Generation of '27* (Tecnosaga), *Piano in the Romantic Room* (SEdeM), *Anthology two Centuries of Spanish Piano* (RTVE), *Santiago de Masarnau: Spanish airs and expressive pieces* (SEdeM) and the complete piano works of Adolfo Nuñez (Pentagram Magic) and Maria Escribano (UM). As a journalist and writer, she has been programming for Spanish Radiotelevisión, Radio 3 and currently she is



director of RNE classic radio and delegate in the European Broadcasting Union. She has served on the board of the Spanish Society of Musicology, and the Editorial Board of the Musicology Journal.

**Trevor Walshaw** was born in Huddersfield in 1938. Having qualified as a secondary teacher at Bretton Hall he worked in secondary schools in Leeds (2 years) and Middlesbrough (20 years) until 1984 when he registered at York University, graduating in 1986, at which point he fled Thatcher's Britain to teach in Kenya, where he remained for 17 years. Having retired 2003 he began to study for an MA at the University of Huddersfield in 2004, graduating in 2006. After an interim of 2 years, during which he was re-introduced to Gerhard's music by Professor Michael Russ he began work on a PhD in 2008. His thesis on Gerhard, under the supervision of Messrs. Russ and Adkins, was accepted in 2012, when he again retired.

# **From Valls to Cambridge: Roberto Gerhard's musical aesthetics**

**Magda Polo Pujadas**

Departament d'Història de l'art  
Universitat de Barcelona

**Josep Maria Mestres Quadreny**

Composer

## **Abstract.**

Roberto Gerhard's compositional aesthetic was influenced by the place he was born (Valls, Catalonia) and its music, the life he had in Cambridge with, the three wars he lived through and his humanistic readings. Gerhard's library contained many books about musicology, literature, philosophy and psychology. Gerhard's reading is bound up in his compositional interests. Firstly, a romantic phase under the tutorship of Felip Pedrell instilled in him a strong nationalistic tendency. Secondly, the books of neo-positivist philosophy, logic and the philosophy of language reflect his interest in the new music of Arnold Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School. In this second period, we consider Wittgenstein's later work, particularly the *Philosophical Investigations* (published posthumously in 1953) to be important in shaping Gerhard's aesthetic. Finally, we can note a strong influence of existentialism, particularly in *The Plague* by Albert Camus. These readings shaped Gerhard's concept of musical language and led to a highly individual approach to composition from the micro- to the macro-level.

## **Gerhard's first steps in the transformation of Pedrell's legacy.**

To understand Roberto Gerhard's artistic and intellectual trajectory, one must take into account certain considerations.<sup>1</sup> The first is his place of origin, the second is the place where he would live most of his creative life, the third is the impact of the three wars that

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<sup>1</sup> Sometimes these factors are given insufficient attention. Some years ago, Josep M. Mestres Quadreny received a visit from a German musicologist who sought information on Roberto Gerhard for the doctoral thesis she was working on. He showed her the correspondence he had and explained the circumstances and consequences of his exile. She said that people in Germany would not understand this and that she preferred to omit this information. Later, she realised that this was of major importance, since Gerhard's works always demonstrated his Catalan roots throughout the different stages of his career. These roots are not only present in the traditional resources one can resort to but also in the comments one finds in his words when he shared them with friends and loved ones.

he would live through and finally, the humanistic spirit he expressed in various articles and texts arising from his wide-ranging interests and reflected in his personal library. These are the fundamental ingredients for an understanding of the aesthetic of Gerhard's music. Xavier Cester writes that,

Gerhard's music is not easy, but there aren't very many composers who could demonstrate such tireless coherence and curiosity while maintaining a constant reflection on the foundations of his art.<sup>2</sup>

Gerhard was born and grew up in Valls, a small town in Catalonia where his parents, a Swiss father and Alsatian mother, settled down to run a wine exporting business. We do not know for certain what language he spoke with his parents (possibly German or French, or both), but we can be certain that when he and his brothers played with the town's children he spoke Catalan. The playful character he shared with those around him can be found in the popular melodies, risky harmonies and strong rhythms such as those of the Sardana found in his work.

In the small towns of Catalonia, Catalan heritage is much more deep-rooted than in the big cities, where successive waves of immigration have diluted it. Thus, Gerhard and his brothers grew up and became young Catalan men. While the population of the Castilian plateau is steeped in the stockbreeder's tradition, with its strong authoritarian character, the people of the Catalan countryside on the Mediterranean coast were traditionally farmers, craftsmen-like and more socially open and inclusive. A cultivation of the pure forms of music pervades Gerhard's oeuvre. In it, one finds a dialogue between the different styles of tradition and modernity reflecting both his heritage and cosmopolitanism.

When Gerhard overcame his father's resistance to beginning his musical studies, he enrolled in the *Akademie der Tonkunst* in Munich. The start of the First World War forced Gerhard to return to Valls. Instead of studying in Germany, as he had intended, he had to study in Barcelona. He enrolled in the Academia Granados, becoming a pupil of Enrique Granados until he died prematurely in 1916. Gerhard then went on to study with Frank Marshall, who ran the academy after Granados' death. At the same time, Gerhard also

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<sup>2</sup> Xavier Cester, 'Robert Gerhard i la importància de la seva contribució a la música', *Faig Arts Quaderns*, 7, (Faig Cultura, Manresa, 2000), p. 8.

began his studies in composition with the Felip Pedrell, whose excellent pedagogy was responsible for training numerous composers including Isaac Albéniz, Enrique Granados and Manuel de Falla. Pedrell was from the same generation as Edvard Grieg, Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov and Antonin Dvořák and, like these composers, he practiced musical nationalism from a late-Romantic perspective, making use of the Iberian Peninsula's rich folklore. Pedrell was responsible for introducing both musicology and the Wagnerian aesthetic to Spain. Gerhard not only learned composition under him, but also musicology, and early Hispanic polyphony. Gerhard also collaborated in field work collecting folk-songs. As a result of this lyrical Romantic legacy Gerhard composed *L'infantament meravellós de Schahrazada* (1916-18) a song cycle for piano and soprano, in which there is a strong influence of the harmonic richness of the German Lied.<sup>3</sup> Its roots are found in the folk-song which, as Pedrell wrote in *Por nuestra música*, is:

The particular stamp, the peculiar inspiration of a unique art or the character of a lyrical school (which is basically the same thing in the end), must be sought. Fortunately, it is found in the same place it was found by certain lyrical schools which sprang forth from that most modern evolution of art: in one of its most powerful agents, the folksong, in the popular song adapted and translated into the higher cultural forms.<sup>4</sup>

Pedrell provided Gerhard with a good knowledge of the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* and its proto-romantic origins in Johann Gottfried Herder's late eighteenth century proposal that the indissoluble nature and relevance of the union between music and poetry in the folksong implied the recovery of melodrama in its most lyrical sense. Pedrell's teaching encouraged Gerhard to take a step further, towards the brilliance of chromaticism, the exhaustion of tonality and the need to break away from a Wagnerian teutonic monolithic and grandiloquent discourse.<sup>5</sup> All of this brought him closer to the fragmentation and

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<sup>3</sup> 'The national lyrical drama is thus a lied developed in proportions adequate for the drama. It is the folk-song transformed'. in Pedrell, F. *Por nuestra música*, (Barcelona: Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1991) p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Pedrell, *Por nuestra música*, p. 38.

<sup>5</sup> The influence of impressionism, post-impressionism, polytonalism, athematicism and the futurist movement caused Gerhard to reflect extensively on compositional language. In his mature style Gerhard demonstrated the assimilation of all of these influences which much later led to the abolition of tonality in his work and unique organizational means to express his compositional ideas and structure them.

atonality<sup>6</sup> prevalent in the European avant-garde of the time. Gerhard wrote in *Mirador* that,

...this word 'atonal', which furrows the brow and has a nihilist past, is applied today, in spite of the protests of interested parties, to a series of musicians who are the most profound respecters of good musical tradition.<sup>7</sup>

### **Commitment to compositional technique and logic.**

At the beginning of the 1920s, aphoristic and apothegmatic tendencies are found in Gerhard's work. This is particularly so in his *Dos Apunts* for piano (1921-2), which strongly resembles Schoenberg's *Sechs kleine Klavierstücke* Op.19 as well as the *7 Haiku* (1922) with poems in French by Josep M. Junoy, which itself was inspired by Stravinsky's *Three Japanese Lyrics* (1913). For this reason, Gerhard decided to further his study with the Schoenberg in Vienna and later Berlin. The leading figure of the Second Vienna School was a great teacher and, even though he had just developed his twelve-tone technique, he always gave his pupils a thorough grounding in classical harmony. The idea was to impose limits on the student which would disappear progressively as they advanced in their abilities. In this sense, he showed students to think and express themselves with freedom.

Before leaving Vienna, Gerhard premiered a number of works that brought him critical attention. As a result there was a great deal of expectation upon his return to Spain. When he arrived to Barcelona, the *Associació de Música da Camera* organised a concert dedicated to the work he had composed during his time in Germany, the *Concertino for Strings*, *Wind Quintet*, *14 Cançons Populares Catalanes* for soprano and piano, and *Two Sardanas*. The *Wind Quintet* was the first work in which Gerhard used serialism in a very personal way. The basic series was not composed of twelve tones but seven, and he used them very freely.<sup>8</sup> There is a predominance of contrapuntal writing and a sense of continuous

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<sup>6</sup> This is why Gerhard considered twelve-note technique to be a new formulation of the principle of tonality: a triad, or any chord of three or more notes, retains its identity in inversion. See Richard Peter Paine, *Hispanic Traditions in Twentieth-Century Catalan Music, with particular reference to Gerhard, Mompou and Montsalvatge* (PhD diss. University of Lancaster, February 1985), p. 217.

<sup>7</sup> Gerhard, Roberto. 'Coral', *Mirador*, - in Joaquim Homs, *Robert Gerhard i la seva obra* (Barcelona: Biblioteca de Catalunya, 1991), p. 175. *Mirador* was a leading cultural and literary magazine of the time.

<sup>8</sup> Gerhard's later use of serial technique from the 1950s and his interest in combinatorial processes emerged after a period of intense theoretical study of the method and is approached very differently than in the early serial works.

variation throughout the work's clear sections in which homophonic melodies of a more popular character are juxtaposed with the more angular counterpoint. From this point on, Gerhard would assert his personal aesthetic position - that of framing nationalist elements similar to composers such as Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály, Igor Stravinsky or George Enescu within a progressive and modernist language. These composers turned away from Romanticism to find inspiration in their respective folk musics, lending them a bold, original harmonic treatment steeped in modernity based, in Gerhard's case, on Catalan music.

The writings of Whitehead and Wittgenstein influenced Gerhard's move towards brevity and semantic and formal concision. Technique and compositional logic served as the cornerstones on which imagination and creativity could then freely develop. In 1962, Gerhard wrote that,

Naturally, there is routine in every technique and one has to admit that routine today is too greatly devalued a concept: the English philosopher A.N. Whitehead observed that it is an indispensable factor in the economy of existence. But technique has aspirations above this indispensable routine level. The question really is where does it reach: where does technique end and inspiration begin? In so 'immaterial' a medium as music, there is no clear dividing line.<sup>9</sup>

Neopositivism contributed to Gerhard's understanding of dodecaphony as a compositional system which did away with the hierarchy of the tonal system and proceeded through retrogrades, inversions and other combinatorial processes applied to the original tone row. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921)<sup>10</sup> was a highly influential book in decadent 1920s Viennese society. Gerhard possessed a copy<sup>11</sup> and also acquired Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, published for the first time in 1953, two years after the writer's death in Cambridge. These texts would influence the avant-garde of the 1950s, of which Gerhard was a part. Musical composition consisted of controlling certain techniques (or

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<sup>9</sup> Roberto Gerhard, 'The Muse and music today' in Meirion Bowen (ed.), *Gerhard on Music: Selected Writings* (Aldershot and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2000), 216-225, p. 216. Originally published in *Revista Shell*, Venezuela, 1962, 64-9.

<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, (London: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1922).

<sup>11</sup> It is not known exactly when Gerhard obtained a copy of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, but the philosopher's writings became increasingly influential for Gerhard from the 1950s.

‘tools’, as Wittgenstein’s ‘Philosophical Investigations’ would put it) and the composer’s contribution of his own.<sup>12</sup>

When Gerhard returned to Barcelona in 1929, after six years of studying with Schoenberg, he had an enviable mastery of compositional technique. Yet this was not enough to make a living and for some time he worked as a translator of musical texts for *Editorial Labor*<sup>13</sup> as well as writing articles on music for the weekly publication *Mirador* and the *Revista de Catalunya*. The following year he married Leopoldina Feichtegger, affectionately known as Poldi, who he had met in Vienna. In 1931, the Second Spanish Republic was proclaimed, which granted the *Generalitat de Catalunya* a statute of autonomy. This newfound autonomy stimulated artists and writers in Catalonia into a state of frenetic creative activity in all areas. The *Generalitat* created the *Consell de Cultura*, of which Gerhard was a part, as well as the *Escola Normal de Catalunya*, where Gerhard worked as a music teacher. In 1932 the *Amics de l’Art Nou* (ADLAN) was created. This was a group created by Joan Prats dedicated to disseminating new art in all its forms: painting, sculpture, architecture, music, film, theatre, poetry, dance, photography, and music-hall. In the social circle surrounding ADLAN, one could find all the modernist celebrities of the time, such as the painter Joan Miró, the poet J.V. Foix, the photographer Joaquim Gomis, or the architect Josep Lluís Sert, among many others. ADLAN was a very active association, and it organised numerous exhibitions for such notable artists as Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí, Alexander Calder, Ángel Ferrant and Hans Arp, the photographs of Man Ray and the poetry of García Lorca. Gerhard integrated himself easily into this scene and so followed the avant-garde in all areas closely.

In 1932 Gerhard composed the five-part cantata *L’alta naixença del Rei en Jaume*, based on a text by Josep Carner, for soloists, choir and orchestra. It was his first large-scale work and composed with a variety of musical materials: a modal monody with a popular medieval character and a series of fourteen tones, divided in two segments of eight and six, respectively. The coexistence of two different, highly developed systems gives the work a very attractive and peculiar character. Two of its movements were premiered at the Festival de la ISCM in 1933 in Amsterdam and its success garnered him a prize from the Emil

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<sup>12</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, London: Blackwell, 1953.

<sup>13</sup> It is important to remember the titles he translated for this publisher: H. Riemann’s *Composició musical* and *Dictado Musical*; H. Scherchen’s *El arte de dirigir la Orquesta*; H. Scholz’s *Compendio de Armonía*; E. Toch’s *La melodia*; F. Volbach’s *La orquesta moderna*; E. Wellesz’s *Música bizantina*; and J. Wolf’s *Historia de la música*.

Hertzka Foundation, awarded for the first time that year. The communion between tradition and modernity has its foundation during this period in Gerhard's career.

In July 1934, Gerhard left the *Escola Normal* and was assigned as adjunct curator of the music section at the *Biblioteca de Catalunya* where he undertook the transcription and publication of the six quintets for string quartet and organ by Antoni Soler and the opera *La Merope* by Domènec Tarradellas. The *Generalitat de Catalunya's* project planned for musicological studies to be carried out in the musical section of the *Biblioteca de Catalunya*, where Higiní Anglès would curate the Early Music section and Gerhard would handle the Modern Music section. As a result, Gerhard was intensely active in stimulating musical life in Barcelona. Gerhard facilitated a visit by Schoenberg in 1931 until the spring of 1932 and invited Anton Webern to conduct two concerts by the *Orquesta Pau Casals*. He also promoted concerts and conferences (including concerts and annotated record-listening sessions). These activities culminated in 1936 with the XIV Festival of the ISCM<sup>14</sup> for which Gerhard was the Executive Secretary.

Abruptly, however, on 18 July 1936 General Francisco Franco led a rebellion against the Republic. A long and cruel war followed, lasting three years and destroying all of the social and cultural work that had been developed over the previous years. During the war, Gerhard continued collaborating with the *Generalitat* in the musical activities which had not been abandoned, as well as writing works such as *Albada*, *Interludi I Dansa*, composed specifically for the BBC Orchestra, which first broadcast in 1937. The work was premiered in Barcelona under the direction of Lamote de Grignon and in London by Hermann Scherchen, at the ISCM Festival in 1938 where it was highly praised by Béla Bartók. The three pieces have the character of a morning serenade and are built from Catalanesque themes which Gerhard created himself. This kind of nationalism, which Bartók also had cultivated, enabled Gerhard to create totally new themes with strong Catalan roots and integrate them fully into his own compositional language.

In December of 1938 Gerhard went with Poldi to Warsaw to participate in the selection of works for the 1939 ISCM. The Spanish Civil War was reaching its conclusion and there was no doubt that it would be lost by the democratic forces. Gerhard made the painful

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<sup>14</sup> International Society for Contemporary Music. See <http://www.iscm.org>.



decision not to return to Barcelona and instead went directly from Warsaw to Paris. There he wrote letters to various acquaintances explaining his situation and asking for help. He received a response from King's College, Cambridge which awarded him a research grant which only required that he live in Cambridge. He moved there in June 1939 and would remain there for the rest of his life. Gerhard was right not to return to Barcelona. The Francoist occupation forces eliminated all Catalan institutions and cultural and social associations, prohibited use of the Catalan language and turned Barcelona into a cultural desert to the extent that it would have been impossible for Gerhard to develop his career.

In September 1939 the Second World War began. At the time, Gerhard's priority was to obtain as much subsistence work as he could from the BBC. He scripted radio programs in Spanish for Latin American audiences, focusing on Spanish musical themes. He also composed productions and arranged operettas for radio. Aside from his subsistence projects, Gerhard composed a number of serious works. Initially he struggled to find acceptance for this work as it differed so greatly from the Spanish clichés so well-known from the music of Isaac Albéniz and Manuel de Falla. In Great Britain, Gerhard was merely an unknown musician, a Spanish exile. Following Pedrell's path, Gerhard extended the scope of his inspiration from national sources to include all of the Iberian Peninsula. His Symphony '*Homenaje a Pedrell*' (1941) is a good example, in addition to the ballets *Don Quixote* (1940-41), *Alegrías* (1942) and *Pandora* (1943-44), whose premieres were met with success. The strong Iberian character brands these works with an ethnic quality, heard both in its melodic lines and its rhythmic vitality. These works are also noteworthy for Gerhard's ability to combine diverse forms of melodic treatment with harmonic concepts and the effective and expressive instrumentation. The works also demonstrate a sophisticated use of timbre and structure. In short, Gerhard's musical personality oscillated between sense and rapture, just as Don Quixote's personality moved between sanity and madness in his hallucinations.

### **The conception of the total serial field.**

By the 1950s Gerhard's compositional development led him to incorporate serial thinking into his working method similar that of his second teacher, Schoenberg. In this period, Gerhard starts to erode the threads that hold melody together. He uses the series of twelve tones as a supplier of combinatory transformations, segmenting them in groups of three or four tones which in turn were subject to mutations. Gerhard does not attribute the series

any thematic function. The Concerto for Piano and String Orchestra (1951), Symphony No. 1 (1952-53) and Concerto for Harpsichord, String Orchestra and Percussion (1955-56) are all representative of this new phase.

In the third movement of the String Quartet No. 1 (1950-55) Gerhard extends the series to the temporal domain for the first time. In it, the series acts as both a code which regulates all the combinatory operations of the pitch structure and directs all operations in its time structure. From the series of tones, a series of numbers is obtained by assigning each tone a number equivalent to the number of semitones separating it from the lowest tone. The numeric series serves to organise the temporal aspect at all levels and acts as a principle of rhythmic articulation. It provides a superordinate temporal space, as if it were a railroad network for the tones to travel along. But the numeric series also serves to order the successive transpositions of the original series, such that the successive transpositions reproduce, in the total field, the pattern of the intervallic structure of the original series, all of which covers the totality of the chromatic scale. Gerhard's Nonet (1956-57) and Symphony No. 2 (1957-59) are representative of this period. For Schoenberg, the series provoked a highly flexible automatism which pushed one to understand music as a polyphonic pitch network, but Gerhard goes beyond that. Gerhard developed his own form of Boulez's notion of total serialism, which he termed the 'total serial field', in addition to pitch, other parameters such as tempo and rhythm were also subject to serial mutation. Thus melody, harmony and rhythm created patterns of regularity.<sup>15</sup> It was during this period that the word 'random' began to be levelled at the scores written by the composers who spearheaded the avant-garde centred around the Darmstadt Summer School. In addition, Cage's use of chance techniques distanced itself from the mathematic concept Gerhard subscribed to. Randomness, for the latter, was to be understood within the concept of probability and stochastic processes, breaking with Valéry's '*fantasie absolue*', in this sense.

Throughout this period, which we can characterise as one of stylistic transition, Gerhard again read widely including scientific, philosophical and literary texts. His concerns as a composer always pushed him to look beyond music, to search for that which music shares

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<sup>15</sup> All of these new ideas were presented in the journal *The Score and IMA Magazine*, no. 16, 1956. This was a special number dedicated to commemorating the Gerhard's sixtieth birthday, proposed by the journal's editor William Glock.

with other areas of knowledge, in order to understand the former better. For Gerhard the application of 'logic' to his compositions should be understood as a method and not an objective, as a way of overcoming obstacles and developing his creative thinking. This vision, of overcoming the traps of rationality developed from his reading of the poetry of Paul Valéry and his concept of 'pure poetry' as an act of excess and, simultaneously, a product of spirit. For this French symbolist poet doubt led to form, and this process nourished inspiration. What is more, this creative process, the *poiein*, encouraged the artist to act, to discover, to defeat, and to resolve. The act of creativity stimulated the impulse to play, to reason and to question. Through this process inspiration took flight. Gerhard was strongly influenced by Valéry and Stravinsky's concepts of the poetic.<sup>16</sup> Gerhard transformed the traditions he worked with, and never merely reproduced them. Thus, in his serial works he subjected his pitch row to combinatorial and permutational procedures rather than using the series strictly thematically. This way the series facilitated more liberty and spontaneity in the compositional process. This approach to serial technique is echoed in Wittgenstein's aphorism 6.54 of the 'Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus' which affirms that after using the scale (in this case, technique), one must make a leap in order to understand things without it (although, of course, with its help).

### **Electroacoustic music: Researching a new audibility.**

The mid-twentieth century witnessed the appearance of new ways of producing music through electroacoustic media (at the RTF Laboratory in Paris, the NWDR Laboratory in Cologne and the RAI Laboratory in Milan). Gerhard developed his own home studio and also worked at the BBC studios making incidental music for radio dramas. Working with the new electroacoustic media encouraged a new way of approaching musical composition. While traditional composition works with the organisation of pitches and other abstract schema, electroacoustic music involves working directly with the sound itself. The sound is immediately physical with no practical way of notating it. Work in the studio implies a change of mentality in the very type of composition Gerhard practiced, as it did for the younger generations in post-war Europe. Musical material became sonic material which could be manipulated like an object. These sonic objects became the formal centre of music. Sounds could be combined in very diverse ways to create a wide variety of textures

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<sup>16</sup> A conference on Paul Valéry's *La poétique* was presented at the Collège de France in 1937. Gerhard possessed a copy of Igor Stravinsky *Poétique musicale* (3rd edn. Paris: J. B. Janin, 1945) His lectures were given in French at Harvard University between 1939 and 1940.

in which individual sounds become part of a larger whole. Thus, composition with electroacoustic media is the art of creating and combining gesture and textures. This change of mentality results in the abandoning of the concept of pitch linearity or 'melody' as the driving force in a work in favour of the linear progression of the total sonic field.

In the 1960s Gerhard developed this new conception of working with sound in to his instrumental music. Gerhard approached composition as the development of sonic textures obtained through the application of the constructive procedures of the total serial field and, while eliminating any sort of thematic allusion, basing development on a chain of varied and diverse sonic trajectories which give the piece an air of polymorphic form, in a sort of allusion to highly developed biological morphologies. Starting with his Symphony No. 3 '*Collages*' (1960), all of the works composed until the end of his life are conceived as a single movement of polymorphic development. Examples include such masterworks as the dramatic cantata *The Plague* (1963-64) for its drama, *Libra* (1968) and the exuberant Symphony No. 4 '*New York*' (1967).

Gerhard's library is a testament to the importance that the French existentialist movement had for the composer. In 1954 Gerhard met Albert Camus, as he was composing the incidental music to the radio version of *The Stranger* for the BBC. He was strongly impressed by Camus' humanitarianism, his vital sense of drama and consciousness regarding man's absurdity. Gerhard had copies of important works by Sartre such as *Nausea* and *The Age of Reason* as well as *The Plague* and *The Rebel or The Myth of Sisyphus*, by Camus. For Gerhard, the act of composition represented a way of making vital decisions, of choosing, of committing oneself to technique and finding a way for the collective imaginary to accumulate diverse experiences. His works, especially those of the 1960s, stayed true to a motto of 'eternal vivacity', since he confronted the world from a place of rebellion, not of revolution, promoting the critical, humanist and emancipatory spirit of man. In this way, the concept of 'form', of 'musical form', acted not as a noun so much as a verb. Musical time came to be understood as a time that depended on its past. Existence precedes essence and, in this way, the present time contains the compromise and consequences of the past that will be reflected clearly in the future. Music became an ode without repetitions or ruptures, just as he had read in Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*. Thus, music constantly shook human sensibility towards insatiable aesthetic experiences strongly rooted in a combination tradition and modernity.

## **7 *Haiku* (1922): a partial reconstruction.**

**Trevor Walshaw**

University of Huddersfield

### **Abstract.**

Gerhard's song cycle *7 Haiku* was written in 1922, revised in 1958 and published in 1968. Only the revised version is currently available. Because of the significance of the piece in Gerhard's development as a composer it seemed pertinent to find a copy of the original. This has not so far been possible. However, the *Institut d'Estudis Vallencs* holds copies of the manuscripts of the flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon parts, as well as a fragment containing sketches for some of the vocal parts. From these it has been possible to compile a partial score and devise vocal settings. What is revealed is that with one major exception Gerhard composed little that was new for the second version, mainly expanding the available material to create greater rhythmic subtlety and more transparent textures. The article will discuss the changes made by Gerhard in his revision of the work and demonstrate the way in which they reflect the composer's adherence to his original concept, as well as ways in which the more refined technique of his maturity enabled him to present the material of the 1922 version with greater subtlety and clarity.

### **Introduction.**

The work that immediately preceded the *7 Haiku* was the piano work *Dos Apunts* (1921-22). David Drew comments that these two brief piano movements mark 'a radical re-orientation of his aesthetic'.<sup>1</sup> The *7 Haiku* are part of that re-orientation. The problem is that although the score for *Dos Apunts* is published, Gerhard revised the *7 Haiku* in 1958, after which, as Drew puts it, the original score, which had been discussed with Schoenberg, was '*vernichtet*' - destroyed.<sup>2</sup> The habit of destroying sketches and previous versions of works was typical of Gerhard. It is confirmed in a draft of a letter to the Arts Council of Great Britain that had recently bought the manuscript of the Concerto for Orchestra (1965) and had requested working manuscripts in addition,

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<sup>1</sup> David Drew, 'The Musical Character', *Score and IMA Magazine*, 17 (September, 1956), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> David Drew, 'Aspekt einer Physiognomy', in *Arnold Schönberg's "Berliner Schule"*, *Musik-Konzepte* 117-118 (2002), p. 126.

Much as I wish I could add to the MS all the sketches that preceded it, I have to confess that I always destroy after the final score has been established.<sup>3</sup>

The problem, therefore, is that a key composition in Gerhard's early development as a composer is extant only in its revised form. One hope of finding the earlier version of the work was that there had been a performance in 1929 for which additional scores must have been produced. The Homs, Gomis and Badía families were approached with the hope of finding a score but without success. Eventually, with help from the *Biblioteca de Catalunya* and Dr. Carlos Duque, the manuscripts of the wind parts, together with a sketch of the vocal parts for four of the songs, were traced to the *Fons Robert Gerhard Biblioteca* at the *Institut d'Estudis Vallencs* and copies obtained.

### Reconstructing the score.

Having acquired the parts, assembling a score for the wind alone was a straight-forward process (see Figure 1).

Andante

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet

Bassoon

p

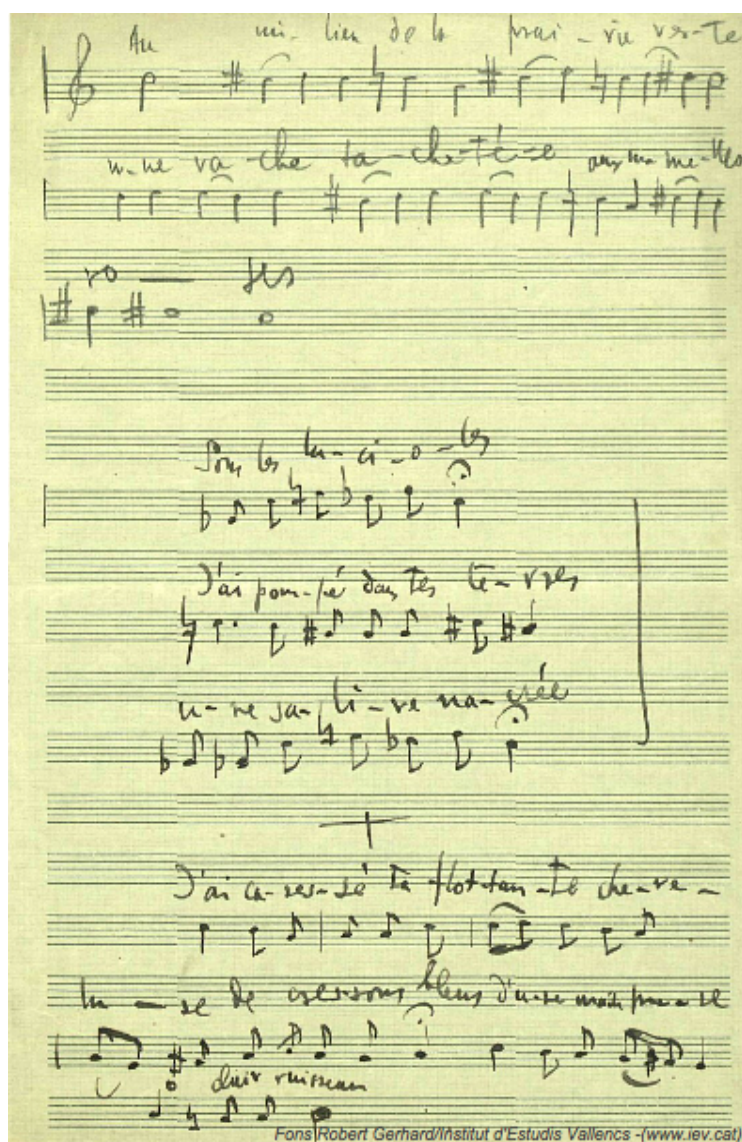
(actual pitch)

Figure 1: Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1922 version, assembly of woodwind parts to create an instrumental score, bars 1-4.

The biggest problem was fitting the vocal part between the woodwind textures, since the vocal manuscript, which contained only Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 6, was written out in a non-rhythmic chant, in even crotchets or quavers, with occasional indications of sustained notes (see Figure 2).

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<sup>3</sup> Notebook Cambridge University Library 7.114 f.46 (1967 or later).



**Figure 2:** Gerhard, *7 Haiku*, 1922 version, copy of manuscript of vocal part.

Fortunately, there is one surviving fully realised vocal line in the manuscript in Song No. 4 and which appears in the flute part as a cue (see Figure 3). The remaining two vocal settings, 5 and 7, were adapted from the 1958 version to fit that of 1922. One fragment of the piano part remains, a cue in the clarinet part of Song No. 3.



Figure 3: Gerhard, 7 Haiku, 1922 version, flute part (with vocal cue for Number 4).

From this compilation of clearly defined wind parts and vocal parts, it became possible to make comparisons between parts of the 1922 and of the 1958 versions.

### The songs.

7 Haiku were composed in 1922, emulating Stravinsky's *Three Japanese Lyrics* of 1912-13, a fact which Gerhard acknowledged in 1965 in a letter to the BBC producer, Leo Black,



Talking of ‘influences’ I think you might find in Haiku some trace of my admiration for Stravinsky’s [sic] *Japanese lyrics, et pour cause!!* – they represent the nearest approximation between him and the Schoenberg school.<sup>4</sup>

One of the most significant features of the *Three Japanese Lyrics* is that it is scored for voice and chamber ensemble. Stravinsky’s instrumentation was itself inspired by hearing Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire* and the ensemble uses a similar mixture of voice, wind and strings. Stravinsky’s work is scored for soprano, two flutes, two clarinets, piano and string quartet, whereas Schoenberg’s smaller ensemble calls for *Sprechgesang*, flute, clarinet, piano, violin and ‘cello, with various instrumental doublings. Other works that followed this model include Ravel’s *Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé* (1913).

Even though *Pierrot Lunaire* is a substantial work it comprises 21 songs which, like Stravinsky’s and those of the 7 *Haiku*, are characterized by their brevity. However, Gerhard’s emulation was not slavish. The scoring is considerably different, and the timbral possibilities inherent in an ensemble of mezzo-soprano (or baritone) with the four individual woodwind instruments and piano as selected by Gerhard are very different from those of Stravinsky’s ensemble.

The most obvious and dramatic change is that the second version is more expansive. Whereas the original version was 92 bars long, the revised version is 241 bars. This facilitates the development of the instrumental textures aiding the structural clarity of the songs. Figure 4 demonstrates this expansion.<sup>5</sup> The figure also throws into relief the way in which Gerhard simplified metrical aspects of the work in the revised version, as he did with the tempi, adding metronome marks in the later version.

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<sup>4</sup> Leo Black, *BBC Music in the Glock Era and After* (London, 2010), p. 209. I am grateful to Mr. Black for providing the date of the letter in an email (11/2/12).

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that number 7 distorts the total bar length since 18 bars of 4/4 in the original version become 50 bars of 2/4 in the revised version.

Song	1922 score	Tempo	1958 score	Tempo
No. 1	12 x 4/4	Andantino	33 x 2/2	Molto tranquillo (48)
No. 2	14 x 2/2	Andantino (alla breve)	19 x 4/4	Scorievole (126)
No. 3	9 x 5/4 & 4/4	Allegretto	35 x 3/4	Con moto (144)
No. 4	19 x 4/4 & 10/8	Andante con moto	39 x 4/4	Allegretto (104)
No. 5	8 x 7/8 & 4/4	Moderato	25 x 4/4	Tranquillo (88)
No. 6	12 x 12/16	Allegretto assai	40 x 12/8	Un poco vivace (152)
No. 7	18 x 4/4 (36 x 2/4)	Andante molto tranquillo	50 x 2/4	Larghetto (52)
Total	92		241	

**Figure 4:** Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*: comparative table of bars length.

The fundamental compositional material of the songs is retained but is subject to expansion and elaboration. Only two of the songs (Nos. 2 and 4) undergo major revision of the pitch organization. In all of the other songs the musical material is essentially unchanged – the expansion of the material takes the form of the insertion of spaces of relative inactivity in the wind section, of additional phrases or through rhythmic augmentation. These revisions lend a clarity to the musical material. The main beneficiary is the singer, who no longer has to compete continually with the ensemble. The density of material in the 1922 version is a result of Gerhard being so concerned with emulating Stravinsky's formal concision. In the 1958 version he allowed his lyrical instincts more scope with the woodwind providing instrumental interludes that frame the vocal sections.

Song No. 1 illustrates several of these points, the main one being that while the basic concept of a *chorale cum organum* interspersed with a vocal chant is unchanged, the passages between instrumental phrases are considerably expanded and some re-scoring takes place. There are three important revisions. Firstly, a bar is inserted at the beginning to allow the initial piano chord to be heard (it seems probable that this chord was played simultaneously with the opening wind chord in the 1922 version). In later works Gerhard

Secondly, additional bars of sustained chords on the piano, inserted between the phrases of the *chorale*, allow the vocal part to expand, and while the melodic lines remain identical, the chorale is re-scored, mainly by lowering the overall tessitura and making the clarinet the alto and the oboe the tenor in the repetitions of the *chorale* (see Figure 5a and 5b).

**Andante**

Flute *p*

Oboe *p*

Clarinet (actual pitch) *p*

Bassoon *p*

Voice

**Andante**

Piano

Au mi - lieu de la prai - rie ver - te

**Figure 5a:** Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1922 version, Song No. 1 (reconstruction).

18

Figure 5b: Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1958 version, Song No. 1.

During Song No. 1 Gerhard applies the simultaneous use of what Stravinsky later termed different ‘poles of attraction’.<sup>6</sup> The *chorale* is chromatic, using all twelve of the available notes, with a final of B.<sup>7</sup> The vocal line is also chromatic, pivoting around D with alternating flattened and raised ‘leading notes’, and, with B as an interim resting point (bar 5), it closes on D.

Finally, the greatest structural alteration occurs in Song No. 2. It is in this song, together with No. 6, that the reasons for Schoenberg’s comments about ostinati are most pertinent,<sup>8</sup> since in the 1922 version the wind parts in both numbers are totally dominated by ostinati, and on the evidence of the 1958 score, so are the piano parts.

Gerhard resolves two similar problems with different solutions. In No. 2 it is arguable that the piano part for the 1958 version is based on that of 1922 – a compilation of three

<sup>6</sup> Igor Stravinsky. *The Poetics of Music, in the form of six lessons*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), p. 38.

<sup>7</sup> Gerhard used a variety of means to create tonal centres. For the sake of simplicity, in this essay the modal term ‘final’ is frequently applied.

<sup>8</sup> Drew, ‘Aspekt’, p. 126.

ostinati over a pedal bass, each of which depicts a different aspect of ‘flow’, reflecting the character of the text, while the wind ostinati are eliminated and replaced with simple lines of chromatic counterpoint (see Figures 6a and 6b).

*J’ai caressé ta flottante chevelure de cressons bleus  
D’une main pure,  
Ô claire ruisseau.*<sup>9</sup>

A frame is created for the singer by limiting the two instruments together to the introduction and coda. In between the clarinet provides a discreet accompaniment of quasi-pedal notes. If the conjecture about the piano part is correct the result is a more coherent texture, with the concept of fluidity enhanced.

**Andantino (alla breve)**

The musical score is for 'Andantino (alla breve)'. It features a vocal line and two instrumental staves. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The instrumental parts are in treble and bass clefs. The tempo is marked 'Andantino (alla breve)'. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'pp (actual pitch)'. The lyrics are written below the vocal line: 'J'ai ca-res - sé ta flo tan - te che ve lu - re de cressonsbleus - -'. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

**Figure 6a:** Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1922 version Song No. 2.

Song No. 6 (see Figure 7a and 7b) presents a similar musical problem - the reduction of a hyper-active ostinato for full ensemble to something less complex (the text suggests summer rain). The basic motif is retained, temporally expanded, and re-scored. The material is redistributed in such a way that the rate of repetition is retained by interlocking wind and piano. However, the texture becomes lighter, more suggestive of summer rain than the deluge of the original version.

<sup>9</sup> Trans. ‘I have caressed your flowing hair of blue cress with a pure hand, oh clear stream’.

**Figure 6b:** Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1958 version Song No. 2.

Allegretto assai

*p*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

Sous la pluie d'été je marche fredonnant

21

The musical score is for Gerhard's 1958 version of Song No. 6. It is written for a chamber ensemble consisting of Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Soprano (Sop.), Baritone (Bar.), and Piano (Pfte.). The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The woodwind parts are highly active, with the Flute and Oboe playing rapid sixteenth-note passages. The Bassoon part is more melodic, often playing in counterpoint with the Oboe. The vocal parts (Sop. and Bar.) enter in the final measure of the score, singing the lyrics "Sons la pluie d'été". The Piano part provides a rhythmic and harmonic foundation, often playing arpeggiated figures. Dynamics such as *mf*, *pp*, and *mp* are indicated throughout the score.

**Figure 7b:** Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1958 version Song No. 6.

Song No. 4 (see Figure 8a and 8b), the only song for which the original vocal part survives, underwent the most extensive revision regarding its pitch organization. This particular song went through several transpositions and was expanded from 19 to 39 bars. However, the original concept in the wind and vocal parts is retained. In the 1922 version the lead is given to the clarinet, which projects each new phrase with a chromatic arpeggio, followed by a rising whole-tone scale on the oboe in counterpoint with a falling chromatic motif on bassoon. The voice is woven into this contrapuntal texture.

In the 1958 version a piccolo was added, doubling the oboe at the octave. The number of phrases was also increased with the clarinet having nine entries compared with only five in the 1922 version. The second entry of oboe and piccolo heralds an insertion of five bars and the coda expands from four bars to nine. The additional length allows the rhythmic augmentation of the vocal part although it remains a part of the contrapuntal texture. The rhythmic writing is more subtle in the 1958 version with a greater use of syncopation, especially in the oboe, piccolo and vocal lines. The most radical changes take place in the pitch organization. In the 1958 version, Gerhard transposed the voice a semitone lower, lowered the initial entries of the oboe and clarinet by a tone and re-wrote the bassoon part in a lower register.



Figure 8a: Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1922 version Song No. 4.

The original version of Song No. 5 (see Figure 9a and 9b) was stark using only the voice, bassoon and presumably the piano. The bassoon part has yet another obstinate figure, with sustained notes between phrases to counterpoint the voice. Both the bassoon and the voice used limited ranges of notes, in a low tessitura, as befits the text,

*Pensée*

*Ourlée de noir*

*Au fond de mon cocktail d'oubli.*<sup>10</sup>

The bassoon uses a chromatic set of D - E $\flat$  - F $\flat$  - G $\flat$ , with D as final, and the voice is restricted to B - C - D - E $\flat$  (an octatonic tetrachord), with B as final.

The basic instrumental line is retained in the later version, but shared between bassoon and clarinet, with the interpolation of additional phrases, repetitions and silent bars, while the additional instrument is used to enrich the texture with sustained notes. The song is expanded from eight bars of mixed meter to twenty-five bars of 4/4.

<sup>10</sup> Trans. 'Thought hemmed in black in the depths of my cocktail of oblivion.'





**Moderato**

Bassoon

Reconstructed from 1958 version.

Pen-sées our-lées de noir

au fond de mon cock -

Figure 9a: Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1922 version, Song No. 5.

5

(TACET FLUTE and OBOE)

Tranquillo ♩ = ca. 88

B♭ CLARINET

BASSOON

SOPRANO or BARITONE

PIANOFORTE

vuota

Den -

Den -

7

A

vuota

vuota

noir.

noir.

A

release Ped. gradually

M. M. 1117

Figure 9b: Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1958 version Song No. 5.

Song No. 3 (see Figure 10a and 10b) is relatively unchanged. The basic material is slightly expanded and, as in No. 6, a cantabile line, on bassoon, is added to stabilize a very active texture. The other significant change is that the vocal part has room for more subtle rhythmic writing and, in effect, sings a duet with the bassoon.

There is also a one bar piano cue in bar four of the clarinet part. The pitches used are identical to those in the equivalent place in the second version at letter B in the score, although in 1958 there is rhythmic augmentation and the arpeggio is placed in a lower register.

In bar 5 the instruction 'picc.' is crossed out and a wavy line inserted below that bar indicating 8va lower?

Picc. crossed out

Piano cue from clarinet & flute parts (actual pitch).

Sous les lu-ci-o-les

J'ai pom pé dans tes lè-vres

Figure 10a: Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1922 version Song No. 3.

The last song receives the least attention in the revised version but seems to have been the one which gave most trouble at rehearsals as there are several manuscript versions of the clarinet part, with much crossing-out. Assigning the melody, which for Homs 'evokes a local folk-tune',<sup>11</sup> to the oboe was an after-thought, since it was written on a separate piece of manuscript paper and pasted over the original. In what looks to be the original clarinet part it appears an octave lower (see Figure 11).

Like Song No. 3, No. 7 also contains evidence that the piano part may have been relatively unchanged in the revised version. In the 1922 version, at bar 10, one bar after the vocal entry, the texture is reduced to minimal accompanying figures in the woodwind and the melody disappears altogether. In the equivalent passage in the second version (at letter B) the music is identical. This conjecture is further strengthened by the fact that the bassoon part relates very closely to that of the 1958 version, which derives from the piano's ostinato motif. As the piano adds the melody above this, it would be logical to allocate the same function in 1922 (see Figure 12a, b and c).

<sup>11</sup> Joaquim Homs, (trans. Meiron Bowen), *Robert Gerhard and his music* (Sheffield, 2000) p. 23.

3

Con moto ♩ = ca. 144

FLUTE

OBOE

B♭ CLARINET

BASSOON

SOPRANO  
or  
BARITONE

PIANOFORTE

Change to Piccolo

*p* *leggiero* *mf* *f* *pp* *fp*

**A**

lu - ri - o - les

J'ai pom - pé dans tes

**B**

Piccolo

*p* *pp*

lu - ri - o - les

J'ai pom - pé dans tes

**B**

*f* *p* *f*

Figure 10b: Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1958 version, Song No. 3.

Handwritten musical score on ten staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first four staves contain a continuous melodic line with many slurs and ties. The fifth staff has a measure with a 2/4 time signature. The sixth staff has a measure with a 7/4 time signature. The seventh staff has a measure with a 4/4 time signature. The eighth staff has a measure with a 4/4 time signature. The ninth staff has a measure with a 4/4 time signature. The tenth staff has a measure with a 4/4 time signature. The score is marked with 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'pp rall.' (pianissimo rallentando) in several places. There are also markings for 'I exp.' and 'm I exp.'.



The image shows a handwritten musical score on aged paper. It is divided into three sections labeled with Roman numerals: IV, V, and VI. Section IV, titled 'Andante con moto', contains staves for Clarinet and Oboe. The Clarinet part has a sketch and a final version. The Oboe part is the final version. Section V is a 'Tacet' section. Section VI, titled 'Allegretto assai', contains staves for Bassoon and Flute. The Bassoon part has a sketch and a final version. The Flute part is the final version. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p', 'mf', 'f', 'pp', 'ppp', 'cresc.', 'diminuendo', 'poco rit.', 'a tempo', and 'Fagot'. The bottom right corner of the page has the text 'Fons Robert Gerhard/Institut d'Estudis Valencians (www.iev.cat)'.

Figure 11 (cont.): Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1922 version, Song No. 7.

Clarinet sketch and final version, and oboe final version.

It seems that following successful rehearsals Gerhard was happy to leave it, merely making some rhythmic adjustments (see the bassoon parts in Figures 12a and 12b) adding a few additional touches in the flute part (see Figure 12c) and extending the coda in 1958.



Figure 12a: Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1922 version, Song No. 7, bars 9-13.

Figure 12b: 7 *Haiku*, 1958 version, Song No. 7, RL B.

## Conclusion

Even without the piano part the reconstructed score is useful, demonstrating just how little of the musical material was changed by Gerhard during the revision and making possible an analysis of 7 *Haiku* which can consider the implications of the reconstruction alongside the revised version while considering such aspects as Gerhard's attitude towards tonal organization, his application of a variety of contrapuntal methods and his discriminating use of instruments.

The musical score is for the opening bars of Gerhard's 1922 version of Song No. 7. It is written for a full orchestra and voice. The tempo is 'Larghetto' with a metronome marking of ca. 52. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 2/4. The instruments shown are Flute, Oboe, B-flat Clarinet, Bassoon, Soprano or Baritone, and Piano. The piano part features a 'basso ostinato' in the left hand. Dynamics include *p*, *pp*, and *sf*. The piano part has a 'col Pedale' marking.

Figure 12c: Gerhard, 7 *Haiku*, 1922 version, Song No. 7, opening bars (*basso ostinato*)

The revisions Gerhard made also bring to the fore some of the fundamental differences with Stravinsky's work. The instrumentation is an important factor here. In the *Three Japanese Lyrics* Stravinsky uses a more cohesive collection of instruments, generally resulting in a more blended sound. Gerhard on the other hand actively seeks to exploit the timbral differences between the woodwind instruments, piano and voice. In addition, Gerhard's vocal writing is the more lyrical. Stravinsky's syllabic style is abrupt and often in a high register, whereas Gerhard remains mostly within the mid-range of the soprano, rising occasionally to F#. Gerhard's use of rhythm is more expansive and varied while in Song No. 5 he makes a deliberate feature of the low tessitura.

It is this lyricism that created issues in the 1922 version and it is these 'problems' that Gerhard sought to address in the revision. Although Gerhard is unable to emulate Stravinsky's brevity, the revisions highlight other important compositional concerns. Gerhard clearly realized the quality of the original material and the expanded version is primarily a re-organization of this material. In this revised version there is a clarity of line and more focused use of the instrumental sonorities to delineate the structure of each song. What is important however, is that the fundamental building blocks of the composition including ostinati, a strong sense of lyricism and rich harmonic sonorities all



point to the importance of 7 *Haiku* as a key composition early in the composer's career that contains portents of Gerhard's mature style.

# Piano music in the *Generation of 27*: Roberto Gerhard

Ana Vega-Toscano

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

## Abstract.

This article analyses Gerhard's piano music in the context of the Spanish *Generation of 27* (or the Spanish Republican Generation) and the most important groups of composers working at this time in Madrid (J. Bautista, F. Remacha, R. Halffter, S. Bacarisse, G. Pittaluga, J. J. Mantecón, R. García Ascot) and Barcelona (M. Blancafort, E. Toldrá, R. Lamotte de Grignon, B. Samper, G. Camins, R. Gerhard). Gerhard's piano pieces are characteristic of the evolution of Spanish music in the first part of the twentieth century. The piano was an important focus for new music in Spain during this period. One of the most significant characteristics of this generation was how composers blended the musical avant-garde with elements of traditional Spanish music. The Gerhard works for piano are an excellent example of this.

## Introduction.

In the early twentieth century Spanish music witnessed a creative explosion as composers from different generations embraced both divergent European musical trends and their own Spanish heritage. This activity in the first third of the twentieth century took place in an environment of musical openness. The apparent breaking apart of this activity that came later was more evident in terms of geographical location than in terms of aesthetic evolution. In Spanish musicology a basic distinction has often been drawn between two generations of composers in the first part of the twentieth century, this brought with it all of the problems implicit in such a fixed definition. However, there are many researchers who in principle have adopted the idea of two generations of composers working during this period.<sup>1</sup> The first generation is sometimes known as the *Generación de los Maestros* (The Generation of Masters), a term coined by Adolfo Salazar, in which composers such as Joaquín Turina, Conrado del Campo, Oscar Esplá, Jesús Guridi, Julio Gómez, and Adolfo Salazar himself are deemed to belong. Chronologically speaking, it comprises composers

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<sup>1</sup> Enrique, Franco. 'Generaciones Musicales Españolas', *La música en la Generación del 27. Homenaje a Lorca. 1915-1939*, (Madrid, Madrid: INAEM, 1986), pp. 35-37.

born between 1879 and 1893, and incorporates those musicians who in the 1920s were having an important pedagogical influence on Spanish music. After this group came the generation which has become known as the *Generación del 27* (*Generation of 27*), because of its close kinship with the generation of poets who were to become so significant in the history of Spanish literature.<sup>2</sup> There was a special affinity between the musicians and poets of the time, demonstrated by the substantial number of collaborations that took place between them during this period. In principle, the Generation of '27 comprised musicians born between 1894 and 1908. Historians have sometimes called them the *Generación de la República* (Generation of the Republic), since the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic was an important political milestone that occurred in their youth.

Within the Generation of 27 there were primarily two groups of composers. They can be clearly defined in geographical terms. The cities in which they carried out their activities until the Spanish Civil War is what marked out their main differences. In Madrid, Ernesto and Rodolfo Halffter, Salvador Bacarisse, Julián Bautista, Fernando Remacha, Rosa García Ascot, and Gustavo Pittaluga were the major protagonists in terms of the aesthetic ideas and direction of the group, along with figures such as Juan José Mantecón. In Barcelona during this period a number of musicians got together with the desire to renew or modernise the musical activity that united them. The goal was more an aspiration than a well-defined shared group philosophy. Amongst these musicians were Eduardo Toldrá, Baltasar Samper, Manuel Blancafort, Ricardo Lamotte de Grignon and Roberto Gerhard. These would be the two major centres to which most of the most prominent composers aligned themselves. However, we should be aware that in the *Generation of 27* there were also figures such as Joaquín Rodrigo and Pablo Sorozábal<sup>3</sup> that also subscribed to many of aesthetic principles of both groups.

These composers took part in various now historically significant events that marked their lives and careers, as indeed marked Spanish cultural life in general. These events made them especially united as a group in the 1920s and 1930s. After the Spanish Civil War

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<sup>2</sup> Specifically poets such as Pedro Salinas, Jorge Guillén, Federico García Lorca, Vicente Aleixandre, Dámaso Alonso, and Manuel Altolaguirre.

<sup>3</sup> As well as other interesting musicians such as Evaristo Fernández Blanco, Regino Sainz de la Maza, Jesús Bal y Gay or Gaspar Cassadó.

(1936-39) they all experienced pronounced change in their lives. Some remained in Spain, though many others went into exile. However, what is of most interest is the fact that despite their geographical separation, it is evident that this generation's aesthetic approach remained more unified than we might expect. It is this singular fact that helps us to understand Roberto Gerhard's compositions in many of his differing creative periods.

### **The piano in the *Generación del 27*: 1915-1939.**

In Spain, solo piano compositions remained a focal point for composers in the first half of the twentieth century and in many cases provided outstanding scores as early examples of new aesthetic trends. Particularly during the early years of the *Generation of 27*, when the composers were geographically closer, solo piano scores were written and quickly disseminated that are key early examples of emerging avant-garde ideas. Most notably, Julian Bautista's *Colores*, written in 1922 and published by UME (*Unión Musical Española* – Spanish Musical Union), is a splendid example of the well-organized publishing industry that existed in Spain in this period. Here we can see one of the first works fully indebted to Impressionism, replete with pianistic techniques after Debussy, modal shifts and the utilization of harmonic blocks. It is a suite of six pieces, each of which depicts a specific colour: white, black, purple, yellow, blue and red. The novelty of the work drew considerable attention to Bautista. Nevertheless, we cannot consider *Colores* to be the first Spanish score to draw on Impressionism. Earlier works by Albéniz and Falla, and Adolfo Salazar's *Trois Preludes* (1916) for solo piano, also utilize elements of musical impressionism.

As well as Bautista's *Colores*, Salvador Bacarisse's *Heraldos* based on the poetic world of Rubén Darío also caught the critics' attention. *Heraldos* is a triptych that uses the piano music of Maurice Ravel as a reference point. The work can be considered another of the impressionist-style pieces that in its time served as the introduction of the new musical aesthetics into Spain. These scores speak of a significant pianistic creativity, to which can be added works by Ernesto and Rodolfo Halffter. Ernesto Halffter's *Marche Joyeuse* (1923) provides one of the first examples in Spanish music of the bitonal language characteristic of Stravinsky or the group of French composers *Les Six*. The work remains one of his most important piano works. Similarly, some of Rodolfo Halffter's piano pieces of the early 1920s are notable examples of the integration of the European avant-garde into

Spanish music. *Naturaleza muerta con teclado*<sup>4</sup> was composed in 1922 and was one of the first steps on the path towards atonality. Later in *Dos sonatas de El Escorial* composed in 1930, there is a nod towards the Hispanic neoclassicism that would become so characteristic of the compositions of the following generation. One of the first works by Fernando Remacha *Tres Piezas para piano* (1923) is characterized by a mix of Spanish nationalism (the Habanera rhythm and repeated notes) and impressionist or polytonal techniques. During the same period Joaquín Rodrigo composed one of his most successful works, *El preludio del gallo mañanero* (*The Morning Cock Prelude*) (1926) in Paris. This work clearly demonstrates a compositional leaning towards the polytonality that was characteristic of much French music of the period. The piano music of Manuel Blancafort is another excellent example of the French influence of *Les Six* on Spanish music of this period.

Overall we can say that in this first, and most defining period for the *Generation of 27*, the piano provides an important focus for understanding the new aesthetic tendencies that are most characteristic of Spanish music at this time. In this period we find some of the earliest examples of impressionism, early avant-garde nationalism, polytonal or pantonal innovations; and neoclassical mannerism all integrated with Hispanic elements in the works of many of these composers.

The second stage of the *Generation of 27* is marked by the geographical dispersion of these composers during or following the Spanish Civil War. Despite this, clear aesthetic connections remain. Joaquín Rodrigo remained in Spain in the 1940s, demonstrating a continuing Hispanic inspiration in his works - something that is also present in the works of all the composers who left the country after the civil war, in the first years of their exile. Even Roberto Gerhard, one of the most independent composers of that generation, wrote scores in the 1940s (such as his ballets *Alegrías* and *Don Quixote*) which were inspired by Spanish nationalism.<sup>5</sup> During this second stage the piano remained an important mirror for the creative evolution of many of these composers, but it is more difficult to cite specific examples of emerging aesthetics in Spanish music as clearly as we can in the first stage.

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<sup>4</sup> This is the first work of Rodolfo Halffter's to be premiered. It was performed in 1922 by Fernando Ember, but not published by *Revista Plural* until the 1950s in México and was possibly revised for this publication.

<sup>5</sup> Franco, 'Generaciones', p.36.

### **Solo piano in the work of Roberto Gerhard.**

The catalogue of solo piano works by Roberto Gerhard is by no means extensive. Although there are no more than a handful of such works, we can see that they exemplify some of the most important moments in his creative development, and that they fit perfectly into the totality of the piano works of his generation in Spain. The influence of Felipe Pedrell is evident in Gerhard's formative works, as would be his contact with Manuel de Falla, who was also a student of Pedrell, and with whom he maintained an interesting relationship that is recorded through their correspondence. This formative stage for Gerhard comes to a close in 1918 with his *Trio in B Major* for violin, violoncello and piano. Even at this very early point in his education we find a short piano piece, the *Sonatina a Carlos* (1914) dedicated to his brother, which reflects the composer's exploration of sonata form in a fully tonal language. Later, between 1921 and 1928, Gerhard was searching for a more personal language which is demonstrated in the *Dos Apunts* for piano (1921-22) and *7 Haiku* (1922, rev. 1958). These were the two works that he presented to Schoenberg as examples of his compositional ability before commencing formal studies in Vienna between 1923 and 1928. Gerhard's *Dos Apunts* are two brief but significant pieces as they are often cited as one of the first examples of atonality in Spanish music. In the first piece there is a French quality, recalling the work of Erik Satie in its elusive and minimalistic melody over a hypnotic accompaniment. The second piece is the one that moves most explicitly towards atonality, with its intervallic structure playing with the tritone.<sup>6</sup>

Gerhard's interest in the Second Viennese School was never submissive and he knew how to adapt its style to the characteristics of a certain nationalism which is present in many of his works. If, in the initial stage of his career, Gerhard created piano works that are brief but noteworthy in the evolution of Spanish music, in the early years of his exile he produced two definitive Spanish works. In 1941 Gerhard finished the ballet *Don Quixote*, a ballet in two acts with choreography by Ninette de Valois, this version remained unperformed for almost two decades though the 1947 version was premiered in 1950 at Sadler's Wells. This work brought together trends to be found in many other composers of his generation. It was precisely in the 1940s that *Don Quixote* occupied a place of singular

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<sup>6</sup> Liner notes for *Piano de la Generación del 27*. Ana Vega Toscano (piano) Tecnosaga, Madrid, 1988, MSD4006 which quotes J.L. Téllez, 'Páginas para teclado de la Generación del 27', Madrid, 1988.

relevance in Gerhard's creative output. The result was a work that emerged after a long and complex period of gestation. Music from the ballet *Don Quixote* in turn became the source for a number of other important scores, among which is the *Danzas para Don Quijote* in its piano version. The ballet was finally produced in 1959 with Margot Fonteyn in the role of Dulcinea and Robert Helpman as Don Quixote. In the work Gerhard was mostly concerned with the play of oppositions and interactions between fantasy and reality, sanity and madness, and the score perfectly express the contrast between the worlds of idealism and chivalry on the one hand, and hard, unmitigated reality on the other. There are musical elements of a heroic nature, sometimes slightly deformed, in contrast to other moments that clearly have a popular and Spanish character. The *Dances from Don Quixote* (1947) begin with an Introduction in which the knight is portrayed by means of a brief fanfare followed by Don Quixote's theme.<sup>7</sup> This introduction leads directly into the 'Dance of the Muleteers', with its marked rhythms and its many Spanish melodic turns and embellishments. These reflect the arrival of the knight and his squire at the inn, and the common muleteers that they encounter there. The 'Golden Age' is a *pas de deux*, and an example of extreme serenity in which the Hidalgo describes the legendary 'Golden Age' as an idyllic Arcadia, expressed musically in a polyphonic style. The next scene represented takes us to the 'Cave of Montesinos' which begins with a mysterious and sombre atmosphere (*poco sostenuto*) splendidly portrayed by Gerhard's use of counterpoint. A sudden transition (*Allegro non troppo*) reflects a phantasmagorical procession of characters in the surreal context of illusion, in this case dreamt by Don Quixote. The brief and brilliant 'Epilogue' takes us to the last scene of the ballet in which variations on Don Quixote's noble theme represent the knight's return to sanity and his peaceful death. The feeling of evanescence is strikingly achieved by means of timbral effects and the piano's resonating possibilities.

From 1950 onwards Gerhard's interest in serialism came to the fore. Joaquín Homs has analysed Gerhard's tendency to segment the twelve-tone series into groups of three, four or six notes; the use of permutations between the tones that make up each group; and the use of the series not in thematic functions but as combinatorial code. It is at this point that he composed his last work for solo piano, the *Tres Impromptus* (1950). This work is an

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<sup>7</sup> Joaquín Homs. *Robert Gerhard y su obra*. Universidad de Oviedo, 1987.

important example of Gerhard's attempt to combine a nationalist aesthetic and his own personal movement towards serialism. The first impromptu is the clearest in its use of 'national' elements. The combination of binary and ternary accents is one of the most typical musical characteristics of Hispanic music. The third impromptu also has a strongly profiled rhythm, with characteristic repeated notes and other typical Spanish ornaments to the fore.

Taken together, Roberto Gerhard's works for solo piano are very few but they clearly reflect the different stages of the evolution of his career, and they clearly reflect an aesthetic kinship with other progressive composers of his generation in Spanish music.



# Challenging Schoenberg's modernism? Gerhard's music and aesthetics at the turn of the 1930s

Diego Alonso Tomás

Universidad de La Rioja

## Abstract.

After the completion in late 1920s of a number of post-tonal works, including the atonal String Quartet (c.1927-28) and the partially serial Wind Quintet (1928), Gerhard came to favour a simpler compositional style and based his musical language and compositional technique on tonal functionality. Furthermore, his music of the 1930s was no longer 'detached' from any extra-musical issue (as he claimed the Wind Quintet had been) but closely related to their socio-political context, namely Republican Catalanism. This stylistic shift was in consonance with the new trends in music that from the late 1920s onwards called for a simplification of compositional technique and for an engagement of modern music in society.

In this article I explore Gerhard's compositional output and theoretical writings of the late 1920s and early 1930s. In the first part I study the negative reception in Barcelona in 1929 of Gerhard's post-tonal works and the composers's immediate response in *Mirador* supporting Schoenberg's modernism. In the second part I describe Gerhard's stylistic shift after the composition of the Wind Quintet and its relationship to the challenges of Schoenberg's paradigm of modernism in that period.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. *Supporting Schoenberg's modernism: Gerhard's defence of atonal music.*

### 'Musician's criteria': objectivity and artistic truth.

Having finished his classes with Schoenberg in the summer of 1928, Roberto Gerhard went to stay for several months in Tulln an der Donau (in Austria), the birthplace of his fiancée, Leopoldina Feichtegger. From there, he sent off the post-tonal string quartet he had composed

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is part of the research project "Tradición, modernidad y construcción nacional en los discursos y en las prácticas musicales en España, Argentina y México 1900-1975, HAR 2008-02243", *Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación*. I thank Pilar Ramos, Julian White and Thomas Hilder for their advice and assistance during the writing of this article.

in 1927-28 (as a final project for Schoenberg's *Meisterklasse*) to be considered for the Patxot composition competition. This composition award was one of the most important in Catalonia at the time. The jury consisted of composers related to the conservative choral society Orfeó Catalá. On that occasion it included the composer Josep Barberà, the musicologist Higiní Anglés and the music critic Lluís Millet. (The latter was one of the main authorities on musical issues in Catalonia at the time.) Apparently, Barberà (a friend of Gerhard's) defended the work but Millet adjudicated unfavourably arguing that Gerhard's quartet 'sounds horrible to the ear'. Shortly afterwards, in a letter to Barberà, Gerhard considered that assertion to be 'a layman's criterion' and called for a 'musician's criteria' in the evaluation of his score.<sup>2</sup>

Gerhard's string quartet was premiered a few months later, in December 1929, in an all-Gerhard concert at the *Palau de la Música Catalana*. Aware of the aesthetic novelty of the work, Gerhard arranged the quartet for string orchestra in order to make it more appealing to the audience and consequently retitled it as the Concertino for Strings. The programme of the concert also included 7 *Haiku* (1922), Wind Quintet (1928), eight of the 14 *Cançons populars catalanes* (1929) and *Two Sardanas* (1929). Both the critics and most of the Barcelona audience found Gerhard's music unpleasant, too complicated and not truly Catalan. A few weeks later, Lluís Millet published a damning review in which he rejected Gerhard's atonal music for its lack of beauty and national substance as well as for its excessive intellectualism and internationalism.

Gerhard promptly replied to these critics in the progressive cultural journal *Mirador*. He defended Schoenberg's compositional system (atonality and serialism) as an inescapable historical necessity, unrelated to criteria of beauty, popularity or functionality. Subjective notions of 'beauty' or 'ugliness' were inappropriate aesthetic categories in the assessment of atonal music. Gerhard called instead for an objective evaluation of modern music based on purely technical and compositional criteria. The mission of modern art, Gerhard implicitly argued, was no longer the quest for 'beauty' but the revelation of 'artistic truth'. Gerhard rebelled again (now with a certain sarcasm) against the authority of aesthetics, understood as

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<sup>2</sup> Letter from Roberto Gerhard to Josep Barberà, 9/8 /1929 (Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya).

the discipline which concerns artistic beauty. In reply to Millet's criticism, Gerhard wrote in *Mirador*,

You say that you have missed in my music 'the true artistic purpose', that is, beauty. Ah, *Mestre*, if you become allied with that lady, I will evidently lose! I will feel bad about having to lose with you in this domain! I would prefer having to lose against a critic who, history proves it, is the only man who possess the secret of Beauty. It is his professional privilege. I am sincerely convinced, maestro Millet, that we, the artists, do not understand anything about these matters.<sup>3</sup>

### **Atonality as a historical necessity.**

Gerhard, much like Schoenberg and his circle, supported an evolutionary understanding of the history of music to legitimise atonality as the most developed stage in the Western musical tradition. They considered the emancipation of dissonance and the serial organisation of melodic material to be the only solution to the crisis of the tonal system since Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. For this reason, Gerhard argued that Schoenberg's latest technical and aesthetic developments were the most developed and sophisticated stage of Western music and therefore the starting point from which every composer (including the Catalans) should initiate the search for their own language. In 1931 Gerhard wrote in *Mirador*,

The last twenty-five years have radically transformed the physiognomy and physiology of our art [music]. The appearance of Arnold Schoenberg in the world of music [...] is not a particular phenomenon of Austrian music, but rather it is universal in scope. The problems which he raised affect us [Catalan composers] all.

They [those problems] must be confronted in order to draw the desired conclusions, the possible conclusions. But they have to be confronted. Music, which is indifferent to this order of ideas, music, which is fruit of a lax cult of extremely private sensitivity and insensitive to the most absorbing problems of contemporary musical development, is something incomprehensible today, especially in the case of a young composer.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Roberto Gerhard. 'Coda', *Mirador*, 63 (10 April 1930), p. 5. This and subsequent translations by the author.

<sup>4</sup> Roberto Gerhard. 'Edicions de Música - Xavier Gols, Suite pour piano (Ed. M. Sénart, Paris)', *Mirador*, 131 (6 August 1931), 5

### **What is the content of music? Formalism and modernity.**

In the mid 1930s Stravinsky formulated his famous and controversial phrase, ‘music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all’.<sup>5</sup> As early as 1921, Gerhard had set out similar aesthetic principles in an equally striking way. In that year he studied Eduard Hanslick’s *The Beautiful in Music* and wrote in a note in the margin of the book, ‘The expression of feelings is not the content of the music’.<sup>6</sup> Around that time, having read the condemnation of formalism expressed in Paul Moos’ *Modern Aesthetics of Music in Germany*, he wrote: ‘the solution to all this: what does music express? – itself. What is its content? – There is none, music itself is content. Result: an illusory problem. Basically an ill-considered issue’.<sup>7</sup>

This formalist position constituted a modernist reaction to the romantic and expressionistic principles of artistic expression of the inner self, which had guided musical composition until the First World War. Gerhard’s understanding of ‘music itself’ as the only content of music coincided with his awareness of the deficiencies of his compositional technique. It was not until the completion of his studies with Schoenberg that he considered himself truly able to compose a musical work that was formalist and ‘objective’ in a modern sense. In one of his personal notebooks of the 1940s he defined the Wind Quintet (the first work composed after Schoenberg’s tuition) as the ‘most serious attempt made at non-individualistic music. Detached, objective approach’.<sup>8</sup> Compositional issues were foregrounded in this work. Even the folk materials included in the work seem to be there just for their musical features and not for conveying any (concealed) extra-musical meaning. This is different to Gerhard’s subsequent output, in where the folk material is chosen on account of the personal, cultural or political meanings associated with them.

### **Art is not for all: elitism and modern music.**

Gerhard’s music was not easy to comprehend at once, not even by the music-lovers that made

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<sup>5</sup> Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography* (London: Gollancz, 1936), p.53-54.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Der Darstellung der Gefühle ist nicht Inhalt der Musik’.

<sup>7</sup> ‘solución de tot aixó: Die Musik spricht was aus? – sich selbst. Was ist ihr Inhalt? – gar nichts, sie selbst ist Inhalt. Resultat: problems il·lusoris! Al fons qüestió mal plantejada.’ Both treatises, that of Hanslick and that of Moos, are kept at the Institut d’Estudis Vallencs, annotated and underlined by Gerhard.

<sup>8</sup> Cambridge University Library, Gerhard 10.136, p. 22.

up the audience of the 1929 all-Gerhard concert at the *Palau*. The ‘absolute’ character of the Concertino for Strings and the Wind Quintet (that is, the absence of extra-musical ideas to which the public could relate) and the boldness of their harmonic language made them inaccessible or unpleasant for most listeners. According to the draft of a letter from Gerhard to Schoenberg, only a small minority of artists and intellectuals (none of them musicians) had truly supported his music on that occasion. Gerhard writes that,

Towards the end of 1929 I returned to Barcelona and immediately got a concert ~~performance~~ of my works at the [Association of] ‘Música da Camera’ which you know very well. The concert was a success and caused a great scandal in the press, whether it be in favour or against modern music. The majority evidently found me too radical. But even those expressing the most negative of views ~~have great respect~~ always accept my technique, for which they apparently have great respect. A small minority proclaimed me as a man of progress and I was given full moral support mainly by artists, writers and ~~people from the university~~ doctors.<sup>9</sup>

Such negative reception of modern music was acknowledged by Schoenberg as a clear sign of its artistic value. For Schoenberg, modern music was a complex and therefore extremely elitist cultural product, only enjoyable by a small minority. In 1930 he wrote about this matter, something that would later become popular for its radicalism, ‘... no musician, whose thought unfolds in the highest sphere, shall descend to vulgarity in order to appear complacent with a ‘slogan’ such as ‘Art for all’. Because if it is art it won’t be for everyone and if it is for everyone it is not art.’<sup>10</sup>

Gerhard also acknowledged the elitist nature of modern music, albeit not in such a radical way. As a reaction to the negative reception of his music after the 1929 all-Gerhard concert in Barcelona, he described a ‘personal fantasy’ in which he imagined the ‘collective consciousness divided into a series of areas with progressively decreasing sensitivity towards the periphery’. In the centre he placed the people ‘discovering the endless problems of the world’ (artists and

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<sup>9</sup> Gerhard draft letter to Schoenberg. The draft is kept in the Institut d'Estudis Vallencs (14.02.02, p. 27). Although it is not dated, judging by the content it was probably written about 1932. As far as is known, the original letter, if it was ever sent, is not preserved.

<sup>10</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, *Neue Musik, veraltete Musik, Stil und Gedanke* (1930) in *Stil und Gedanke. Aufsätze zur Musik [1909–1950]. Gesammelte Schriften 1*, ed. Ivan Vojtech. (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1976). English translation: ‘New Music, Outmoded music, Style and Idea’, in *Style and Idea. Selected writings of Arnold Schoenberg* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), p. 124.

intellectuals?); in the next level a minority of people, sensitive to their ideas (which included ‘dilettantes’); on the periphery the great mass of the audience (including critics), which was often insensible or reactionary towards new (artistic) ideas.<sup>11</sup>

By ‘dilettantes’ Gerhard seemingly referred to the group of artists and intellectuals that supported modern music in Barcelona during the 1930s (most of whom probably later founded the artistic group *Amics De L’Art Nou*.) In spite of their lack of technical musical training (or maybe due to it), these artists and intellectuals approached modern music in an unprejudiced way. Gerhard contrasted this attitude with that of the ‘professionals of music’, in other words critics and composers with an advanced musical education but often ‘deaf’ to new musical ideas. In 1931 Gerhard wrote in *Mirador*,

We should revive the term and demand the past nobleness of the title of dilettante (that the decline of the ‘professionals’ rather than that of the ‘music lovers’ [*afición*], in our times, has taken on a derogatory tone) as a platonic and fervent worship of the art of music through its disinterested and idealistic practice.<sup>12</sup>

## ***2. Challenging Schoenberg’s modernism? Gerhard’s music after the Wind Quintet.***

### **Art for all: *Gebrauchsmusik* and *Neue Sachlichkeit*.**

In the early *Mirador* articles (1930), Gerhard defended a corpus of aesthetic principles related to (or derived from) Schoenberg’s ideas, particularly an understanding of atonal music (including serialism) as an historical necessity and an acknowledgement of the artistic autonomy of that music. However, approximately one year later, Gerhard wrote a number of articles in which he mentioned, from a rather sympathetic point of view, new modernist trends that challenged or relativized those postulates. In Germany in the late 1920s, young composers of his generation (including Hindemith, Eisler, Weill or Krenek) began to call for ‘New Music’, which should be simple, useful, more accessible and in touch with the needs and interests of society. For them, radical harmonic experimentation could no longer be the only *raison d’être* of modern music. In

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<sup>11</sup> See Roberto Gerhard, ‘Preludi’, *Mirador*, 53 (30 January 1930). On the ‘dilettantes’ see also Roberto Gerhard, ‘C. Badía d’Agustí’, *Mirador*, 112 - (26 March 1931), p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Roberto Gerhard, ‘La Banda Municipal’, *Mirador*, 128 (16 July 1931), p. 5.

the article *Música Aplicada* ('Applied Music') Gerhard contrasted 'pure' and 'functional' modern music writing that,

The composer [of pure music] has almost unlimited freedom. This explains, in part, why the extraordinarily fast and complex evolution that pure music has undergone in modern times has created a very considerable distance between new production and the audience. [...] As opposed to luxurious entertainment, to which an ever more distant, cold and disappointed public pays an increasingly external and conventional form of devotion, music aspires to become an object of current, primary, spiritual needs. *Zweck-musik* [music with a purpose]: A concept of utilitarian music opposed to the concept of sumptuary music. Here is the maxim.<sup>13</sup>

Amongst the representatives of modern functional music Gerhard particularly praised the music of his friend Hanns Eisler. Alluding to the close ties of Eisler's recent music with the German socio-political situation, Gerhard described him as 'the most implacable enemy of the art for art's sake of our bourgeois music', a composer 'of now, in the fullest sense of the word'. For Gerhard, Eisler's music was in total 'harmony with its time', above both currents that looked back to the past (neoclassicism) and those that looked into the future (probably in reference to the music of the Second Viennese School). Gerhard also praised Eisler's technical skills but expressed his reservations about the political ideology (Marxism) that lay beneath his compositions:

Coming from the Schoenbergian school and having one of the most subtle techniques of the most refined spiritual quality, he has lately evolved into a voice of categorical simplicity and concentration. His choral works, leaving aside their effectiveness as propaganda, which doesn't interest me, have an impressive musical force. And what is most impressive is that, without falsifying the current state of musical developments, and within the atonal evolution, his music has an extraordinary thematic plasticity and harmonic coherence [...] [His choral works] are given an intensity of musical expression and a persuasive force that silence all objections. Musically, at least, they leave you absolutely convinced.<sup>14</sup>

### **Gerhard's compositional attempts in early 1930s: twelve-tone music and *Männerchöre*.**

Gerhard's writings on modern 'applied' music coincided with a period of creative difficulties. It

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<sup>13</sup> Roberto Gerhard. 'Música aplicada', *Mirador*, 124 (June 1931), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Roberto Gerhard. 'Hanns Eisler', *Mirador*, 101, 8 January 1931, p. 5

seems that after the composition of the Wind Quintet, the *14 Cançons populars catalanes* and the *Two Sardanas* (all completed in a relatively short time around 1928-29), Gerhard felt uncertain about continuing with serial composition. The only clue about his compositional attempts during the three years, between the completion of the works of 1928-1929 and the beginning of his cantata *L'alta naixença del rei en Jaume* in 1932, is to be found in the draft of the previously mentioned letter to Schoenberg of circa 1932. Gerhard wrote him that during that year 'I have only composed two pieces for male choir and some piano pieces, very little in the twelve tone system'.<sup>15</sup>

Both facts are significant. Gerhard's 'little' employment of twelve-tone composition seems to indicate that he tried to resume serial composition after the Wind Quintet but was not pleased with the end results or with the implications of elitism and detachment associated with serial music. His interest in composing music for choir is equally significant. In Catalonia the music for amateur choral ensembles (*orfeós*) was the most effective vehicle for musical expression of Catalan nationalism and the strongest nexus between high art music and the people.

Gerhard's decision to compose for a *male* instead of mixed choral ensemble is nevertheless surprising, as the vast majority of Catalan *orfeós* were for mixed voices. Thus, I wonder whether these pieces could have been an attempt to (musically) emulate in some way the 'proletarian' male choirs composed by Eisler and other young German composers at the turn of the 1930s. Gerhard's choral pieces (if actually composed) have not survived, making it difficult to imagine what type of music it was. If Gerhard did actually finish the pieces, the fact that he did not perform or publish them (but probably destroyed them), seems to indicate that he was not pleased with the end result.

## Conclusion

Gerhard studied with Schoenberg in Berlin from 1926 to 1928. At that time, the Austrian composer was considered one of the most prominent representatives of German musical modernism. During this period, Europe saw the emergence of new musical trends that

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<sup>15</sup> Roberto Gerhard, Letter to Arnold Schoenberg c. 1932, (IEV 14.02.02)



challenged paradigms of modernity based on sophisticated harmonic novelty and complete detachment of music from specific uses and functions. Instead, a simplification of compositional technique and a direct engagement of modern music in society were demanded. In Berlin, these demands were often expressed in explicit political terms and constituted an attempt to challenge, or at least to relativize, Schoenberg's influence as aesthetic leader.

Once back in Barcelona, after the negative reception of his recent music, Gerhard supported an understanding of musical modernism in which Schoenberg's atonal and twelve-note systems constituted an historical inevitability. However, his compositional language and style had already distanced themselves from Schoenberg's paradigm of modernism. Although in some of the works composed shortly after the Wind Quintet Gerhard did not completely reject some compositional procedures derived from or related to serial organisation, his music was no longer based on serial technique. The twelve-tone pieces mentioned in correspondence of circa 1932 seem to have constituted, in his view, a failed attempt at resuming serial composition. It was not until the period following the Second World War that Gerhard's music came to be extensively based on twelve-note principles again and he took up composition in the genres traditionally associated with absolute music, particularly in his two string quartets and four symphonies.

Gerhard's 'Catalanist' music of the 1930s was more conservative in idiom than the 1920s post-tonal works and therefore more accessible to general audiences. It was no longer 'detached' but closely linked to the cultural and socio-political situation of the time. Its composition constituted an overt political act, related to the extraordinary need for affirmation of Catalanism (Catalan Nationalism) during the Republican period, that is, after the repression of Primo de Rivera's regime.

Furthermore, in consonance with the aesthetic requirements of the period, Gerhard's music of the 1930s acquired a kind of 'functionality', albeit in a very different sense to German *Gebrauchsmusik*. The cantata *L'alta Naixença del Rei en Jaume* was intended to be premiered by the Barcelona *Orfeó Grancienc* (one of the Barcelona *orfeós* most interested in modern music). Its composition was related to the 1930s interest in oratorio-like works, through which composers were able to integrate high music into the community and to express a commitment to the

people (through the choir) at the same time. *Albada, Interludi i Dansa* (composed for a series of radio broadcasts for the BBC) and the ballet music of this period (*Ariel, Soirées de Barcelone* and other unfinished projects<sup>16</sup>) particularly fit in with the 1930s requirements of taking music out of the ‘splendid isolation’ of the ‘bourgeois concert hall’, as Gerhard put it.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Diego Alonso, ‘Música nacional de categoría universal: catalanismo, modernidad y folclore en el ideario estético de Roberto Gerhard tras el magisterio Schöberguiano (1929–1931)’, in Pilar Ramos (ed.), *Discursos y prácticas musicales nacionalistas (1900–1970)* (Logroño: Universidad de La Rioja, 2012), 255 - 276

<sup>17</sup> Roberto Gerhard, ‘Música aplicada’, *Mirador*, 124 (June 1931), p. 5.

# Catalan Musical Life in the early 20th century: a biographical and musical comparison of Roberto Gerhard and Frederic Mompou.

Desirée García Gil

Universidad Complutense de Madrid  
Departamento de Expresión Musical y Corporal  
Área de Música

## Abstract.

Roberto Gerhard and Frederic Mompou were two of the greatest Catalan composers in the 20th century. Their artistic careers show numerous points of correspondence. Both musicians became friends with well-known musicians such as the composer Enrique Granados and the singer Conxita Badía; they formed the Association of Catalanian Independent Musicians which was one of the first attempts to bring composers from Barcelona together at the beginning of the 20th century. Gerhard and Mompou also undertook musical training abroad (Germany and France respectively) and then returned to Catalonia and established their careers in the 1930s. This article tries to compare the lives and musical paths of both composers using, besides existing documentary sources, the unpublished correspondence between both musicians deposited in the Fons Mompou of the National Library of Catalonia, Barcelona. The aim of the article is to see to what extent Gerhard and Mompou are representatives of the vibrant Catalanian musical scene in Barcelona at the beginning of the 20th century.

## Introduction.

Musical life in Catalonia in the early 20th century followed one of the key postulates of the Modernist movement, namely to open up musical horizons to a cosmopolitan world enriched by multiple influences in which, in the words of Enrique Encabo, the idea was to avoid any involvement with Madrid and to look towards the north, in other words, towards Europe.<sup>1</sup> Newspapers of the time clearly demonstrate how the opera houses of the *Liceo* and the *Teatro Principal* in Barcelona sought to focus their repertoire on French and Italian works, and that such composers and performers as Richard Strauss, Gabriel Fauré, Vincent D'Indy and Wanda Landowska were regularly invited to perform in the city. That Schoenberg was invited to conduct his masterpiece *Pierrot Lunaire* at the Palau demonstrates the desire of the time to embrace all things artistically new.<sup>2</sup>

Barcelona was to become a strong cultural centre for European music thanks to the innovative programming of institutions such as the *Orfeo Catalá* choir (with its particular interest in the work of Bach) and the activity of the *Associació Wagneriana* operatic society, which, as indicated by Xosé Aviñoa,

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<sup>1</sup> Enrique Encabo, *Música y nacionalismos en España* (Barcelona: Erasmus 2007), p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Suzanne Rhodes Draayer, *Art song composers of Spain: An Encyclopedia* (United States of America: Scarecrow Press, 2009), p. 144.

proposed one of the most progressive opera programmes in Europe.<sup>3</sup> As well as a wealth of music making, Barcelona was also witness to a thriving musical press. The *Revista Musical Catalana*, *Mundo Musical* and *Hispania Música* contained articles not only by musicologists and critics but also Catalan composers themselves. This climate is exemplified by the relationship between Roberto Gerhard and Frederic Mompou. Both Gerhard and Mompou worked as music critics covering the entire musical scene. Gerhard wrote for *El Mirador* and *La revista de Catalunya* from 1931 to 1936,<sup>4</sup> and Mompou for the journal *Pueblo* between 1944 and 1945.<sup>5</sup>

This article is a study of that relationship and how it illustrates the prevailing aesthetic ideology in Catalonia at the time. It places particular emphasis on the affinities between these two musicians, both at the level of their personal experiences and their musical aesthetics, focusing specifically on lyric songs from their repertoire. The analysis covers the period between 1920 and 1931, the years which mark the beginning and end of their written correspondence. The sources used are listed in the corresponding historiographic bibliography, together with this collection of letters, some of which are unpublished including nine letters written by Gerhard to Mompou, and three drafts from Mompou in response (held in the Mompou deposit at the National Library of Catalonia).

### **Mompou and Gerhard.**

Biographically Mompou and Gerhard share common elements. Both had a foreign parent - Gerhard's father was Swiss and Mompou's mother was French. Both composers studied music outside Spain - Gerhard in Germany and Mompou in Paris. Both returned to Catalonia in 1914 after the outbreak of World War I.<sup>6</sup> A common figure in their musical training is that of Enrique Granados. Thanks to his three letters of recommendation Mompou was able to present himself at the Paris Conservatory and subsequently to receive classes in piano and harmony.<sup>7</sup> These letters of recommendation were addressed to Gabriel Fauré, who at that time was director of the Conservatoire, and to the piano teachers Louis Diemer and Isidore Philipp.<sup>8</sup> Although Mompou was not one of his piano pupils, it can be deduced from the contents of the first letter that Granados took as much interest in him as if he

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<sup>3</sup> Xavier Aviñoa, *La música i el modernisme* (Barcelona, Curial), 1985.

<sup>4</sup> Emilio Casares Rodicio, 'Gerhard Ottenwaelder, Robert', *Diccionario de Música Española e Hispanoamericana*, 6, ed. Emilio Casares Rodicio, (Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 1999), p. 581.

<sup>5</sup> Mompou, F. *Producció musical. Col·laboracions periodístiques*. Fons Mompou, Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya, M 4987/1.

<sup>6</sup> Barcé, R., Millet, L., Bonet, N., Frederic Mompou, *Col·lecció compositors Catalans*, N°3, Boileau, Generalitat de Catalunya, 1993; Joaquim Homs, *Robert Gerhard y su obra*, (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1987).

<sup>7</sup> Although Mompou was not one of his piano pupils, it can be deduced from the contents of the letter that Granados took as much interest in him as if he were. Granados encouraged Fauré to admit Mompou to the Conservatoire even though he was almost eighteen years old, the maximum age for entering the institution.

<sup>8</sup> Clara Sardin, 'Frédéric Mompou à Paris', *Reveu internationale de musique française*, 26 (1988), p. 94.

were. Granados letter encouraged Fauré to admit the young pianist to the Conservatoire even though he was almost eighteen years old, the maximum age for entering the institution. The fact that Granados represented Mompou to a composer of the stature of Fauré implies that he considered the young musician to have already completed part of his musical training in Barcelona, and that the time had come for him to continue his studies in an atmosphere as distinguished as that of the Paris Conservatoire.

At the same time, Granados, together with Felip Pedrell, was also one of Gerhard's most important piano teachers.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the social and cultural circles in which these two musicians moved included a series of common acquaintances and artists. This social milieu included composers such as Manuel Blancafort and Óscar Esplá; the pianist Ricard Viñes; the poets Josep Carner and Josep Janés; and sopranos like Conxita Badía. Mompou and Gerhard had a special relationship with the latter that arose mainly from their love of Barcelona, which both musicians expressed through lyric songs dedicated to Badía. Gerhard dedicated his composition *L'infantament meravellós de Schahrazada* to Badía, which is, according to Casares, 'a work rooted in popular Catalan song but aimed at including new features that distance it from nineteenth century nationalism'.<sup>10</sup>

It was the Spanish Civil War, however, that prompted Mompou to put music to the popular song *El testament d'Amelia*, also dedicated to Conxita Badía, whom he frequently met with in Paris after the outbreak of the conflict. When the soprano decided to go into exile in Argentina it was Ventura Gassol and Mompou who were there to wish her safely on her journey. Mompou gave Badía a manuscript of his version of *El testament d'Amelia* for voice and piano as a parting gift. The piano accompaniment he had composed for this popular song included a short melody that would remind her of her homeland. Clara Janés notes that this 'little treasure was religiously kept in a chest of drawers at Conchita's house in La Bonanova, among manuscripts by Albéniz, Ventura Gassol and Apelles Mestres'.<sup>11</sup>

The two composers also sought to further the career of the other where possible. Gerhard's friendships helped to further Mompou's career by introducing him to highly influential friends on the Spanish and European musical scene. Gerhard sent Adolfo Salazar an edition of Mompou's early works for piano

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<sup>9</sup> Casares 'Gerhard Ottenwaelder, Robert' p. 579.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 580.

<sup>11</sup> Clara Janés, *La vida callada de Federico Mompou*, (Barcelona: Ariel, 1975), p. 83.

and made a point of writing to Falla to comment on the progress he was making in Paris.<sup>12</sup> The two composers made two attempts at association. In 1921, after the success in Paris of the first performance of Mompou's works for piano, Gerhard, Adolfo Salazar and Óscar Esplá travelled to the French capital to congratulate him in person and to create 'The group of four',<sup>13</sup> which ultimately went no further than simply a declaration of intent. Similarly, in the spring of 1931 Gerhard and Mompou, together with Gibert Camins, Agustí Grau, Eduard Toldrà, Manuel Blancafort and Ricard Lamote de Grignon, formed a group entitled 'Independent composers of Catalonia',<sup>14</sup> whose public presentation in June of that same year was the only joint project undertaken by that fleeting association (see Figure 1).

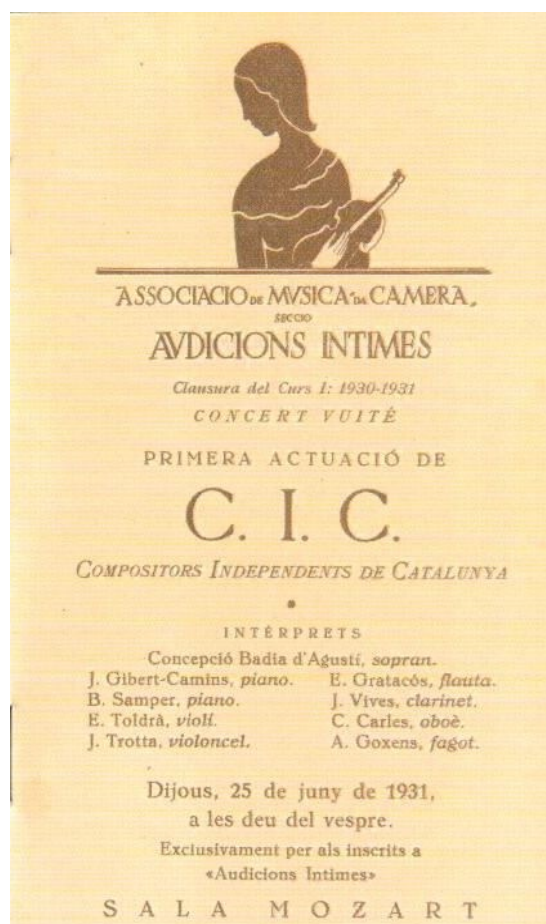


Figure 1: *Compositors Independents de Catalunya*. Programme for inaugural concert 25 June 1936.

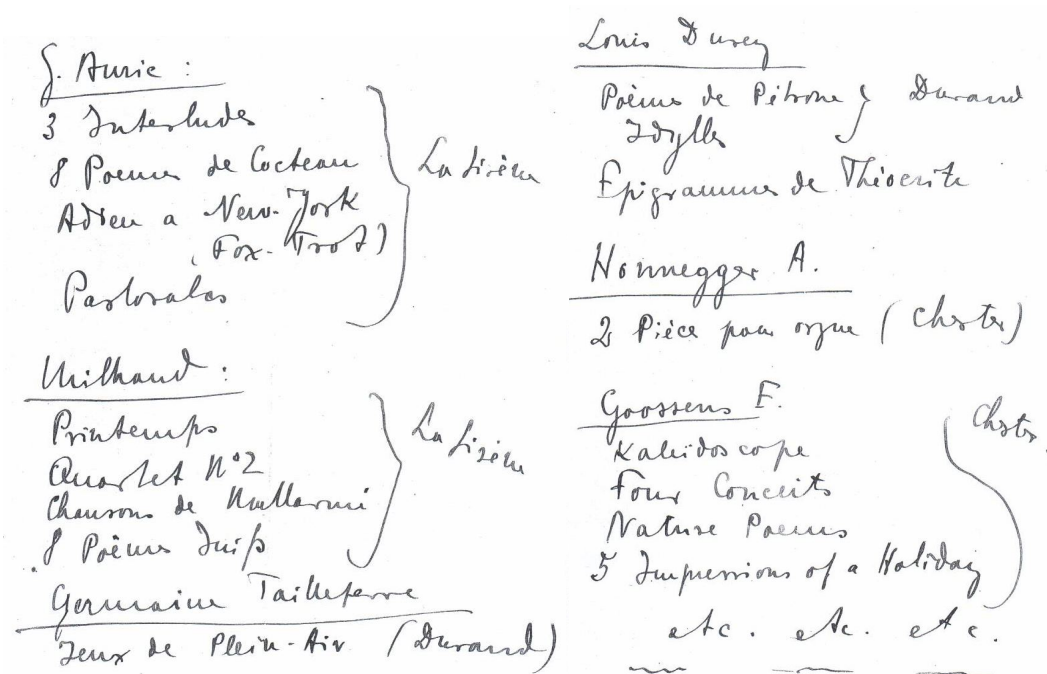
<sup>12</sup> Clara Janés, *Federico Mompou: Vida, Textos y Documentos* (Madrid: Fundación Banco Exterior, 1987), p. 63.

<sup>13</sup> Jérôme Bastianelli, *Federico Mompou 1893-1987. À la recherche d'une musique perdue* (Lausanne : Editions Payot 2003), p. 56.

<sup>14</sup> Xavier Aviñoa, *Manuel Blancafort. Col·lecció Compositors Catalans*, n°7, (Barcelona, Boileau, 1993), pp. 50-51.

## Letters between Gerhard and Mompou.

Mompou and Gerhard's friendship grew out of a mutual appreciation of each other's music and is demonstrated in the letters they exchanged.<sup>15</sup> In all of Gerhard's letters he enquires about Mompou's 'projects'. An example of this interest can be found in the letter dated 27 May 1921, in which Gerhard praises Mompou's collection of *Cants Magics*, describing them as 'open and transparent'. Gerhard also repeatedly recommends that Mompou should study the 'modern musicians' as a means of encouraging his friend. In a letter dated 6 March 1921, Gerhard goes further and cites works by French composers and specific editions that in his opinion Mompou would do well to 'study carefully', 'if not in Barcelona then in Paris'. These included a number of works by Francis Poulenc as well as works by Goossens, Auric, Milhaud and other members of *Les Six* (see Figure 2).

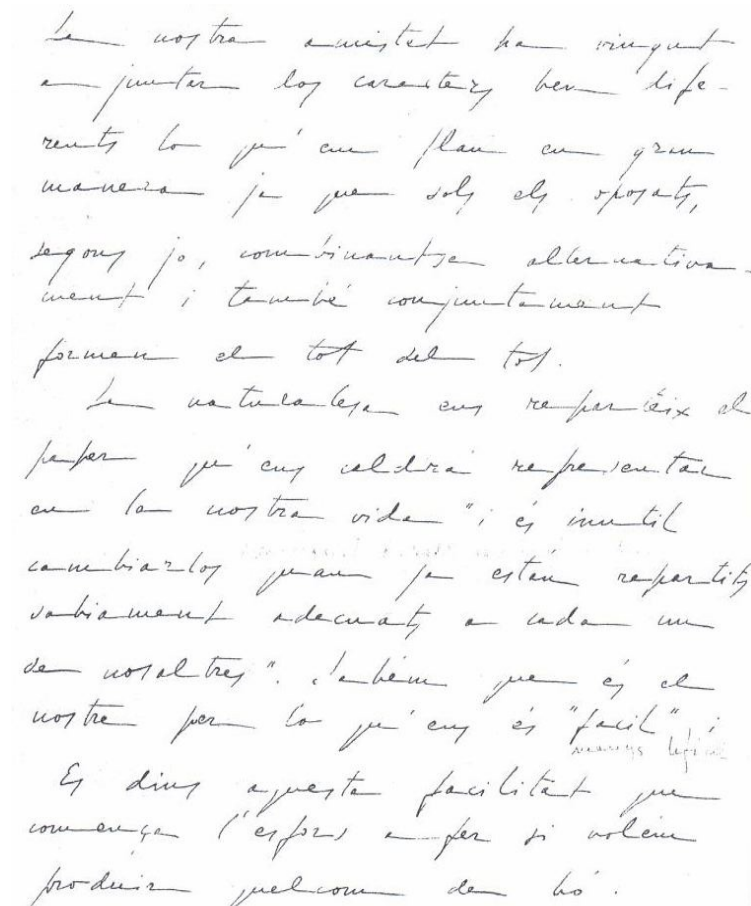


**Figure 2:** Gerhard, letter to Mompou, 6 March 1921.  
(Fons Mompou. Biblioteca Nacional de Cataluña, Barcelona, Spain).

In a subsequent letter Gerhard includes recommendations of 'Italian and German Expressionists' but goes on to insist that 'Stravinsky is the only one who counts' (letter dated 24 April 1921). As mentioned above, Gerhard was also instrumental in disseminating Mompou's work to the most important critics of the day. Adolfo Salazar was 'extremely interested in discovering' his music (letter of 27 May 1921),

<sup>15</sup> The letters can be consulted at: Mompou, F. Correspondència professional. Gerhard Robert. Fons Mompou, Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya, M 5022/ 4.

about which the critic conveys his great admiration of the work to Gerhard (letter of 30 May 1921). Always aware of Mompou's diffident and introverted nature, Gerhard encouraged him to overcome this and to socialise with Manuel de Falla and Óscar Esplá, whom he considers to be 'extraordinarily intelligent, very agreeable and a decent person' (letter of 30 March 1921). Gerhard also encourages Mompou to perform his own piano works, particularly in concerts which Gerhard could organise for him in Madrid (letter of 24 April 1921). Mompou systematically turns down these invitations, alleging as an excuse that he is abroad. Whilst Gerhard is conscious of their very different personalities, he does not consider this to be an impediment to the development of their friendship, since, in his own words 'combining them both alternatively and jointly, together they form a whole' (response to Mompou, without date). Mompou writes to Gerhard (see Figure 3),



La nostra amistat ha vingut a junter dos caràcters ben diferents lo qu' en plan en gran manera ja ja són els oposats, segons jo, combinant-se alternativament i també conjuntament formen el tot del tot.

La naturalesa ens reparteix el paper qu' en cada representació en la nostra vida "i és inútil canviar-los ja ja estan repartits sabiament adequats a cada un de nosaltres". Sabem que és el nostre paper lo qu' en és "fàcil" i ens donem a l'efort si volem produir quelcom de bo.

**Figure 3:** Mompou, letter to Gerhard, undated.<sup>16</sup>

(Fons Mompou. Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain).

<sup>16</sup> Trans. 'Our friendship has joined two different characters, which I greatly applaud because only opposites, for me, combined alternately and also jointly, form a whole. Nature gives us the role that we will have to represent during our life and 'it is useless to change them when they are already distributed wisely, adapted to each of us'. Inside us we know what is 'easy' [and logical]. We must begin to apply effort if we want to produce something good.'



Mompou also demonstrates his appreciation of Gerhard's work by congratulating him on performances of his compositions in concerts he has attended. In a letter dated 4 January 1930, Gerhard thanks Mompou for the critique proffered on his concert (apparently given in Barcelona), which he defines as 'the only sincere one' he has received. Moreover, Mompou heeds Gerhard's compositional critique when suggesting revisions to his first collection of pieces for piano even before their first performance in Paris (letter dated 6 March 1921). After studying them, Gerhard does not hesitate to wish him a successful debut in the Salle Erard in France (letter of 24 April 1921) and even travelled to Paris with Salazar to congratulate Mompou in person.

From the compositional and aesthetic point of view, Gerhard recommends to Mompou 'that he should return to counterpoint within a new concept; naturally, a type of parilinear-poliphonic style', of 'clear music' (letter of 6 March 1921). This last idea responds to Mompou's concept of 'essentiality and musical specificity', to the detriment of the long-themed developments which according to him 'contribute nothing to the composition'.<sup>17</sup> These concepts led to both composers advocating compositional brevity. In fact, for Gerhard 'the supreme art is not composing, but editing' (letter of 6 March 1921); and similarly, the 'poetics of simplification' conceived by Mompou lead him to opt for a 'maximum of expression with a minimum of means'.<sup>18</sup>

Mompou's catalogue of compositions reveals that he does not feel the need to work with a large mass of sound, enriched by a multitude of different timbres; nor does he seek to cultivate extended forms. It is therefore evident that his main compositional aim was to highlight particular individual sonorities, or as he himself put it, 'the sound itself'.<sup>19</sup> The end is thus more important than the means. Gerhard clearly concurred with this idea. For him 'the only thing that counts in everything is the result, the route that has been taken is of no interest, nor is the starting point, as these are issues of personal economy and are absolutely intimate' (letter of 6 March 1921) (see Figure 4). Hence Gerhard emphasises the use of a general style which tends towards neoclassicism with balanced musical structures.

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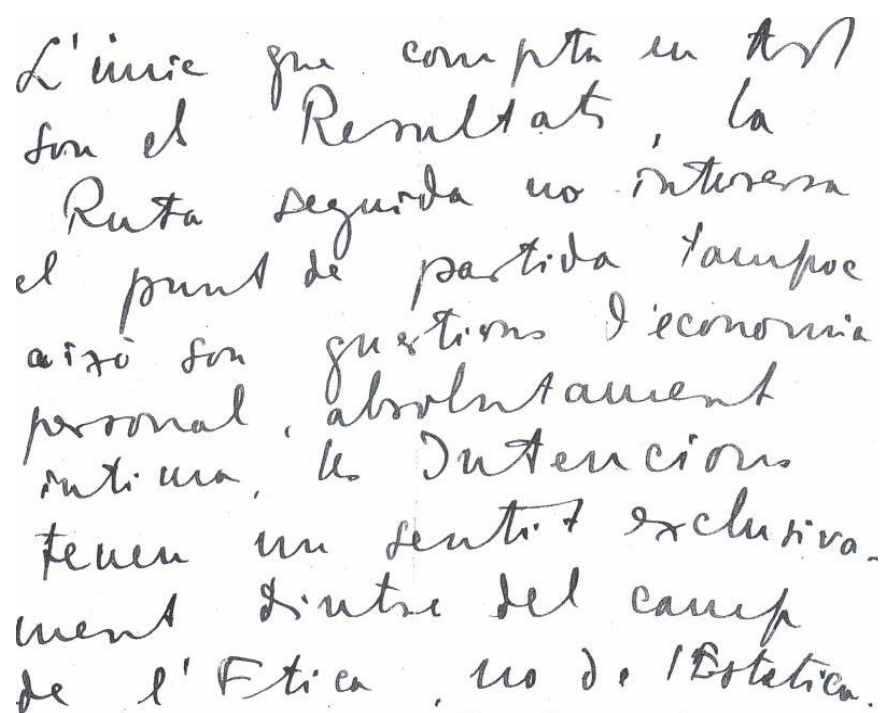
<sup>17</sup> Frederic Mompou, *Escrits sobre música i art*, Fons Mompou, Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya, M 4986/11.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., M 4986/30.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., M 4986/70.

### Lyric songs by Gerhard and Mompou.

Perhaps the most important aspect shared by the two composers is the significance they both attribute to the use of popular music in new compositions. Mompou harmonised popular songs in his own idiom, much as Bartók did. Mompou also found inspiration in popular song repertoire resulting in a melodic and structural simplicity in his work. A similar approach to popular songs can also be seen in Gerhard.



L'únic que compta en tot  
son el Resultat, la  
Ruta seguida no interessa  
el punt de partida tampoc  
així son qüestions d'economia  
personal, absolutament  
intima, les Intencions  
tenen un sentit exclusiu-  
ment d'entre del camp  
de l'Ètica, no d'Estètica.

Figure 4: Gerhard, letter to Mompou, 6 March 1921.<sup>20</sup>

In 1920 Salazar indicates that Gerhard's lyric songs were also inspired by the popular genre, from which they absorb 'the popular essence, without attempting to retain the external forms', taking from the 'song of the common people elemental forms of expression which reinvigorate and increase the cosmopolitan capital'.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, Salazar noted in the review he wrote on January 16th 1920, that,

<sup>20</sup> Trans. 'All that matters is the result, the route followed doesn't interest me, the starting point neither, therefore, they are issues of personal economy, absolutely intimate. The intentions make sense only within the field of Ethics, not Aesthetics.'

<sup>21</sup> Frederic Mompou. *Resenyes, crítiques i comentaris sobre la seva obra*. Fons Mompou, Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya. M 5020/48.

It is so unusual today for a Spanish work to make such a deep and vivid impression on us that it explains the desire to be more fully acquainted with an author, his ideas and his way of thinking. There is a direct Pedrellian influence on Gerhard and the maestro himself described him to me as ‘the best fruit of his vineyard’, his ‘alter ego’. However, Gerhard’s work acquires so much personal value that on the outside it differs greatly from that of the maestro. The nationalist base in the young musician is a long way from the regional characteristics associated with so many of our other composers; he understands that the interesting part of this idea lies in absorbing the popular flavour without having to observe external elements; in short, it is about taking from popular song those elementary forms of expression that renew and enhance its capital at a cosmopolitan level. As well as being deeply rooted in Catalonia, Gerhard’s lieder have a more universal quality that makes them comparable to those of the last of the great German composers of lieder.<sup>22</sup>

**El testament d'Amelia**  
Cançó popular catalana F. Mompou

<sup>22</sup> Casares, ‘Gerhard Ottenwaelder, Robert’, p. 579.



Figure 5: Mompou, *El testament d'Amelia* (1931).<sup>23</sup>

The lyric songs that each composer wrote for the soprano Conxita Badía demonstrate how each succeeded in reviving the genre of song by using a popular melody and developing it according to their own style. In Mompou's unpublished *El testament d'Amelia* of 1931, the composer creates harmonies based on his own compositional aesthetic. Mompou presents a tonal vocal melody, the harmonisation of which alternates between sections based on G Dorian and B-flat major (see Figure 5).

Homs writes of Gerhard's *14 Cançons populars catalanes* (1928-29) that he applies 'procedures which are similar to those he uses in the chamber works', which serve to highlight "the close links between the musical accompaniment and the expressive characteristics of the songs".<sup>24</sup> Both Gerhard and Mompou's compositions make evident the degree of austerity and the economy of means and materials, which is clearly designed to maintain the authenticity of the popular airs used.

<sup>23</sup> *Fondos Conxita Badía*, Barcelona. The inverted stems in the vocal part correspond to the original manuscript. The text of the folksong *El testament d'Amelia* is as follows *L'Amèlia està malalta, / la filla del bon rei. / Comtes la van a veure. / Comtes i noble gent. // Ai, que el meu cor se'm nua / com un pom de clavells. // Filla, la meua filla, / de quin mal us queixeu? / El mal que jo tinc, mare, / bé prou que me'l sabeu. // Filla, la meua filla, / d'això us confessaren. / Quan sereu confessada / el testament faren. // Ai, que el meu cor se'm nua / com un pom de clavells. // Un castell deixo als pobres / perquè resin a Déu. / Quatre al meu germà en Carles. / Dos a la Mare de Déu. // Ai, que el meu cor se'm nua / com un pom de clavells. // I a vós, la meua mare, / us deixo el marit meu / perquè el tinguen en cambra / com fa molt temps que feu. // Ai, que el meu cor se'm nua / com un pom de clavells. //*

<sup>24</sup> Hom, *Robert Gerhard y su obra*, p. 38.

## Conclusion

On 18 June 1921, Adolfo Salazar wrote a joint review of Gerhard and Mompou's work for *El Sol* in Madrid. The critic emphasizes the difference in their musical styles. However, a study of the correspondence between Mompou and Gerhard demonstrates how these two composers, who were considered to be diametrically opposed, actually share fundamental aesthetic principles in their musical writing, although without losing their own distinctive musical traits. This relationship replicates the dynamic which occurred on a larger scale all over the Catalan musical landscape, where artists of different nationalities, genres and styles came face-to-face with one another and influenced each other's work, generating a rich musical heritage which was the hallmark of those years.

# Roberto Gerhard in the United States

Mark E. Perry

Oklahoma State University

## Abstract.

In the early 1960s, Roberto Gerhard taught composition in the United States, albeit for a brief period. First in 1960, he served as a visiting composer at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor - temporarily replacing Pulitzer Prize winner Ross Lee Finney. At Ann Arbor, Gerhard's students included Roger Reynolds and Robert Ashley. Gerhard read his thought-provoking lecture 'Is Modern Music Growing Old?' and the university commissioned his String Quartet No. 2 (1961-62). Later in 1961, Gerhard taught at the prestigious Berkshire Music Centre at Tanglewood, working and collaborating with the eminent American composer Aaron Copland. Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra commissioned Gerhard to compose his Symphony No. 4 '*New York*' to celebrate the organization's 125th season. Gerhard quickly completed the symphony from his home in Cambridge, England. In comparison to his works composed in Spain or England, his music in the United States or for the American public appears relatively minor; however, Gerhard's impact on American composers should not be underestimated, nor the importance of his writings and compositions from this period. Gerhard's reception within the United States demonstrates that the European composer indeed influenced numerous American composers.

## Roberto Gerhard and the USA.

Roberto Gerhard's encounter with American music occurred long before his first visit to the United States in 1960. In Vienna, he befriended American composer Adolph Weiss, and in Berlin, the American composer Marc Blitzstein. Many years later, Gerhard reminisced with Blitzstein of their time in Berlin, Gerhard calling himself a 'non-conformist' or a 'Schoenbergian [sic] despite himself', writing that,

How well I do remember our Berlin days, what a couple we made, you and I, you (at that time) the anti-Schoenbergian, or the very reluctant Schoenbergian, and I, the non-conformist, or the Schoenbergian *malgré moi*. Maybe I've got it all wrong, but that's how I remember it; anyway, the two recalcitrants in the fold.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roberto Gerhard, letter to Marc Blitzstein, February 11 1963. Wisconsin State Historical Society.

Gerhard was also aware of the writings of American composers. Most pertinently, his library in Spain contains a copy of Henry Cowell's *New Musical Resources* (1930). However, it remains the last decade of Gerhard's life, in which the Catalan-born composer had his greatest contact with the United States. In 1956, Gerhard thanked Cowell for his encouragement to apply for a Louisville Foundation grant:

You were kind enough to encourage me to write to the Louisville Foundation and try my luck. I have been hesitating because I don't think much of it (my luck). But I understand that the spirit of Louisville is exceptional, generous and catholic, which makes me think about the combination of the three factors might perchance work, for once.<sup>2</sup>

That same year, the University of Louisville expressed interest in Gerhard's *Two Sardanas* (1928) arranged for brass band (1940). Attempting to return the favour, Gerhard wrote to Cowell about his upcoming visit to England and the possibility of the American composer working with the BBC, writing humorously, albeit crassly, of the BBC,

They remind me of the Catalan saying: '*qui no plora no mama*' (he who does not cry does not get the breast, the mother milk, I mean). On the other hand, someone like William Glock, who runs the Institute of Contemporary Arts concerts, who has a high regard for your work, only needs offering. Please do forgive my mixed metaphors, the 'prodding' and the mother's breast do not go very well together. Perhaps the best thing is to cry and to prod, alternatively or even together.<sup>3</sup>

Later that same year, Gerhard received a commission from the Koussevitsky Music Foundation and Library of Congress for the composition of the Symphony No. 3 '*Collages*'.<sup>4</sup>

In the early 1960s, Gerhard taught composition in the United States, albeit for a brief period. First in 1960, he served as visiting professor of composition at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor for the spring semester - temporarily replacing Pulitzer Prize winner Ross Lee Finney who was on sabbatical. Before his arrival to the United States, Gerhard contacted Roger Sessions, the Princeton

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<sup>2</sup> Roberto Gerhard, letter to Henry Cowell, 3 January 1956. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>3</sup> Roberto Gerhard, letter to Henry Cowell, 25 January 1956. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Grant, letter to Roberto Gerhard, 6 July 1959. Cambridge University Library. Gerhard donated the manuscript of his Symphony No. 3 '*Collages*' to the Library of Congress in 1961.

professor replied, 'At all events, it is wonderful that you are coming to the United States, and I look forward more than I can tell you to seeing you again and talking with you of a thousand things.'<sup>5</sup>

Gerhard also asked Elliot Carter for potential lectures or musical engagements while teaching at the University of Michigan.

On 17 May 1960, Gerhard delivered the thought-provoking lecture 'Is New Music Growing Old?' at the University of Michigan shortly before returning to Cambridge. Gerhard borrowed the title of his talk from a chapter in Theodor Adorno's book *Dissonance*, assertively titled 'Modern Music is Growing Old'.<sup>6</sup> Gerhard opened his lecture by pondering why we grumble about music,

One comes to suspect though, that the yearning for the good old days is in reality something more like the perverse satisfaction we take in being just bad-tempered rather than a true nostalgic recollection of a Golden Age or a genuine, deep-rooted conviction that everything was in fact so much better when we were young.<sup>7</sup>

Gerhard reminded his audience that 'whether old or young' the reality remained that 'we all advance into the future facing backwards',<sup>8</sup> adding that 'hindsight seems to be our natural mode of vision'.<sup>9</sup> He shifted his discussion to critics, claiming that, 'now we are all agreed that critical appraisal of contemporary works of art is an arduous and hazardous business. [...] The most common critical pitfall, the real booby-trap, in which the critic is most often caught, is that under the pretence of examining a work objectively in reality he may let himself be lured into giving us a piece of his mind'.<sup>10</sup> Gerhard claimed that Adorno believed that new music was ageing prematurely and new music was no longer shocking or menacing, adding 'in short it is growing old because 'it has become afraid of being afraid''.<sup>11</sup> In *Dissonance*, Adorno calls the public that celebrated music of the past as

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<sup>5</sup> Roger Sessions, letter to Roberto Gerhard, 21 August 1959. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>6</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Dissonanzen: Musik in der verwalteten Welt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956). Gerhard's copy of this book is now in Cambridge University Library. In his lecture, Gerhard quickly emphasized that Adorno supported new music.

<sup>7</sup> Gerhard, Roberto. *Is New Music Growing Old?* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1960), p. 3. Gerhard's lecture is reprinted as 'Is modern music growing old?' (1960) in Meirion Bowen, ed. *Gerhard on Music: Selected writings*, (Aldershot and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2000), 201-10.

<sup>8</sup> Gerhard, *Is New Music Growing Old*, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Gerhard, *Is New Music Growing Old*, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Gerhard, *Is New Music Growing Old*, p. 5.



mere ‘butterfly collectors’ arguing that true art music serves to critique modern conditions, and not the past.<sup>12</sup> Gerhard addressed the issue of social significance between art and society writing,

To my way of thinking, a good deal of the confusion in the contemporary scene comes from the ambiguity in what we mean when we speak of the social significance of art in general and of music in particular, in other words, when we try to define the creative artist’s social function and status.<sup>13</sup>

Gerhard turned his critique to composers, warning that, ‘our world tends to make specialists of us all. It’s very needful to be aware of the fact and of the importance of escaping from one’s specialism ... a specialist commands a limited audience only’.<sup>14</sup> Gerhard’s scorn included avant-garde music festivals where, ‘the spirit of specialization fosters inbreeding: the painter painting for painters, the poet writing for literati, the composer composing for experimental music festivals’.<sup>15</sup> Addressing the perceived achievements of composers of the early twentieth century, Gerhard concedes, ‘if, on the other hand, what the critics mean is that the leading composers of our day are lesser men than the masters who achieved the break-through and opened the way for us, then I have no quarrel’.<sup>16</sup> In Gerhard’s lecture, he concluded that, ‘My point is that the last thing of which music today can be accused is of having grown old or derivative’.<sup>17</sup>

In 1961, Gerhard served as visiting composer, which included a grant from the Ford Foundation, at the prestigious Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, working and collaborating with the eminent American composer Aaron Copland as well as the German composer Wolfgang Fortner. Before his arrival, Copland explained to Gerhard that at Tanglewood, they held Friday afternoon lectures dedicated to a single composer, which consisted of a thirty-minute introduction by the composer and a forty-five minute performance of the composer’s music.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Gerhard, *Is New Music Growing Old*, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Gerhard, *Is New Music Growing Old*, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Gerhard, *Is New Music Growing Old*, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Gerhard, *Is New Music Growing Old*, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> On 7 July 1961 at the seminar: ‘Contemporary Music, Aspects of New Music Lecture-Concert’ performances of Gerhard’s works included the Wind Quintet (1928-9) and Nonet (1957). Shortly after Tanglewood, Gerhard spoke at Princeton University.

Gerhard's American students include those that attended the University of Michigan and the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood.<sup>19</sup> Roger Reynolds also studied with Gerhard at both the University of Michigan and Tanglewood. According to Reynolds, Gerhard often discussed his own works and individual lessons were intense one hour sessions that covered serial music and discussion of electronic music. While Gerhard only taught at the University of Michigan for a semester, he influenced Reynolds, as the former student recalled, 'the impact of his thought can be gauged by the fact that I have sometimes found myself, close to four decades later, unknowingly quoting him to a student or colleague with close to literal accuracy'.<sup>20</sup> With Reynolds, Gerhard spoke about the BBC, revealing his high regard for the organization and its advocacy of new music, which Reynolds found surprising. Reynolds writes that, 'From a contemporary American perspective, such governmentally-derived support was astonishing and improbable in a period so full of musical experiment as the late '50s and early '60s'.<sup>21</sup> Reynolds remembered fondly of one of Gerhard's vices: 'foremost among his 'sins' (explicitly withheld from Poldi) was a passion for Coca-Cola, which he would consume in quart-sized 'jumbo' containers whenever the opportunity presented itself, pulling on his straw with raised-eye browed relish'.<sup>22</sup>

Gerhard's impact on students at the University of Michigan extended to the foundation of the ONCE festival, a new music concert series that took place in Ann Arbor, Michigan from 1961-1966. According to Donald Scavarda, one of the founders of the ONCE Festival, 'Gerhard was the catalyst' of the Ann Arbor new music festival.<sup>23</sup> Gordon Mumma, also a founder of the festival, remembered Gerhard as being, 'wide open and positive about innovation' as well as 'enthusiastic about differences'.<sup>24</sup> Gerhard's electronic work *Caligula* (1961) received its world premiere at the second ONCE Festival in 1962.

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<sup>19</sup> Gerhard's students at the University of Michigan include Robert Ashley, George Cacioppa, Roger Reynolds, Donald Scavarda, Sherman Van Solkema, David Bates, Ed Coleman, and Tom Schudel. Gerhard's students at Tanglewood were Jan Bach, Michael Fink, Reginald Hall, Richard Monaco, Roger Reynolds, and Stanley Siverman.

<sup>20</sup> Joaquim Homs, *Robert Gerhard and His Music* (Sheffield: The Anglo-Catalan Society, 2000). p. 117

<sup>21</sup> Homs, *Robert Gerhard*, p. 118

<sup>22</sup> Homs, *Robert Gerhard*, p. 119

<sup>23</sup> Leta Miller. Liner notes from *ONCE Festival 1961-1966*. New York: New World Records CD 80567-2, 2003.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

Jan Bach studied with Gerhard at Tanglewood, through the encouragement of University of Illinois professor Kenneth Gaburo. On the quality of teaching at Tanglewood, Bach claimed that 'oddly enough, only those with Mr. Gerhard felt they were getting their money's worth'.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, at the end of summer, of the three students that received awards, two studied with Gerhard. Midway through the summer, Gerhard added weekly seminars with his students, which concentrated on orchestration, employing the musicians at hand at the centre. Bach characterised the seminars as more philosophical than technical. Private lessons consisted of having the students play their compositions on the piano, and Gerhard making comments and observations. They discussed generating rows from subsets as well as advanced methods of serialism.

Later in 1961, Gerhard returned to England. Ross Finney, having his own compositional crisis, wrote to Poldi, Gerhard's wife, for some of her husband's music,

I want to beg, borrow or steal the score of Roberto's 1<sup>st</sup> symphony (an absolute must); his Concerto for Violin & Orchestra (if it is at all possible); and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Symphony (if it is not too difficult) ... my reason for wanting the scores is very personal. I am increasingly unhappy about my music. I don't need to bother you with details, though Roberto will understand my desire to find better means of shaping it - the phrase he used in Cambridge was 'Planning the time' - but another concern is just the surface sound. I'm crazy about Roberto's orchestration and I want to see how he gets the sounds he does.<sup>26</sup>

In 1962, Gerhard finished his String Quartet No. 2, which the University of Michigan commissioned. Gerhard dedicated the work to the university's Stanley Quartet, and on the quartet, its violinist Gilbert Ross commented that, 'I am terribly glad to have your remarks about the work and your comments on your interest in pitch as against percussion in connection with the various special effects called for in the score.'<sup>27</sup> In a later letter, Ross stated that its American reception went well writing, 'now I hasten to tell you that your Quartet made a tremendous impression. Everyone was excited about it and it was clearly perhaps the most distinguished work presented at the Festival'.<sup>28</sup> That same year, Gerhard received a curious inquiry about the Symphony No.3 '*Collages*'. The New York City Ballet expressed interest in using this work for a space-fiction inspired ballet.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Homs, *Robert Gerhard*, p. 115

<sup>26</sup> Ross Lee Finney letter to Poldi Gerhard, 11 January 1961. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>27</sup> Gilbert Ross letter to Roberto Gerhard, 21 July 1962. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>28</sup> Gilbert Ross letter to Roberto Gerhard, 30 March 1963. Cambridge University Library.

In 1963, Gerhard joined the advisory board of the journal *New Music*. That same year, the University of Illinois offered Gerhard a one-year teaching position, which Gerhard declined citing too many commitments to take the job offer. The following year Gerhard, displeased with the performance of his *Alegrias* by the Harvard Radcliffe Orchestra, wrote to complain, mistakenly believing that they had only performed portions of the work.<sup>30</sup>

Even though now back in Cambridge, England, offers continued to come from the other side of the Atlantic. In 1965, the Detroit Symphony expressed interest in giving Gerhard a commission, the discussions for which eventually led to a further commission, the *Duo concertante* for violin and piano, later known as *Gemini* (1966) from its former conductor Morris Hochberg. For Hochberg, the world premiere did not go as originally planned; instead, its premiere took place in England in connection with Gerhard's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration hosted as part of the McNaghten Chamber Music Concerts and was not premiered by the American duo.<sup>31</sup> Losing the opportunity for the world premiere, Hochberg requested a new work, but ultimately settled for its American premiere. He had some objections to the duo, writing 'there is one slight hitch, however. My wife refuses to use a nail file or anything other than the piano hammer-key combination on her instrument or any fine piano. We could substitute a chromatic glissando or delete, as you wish'.<sup>32</sup> Complying with the request, Gerhard responded 'I don't mind about Mrs. Hochberg's objection to my string-gliss, as a matter of fact, I dislike it myself, I don't want it replaced by an ordinary gliss, but I'll replace it by [sic] something'. Gerhard also added the recommendation that they should play the work twice at the American premiere, because of its complex nature.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Gerhard commented on his earlier modest assessment of *Duo concertante*, blaming it on his years in England writing that,

You can't have been living in a country like this for over 25 years without something insular rubbing off on you, it's not a question of adopting their way of life (I have not) but a host of small things, verbal accretions, 'barnacles' of some sort of other cling on to you[r] keel, and you don't even realize

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Irving letter to Roberto Gerhard, 23 January 1962. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>30</sup> Karen Monson letter to Roberto Gerhard, 23 April 1964. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>31</sup> Morris Hochberg letter to Roberto Gerhard, 8 November 1965. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>32</sup> Morris Hochberg letter to Roberto Gerhard, 20 October 1966. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Gerhard letter to Morris Hochberg, 16 November 1966. Cambridge University Library.

it if until someone from a different continent doesn't notice and observe on it. I'm afraid I've caught the British 'understatement' disease!<sup>34</sup>

In 1966, John Cage reached out to Gerhard, requesting a composition to raise money for the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts. Cage provided the following instructions: 'two statements using 51 and 52 words on the subject of notating, or any other subject which seems to you to be relevant'.<sup>35</sup> Acquiescing in the request, Gerhard sent the composition with the following letter,

Dear John Cage, this out-size Christmass [sic] card won't reach you in time as I promised, I'm afraid, nonetheless, my very best wishes to you for the New Year go with it. I wish you'd perform it! I'm certain with you and David Tudor as Monitors you'd make a stunning composition of it! Also, I've no doubt that in the next edition of his book, Marshall McLuhan would have to quote us *tutti quanti* as corroborating evidence - he's welcome to it, as far as I'm concerned. More - as far as he's concerned - is to follow.<sup>36</sup>

Cage chose to publish a page from Gerhard's Concerto for Orchestra (1965) instead of *Claustrophilia*, which was on the reverse side of the manuscript. Gerhard's aleatoric contribution demonstrates that he was familiar with and understood chance music associated with the American maverick.

One of the most significant American commissions Gerhard completed was his Symphony No. 4 'New York'. Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra commissioned the work from Gerhard to celebrate the organization's 125th season.<sup>37</sup> During 1966-67, Gerhard quickly completed the symphony from his home in Cambridge. Bernstein and Gerhard's friendship developed, as demonstrated by the humorous and jovial manner Gerhard addressed the legendary conductor and composer: 'Dear Leny, querido amigo positivo, comparativo y superlativo.'<sup>38</sup> Following the success of this work, in 1968, Gerhard would receive another commission from an American organisation. The Fromm Music Foundation offered a commission for a fifth symphony, at the recommendation of Antal Dorati and Yehudi Menuhin. That year, Gerhard had vacationed in Spain and was recovering from bronchitis when he wrote to Paul Fromm, 'I am glad to say that I am

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<sup>34</sup> Roberto Gerhard to Morris Hochberg, 1 December 1966. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>35</sup> John Cage letter to Robert Gerhard, 24 January 1966. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>36</sup> Roberto Gerhard letter to John Cage, 22 July 1966. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>37</sup> In 1963, Leonard Bernstein had conducted the New York Philharmonic in a performance of Gerhard's Symphony No. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Roberto Gerhard letter to Leonard Bernstein 11 January 1966. Library of Congress

at last regaining my old resilience and about to take up work again on my Symphony no 5!<sup>39</sup> That same year, Gerhard wrote a letter to Robert Fiedler to inquire if there was any American interest in purchasing the manuscript of the Symphony No. 4, having insured it for an American exhibit for \$3000.<sup>40</sup> The fifth symphony was never completed.

In addition to this steady stream of commissions, demand for Gerhard as a visiting professor of composition in the United States continued. The Peabody Conservatory expressed interest in having Gerhard teach composition for the academic year 1968-69. However, Gerhard felt his health would prevent him from being able to teach. In 1969, Gerhard won the Koussevitzky International Recording Award for his Concerto for Orchestra, recorded by Argo. In addition, Gerhard's last completed work *Leo* (1969) was commissioned by the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College.

Gerhard's bonds with American music date from as early as the 1920s with his friendship with Adolph Weiss, culminating in Gerhard's active participation with American composers and organizations in the 1960s. Gerhard's music destined for the United States and the American public includes several of his most important works: Symphony No. 3 '*Collages*' String Quartet No. 2, *Caligula*, *Gemini (Duo concertante)*, *Claustrophilia*, Symphony No. 4 '*New York*', *Leo*, and the unfinished Symphony No. 5. This collection of works covers orchestral, chamber, electronic and live electronic compositions and demonstrates that the United States was an important arena for the composer's continually developing work in the last decade of his life. One should also not underestimate the impact of Gerhard's works, writings and teaching on the composers and musicians Gerhard had contact with in the United States.

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<sup>39</sup> Roberto Gerhard letter to Paul Fromm, 6 November 1968. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>40</sup> Roberto Gerhard letter to Robert Fiedler, 21 March 1968. Cambridge University Library.

# Serial and melodic evolution in the work of Roberto Gerhard:

## An explorer in the avant-garde

Dr. Carlos Duque

*Centro Superior Katarina Gurska*

### Abstract.

This article explores the melodic and serial evolution of the music of Roberto Gerhard, from his early works, through the years of study with Arnold Schoenberg, to his later works for orchestra. Thanks to Gerhard's continual stylistic development, we can define his later works for orchestra as electronic music or electronic-like music composed for acoustic instruments. The best example of this is his last finished orchestral work, the Symphony No. 4 '*New York*', which represents the apex of his orchestral technique, offering textures of great originality combined with a fascinating use of rhythm and a wide dynamic and gestural range. This article will explore the composer's evolution and disintegration of melody (understood in the classical sense) through four different stages.

### Introduction.

With such a rich cultural heritage and thanks to his capacity to amalgamate diverse styles and techniques, Gerhard created a unique fusion of elements that place his works among the most unique of the twentieth century regarding both their construction and their sound. This fusion of styles begins with the combination of two diachronic concepts which he was taught by his composition teachers. Felipe Pedrell opened Gerhard's musical thinking to the wealth of popular and folk music. Arnold Schoenberg taught him, among other techniques, the emerging twelve-tone technique that he himself was developing in the mid-1920s.

To understand the evolution of Gerhard's music one must take into account the development of his melodic style. This ranges from traditional melody in works such as *Ariel* (1934), to electronic-like music, where the organization of the music becomes driven more by 'sound objects', as well as texture and gesture. This process involves a combination of techniques that lead to Gerhard's unique style of the 1960s in such works as the Symphony No. 3 '*Collages*' and the Concerto for Orchestra (1965).

As is evidenced in his copious notebooks, Gerhard's engagement with electronic music during the 1950s changed his way of thinking about composing. However novel at the

time, the electronic medium was one more step for Gerhard in his exploration of sound. He perceived music as sound-organization and working with electronics gave him a larger musical palette with greater sonic possibilities. For Gerhard, electronics was not an end in itself, it was a catalyst to develop instrumental harmonic and timbral materials in hitherto unimagined ways. Much of his work in electronics evidences Gerhard's acute aural capacity when recording, treating and listening to new materials. The eminent ethnomusicologist Laurence Picken, a great friend of Gerhard and an expert in Eastern music, was very surprised by the composer's enormous ability to analyze music styles that he was unfamiliar with. Picken wrote about his experience of listening to Japanese music with Gerhard:

The immediate recognition of absolute pitch-values, of non-just intonation, of irregular (*aksak*) rhythms; the discrimination of instruments in ensemble; the detection of components at the limits of the audible range; the identification of formal procedures — all these things one might have expected from any trained listener. What was unexpected was the intensity of response; the degree of participation evinced; the visible signs of emotional possession by this alien music.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that it was because of this auditory capacity and sonic inquisitiveness, his interest in new sound sources and the technical facilities kindly provided by the BBC, that Gerhard was one of the first composers in Britain to develop electronic works. As his work with electronics developed, Gerhard became more interested in the texture of his music than in the concept of melody and accompaniment.

The concept of melody in a traditional sense (even as one would think of it in the work of Britten or Shostakovich) disappears in Gerhard's music in his third period, when he finally reaches his serial (and melodic) maturity. In this period (starting in the 1950s) Gerhard made his first experiments with electronic media. In fact, the less interested Gerhard became in melody per se, the more interested he became in serial technique, and the greater his understanding of electronic music became. Gerhard did still draw on melody as an element in his work no matter how transformed it was. Often he drew on the huge collection of folk songs that his teacher Felipe Pedrell gathered in his *Cancionero Musical*, and on the folk melodies that he knew from Catalonia. As a result, one of Gerhard's major achievements was the amalgamation of the serial technique with the use of folk tunes.

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<sup>1</sup> Laurence Picken, 'Roberto Gerhard intermittently observed', *The Score and IMA Magazine*, 17, (September 1956), p. 53.



### **Serial evolution.**

Some musicologists have highlighted Gerhard's privileged position within the complex development of serialism in the twentieth century. In *Serialism*, Arnold Whittall entitles his chapter on Gerhard 'Eye witness'.<sup>2</sup> He also remarks on the importance for the Catalan composer of the development of serial technique writing that,

[G]erhard clearly believed that twelve-tone techniques needed to evolve, and do so by building on Schoenberg's own foundations, just as Schoenberg himself had claimed to build on the manifestations of developing variation found in Brahms and Wagner.<sup>3</sup>

Allan F. Moore goes further and considers that Gerhard took up the baton of serialism in Europe, comparing him with Milton Babbitt in the United States. Though Babbitt met Schoenberg several times, unlike Gerhard, he never studied with him. Nevertheless, Moore considers that, 'both Milton Babbitt and Roberto Gerhard may be described as being in the direct line of descent: pupils of Schoenberg in the USA and Europe respectively'.<sup>4</sup>

Outside of the Second Viennese School composers, Gerhard is arguably one of a handful of key figures that developed serialism both practically and theoretically. Gerhard's development of the serial technique has three main features:

- a continual evolution in his approach to serialism, where each work represents an refinement of his technique;
- exploiting the combinatorial function of the series to limit intuitive decisions regarding pitch;<sup>5</sup>
- the application of the series to other parameters of music through the system of proportions.

From a technical standpoint, these three general points have the following practical application:

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<sup>2</sup> Arnold Whittall, *Serialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

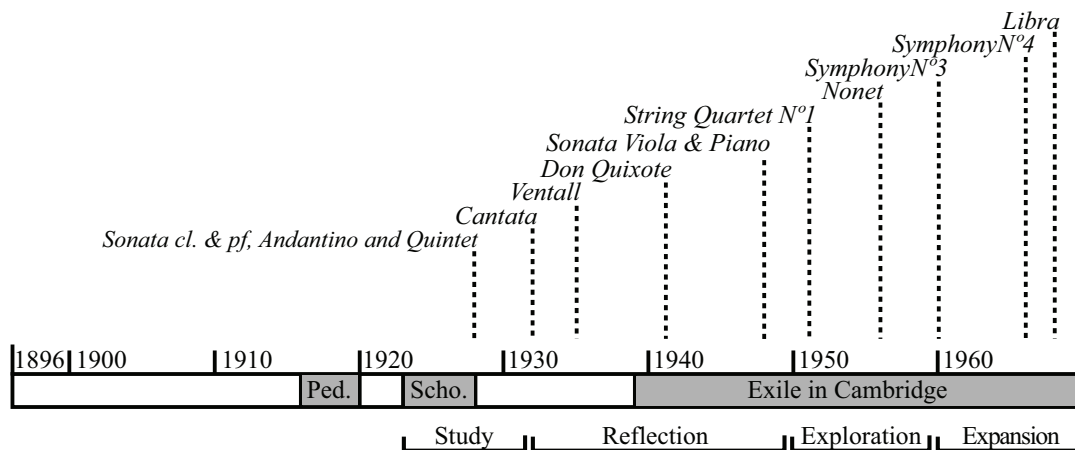
<sup>3</sup> Whittall, *Serialism*, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Allan F. Moore, 'Serialism and its contradictions', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 26/1. (June 1995), p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> It was the combinatorial properties of the row that constituted its 'tonality' for Gerhard.

- the use of different types of series (seven-, ten-, eleven- and twelve-note) and the integration of borrowed materials including some from folk music;
- the segmentation of the series in two or three parts, with a free interchange of pitch classes within each part;
- in later works, the application of the ratio of the series to the duration of the work, the length of the sounds or phrases themselves and the timings of their respective entries.

Gerhard's development of serial thinking can be divided into four periods which I term study, reflection, exploration and expansion. These periods are shown in Figure 1 along with the stages of study under Pedrell (Ped.) and Schoenberg (Scho.) and his exile in Cambridge (in grey), together with the works that I examine in this article.



**Figure 1:** Gerhard, periods of study, serial development and works discussed in this article.

I characterise Gerhard's approach to serialism in each of these periods as:

- Study (1923-1932). His academic studies with Schoenberg cover the period 1923-1928 but this period can be extended until 1932, when he composed the cantata *L'alta naixença del Rei en Jaume*.
- Reflection (1933-1951). For almost twenty years, Gerhard composed a lot of commercial music mainly for radio plays for the BBC. He also composed a number of large-scale works including the opera *The Duenna* (1947-49) but amongst these there are just three serial works. The end of this period coincides with the death of his teacher, Schoenberg.

- Exploration (1951-1960). He applies the series to other parameters of music, developing the concept of the time-set and he expresses it in a relatively rigorous way in his works, most evidently in the Symphony No. 2 (1957-59). It is also the decade in which he writes articles on serial technique and electronics.
- Expansion (1961-1970). Gerhard abandons the rigour of the system he established in the previous decade. He utilises a much freer serialism and integrates elements of folklore and electronic sounds in his acoustic music.

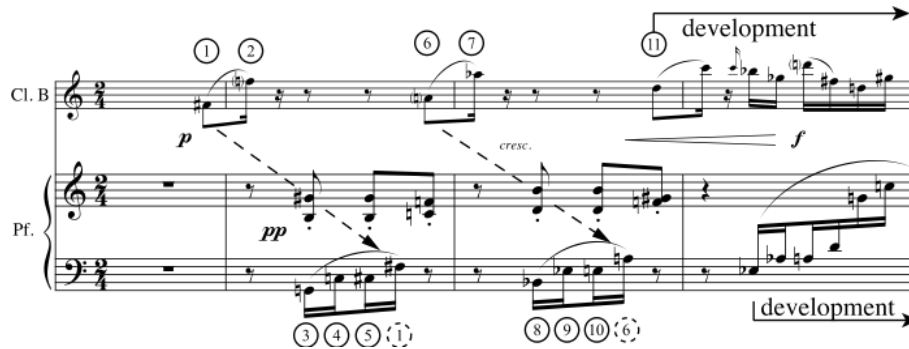
### First Period: Study (1923-1932).

Gerhard studied with Schoenberg from December 1923 until late 1928, first in Vienna (1923-25) and later in Berlin (1926-28) at the *Akademie der Künste*, of which Schoenberg was Director following the death of Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924). In the Viennese period, Schoenberg taught Gerhard harmony and counterpoint, and it was in Berlin that Gerhard began using serial techniques. Of his works written as part of Schoenberg's class, three employ a nascent serialism. These were the final ones composed under Schoenberg's tutelage and were completed in 1928-9. The three works are the Sonata for clarinet and piano, the Andantino for clarinet, violin and piano and the Wind Quintet.



**Figure 2:** Gerhard, Sonata for clarinet and piano, eleven-note series.

The Sonata for clarinet and piano (1928) is Gerhard's first extant experiment with serial composition. This is manifested in the form of an eleven-tone series, which evolves throughout the piece more as a thematic game than as a series with its own character (see Figure 2). Following the presentation of the series, the material evolves in a motivic manner, avoiding its original ordering. This form of proto-serialism is the seed for later techniques in Gerhard's work (see Figure 3). The row is initially divided between the clarinet and the left hand of the piano while the right hand fills in with a harmony, using the note (B) which is missing from the series.

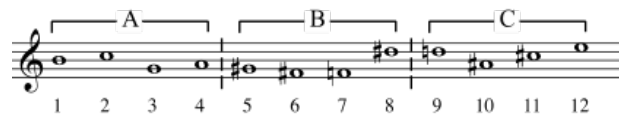


**Figure 3:** Gerhard, Sonata for clarinet and piano (1928) bb. 1-3.

Though the sonata cannot be regarded as a strictly serial work, it nevertheless represents Gerhard's embryonic development toward an individualistic approach to the technique. The contact Gerhard had had with serialism was very recent as Schoenberg had only begun to teach this technique to his students at the *Akademie der Künste* in 1926. This new method was immediately attractive to Gerhard and during 1928 almost all of his works used serialism in one way or another.

The next step in his study and consolidation of the technique is the Andantino for clarinet, violin and piano (1928). The key feature in this work is Gerhard's segmentation of the (twelve-tone) series, and the permutation of notes within each segment, in this case, within each tetrachord (see Figure 4). Diego Alonso notes that,

in this piece, Gerhard employs a single twelve-tone row that is divided into three tetrachords (as Schoenberg did in his Suite op. 25, finished five years earlier), and reorders the notes within these differently each time.<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 4:** Gerhard, Andantino for clarinet, violin and piano. Twelve-tone series with three tetrachords.

Gerhard presents the complete series on the violin at the beginning of the work (see Figure 5, in grey). The solo series only appears again in its complete form on one other occasion before the end. Clarinet and piano generate an accompaniment that arises from the permutation of the notes of each tetrachord. The piano chords repeat the sequence CBA.

<sup>6</sup> Diego Alonso, 'A breathtaking adventure: Gerhard's musical education under Arnold Schoenberg', *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference Roberto Gerhard* (Huddersfield: CeReNeM, 2010), p. 143.

The Andantino sets out an approach to Schoenberg's technique. In this work the series is used more as a source of possibilities to generate order and structure using different procedures rather than a simple sequence of sounds.

**Figure 5:** Gerhard, Andantino for clarinet, violin and piano bb. 1-3.

Gerhard's first mature work to incorporate elements of serialism is the Wind Quintet (1928-9). It is likely that Gerhard was testing himself with this piece, in a fictitious trial of strength between his creativity and that of his Viennese master. Schoenberg had completed his Wind Quintet in 1924 using the twelve-tone technique. In his Quintet, Gerhard used a series of only seven notes (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6:** Gerhard, Wind Quintet, seven-note series.

In the first bar of the Wind Quintet Gerhard presents the series on the bassoon. This series is repeated in bars 7 and 13 (on clarinet and oboe). In the early bars there are three motivic sets, A, B and C (see Figure 7).



Figure 7: Gerhard, Wind Quintet, first movement, bb. 1-4.

In the Wind Quintet, Gerhard refines the permutation of notes within the row first evident in the Sonata for clarinet and piano. Gerhard writes that, ‘we might say that the serial technique is to the permutational technique *what strict contrapuntal style is to the free melodic style* of homophonic music’.<sup>7</sup> In addition, in this work he goes a step further and elides notes from different transpositional and inversions forms of the series in the process of permutation. Mitchell comments that ‘[t]his overlapping of row segments with mutual pcs becomes a way for Gerhard to define ‘tonal areas’ that are essential to his formal designs’.<sup>8</sup> Figure 8 demonstrates this (after in bars 24-6 where P11 and R7 are elided with the beginning and end of I6).

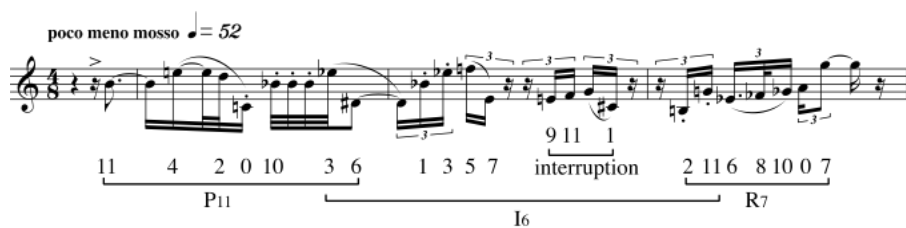


Figure 8: Gerhard, Wind Quintet, first movement, bb. 24-26 (after Mitchell).

In 1933, the cantata *L'alta naixença del Rei en Jaume*, for soprano, baritone, chorus and orchestra, with text by Josep Carner, won the Hertzka Composition Prize established by

<sup>7</sup> Roberto Gerhard, ‘Tonality in twelve-tone music’, *The Score and IMA Magazine*, 6 (1952), p. 35.

<sup>8</sup> Rachel Mitchell, *An Examination of the Integration of Serial Procedures and Folkloric Elements in the Music of Roberto Gerhard* (1896–1970), PhD diss. (University of Texas, 2009), p. 27.

the publisher Universal Edition.<sup>9</sup> The prestigious jury was made up of Alban Berg, Anton Webern, Egon Wellesz, Ernst Krenek and Erwin Stein. Except for Krenek, all were students of Schoenberg. The award was shared by five composers: Roberto Gerhard, Norbert von Hannenheim, Julius Schloss, Ludwig Zenk and Leopold Spinner. The first three studied with Schoenberg and the last two with Webern.

Perhaps because of his desire to please a jury, Gerhard employed a series of 15 notes that in White's words is, 'the principal unifying idea of the work'.<sup>10</sup> The series appears three times. Firstly, in the bass in the introduction; secondly, in the passacaglia of the third movement; finally, in the final movement (see Figure 9).



Figure 9: Gerhard, *L'alta naixença del Rei en Jaume*, cello and double bass, bb. 3-11.

However, this sequence of notes, was not elaborated in a serial way and as Drew comments, 'of the serial methods and the (intermittent) Viennese flavour of the Wind Quintet there is no trace whatsoever in the Cantata'.<sup>11</sup> The cantata is actually composed using a collection of techniques and procedures, of which the use of modes and harmonies built on fourths are prominent can be. Trevor Walshaw highlights the importance of this interval and the unstable tonality around C/D<sup>b</sup> which is evident throughout the work.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the cantata is, in part, a further small experiment with serialism rather than a big step forward. The lack of Viennese serial traces in this work encourage an understanding of it as an end to the period of study and investigation with serial technique and a bridge to Gerhard's period of reflection.

<sup>9</sup> Although the cantata received the Hertzka Composition Prize only movements 4 and 5 were performed on 10 June 1933 in Amsterdam at the ISCM Festival.

<sup>10</sup> Julian White, 'National Traditions in the Music of Roberto Gerhard', *Tempo*, New Series, 184 (March 1993), p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Geoffrey J. Walker and David Drew, 'Gerhard's Cantata' *Tempo*, New Series, 139 (December 1981), p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> Trevor Walshaw, Roberto Gerhard: Cantata, *L'Alta Naixença del Rei En Jaume*, unpublished essay, Huddersfield, 2010.

This period of study, is one in which Gerhard uses melody from a classical point of view but is always trying to integrate it into a dense, often contrapuntal musical texture. His interest in the use of series other than those with twelve tones and his search for processes that are based on hexachord segmentation, demonstrate his individual approach to the technique.

### Second Period: Reflection (1932-1951)

During this period of nearly twenty years, Gerhard made little use of serialism. His output mostly consisted of music with Spanish overtones, either as a tribute to his teacher (*Pedrelliana*, 1941) or as Spanish-themed arrangements for the BBC (*Cádiz: Fantasía sobre la zarzuela de Chueca y Valverde*, 1943). He spent more time composing what he called ‘commercial music’ or ‘applied music’ than works where he could develop his serial technique. In fact, he did not feel comfortable using serialism, and in 1944 he wrote in a letter to Arnold Schoenberg:

... I have not found it possible for me yet to work consistently with 12-tone series. I find the desire to work with poorer series insurmountable. A full series usually grows with me out of an exceptionally tone-rich feature which is thematically relevant. And I step in and out by a sort of ‘convertimenti’ and ‘divertimenti’, if I may call it so, taking these words very near their literal meaning.<sup>13</sup>

Despite Gerhard’s confessed insecurity, his very occasional forays into serialism during this period have left us with works of great personality, that follow a firm line in pursuit of strengthening the technique. For example, in *Ventall* (c.1935), a song for voice and piano based on a poem by Ventura Gassol (1893-1980), Gerhard used a decaphonic series (see Figure 10).<sup>14</sup>



Figure 10: Gerhard, *Ventall*, ten-note series

<sup>13</sup> Roberto Gerhard letter to Arnold Schoenberg, 2 December, 1944. Cambridge University Library.

<sup>14</sup> *Ventall*, for voice and piano. There are two manuscript copies of this work. One is in Gerhard Archive at Cambridge University Library, without date and dedicated to ‘Senyora Esperança Gassol’. The other is in the Biblioteca de Catalunya, dated 20.XII.35 and with a double dedication to ‘Senyora Esperança Gassol’ and to ‘l’amic Ventura Gassol, trabant-se al penal de Cartagena, amb una abraçada del seu amic, Robert Gerhard’. Homs dates this work as c.1930. But having not found any information to verify this, I consider it better to use the date that appears on the manuscript deposited in the Biblioteca de Catalunya.



The pitch classes A and A<sup>#</sup> are the only two pitches that do not appear in the series.<sup>15</sup> Pitch-class A only appears once the whole series is completed in the piano LH in the 9<sup>th</sup> bar and does not appear in the voice anywhere in the work (see Figure 11). From this moment (bar 9), the serial direction becomes blurred and a motivic process deriving from the two pentachords of the series ensues.

The musical score for Gerhard's 'Ventall' for voice and piano, measures 1-9, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 1-4) shows the voice part (top) and piano part (bottom). The voice part has notes numbered 1 through 7, with a 'p' dynamic. The piano part has notes numbered 1 through 10, with a 'p' dynamic. The second system (measures 5-9) continues the voice part with notes 1 through 10, and the piano part with notes 1 through 10, with a 'pp' dynamic. The piano part features a complex serial structure with many accidentals and ties.

**Figure 11:** Gerhard, *Ventall*, for voice and piano, bb. 1-9.

Possibly, the exclusion of A and A<sup>#</sup> in the series and A from the vocal section had a symbolic explanation since the song is dedicated to his friend Ventura Gassol who at that time was in the Cartagena prison.<sup>16</sup> However, I have not found any evidence of this in Gerhard's papers, so it remains a mere hypothesis.

The serial approach continues in the ballet *Don Quixote* (1941). As Gerhard wrote on the record sleeve, 'after the opening fanfares, a bass clarinet announces the Don Quixote

<sup>15</sup> Roberto Gerhard, *Tres cançons catalanes* (Barcelona: Periferia, 2012), p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> Ventura Gassoll wrote the poem 'Ventall' on a fan that he gave to his great friend, the singer Conxita Badía (1897-1975). On one of his visits to the home of the singer, Gerhard saw the fan and copied the poem to set as a song. The fan disappeared during the Spanish Civil War and Conxita Badía could not find it when she returned from exile. (Information obtained through a conversation with Mariona Agustí de Badía, daughter of Conxita Badía, in Barcelona, on 21 April 2011).

theme [Figure 12, Ex. A]. A “skeleton” of this theme [Figure 12, Ex. B] is treated serially throughout the ballet, and will be heard at several points in the suite<sup>17</sup>.



Figure 12: Gerhard, *Don Quixote*, theme for Don Quixote theme (A) and series (B).

It is true that this theme reappears periodically throughout the work giving a certain structural coherence to piece. However, Gerhard himself revealed that he only came up with the series by chance, after he had composed the *Don Quixote* theme:

Analysing my theme I found that it was unusually rich in notes of different pitch. It consists actually of twenty notes of which nine are of different pitch.<sup>18</sup> This discovery prompted me to pick out the nine different notes in the same order in which they appear in my original theme and join them together in a row of series, so that they would reproduce in its essentials the substance of my theme...<sup>19</sup>

This reveals that even with an implicit serialism, the work remains essentially intuitive, and therefore even less systematic than previous works such as *Ventall* or the Wind Quintet. Gerhard also writes something very significant in the record sleeve notes, that ‘[m]y strange little tune is hidden within my theme’.<sup>20</sup> Although this appears to be a minor detail, in fact it would become a constant in his work, especially in his later period. Gerhard tends to hide or embed elements in his themes that will later be expanded upon through a process of metamorphosis.

<sup>17</sup> Record sleeve booklet to ARGO 752. The examples are Gerhard’s.

<sup>18</sup> Although these are Gerhard’s words the theme has 19 notes of which ten are different pitch classes. He extracts nine pitch classes leaving out F# which is prominent in the melody.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Like *Don Quixote*, the Sonata for viola and piano (1948) has some minor instances of thematic mutation. It was rewritten by Gerhard in 1956 for cello and piano. The work marks an important step in his process of serial thinking. The work can be seen as an exploration of serialism from different angles. García Torrelles remarks,

it is not a strictly serial work but it allows the repetition of notes in the same melody composed through the full chromatic scale, that is to say he reintegrates the concept of the scale in his own interpretation of serial composition technique.<sup>21</sup>

It is a mistake to talk about strict serialism in connection with Gerhard's compositions. This is especially true when you consider that permutation is an important element in his system. However, it is the inclusion of a popular melody in the third movement of the work that apparently breaks with the serial processes that Gerhard had explored in the first two. In the early bars of the work, Gerhard presents the full chromatic scale as the result of a bitonal scalic figure. The right hand plays in the Mixolydian scale of G (it could equally well be C major) and the left hand in the scale of B-major. In the third bar, the bitonality resolves onto a chord formed by notes from the second hexachord of I4 (see Figure 13).

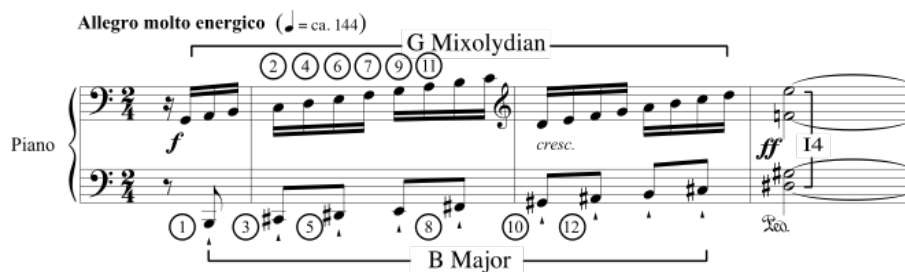


Figure 13: Gerhard, Sonata for cello and piano, piano bb. 1-3.

The series (see Figure 14) first appears in the cello part (bar 4). The first phrase presents eleven tones. The remaining twelfth tone only appears after the second phrase has begun (see Figure 15).

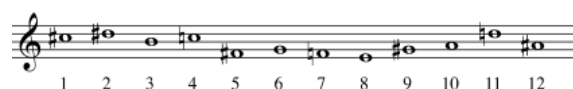


Figure 14: Gerhard, Sonata for cello and piano, twelve-note series

<sup>21</sup> Pablo García Torrelles, *Catalogación, estudio, análisis y criterios de interpretación de las sonatas para viola y piano de compositores españoles del siglo XX*, diss., Universidad de Granada, 2005. p. 203 Trans. Carlos Duque.

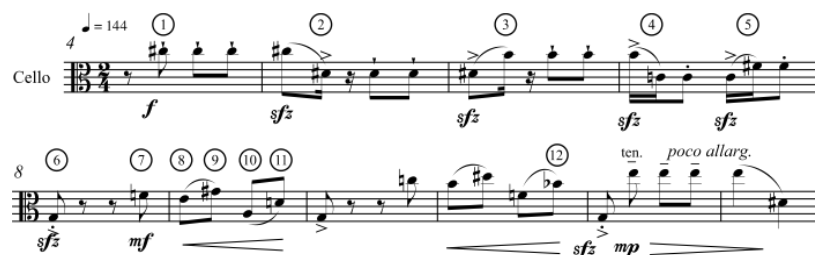


Figure 15: Sonata for cello and piano, cello, Movt. I, bb. 4-13.

As in *Ventall*, A<sup>#</sup> is the note that does not seem to belong - it seems purposely distanced from the rest of the row. In addition, the work bears further resemblance to *Ventall*, in that the series is presented in the main melodic line and the harmonic accompaniment is freely drawn from the hexachords without regard to ordering.

As in the Wind Quintet, the Sonata uses different sub-groupings of the original series to generate melody, freely repeating tones. It does so clearly in the cello line at the beginning of the second movement where pitches 4, 7, 11, 12 are repeated (Figure 16). This, along with the similar rhythmic profile for each phrase provides a sense of musical cohesion.

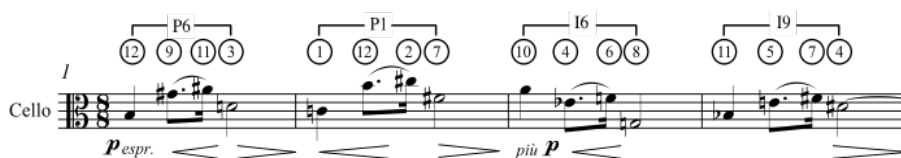


Figure 16: Gerhard, Sonata for cello and piano, cello, Movt. II, bb. 1-5.<sup>22</sup>

In the striking third movement of the sonata, Gerhard uses the popular song *Arrion*. This song was very popular during the Spanish Civil War with lyrics written by the Republicans, who knew it as *Qué será*. It is also found in the *Cancionero Popular Musical Español* by Pedrell, under the name of *Copla de corro* (see Figure 17).<sup>23</sup> Pedrell's *Cancionero* inspired many of Gerhard's themes.

<sup>22</sup> The labelling of these tetrachords as belonging to P6, P1, I6, I9 is from Gerhard's original dodecaphonic matrix.

<sup>23</sup> Felipe Pedrell (ed.), *Cancionero Musical Popular Español*, (Barcelona: Boileau, 1958). Originally published by Eduardo Castells, Valls, 1918-22.



Figure 17: Anonimous, *Copla de corro*.<sup>24</sup>

Gerhard's metamorphosis of this tune increases the tempo of the melody, changes the meter to 3/8, rewrites the phrase in four bars instead of three, uses the twelve notes of the chromatic scale in the first nine of the 32 bars in the melody and chooses a different note to begin each phrase, except the first and last which both use F<sup>#</sup> (see Figure 18).

Analysing the first nine bars of the cello melody, Gerhard used the first hexachord of I5 for the first four notes, the second hexachord of I5 for the next four, and the second hexachord of I7 for the last four notes, with an elision of the first note, which is from the first hexachord of I7 (see Figure 18). What is more remarkable is how Gerhard is able to reshape the original melody (*Qué Será*) but still render it recognisable within a serial structure.

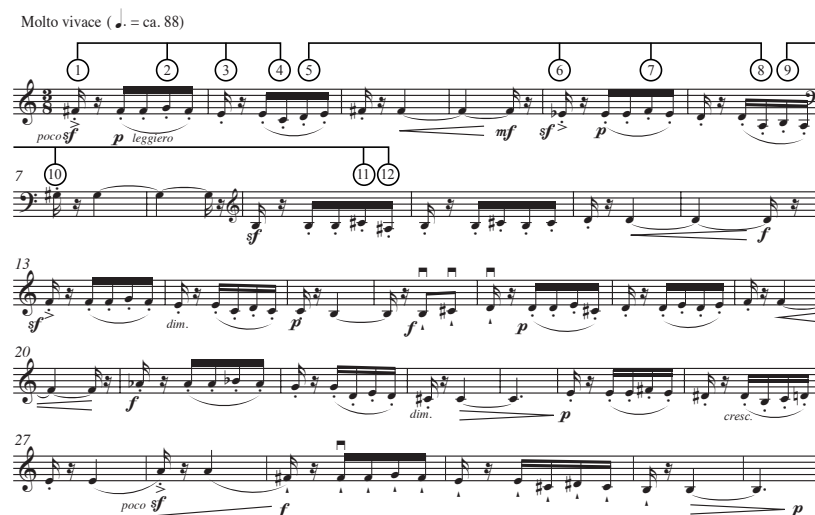


Figure 18: Gerhard, Sonata for cello and piano, *Movt.* III. bb. 1-24, cello.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Vol. II. p. 130.

Throughout the works of this period, one can see a tendency to assimilate serialism in Gerhard's music but in a very limited, personal and idiosyncratic way. Serial techniques in works before 1950 are for the most part incidental to the main structures of these works, but each work provided Gerhard with new challenges and solutions to experimenting with serial technique. However, even in this period of reflection it seems that doubts assailed him concerning how to employ serialism in his music. The fact remains, that he needed to work to develop serial technique to his own compositional ends.

A significant evolution in Gerhard's melodic design takes place during the period of reflection. The original melodies that he composes represent either a challenge for the singer (*Ventall*) or are cell-based rhythmic processes (Sonata for cello and piano, 1st movement) or a metamorphosis of a popular song (Sonata for cello and piano, 3rd movement). This form of metamorphosing a melody would continue to evolve until his last completed orchestral work, the Symphony No. 4 '*New York*', where the popular tune that is used is almost completely hidden.

### **Third Period: Exploration (1951-1960)**

The year 1951 marked an important turning point in Gerhard's career. Two events caused him a deep sense of unease and made him rethink his creative approach. Firstly his friend and teacher Arnold Schoenberg died in Los Angeles on 13 July 1951. Secondly his opera *The Duenna* and the Sonata for Viola and Piano received very bad reviews. *The Duenna* was performed at the ISCM Festival in Wiesbaden. What was seen at the time as Gerhard's excessive use of popular melodies as a basis for his work, did not please the public. Lacey observes, '[I]t was dismissed by almost everybody on the grounds of having tunes.'<sup>25</sup> Regarding the London premiere of the Sonata, critics commented that,

Roberto Gerhard's Sonata for Viola and Piano was a pleasant and stylish work in what some would call a 'horribly modern' idiom, though lacking in originality.<sup>26</sup>

Gerhard was no stranger to bad reviews and throughout his career he had to face bitter comments. Since his presentation concert at the *Palau de la Música* in Barcelona in 1929, which received a devastating critique from Lluís Millet, he had had to face up to numerous

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<sup>25</sup> William Lacey, 'The vocal music of Roberto Gerhard 1917-1947', unpub. M.Mus. Diss. King's College, Cambridge, 1996. p. 25.

<sup>26</sup> n.a. 'London Concerts', *The Musical Times*, 92 (Feb. 1951), p. 83.

critical disappointments.<sup>27</sup> However, *The Duenna* was an especially important work for him, and the Sonata for viola and piano embodied and reflected his feelings as a composer having lived in exile for over a decade. These reviews coupled with the loss of his teacher, plunged Gerhard into a personal crisis and self-questioning. The model that Pedrell had taught him, based on the use of popular song was in crisis and did not please the public and critics. However, he would not abandon it, especially as he felt so attached to a music that brought him closer to his roots and that was essential for him as an exiled composer.

From 1951 onwards Gerhard's music would be based on serial techniques, but with folk music influencing the orchestration, rhythm and the contour of his series. Though this was something Gerhard had already hinted at in his early works, he was to take this approach to its limits by the end of his career, to the point where it became almost a secret message in his music. In 1951, Gerhard wrote several articles and gave a number of lectures on serialism, or as he preferred to call it, twelve-tone composition. In these, he explained his views on the use of the technique and the solutions provided. Sometimes these articles served as a platform to critique other theorists and composers including the Darmstadt School. Schoenberg's death affected Gerhard so deeply that he felt the need to pick up the baton from the Second Viennese School. By this time, he was the only leading European student of Schoenberg that was still alive, and more importantly, ready to develop the technique that his teacher had taught him (Berg died in 1935, Webern in 1945, Skalkottas in 1947 and Eisler in 1962 but the latter did not make a significant contribution to the development of serialism in his later years).

Gerhard's articles written in the 1950s (see Figure 19) were mostly contributed to *The Score and IMA Magazine*, a prestigious publication edited by William Glock. Despite running for only twenty-eight editions, the magazine has become a reference source for contemporary music.<sup>28</sup>

In this period of creative maturity, Gerhard took a giant step in his development of serialism, applying the series not only to tones but also to rhythms and durations. To do this, he introduced the time-set, a new concept that allowed the application of the implicit

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<sup>27</sup> Pere Artís, 'La Polèmica Robert Gerhard-Lluís Millet', *Revista Musical Catalana*, 23 (September, 1986), p. 28-29.

<sup>28</sup> Sir William Glock (*b* London, 3 May 1908; *d* Oxford, 28 June 2000). English music administrator, pianist and critic. In 1946 he founded *The Score and IMA Magazine*, a magazine that focused on contemporary music. He was also musical adviser to the BBC (1959-73). Peter Heyworth, 'Glock, Sir William', *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy <[www.oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com)>, accessed 20th December, 2010.

YEAR	ARTICLE
1952	<i>Tonality in twelve-tone music: The Score and IMA Magazine</i> , 6 (May 1952), 28-35.
1954	<i>On composition with twelve notes</i> in Rufer, <i>Composition with Twelve Notes</i> (London: MacMillan, 1954).
1954	<i>Reply to George Perle: The Score and IMA Magazine</i> , 9 (Sept 1954), 59-60.
1955	<i>Twelve-note composition explained</i> , BBC Radio Talk; 2 April 1965.
1956	<i>Developments in twelve-note technique: The Score and IMA Magazine</i> , 17 (Sept 1956), 61-72.
1960	<i>Functions of the series in twelve-note composition</i> : two lectures given at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, spring 1960.

**Figure 19:** List of Gerhard's articles discussing twelve-tone composition.

proportion of the series in the time dimension. The concept was developed in a different ways by Messiaen, Boulez and Stockhausen in their totally serialist works of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Gerhard used the time-set to determine the 'distance' between phrases as well as the length of sections within a work. According to Gerhard:

The series is regarded as a miniature code for the combinatorial operations concerned with pitch structure. The proportion set is the steering device for all time structural operations. In this capacity it is the source of rhythm and articulation at all levels of form organization and, in the last resort, it rules form as a whole.<sup>29</sup>

Gerhard wrote of Boulez and Stockhausen's approach to using the series in the time dimension that:

If Cage, Stockhausen or Boulez read my article, they would not understand it. They all made the same, almost identical, mistake. They applied Schoenberg's 12-tone idea (only the tonal concept) to rhythm, that is, to the temporal world. But they applied the idea literally, without translating, surpassing or imaginatively adapting it to the time dimension.<sup>30</sup>

Gerhard created and applied the time-set in many different ways over the last sixteen years of his life. This desire to search for new possibilities was a constant throughout his career and although in his articles he explained his compositional technique and its application, the fact is that in his works, he always comes up with different solutions and processes. It is particularly difficult to study the application of serialism in Gerhard's music because the

<sup>29</sup> Roberto Gerhard, 'Developments in twelve-tone technique' *The Score and IMA Magazine*, 17 (September 1956), p. 61.

<sup>30</sup> Roberto Gerhard, letter to Joaquim Homs, 27 July 1966. Homs family archive, Barcelona.



composer systematically destroyed all of his working sketches. We are only left with his notebooks, a few sketches and the articles he wrote on serialism.<sup>31</sup>

Gerhard explained the concept of time-set in his article *Developments in Twelve-Tone Technique* (1956) using the row of the String Quartet No. 1, and later in *Functions of the series in twelve-note composition* (1960), using the series from his Symphony No. 2 (1957-59) as examples.<sup>32</sup> To get the series to govern the rate and duration, Gerhard subtracted the ‘horizon note’ from the original series. Gerhard designated the lowest note of the series the ‘horizon note’. In Figure 20, we note that E (that corresponds to 4 in the chromatic scale starting on C numbered from 0 to 11) is the lowest note.



**Figure 20:** Gerhard, Symphony No. 2, 12-tone series and corresponding proportions set.

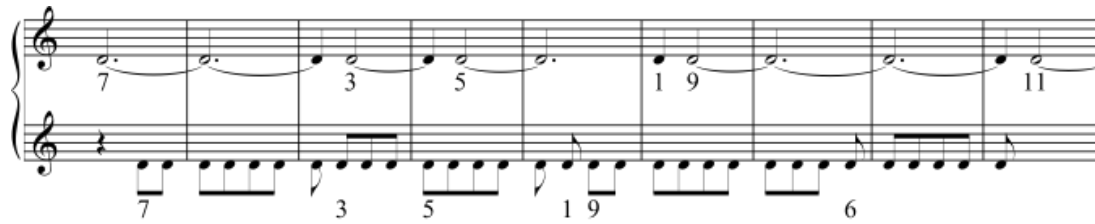
By subtracting the value 4 from the original series (in the top line), we obtain the time-set in the lowest line:

11	7	0	6	4	5	9	10	1	2	8	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
7	3	8	2	12	1	5	6	9	10	4	11

Once the time-set was obtained, Gerhard applied an arbitrary unit on which to work (such as a quaver or a crochet) and structured the duration of notes, or sequence of inputs or the pulses of each bar. Figure 21 is taken from one of these notebooks. In it he executed a typical application of the time-set (in this case 7, 3, 5, 1, 9, 6), generating the duration of each note with a crotchet on the right hand and a quaver on the left hand.

<sup>31</sup> Gerhard destroyed all his working outlines but there are examples of his serial analysis in the manuscript of the Symphony No. 1 (copy sent to his friend Ricard Gomis, Gomis Family Archive, Barcelona) and in the manuscript of the Symphony No. 5 (unfinished), Gerhard Archive in the Cambridge University Library. There is also an example in the original of his work *Claustrophobia*, that he sent to John Cage in 1966, John Cage Archive, Northwestern University Music Library.

<sup>32</sup> Later to be reworked as *Metamorphosis* (1967-68).



**Figure 21:** Example from Gerhard's notebook 5.23.<sup>33</sup>

The first work in which Gerhard applied the time-set is the String Quartet No. 1 (1950-55). This work took him over four years to complete due to his commitments with other works (including the soundtrack for the movie *Secret people* by Thorold Dickinson, 1952; *War in the Air*, the soundtracks for five BBC documentaries, 1952, and the *Symphony No. 1*, 1952-53). It also took time because in this work Gerhard explores the application of the new system in combination with classical forms. According to Mitchell:

[t]he first movement [...] is a twelve-tone work, but it also follows the classical sonata-allegro model, which reveals an exposition, complete with two themes, a development section, and a reversed recapitulation.<sup>34</sup>

Gerhard was by no means the first to compose serial music using a classical form. (Schoenberg cast his first serial work, the *Suite for Piano*, op. 25 (1925) as a baroque suite.) But Gerhard also came up with a tonal work through combining hexachords.<sup>35</sup> Gerhard wrote that, 'Fundamentally all the twelve notes are equal in the sense that none can claim the position of a tonic or a centre, but in practice, some can be "more equal than others"'.<sup>36</sup> In fact, the title of the 1952 essay where Gerhard gave expression to this phrase was a declaration of intent: 'Tonality in twelve-tone music'.

The series appears in the first violin in the fourth bar and presents the same rhythm in bars 9 and 11 (see Figures 22 and 23).

<sup>33</sup> Gerhard notebook 5.23. Gerhard Archive in the Cambridge University Library.

<sup>34</sup> Rachel Mitchell, 'Form and function in Roberto Gerhard's String Quartet No. 1.' in *Proceedings of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference Roberto Gerhard* (Huddersfield: CeReNeM, 2010), p. 63.

<sup>35</sup> See Rachel Mitchell, 'Roberto Gerhard's Serial Procedures and Formal Design in String Quartets Nos. 1 and 2' in Monty Adkins and Michael Russ (eds.) *The Roberto Gerhard Companion*, (Farnham and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2013), 181-204.

<sup>36</sup> Gerhard, 'Tonality in twelve-tone music (1952)', pp. 124-125.



Figure 22: Gerhard, String Quartet No. 1, twelve-tone series.



Figure 23: Gerhard, String Quartet No. 1, first violin, bb. 8-11.

As Mitchell observes, the time-set articulates the rhythmic structure of the work in the third movement. It consists of forty-five bars, the duration of each is determined by the proportions-set which determines the number of quavers per bar (see Figure 24).<sup>37</sup> Gerhard combines integers 1 and 2 into a single bar (bar 2), presumably to make it easier for the interpreters to perform.



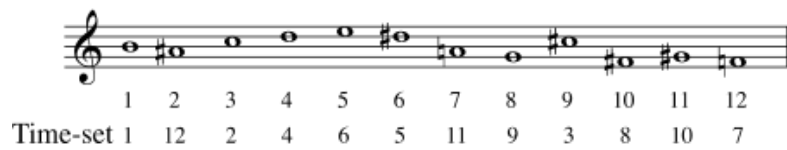
Figure 24: Gerhard, String Quartet No. 1, First movement, bb. 1-7.

For Gerhard, what from a theoretical point of view may seem an overly strict system that limits creative possibilities is actually a tool of infinite possibilities that generates an enormous freedom of action. In the words of Roman Vlad, ‘Such a plan of organization may appear extremely rigid. But Roberto Gerhard is no pedant. He always knows how to

<sup>37</sup> Mitchell, ‘Form and function in Roberto Gerhard’s String Quartet No. 1’ p. 69. (Example 21 taken from Mitchell).

preserve his freedom of action in confronting any musical problem'.<sup>38</sup> For Gerhard the twelve-tone technique was a tool, just as it was for Schoenberg.

In the Nonet (1956-57), Gerhard the time-set gives a value of one to the first note of the series (B-natural) and generating the other eleven values following the chromatic series, so that by applying them to the series the time-set in Figure 25 is obtained.



**Figure 25:** Nonet, twelve-tone series and time-set.

Gerhard chose the quaver as the unit value for the time-set. In this instance it governs the appearance of the next tone in the series. The horizon tone is A<sup>#</sup>, so the initial pitch-class, B, has a value of 1 and the second tone A<sup>#</sup> appears one quaver later. Similarly A<sup>#</sup> has a value of 12 so the third pitch-class in the series, C appears 12 quavers later. And so the process continues. (Figure 26 show those instruments that reveal the series but not the accordion, trumpet, trombone or tuba whose parts are derived more freely).

In the early 1950s, Gerhard began exploring the possibilities that technology offered for generating and manipulating audio. He soon became one of the pioneers of electronic composition and performed works using this medium alone and in combination with acoustic instruments. In just six years his conception of sound and music changed radically and from 1960 he adapted his application of the serial system to include the new sonorities and methods of handling materials he had developed. In the 1960s Gerhard aimed to create instrumental music that drew upon the new textures and sounds he had created in the studio.

Gerhard's experience echoes that of Berio who created radical instrumental pieces alongside his electronic music. As Osmond-Smith has described:

<sup>38</sup> Roman Vlad, 'My First Impressions of Roberto Gerhard's Music' *The Score and IMA Magazine*, 17 (September, 1956), p. 33.

Work in the studio entailed not only (perhaps not even primarily) a search for ‘new sounds’, but also new ways of thinking about musical material. To take only the most obvious issue, the primacy of pitch as a primary focus for structure was severely challenged. If instead comparative densities of texture and qualities of timbre were to be used as vehicles for structure, a new sense of large/scale formal priorities might also have to be developed.<sup>39</sup>

Time-set → (1) (12) (2) (4) (6) (5) (11)

**Allegro moderato** ♩ = 90

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in A

Bassoon

Horn in F

Time-set → (9) (3) (8) (10) (7)

Fl.

Ob.

A Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Figure 26: Gerhard, *Nonet*, for chamber ensemble, bb. 1-9.

Gerhard's development of his orchestral technique through to his last works is unique. Significantly, the multi-textural sound found in the scores of his later period, particularly the *Symphony No. 4 'New York'*, *Libra* and *Leo*, are virtually identical to some of the

<sup>39</sup> David Osmond-Smith, *Berio* (Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 14.

textures of his electronic works such as *DNA in Reflection* and *Pericles*.<sup>40</sup> One of the most important works to demonstrate the beginnings of this development in Gerhard's orchestral technique is the Symphony No. 3 '*Collages*' (1960) a pioneering work for orchestra and electronics. In his article on the work, Fernando Buide observes that, 'It is difficult to affirm whether Gerhard consistently followed his own serial technique in the compositional plan of the Symphony No. 3, '*Collages*''.<sup>41</sup> It is clear that, conditioned by the desire to integrate the electronic sounds, Gerhard chose a more intuitive application of serial technique. The series of the Symphony No. 3, '*Collages*' is clearly present at times. As in previous works Gerhard applied the series by dividing it, this time into tetrachords (see Figure 27).



Figure 27: Symphony No. 3, '*Collages*', twelve-tone series.

Series, tetrachords and references to folklore are all present in the Symphony No. 3, '*Collages*' but applied much more freely than in his previous works. Specifically, Gerhard probably took the melody '*Retraída está la infanta*' from the *Cancionero Musical Popular Español*, by Felipe Pedrell although it was published earlier in *De musica libri septem* (1577) by Francisco de Salinas, 1513-1590. In Figures 28 and 29, the metamorphosis that Gerhard applied to Salinas' theme can be seen.



Figure 28: Salinas, '*Retraída está la infanta*'.



Figure 29: Symphony No. 3, '*Collages*', melodic line from Fig. 27-28.

<sup>40</sup> For more information, see: Carlos Duque, 'Gerhard's electronic music: a pioneer in constant evolution.' in *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference Roberto Gerhard* (Huddersfield: CeReNeM, 2010), p. 87-97.

In this period, Gerhard lost his confessed fear of using the series systematically and looked for new possibilities based on his system of proportions. Furthermore, he became a spokesperson for serial development, producing a collection of articles to spread understanding of not only the process but also serial music. However, each of Gerhard's compositions led him to take another step in his ongoing exploration, and a new universe of possibilities beckoned. Gerhard's experience with electronics opened a new sound field to him. As a result, melody became increasingly part of a contrapuntal texture driven on by sonic sound objects - or complex orchestral gestures intended to be perceived as one musical unit that could undergo sonic transformation. During this period, Gerhard's explorations with electronics profoundly changed his conception of sound and captured a style that he would develop in his fourth and final period.

#### **Fourth Period: Expansion (1961-1970)**

In his last decade Gerhard received a number of prestigious commissions, created a corpus of innovative masterpieces and achieved a well-deserved international recognition. The quasi-electronic instrumental scores of this period distinguished him among other British composers of the time. In the works of his last period he gave a central role to percussion and used tone clusters to create textures similar to white noise. In this final decade Gerhard ceased to be as rigorous in his application of serial technique. This allowed him to integrate elements borrowed from folklore in a much freer way and to generate new sounds stimulated by his work with electronics. The application of a large and varied palette of sonic resources was a constant in the later orchestral and chamber works of Gerhard, to the extent that it is difficult to unpick the elements that justify the theory that he had set out in his articles. According to Whittall:

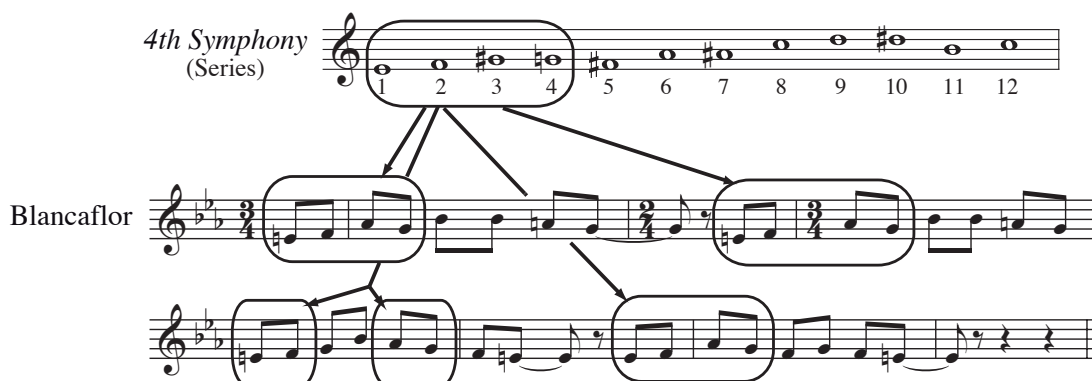
Gerhard's use of serialism in his later works suggests strongly that, once this theoretically totally consistent universe was conceived, the composer lost interest in it as anything more than a background against which other freer, and often much more traditional, factors could operate.<sup>42</sup>

Undoubtedly, the highlight of his serial technique is the Symphony No. 4 'New York'. So far, Gerhard had incorporated elements of folk tradition in his works, but in this work he went a step further, employing a series whose first four notes are derived from a popular

<sup>41</sup> Fernando Buide, 'Unity and process in Roberto Gerhard's Symphony No. 3, 'Collages''. in *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference Roberto Gerhard* (Huddersfield: CeReNeM, 2010), p. 73-78.

<sup>42</sup> Arnold Whittall, *Music since the First World War* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), p. 185.

song, *Blancaflor* (see Figure 30).



**Figure 30:** Symphony No. 4 ‘New York’, twelve-tone series and *Blancaflor*.

This recalls the series in Alban Berg’s Violin Concerto (1935), in which the Viennese composer uses the Bach chorale *Es ist Genug*. Thirty-one years later Gerhard also used four notes of a melody, but chose to incorporate them at the beginning of the series while Berg places them at the end of his row (see Figure 31).



**Figure 31:** Alban Berg, Violin Concerto, twelve-tone series.

Gerhard used the proportions arising from the series to determine the duration of the work. The sum of the six integers in each hexachord results in the ratio 21:57, which can be simplified to 7:19. Adding both figures gives the total (approximate) duration of the work in minutes (see Figure 32). This was the process that Gerhard followed to establish the duration of several of his works; this particular series is notable for its chromatic hexachords.

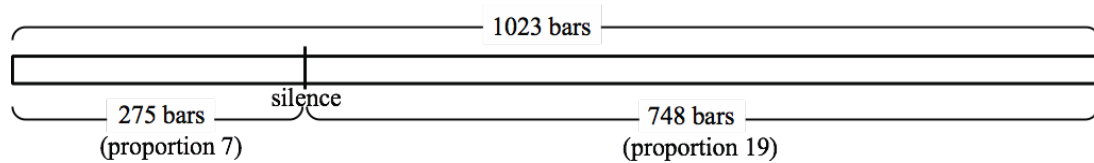




$$(1 + 2 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 6) : (7 + 10 + 11 + 12 + 8 + 9) = 21:57 = 7:19 (= 26 \text{ minutes})$$

**Figure 32:** Gerhard, Symphony No. 4 ‘*New York*’, twelve-tone series used to determine the proportions of the work.

The 7:19 ratio is present throughout the work, creating the form and governing the moments of maximum tension. To generate the form, Gerhard divides all the bars of the symphony (1023) in two parts; 275 and 748 respectively (in line with the 7:19 ratio). The division is marked by a two-bar silence (Figure 33). The *Blancaflor* melody is heard for the first time just before this silence, creating one of the most dramatic moments in the symphony.



**Figure 33:** Gerhard, Symphony No. 4, formal structure.

The time-set of the symphony emerges in a new way. Instead of counting from the horizon note and getting the time-set Gerhard derives the time set from I7.

$$(7, 6, 3, 4, 5, 2) : (1, 10, 9, 8, 0, 11)$$

Gerhard then reordered this series into odd and even numbers:

$$(7, 3, 5, 1, 9, 11) : (6, 4, 2, 10, 8, 0)$$

Throughout the symphony, Gerhard applied the time-set differently depending on his structural and sonic requirements at each moment. He not only applied the time-set values to pitches or to determine bar lengths, as he did in the String Quartet No. 1, but also to the distance between note entries (known as attack-point rhythm). In Figure 34, the pentachord [1, 2, 3, 6, 5] (from P4) unfolds to an attack-point rhythm (7, 11, 5, 3) derived by permutation from the first hexachord of the time series (as with his 12-tone rows, permutation of the time-set was commonplace in Gerhard’s compositions). In addition, as

with the series of notes, he worked with a small group of permutations, which provides an element of temporal consistency.

Figure 34: Gerhard, Symphony No. 4, 'New York', strings, bb. 245-255, time-set.

As Gerhard's intuitive application of serialism developed during this final decade, so did his use of certain other elements (folk song and musical quotations from other composers and from his own works). This was particularly evident in his last two works, *Libra* (1968) and *Leo* (1969). In both works, the strictly serial direction is blurred by a highly personal application of serialism based on an intuitive understanding of its possibilities rather than a rigorous implementation. In *Libra*, Gerhard combined tonal passages with two series that do not appear consistently. The first series was identified by Ates Orga in 1973. He took the ten notes of the first chord in ascending order and added the remaining two, G<sup>#</sup> and C, in the order they appear in the work (see Figure 35).<sup>43</sup>

Figure 35: Gerhard, *Libra*, b. 1, piano and percussion.

<sup>43</sup> Ates Orga, 'The works', in David Atherton (ed.), *Programme Book for the London Sinfonietta Schoneberg-Gerhard Series* (London: London Sinfonietta Productions, 1973), p. 85.

Gerhard used the series and its permutations so freely throughout the work that it is only an occasionally detectable. The original series rarely appears in a recognizable form, and even then with deviations from strict order, as in Figure 36.



Figure 36: Gerhard, *Libra*, 4 bars before Fig. 36, guitar.

The second series, like the first, is used throughout the work in a diffuse way. It derives from reworking the first into four trichords (see Figure 37).



Figure 37: Gerhard, *Libra*, twelve-tone series.

Gerhard used a transposition (T1) of this derived series, on the piano, to build the beginning of the clarinet accompaniment. He then built the rest of the accompaniment more freely (see Figure 38).

Miller observes that, 'Although it cannot be said, therefore, that *Libra* as a whole is serial, the idea of serialism informs the musical language of the work'.<sup>44</sup> Gerhard's method was neither strict nor dogmatic; in it he allowed for some windows of freedom and inspiration, which is a part of his temperament. As Homs said, referring to that point, one should use a method only as a means, not as an end.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Jeffrey Miller, *An analysis of Roberto Gerhard's Libra*. Unpublished Diss., City University of New York, 1987, p. 57.

<sup>45</sup> Homs, *Robert Gerhard and his music*, p. 67.



Figure 38: Gerhard, *Libra*, 1 bar before Fig. 6, piano.

### Conclusion.

Although it is possible to go into detailed analysis of *Libra* and *Leo* to understand how serial techniques were implemented, according to Gerhard, the system of composition (whether serial or another system) did not matter once the work was finished. The framework of the music had to be withdrawn as you might remove the scaffolding after a building is constructed. In a letter to Homs, Gerhard wrote,

The supreme art is not to compose, but to cut: the system is a scaffold for me, the essential necessary to *make*; but in order to *contemplate*, any system is not only unnecessary, but constitutes an impediment.<sup>46</sup>

To understand the serial structure of Gerhard's late works is to understand only part of their process of construction and their sonic intent. These late works mark the end of a process of evolution where the music becomes sound organized and shaped through time, and melody, accompaniment, harmony or counterpoint become mere elements of this movement. Gerhard is a composer who experienced one of the most rapid musical evolutions in history. He was born in the nineteenth century, received a 'classical' education and in the final part of his career made electronic music and music for experimental film. In one of his notebooks, Gerhard wrote, 'No, I'm not an avant-garde composer, because I am an explorer'.<sup>47</sup> Perhaps this assertion is the best way to understand a creative career based on relentless development and the continual questioning of a composer's function in society and the on-going refinement and of one's own creative aesthetic through critical reflection. One of the most obvious compositional elements in Gerhard's musical evolution is his consideration of melody. In his early works, melody is the principal driving

force. As Gerhard's career progressed he sought new means of integrating serial and contrapuntal thinking into his work. As in some of Schoenberg's works, such as *Erwartung* (1909), the emphasis becomes less on a melodic surface and rather and more on a logical developmental interplay between motivic groups of highly contoured intervallic structures. Melodic thinking is not lost but becomes atomised. In his seminal works from the 1960s Gerhard merely added to his arsenal of compositional techniques. By this stage, his advanced thinking about musical line had replaced a traditional sense of melody and was itself subsumed into sonic trajectories that pushed his music forward through more textural and gestural writing. These late works demonstrate that for Gerhard exploration was not a relentless quest to move forward but to expand one's creative territory and to make use of everything one had discovered.

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<sup>46</sup> Letter from Gerhard to Joaquim Homs, 21 October, 1957, in Joaquim Homs, *Robert Gerhard and His Music*. Meirion Bowen (ed.) (Sheffield: The Anglo-Catalan Society, 2000) p. 59.

<sup>47</sup> Notebook 10.140, p. 20. Roberto Gerhard Archive, Cambridge University Library.

## Memories of the relationship between Roberto Gerhard and Conxita Badia

Mariona Agustí Badia

I remember Roberto and Poldi being very close to my parents. It was as if they were part of our family. When my younger sister was born, my older sister and I were left in their care in Bigues, where my parents had a rented house for the summer. Whilst we were with the Gerhard's in Bigues I recall that we often used to walk by the forest. Roberto would teach me the name of each plant we came across. He was a very cheerful man and he had a keen interest in almost everything. Following these walks, at home, I would play random notes on the piano and he would guess them. I was amazed by his ability and I still am when I think of it. Some days later my parents came with my newborn sister Carmen to collect us. Roberto became Carmen's godfather.

The friendship between Gerhard and my mother, the soprano Conxita Badia, started whilst they were both students at the Granados Academy, one of the most influential and important centres of music at that time. After Enrique Granados' tragic death in 1916 both Gerhard and my mother went to study with Felip Pedrell, founder of the *Estudis Musicològics* (Musicological Studies) and considered one of the greatest Spanish musicians. Ten years after Granados' death, Manuel de Falla, Frank Marshall, Roberto Gerhard and my mother met at the port in Barcelona. To commemorate this anniversary they threw a bottle into the sea along with some scores of Beethoven and other great composers as well as those of Granados himself.

My mother was directly involved in Gerhard's early musical career. She sang Gerhard's early *L'infantament meravellós de Schabrazada* for voice and piano in 1918. In the score Gerhard gave to my mother, he wrote, 'These songs are yours, because you have loved them all so much and you made the living song of my youth.' Furthermore, when Gerhard decided to go to Vienna to study with Schoenberg, it was my mother who made the initial connections through her friendship with Dr. Sarró, who was the family doctor and a psychiatrist. It was whilst he was in Vienna that Gerhard met Poldi who was at that time a Spanish language student. Gerhard made lasting friendships in Vienna and came to know Alban Berg and Anton Webern. It was Webern who, in 1932 conducted my mother's performance of Gerhard's *Sis cançons populars catalanes* in Vienna. We still have the photo

taken on the occasion of this performance. Roberto, in a letter to Pau Casals wrote of my mother, 'While singing, Conxita feels such a great joy when she sings, joy in the music, joy in her own voice.' The connection with Vienna was further strengthened when Gerhard managed to convince Schoenberg to come to Catalunya in 1932 to take advantage of the good weather and to finish his opera *Moses and Aaron*. It was whilst Schoenberg was in Catalunya that his daughter Nuria (a very Catalan name) was born. Schoenberg would often come to our home. We even had some home movies that show me teaching Schoenberg to dance the *sardana*. My mother performed a number of Schoenberg's songs in *Palau de la Música Catalana* and in the manuscript score he gave her he wrote that, 'It's funny how I had to travel so far to find someone who could really sing melodies'.

In 1931, the Republic was settled, the *Generalitat de Catalunya* government, with Ventura Gassol as Minister of Culture (also a poet and great friend of the family), hired Roberto Gerhard as a music teacher at the *Escola de Mestres* (School of Teachers) and as a musicologist at the *Biblioteca de Catalunya* (Catalunya's Library) along with Mossen Higiní Anglès. Gerhard also joined the *Mirador* magazine as a music critic at this time. Through reading his reviews you realize his great musical insight as well as his writing skills. Amongst other activities Gerhard organized during these years, I like to remember a closing concert of the Teacher's Summer School at the *Pati dels Tarongers*, inside the *Palau de la Generalitat*. The concert included works for flute, voice and harp played by Gratacós, Badia and Balcells respectively.

Culturally and pedagogically, Barcelona was very vibrant in the 1930s. The artists Dalí, Picasso, Miró were all highly active. Musical activity was also flourishing. There was the Pau Casals' orchestra (with whom my mother performed in over 30 concerts); the *Concerts Música de Cámara Association* that brought Falla to perform his *Concerto for Harpsichord, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Violin and Cello* (1923-26) with Wanda Landowska in the *Palau de la Música Catalana*; the *Música de Cámara Association* (whose president was Frank Marshall); as well as the concerts and operas staged at the *Lízen*. In addition radio stations started to have a stronger role in cultural life as many had their own orchestra.

In April 1936 Roberto Gerhard brought the ISCM to Barcelona. I still have the ISCM agenda (with Obiols' drawings on it). In this Festival, the greatest European composers of the time were performed. Works by Berg (including the premiere of the *Violin Concerto*),

Britten, Krenek and Ruggles were performed alongside Roberto Gerhard, Rodolfo Halffter, Manuel Blancafort and Josep Maria Ruera. Unfortunately this was one of the last major cultural events of the Second Spanish Republic and such an interesting and stimulating lifestyle abruptly ended with the start of the Civil War only three months after the ISCM in 1936. Many intellectuals, painters, musicians, doctors and poets escaped the civil war and dispersed across the world.

We also left Spain and went firstly to Paris. Paris was a natural refuge as it was where many of the musicians who had played an important part in revitalizing the international profile and musical life of *Catalunya* now lived. These included Nadia Boulanger, Alfred Cortot, and Ernest Ansermet. Gerhard briefly moved to Paris before settling in Cambridge in England. My mother sang with him on several occasions at the BBC. However, with the growing conflict throughout Europe in the 1930s my mother decided to leave. My family headed to Brazil and then later to Argentina, where she inspired a new community of composers. Many of them wrote and dedicated works specifically to her including Villalobos, Juan José Castro, Guastavino, and Ginestera.

My family and I returned to Barcelona in December 1946 after ten years exile. We found a sad and abandoned city. So many friends were now living in exile including Pau Casals, Ventura Gassol and Roberto Gerhard. However, we also found another form of exile in those who had stayed in Catalunya. Figures such as Toldrà, Blancafort, Homs, Llongueras, and Mompou lived in fear of Franco's Dictatorship and as a result did not feel able to express themselves openly in their own artistic language. During this period, Gerhard asked my mother once again to come to London to perform at the BBC. He also came for very short periods of time to *Catalunya*, where we had the pleasure of meeting again.

After my mother's death, in 1975, we organized all of her papers and gave everything we had to *Biblioteca de Catalunya*. My sister Carmen and I went through my mother's correspondence and we found over three hundred letters from my mother's students who had come from all over the world to Barcelona and to Santiago de Compostela to learn from her. We also found many letters by Roberto Gerhard. Gerhard's letters are fantastic. The letters were always full of joy. I particularly remember one of them because it was written on the 14th July. Gerhard realised it was Bastille Day in France, so he added 'Allons enfants de la Patrie'. There is another letter in which Gerhard pre-empting the evolution



of long-distance communication writes that 'If the future evolution of technology ever gets to simplify long distance communications, until the point where people lose the appetite to write letters, the disappearance of the epistolary genre would mean an important loss for civilisation'. We also found a number of postcards with a three-note musical motif on them written by Gerhard.

Today, I still miss Roberto. I feel that Gerhard was robbed from us and through living in exile, we Catalans lost our most influential composer, writer and researcher since Pedrell.

## Speech given at the Second Robert Gerhard International Conference

**Ferran Gerhard**

(translated by Daniel Migueláñez)

*Those who keep a tradition alive are not those who resign themselves to it,  
but those who transform it.* (Roberto Gerhard)

During the second half of the nineteenth century, a plague struck central Europe's vineyards. Its cause was the phylloxera, an insect of American origin against which the vineyards of that continent had been immunized. Its emergence triggered a true economic disaster because the insect attacked the vineyard's roots and, in addition to the failure of the harvest, it implied the death of the entire grapevine, and by extension the whole vineyard. Phylloxera was first detected in France in 1863, although it did not reach the fields of Tarragona until 1890. During this period, various European wine producing companies settled in Catalonia, looking for a solution to the sharp decrease in production in France. Among them we may cite the Swiss company *Huber* and the French companies De Müller and Barbier, which established themselves in Tarragona. Another French company, Berger, began operations in 1878 in Vilafranca del Penedès (Alt Penedès.)

A young Swiss man, Robert Gerhard, who was born in the city of Britnau - within the Aargau canton - moved in to the Berger factory to conduct trade negotiations. There, he met a young woman, María Luísa Ottenwaelder Berger, who was the niece of the company's owners. She had been born in Schlestadt, Alsace. On 19 November, 1895, the couple got married in the church of Santa María, in Vilafranca del Penedès. He was 27 and she was 22 years old.

### **Business in Valls**

The newly married couple decided to set off on their own in Valls (Alt Camp), where they set up a wine business, chiefly oriented to exportation. They lived in a flat at 14 Carretera de Montblanc, and also rented a storehouse just behind the same building. Their first son, Roberto, was born there on 25 September 1896. My grandmother María encountered many

difficulties in Valls as she was more accustomed to the sophisticated atmosphere of Versailles (France) - where she had lived before moving to Catalonia. She spoke neither Catalan nor Spanish, and she told me that at first she was forced to buy things in the market and in shops by pointing them out with her finger. Fortunately, the Brunels, a family of French origin, also lived in Valls. They had a manufacturing business, and thanks to the fact that both spoke French, they became good friends. There was also a school in town run by nuns of the *Santa Joaquina de Vedruna* Carmelite order where French classes were offered as an elective. Therefore, some women from wealthy local families knew the language. María Luisa Ottenwaelder came to know some of them, and they helped her a lot as she slowly settled into Valls. Some neighbours called her 'the French woman.' At the same time, as they saw how she addressed other women with the word 'madame', they called her 'Señora Madame', without noticing the redundancy of the remark.

Many vineyards did extremely well until phylloxera reached the Tarragona area in 1890. In the previous decades crop yields were high and farmers made a good living. This enabled agricultural companies to build spectacular and spacious wine cellars designed by the most prominent architects of the time, which today constitute true forerunners of the Modernist style. The particular importance of the sector in the area can be seen through the formal endorsement, on 11 September 1912, of the regulations for brokers of the Society of Wine Exporters and Wholesalers of the City of Valls. My grandfather Robert Gerhard was one of those who signed the document, along with other traders such as Josep Miró, Francesc Martí, Pere Tondo, Joan Dalmau, Vendrell and Co., Carles Wagner, Ramon Rodon, Josep Magriñà, Magí Mestres, Joan Guinovart, Ramon Mallorquí, Antoni Rodon, Josep and Joan Andreu, Baldomer Fernández, Miquel Jové and Joan Llenas.

The arrival of the disease signaled the end of the golden years. According to statistics, in 1899 half of the vineyards of the zone had been affected and wine production had plummeted. While production was less affected than in France, this was largely due to the magnitude on which the crop was grown, which in 1879 occupied 55% of the total of cultivated land; the French discovered that the plague could be treated through the use of American grapevines which were resistant to the insect. One of the problems that arose was that the quality of the American grapes was notably inferior to that of domestic vines. A viable solution turned out to be the method of grafting the native sprouting vines on to foreign stumps. This process is still carried out today.

In Catalonia, the damaged vineyards were quickly uprooted and replaced by others of American origin. As a result, production quickly recovered.

### **Storehouses and Railway**

Meanwhile, the Gerhard family moved again, this time to number 5 of what is now called González Alba street, near *El Pati*, a spacious central square where their second son Carles was born in 1899 and my father Ferran, two years later, in 1901.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the manufacturer Josep Magriñá, (the owner, among other assets, of a distillery for the local schnapps), built a department store in front of the train station, after the railway linked the town to a wider rail network in 1883. My grandfather rented one of these buildings and was thus able to improve the logistics of the company significantly. The former location was about two kilometers away from the station, whereas the new one was only fifty meters from the platform. This simplified the transportation of the *botas*, the large wineskins used to store the wine in the Iberian Peninsula and nearby France. This avoided the use of carts, as two workers were able to carry the *botas* up a ramp and leave them by the side of the trains.

My grandfather's older brother Roberto had felt an extraordinary attraction for music since he was very small. One day, there was an organ grinder in Valls and Roberto, mesmerised by such a melodious sound, sneaked away from the nanny who was looking after him and followed the musician through the streets to the outskirts of the town. The organ grinder noticed the boy and told him to stop following him. Sat on the kerb of the road, not knowing where he was, and feeling helplessly lost, Roberto started to cry. Fortunately, a doctor who was coming back by cart from visiting a sick person in a nearby town saw Roberto. The doctor knew the Gerhard family and he brought the boy to his house.

Roberto's childhood was quite restless and lively. There were cliques in Valls made up of boys from different neighbourhoods who usually competed with each other. They solved their problems by stone-throwing. Roberto was also a member of these gangs along with the Brunel's older son Antonio, (who is the grandfather of Xavier Salat, current head of the Institut d'Estudis Vallencs (IEV) cultural centre. Both boys were good friends. They participated in many battles on the outskirts of town. Despite the hostility of the fights, and the fact that some boys were experts in handling slingshots, there were never any serious injuries.

The situation changed when the Brothers of Saint Gabriel arrived in Valls. They were a religious order devoted to teaching. On 31 March, 1906, they opened a school that had a positive influence on the town's youth. Roberto, who had first studied at a school run by Joan Rius and then at the Avellá school, entered the new centre, 'Gabriels', as it was popularly known. However, in 1908, when he was twelve, Gerhard's father sent him to Switzerland to study business. First he went to the city of Zofingen; then, in 1911, to Neuchatel; and finally, in 1913, to Lausanne. In the meantime, his interest in music had grown, which eventually resulted in his desire to study composition. His mother understood him and supported his musical interests. Roberto's father wanted him to continue with the family business and did not want to hear about any other job or occupation for his older son.

### **The Picaresque**

In order to understand the obstinacy of Roberto's father, we have to take into account the difficulties he had encountered when he started his own career. The business culture and social attitudes in Valls were very different from those in Switzerland. In many cases, informality and dishonesty predominated. Thus, the drivers of the carts carrying barrels or casks full of wine towards the storehouse frequently stopped for breakfast. Some of these drivers would open the barrels to fill their wineskin or leather skins with wine. Then, they would add water to refill the barrel. For my grandfather, such 'baptism' of the wine, as they called it, was not Christian at all, and he was very angry when he found out about the scam that had been going on.

Train deliveries were also targeted for theft. In these cases, the thieves made small holes in the upper part of the barrels to let air in and another hole below to drain the contents illicitly, reminiscent of incidents in the picaresque style of the 'Lazarillo de Tormes' novel. They filled their containers and then covered the holes with wooden spikes which were wedged in and later broken off at the barrel's surface. The whole area was then covered with mud, so that, at first glance, everything looked fine. Nonetheless, when the barrels were dismantled to be cleaned or fixed, one could see the tip of the spikes that had been used to fill the holes. These and other similar activities seemed unbelievable to Swiss thinking. This was why Gerhard's father trusted that his son, who was thoroughly integrated into the local culture through his boyhood activities, could take care of the domestic part of the vine business, which would make it easier for him to devote his time, more intensively, to exportation.

## **Sickness**

During the last part of his stay in the School of Business in Lausanne, Roberto started to take music lessons from Hugo Strauss. He did not sleep much, as he had to combine both fields of study. In addition, he ate very rarely, because part of the money for his upkeep, that the family sent from Valls, was being used to pay for his musical education. These two factors were both very harmful to his health and he got sick with pleurisy.

Roberto returned to Valls for medical treatment. Before penicillin, the only known remedy for this kind of illness were rest and a healthy diet. Roberto spent many hours at a country house called 'Sarris' that his parents had rented on the road to Barcelona. There he was able to make great progress with his music and, with the knowledge he had acquired from Hugo Strauss, he also started composing.

Once Roberto recovered, his father acceded to his son's wishes for a musical career. At the end of 1913, Roberto saw one of his dreams come true - he became a member of the Royal Academy of Music in Munich. With the outbreak of the First World War, his father wanted him to return home, but he refused. Finally, his father went to Munich and convinced him that returning to Catalonia was the only option. Once settled there, he studied music with Granados, Frank Marshall and, finally, with Felip Pedrell. In 1923 he moved to Vienna where the prestigious Arnold Schoenberg accepted him as a student. In 1926 Roberto followed Schoenberg to Berlin.

## **A polemic**

Three years later, Roberto went back to Catalonia. On 22 December 1929 he gave a concert at the Palau of Catalanian Music, in Barcelona. María Luisa, his mother, left the auditorium very upset because of the public's reaction. While his popular Catalanian songs, interpreted by the soprano Conxita Badia, thoroughly pleased the audience, other more advanced pieces including the Concertino for String Orchestra and Wind Quintet were coldly received and generated some misunderstandings. During an interview in *Non Diari* in Tarragona 1996, my mother, Isabel Masqué Bosch, still recalled that evening recounting that, "The concert was not a success and some people from the public even whistled their disapproval. Lluís Millet, founder of the *Orfeó Català*, categorized Robert as a 'pseudomusician'. Millet harshly criticized Roberto's work and as a result the two began a polemical exchange of letters that were published in *Mirador* and the *Revista Musical Catalana*, and which illustrated the great conceptual distance that separated them. Other critics were similarly harsh. In *La Vanguardia* a critic wrote that 'nobody will doubt that

Gerhard seems ready to swell the ranks of those revolutionaries who think that the whole secret of musical Modernity lies in the fact that it sounds bad.'

In 29 April 1930 Roberto married Leopoldina Feichtegger - known as Poldi - in Marie Zell church in Vienna. They settled in a former country house in the neighbourhood of La Salut, near Travessera de Dald road, Barcelona. I remember that, at the time, the house was located in the country yard with a balcony across the whole façade. It was very calm and quiet, unlike the rest of Barcelona, where, in addition to the usual urban hubbub, there was the constant sound of trams' bells, warning pedestrians to get out of the road. The couple's new home was the perfect environment for musical composition. Roberto's absence from his father's wine business resulted in my uncle Carles and later my father becoming involved. Within a year or so however, Carles Gerhard decided to devote himself to politics. On 20 November 1932 he was elected a member of the Catalan Parliament and moved to Barcelona.

### **Military Rebellion**

Civil war broke out on 18 July 1936. Or we might say an 'uncivil' war, as a group of generals led by Francisco Franco, rose up against the legitimate authority of the Republic. During the war my family continued living in Valls, although my mother, my grandmother, my brother and I took refuge in *Mas d'en Plana*, a country property in the Prades mountains. My father and my grandfather went there on weekends. Roberto and Poldi did not move from Barcelona and my uncle Carles moved with his family into the Montserrat monastery as he had been appointed inspector of the Generalitat with the aim of preserving the monastery and its property from the dangers arising from the on-going political upheaval. My grandparents Robert and María also moved to Montserrat. My grandfather died there and when the war was almost over, my aunt Teresa Hortet, known as 'Teresita', wife of Carles, also died.

At the end of the war, my uncle Carles and his two children, Carles and María Teresa, went into exile. My grandmother María, who had planned to stay in Catalonia, in our house in Valls, finally decided to follow them, in order to take care of her grandchildren, who had recently been left without a mother. Once the war ended, Roberto and Poldi found themselves in Warsaw, Poland, where he participated in the committee that was selecting the compositions for the ISCM festival. At this point they had to decide whether to come back to Barcelona or not. Franco had said that those who did not have blood on their hands had nothing to fear. Yet this was not true. Josep Magriñà, owner of the wine

storehouse and head office of our business was imprisoned and his only 'crime' was to have been the Republican major of Valls. My father was terrified when, during Josep's trial, the public prosecutor discounted all that might be said in favour of the accused because 'the reds' had killed two of his own sons and he had to take revenge. Therefore, he asked for the death penalty. Finally, thanks to my father's mediation and that of a priest from town - Father Termes, Josep was condemned to life imprisonment, only to be released after several years in prison. On the other hand, Nicolás Pascual Palacios, a partner in my father and Carles' wine company, who had been a member of the Euskadi (Basque) parliament, was arrested and jailed in Barcelona. Fortunately, my father, with the help of some Nicolas' Basque friends who were supporters of the new regime, managed to get him released within a few months. Thus, it was deemed appropriate that Robert and Poldi should stay abroad. Robert had not only collaborated with the *Generalitat*, he had been member of the music section of the *Conselleria de Cultura* and represented it at a number of international events; he was also the brother of a Socialist member of parliament. These facts suggested that his return might be rather dangerous. Carles Gerhard's family was taken in by some family members of my grandmother in France, although they would later settle in Switzerland. My grandmother died in Zurich. Then, due to work-related issues, they established their residency in Mexico.

### **A new life in England**

After some time living in Warsaw, Roberto and his wife spent several months in a house on the outskirts of Paris until my uncle received a job offer from King's College, Cambridge in England, arriving in June 1939. In September of that year the Second World War started. No one knew if Spain would be involved or not. Roberto did some work for the BBC. In Spain at this time it was impossible to prosper if one was not a supporter of Franco. His music generated interest in England, whereas in Catalonia it was almost ignored. For these reasons the composer was reticent about returning to Spain.

Regarding the relative obscurity of his works in Catalonia, one has to take into account that musical broadcasts that could be listened through the BBC were announced secretly in Valls. Following them was a clandestine, dangerous activity which implied disobeying the prohibition of tuning in to radio programmes that could spread any information other than Franco's propaganda. Some of the radio stations included on the black list of the Franco Regime were Radio Andorra, Radio Paris and the BBC. If a person was reported to be



listening to one of these stations, the authorities would confiscate the radio and could impose sanctions, including fines.

When the Second World War ended in 1945, many exiled Spaniards thought that the allies' victory could lead to Franco's fall and democratic change in Spain. Within a few years, however, it was clear to everyone that there was going to be a dictatorship for a long time. For these reasons, my uncle, who was in the middle of a very creative period and whose work was greatly in demand, definitively gave up on returning to Spain.

Part of Gerhard's family were able to stay in Valls throughout the Franco regime. That was possible because, despite being a sympathizer of the Republic and left-wing politics, my father did not get directly involved in politics. Also, during the war, he adopted a humanitarian attitude, always helping those who were in need of it, regardless of their creed or ideology. One example of this was the help that he gave to a member of the Fàbregas family, suspected by the Republicans of having gone over to the military rebels. My father found out that he indeed had joined the rebellion, and advised him to contact his family in Valls via the diplomatic wing of the Swiss consul general in Barcelona. After the war, this person became a mayor and a deputy in the Spanish parliament. With the help of my uncle Carles and the intervention of the general secretary of PSUC Joan Comorera, Ferran Gerhard Ottenwaelder also managed to secure the release from the Model prison in Barcelona of one of my mother's cousins who was a member of the Falange movement. Ferran also counted on the collaboration of his father in law, Joan Masqué, a notorious Carlist and thus a right-wing sympathiser. Ferran also helped secure his release from prison after he was arrested in Valls for refusing to disclose the location of the Recorder of Deeds Mr. Viola, and his son, who were in hiding and whose lives depended on not being found. Another circumstance that could have guaranteed my father's immunity in Catalonia was the fact that he was still a Swiss citizen and had not acquired a Spanish passport. The reason for this is that despite his having been born in Spain, Switzerland guaranteed its citizens' nationality up to the third generation, even if they were abroad.

### **Our property endangered**

When the Republicans were defeated and exiled, the majority of their houses were looted. My father hurried to Barcelona to try to protect the property of his two brothers. Most of the furniture, musical manuscripts and other documents at the house where Roberto and Poldi lived were untouched since they did not interest the looters. My father had the Swiss consulate declare all of Roberto's property the personal belongings of a Swiss citizen to

protect them from later theft. Despite a certain amount of difficulty, the belongings were transferred to our flat in Valls which was spacious enough to accommodate all of it.

Almost fifty years later, and after an arduous and careful process of classification done by Albert Sanahuja, a musician from Valls, Gerhard's family donated this property to the IEV (Institut d'Estudis Vallencs) on 11 April 1987. On 7 August 2008 my cousin Carles Hortet also donated a collection of documents, mainly the correspondence between Roberto's brothers and Carles Gerhard.

### **A musical recovery**

Roberto Gerhard's recognition in his home town arrived rather late. Local historian Joan Ventura I Solé has described the surprise of townspeople when, in 1966, a BBC television crew arrived to film scenes for a report in celebration of the composer's 70th birthday. People asked, 'Who is Gerhard?' Few people knew of the musician and his international prestige. At a national level, the cloak of silence was broken only after his death in 1970. Televisión Española reported the death of the 'Spanish musician Robert Gerhard' on the daily news.

At the 1971 celebration of the Virgin of Candela in Valls, a festival only held every ten years, the city council gave Gerhard's family an official certificate as a small gesture toward the deep tribute that the city owed him. The certificate was particularly valued as it had been produced by hand by the renowned artist Josep María Tost, also born in Valls. On 29 May 1980 some five years after Franco's death, the city council, in plenary session chaired by Socialist Mayor Pau Nuet Fàbregas, endorsed the naming of Robert Gerhard Ottenwaelder as an outstanding son of Valls, along with his friend, painter Jaume Mercadé. They also named a city street after Robert Gerhard, something that was also done in Barcelona, in Vila-seca and in Cambrils.

On 25 September 1996 an event was held in Gerhard's honour in the *Palau* of the *Generalitat*, seat of the autonomous government, to mark the centenary of his birth. Other events were also held in England and in Catalonia. The meeting at the *Palau* of the *Generalitat* was chaired by Joan María Pujals Vallvé, cultural attaché, ex-mayor of Vila-seca and a true admirer of Roberto's work. On 21 December 1996 Pujals Vallvé and Valls' Republican Mayor Jordi Castells Guasch dedicated a monument to the composer located near the street that bears his name and built by the sculptor Antón Gurí, also from Valls. In addition, the town's music school bears the name of Roberto Gerhard. Finally, the

world premiere of Gerhard's ballet *Ariel* took place during the local Candela Festival in 2011. The music had been heard in concert once before, but the work have never been performed as a ballet. The orchestra Camarata XXI played the musical piece and 300 school pupils aged six to twelve participated in the event. These school children carefully prepared for the show, learning about the figure of Roberto Gerhard, contributing to an understanding of his music as well as promoting musical education in the city.

*Ferran Gerhard Masqué*

Tarragona, April-May 2012