



L'HEURE ESPAGNOLE

One hundred and twenty years of Spanish musical creation

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One Sunday in April 1889, Enrique Granados and pianist Ricardo Viñes rented a two-seater tricycle and went on a tour of the most remarkable places in Paris. The somewhat comical image of the two friends perched on their trike, “as old as a landau and as heavy as a bus”, could well transcend the capers of the two young, carefree students to become a metaphor: that of the search for Spanish musicians who were introduced globally with limited means, brimming with

talent and curiosity but lacking in support and resources. For the majority of composers featured here, the Parisian music scene was a source of motivation, an opportunity to acquire specialised training and a place from which they could present themselves to the public to gain recognition and the endorsement of critics. In return, they inspired musical activity within their host society and contributed some of the best pieces to the repertoire of their era.

During the final few decades of the 19th century, leaving the

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country meant escaping a conservative political and social situation, reinforced by all Bourbon monarchist governments, and avoiding an uncompromising environment consumed by its love for Spain. The zarzuela consolidated public success, and debates on the nature of the national lyrical theatre and the reach of Wagnerism dominated musical topics. However, with development linked to the industrial revolution, a new social class – along with that associated with Catalan modernism – had reached economic prosperity and was demanding new cultural expressions to sustain cafés and halls. It was around this time that choral societies, musical magazines, publishing houses, schools and associations started to appear. The emerging piano careers of Isaac Albéniz and Enrique Granados unfolded, sheltered from bourgeois

societies, and a big part of their success came from being able to fulfil the expectations of both critics and *aficionados*. Because of the paths their lives took – especially in Albéniz's case, who must have been fantasising about his biography and wasn't far off the adventurous characters in Jules Verne's novels –, the close relationship between their work and European piano traditions and the weight of extra-musical stimuli, both are characteristically Romantic figures. Their style, which was cohesive of different Hispanic sounds, introduced an essential dose of exoticism in a fully current European language. Composer and musicologist Felipe Pedrell opened up the perspectives of the most outstanding Spanish composers of the first half of the 20th century (Albéniz, Granados, de Falla, Roberto Gerhard) by instilling in them

“BEING PUBLISHED IN SPAIN IS WORSE THAN NOT BEING: IT’S LIKE THROWING MUSIC DOWN A WELL”

a desire to capture the essence of Spanish music – no matter the what extent the purity was debated –, absorbed into an updated language. However, according to his students, Pedrell’s advice was not tantamount to technical composition training, which they all had to receive outside the country.

The crisis in 1898 that culminated with the loss of overseas colonies meant that intellectuals and artists were confronted with a process of self-criticism and reflection. Throughout the 20th century, Spanish music struggled between searching for national substance and merging with the currents of international composition, from a position that was fundamentally peripheral. For this reason, any composer who wished to distinguish themselves on the world stage needed to join the publishing houses, circuits and projects that were being developed in the main centres of European culture, among which the closest and most like-minded was Paris. “If it were not for Paris,” de Falla confessed in a letter to the painter Ignacio Zuloaga, “I would have had to abandon composition and commit to teaching to make a living.” Joaquín Turina and Manuel de Falla (who claimed that “being published in Spain is worse than not being: it’s like throwing music down a well”) didn’t only enrich their orchestral and harmonic languages in the French capital, but also made editorial relationships which, although not without tension, provided them with some stability. At the start of the First World War, both returned to a neutral Spain that had become

conducive to artistic creation. Under these circumstances, the visits of Stravinsky or Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes helped consolidate a new path for Spanish musical creation.

What de Falla had achieved – modernisation of the national language through an austere, Hispanic interpretation of neoclassicism – was a model for the next cycle of composers, known as the Generation of ‘27. The Group of Eight from Madrid, who were among its members, declared in a manifesto published in 1931 (the year in which the Second Spanish Republic was proclaimed) that they were in search of “pure music, without literature, without philosophy, without ‘blows of fate’, without physics or metaphysics”, an anti-Romantic line that met plenty of the purely artistic criteria of a new style without sentimental implications, defined by philosopher Ortega y Gasset in his essay *The Dehumanisation of Art*. Ernesto Halffter’s *Sinfonietta* is a prime example of the return to classic forms in miniature, economy in the use of sound materials and orchestral resources, and the Hispanicisation of the neoclassicism that reinterpreted Scarlatti.

Musical activity, which had reached its peak in 1936 with the Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) in Barcelona, was undoubtedly conditioned by the impact of the Spanish Civil War, although in no way can this period be considered a “bridge of silence”, as it is referred to by the critic Enrique Franco. In both the “red” and “national” areas music took on a variety of functions both on the front line and in the streets,



prisons, cinemas and theatres. Many composers, the protagonists of the musical world, dispersed in exile, which profoundly affected not only their personal journeys but also the evolution of Spanish music itself throughout the core years of the 20th century. Creation, however, continued in the forties and fifties and in that era, despite the consequences of the autarchy and the regression in musical initiatives that had started during the Republican period, composers such as Joaquín Rodrigo, Frederic Mompou or Xavier Montsalvatge conceived some of the most popular

pieces of the Spanish repertoire.

Since the 1950s, the increasing openness of Franco's regime and its incorporation into international institutions marked a new era in which Spain was to play a substantial role in the context of the Cold War. These circumstances were accompanied by a thirst for renewal in all aspects of culture, although it wasn't until the 1960s that the generational change was certified and the avant-garde reached hegemony. For young composers, Spanish music had emerged from the "comfortable interior sea of nationalism", and had ceased to

Pablo Picasso, *Three Musicians*, 1921.
Philadelphia Museum of Art.



Darío de Regoyos,
Albeniz au piano,
1888. Bibliothèque
nationale de France.

be picturesque or merely aesthetic in creating an expression of the problems of its time. The creators went back to searching for references abroad: Darmstadt or Paris (again), as was the case with Luis de Pablo and Joan Guinjoan, both involved in initiatives that sought to bring new languages to restless listeners. The first example of avant-garde music, written by the composers of the so-called Generation of '51, was mostly rejected by the public, but also united a young audience that joined together in symphony music spaces and that,

to a great extent, chose this repertoire in defiance of obsolete concert halls and scheduling. At the time the trend towards serialism was based on open structural proposals and mobile forms, as can be seen in *Módulos* by Luis de Pablo. As had occurred previously with plastic arts, Franco's regime capitalised on these avant-garde expressions to project an image of modernity that it displayed at events such as the 1964 Contemporary Music Biennial or the 39th Festival of the ISCM held in Madrid – 26 years after Barcelona –, all in

contradiction to the increasingly politicised environment in which contemporary music was received. At the brink of the authoritarian government's dissolution, composer and critic Tomás Marco considered music in Spain to be the best known it had been for centuries. Although his optimism is surprising today, it was certainly a time of unprecedented associative vitality: collective initiatives and proposals based on improvisation or collaborative works had spread, which brought together the creative concerns of young musicians who sought to distance themselves with an increasingly academic avant-garde. The minimalist language was channelling some of these movements, as well as the precedent of what is now being developed under the term "sonorous art", but more rationalistic individual stakes arose simultaneously; for example, Francisco Guerrero was starting his catalogue at that time, full of loud sonority and scientific orientation. At the same time, the wind of postmodernity was starting to creep into Spanish composition and made one of its first appearances in Luis de Pablo's piece *Éléphants ivres* with his allusions to Tomás Luis de Victoria. In fact, the use of references to historical Spanish music was a dominant trend during the 1980s and early 1990s, thus linking new productions with traditional Hispanic music. In 1985, the *Centro para la Difusión de la Música Contemporánea* had been created, which, although it stimulated the creation

and dissemination of new music throughout Spanish territory, was not enough to place Spanish creation on the international scene. By then, another generation of composers – among them José Manuel López López – had resorted to training abroad again, in Germany or Paris, this time to get to know the post-spectral sources *in situ*. Some composers didn't stop exploring their national roots (flamenco, the Arab legacy) inserted into a timbrically complex language which proved to be effective at putting Spanish music back into an international context. Among Guerrero's followers were some who resisted the combinatorial procedures of their teacher, suggesting alternatives that were more harmonic and less immense. Others continued their aesthetic practices and applied the use of exogenous scientifically-derived models to their composition, as was the case with Alberto Posadas. Héctor Parra has developed his career in the same way; he has turned mathematical, astrophysical and biological archetypes into musical metaphors.

Nowadays, even with a substantial technical base, young composers such as Blai Soler or Joan Magrané continue looking for stimuli and training abroad. The economic crisis and the scarcity of public and private initiatives pushes them – this time not on a heavy old tricycle but on the wings of digital society – to move towards new horizons, in search of tools to cope with the unprecedented crisis of concert music.
—Belén Pérez Castillo

FRANCO'S REGIME CAPITALISED ON THESE AVANT-GARDE EXPRESSIONS TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF MODERNITY



ISAAC ALBÉNIZ

(Camprodon, Spain,
1860 - Cambo-les-Bains,
France, 1909)

Pepita Jiménez (rev. 1897)

During Albéniz's lifetime, *Pepita Jiménez* was presented in Barcelona, Prague and Brussels. At the Liceu Opera in Barcelona, its first version was played in one whole act, but for its debut in Prague, Albéniz recomposed his work: he divided the action into two acts, added new music – mostly in the second act – and reorchestrated the score. Albéniz later revised the piece, focussing mainly on the changes in orchestration.

The libretto comes from the novel of the same name by Juan Valera (1824 - 1905), a diplomat and author from Andalusia, whose narrative work is characterised by a kind of idealised realism and the delicacy of the psychological portraits of his characters – especially the females. The beautiful yet

prudent Pepita Jiménez, a young and wealthy widow, is a kind of anti-Carmen who maintains a loving, contained and provincial relationship with Juan. The young seminarian abandons his clerical vocation to marry her. The libretto is therefore kept within the boundaries marked by the devotional religiousness of its characters, while Albéniz's original music reveals their inner lives. As such, the score expresses and amplifies the emotions that are exposed on stage, recapturing the atmosphere and tone used in the novel.

One of the most striking and modern aspects of this piece – clearly apparent in his second version – is Albéniz's clearly fluid conception of lyrical drama. Duets and romances are articulated with lightness, a steady-flowing harmony, and through a network of musical motifs. These are quite clearly associated with the atmospheres Albéniz hopes to create, and with the feelings, intentions and nature of each character. Elements such as the *malagueñas* rhythm or Phrygian mode give the piece an Andalusian hue, although it never falls into the trap of exaggerating a stereotypical image of Spain.

Albéniz traces the profiles of some very human characters who struggle between their emotions and the propriety of their faith and social class. In the first act, through the dialogue, the focal point of the drama becomes apparent: several suitors see Pepita Jiménez, with such beauty, honour and fortune, as an object of desire. In the second act, human passion and Catholic devotion come up against each

other, and this confrontation drives the words and actions of the two main characters throughout the final scene; as such, the triumph of ungodly love doesn't happen until we reach the last bars of the score. Some of the most celebrated parts of the piece can be found in the second half, namely the children's choir at the Feast of the Child Jesus and the orchestral interlude.

***Iberia, twelve impressions for piano* (1905 - 1908)**

Iberia is usually considered to be the greatest piece in Albéniz's repertoire. Written in France between 1905 and 1908, amidst the increasingly unbearable pain of the illness that led to his death, the "twelve impressions for piano" are one of the greatest monuments in piano literature of all time. It is a fundamental piece in the history of music that encapsulates three elements: the Romantic piano tradition, what can be referred to as cultural Hispanism, and an abstract approach to the process of composition.

The first two are intimately connected with the composer's biography. Hailed as a virtuoso pianist, Albéniz, who was restless by nature, kept track of all the intellectual and aesthetic debates going on at the time. Like many others, he compensated for a cosmopolitan lifestyle with the evocation of an imaginary sound space tinted with patriotism. In his case the landscape was directly linked to Spain, and in particular to Andalusia; it is therefore not an accident that *Evocación* is the title of *Iberia's* opening.

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THE SONOROUS AND RHYTHMIC RICHNESS OF THIS SCORE - THE FREEDOM WITH WHICH HE PRODUCES MATERIAL INSPIRED BY *FANDANGOS*, *POLOS* AND *HABANERAS*, AMONG OTHER POPULAR GENRES... IS ONE OF [ALBÉNIZ'S] GREATEST APPEALS

The link between the idea of a nation and its landscape is a common theme in artistic reflection during the crossover from the 19th to the 20th century – this piece by Albéniz is one example. The landscape is not only built from the cultural expressions it contains, such as songs and dances, but also from the impressions evoked by the atmosphere of a particular place. Enrique Fernández Arbós made the most of the latter in his orchestration, which contains exactly four of Iberia's pieces related to the atmosphere of Andalusian cities: Seville (*El Corpus* and *Triana*), the Port of Santamaria in Cádiz (*El Puerto*) and Granada (*El Albaicín*). Composer Désiré-Émile Inghelbrecht also made a thoughtful orchestration of *Iberia*, conserving the original magic of the piece while at

the same time making it even more spectacular.

The complexity of the piano in *Iberia* distinguishes it from the pieces that preceded it in Albéniz's repertoire. His interest was not depleted by the brilliant virtuoso writing or the allure of popularly inspired melodies. As Claude Debussy and Olivier Messiaen pointed out at the time, the sonorous and rhythmic richness of this score – the freedom with which he produces material inspired by *fandangos*, *polos* and *habaneras*, among other popular genres from that time – is one of his greatest appeals. Albéniz modelled his compelling harmonic blends into a formal solid structure based on the sonata form, which is also one of the characteristic features of this work.



ENRIQUE GRANADOS

(Lleida, Spain, 1867 -
At Sea, 1916)

Doce Danzas Españolas (1888 - 1990)

In 1883, Granados won first prize in a piano playing competition in Barcelona that was established by his teacher, Joan Baptista Pujol, which captured the attention of the musical elite of that era. On the judging panel were Felipe Pedrell and Isaac Albéniz, two significant figures in the history of Spanish music, and they

immediately took him under their wing. In his public recital he played Robert Schumann's *Piano Sonata in G minor, Op. 22*: one of Granados's constant references which is mirrored in his own music.

The next step in Granados's formative period was to travel to Paris. While he was there he happened to meet Ricardo Viñes, who was his classmate at the Academia Pujol. He was a private pupil of Charles-Wilfrid de Bériot, of Spanish descent: grandson of the tenor Manuel García, son of the mezzo-soprano María Malibrán and therefore nephew of fellow singer Pauline Viardot, maestro of Maurice Ravel (to whom he dedicated *Rapsodie Espagnole*), in addition to the celebrated Viñes

and Paul Loyonnet, among others. Bériot's teaching had an influence on Granados's style; after studying with Pujol, he was able to enter the piano school's advanced level. Bériot's demands mainly concerned the quality of phrasing and sonority, paying particular attention to the use of the pedal, a technique in which he trained his students from the beginning. Granados's piano style was a direct continuation, judging by the memories of his contemporaries.

The *Doce Danzas Españolas* are, in large part, the contemplation of all these circumstances. They equally reflect the influential trend which, at the end of the 19th century, pushed composers to strengthen their ties with the rhythms from their countries of origin. It is no coincidence, therefore, that composers as diverse as Jules Massenet, Edvard Grieg and César Cui praised his excellence and the richness of his popular expression. The *Doce Danzas Españolas*, which Granados started during his stay in Paris, achieved great success. They were commended because, at that time, they were what was expected from a composer from the south: transparent in their texture, colourful, happy and elegant. In addition to that, the explicit Orientalism that is found in some of them – think of the titles *Oriental* and *Arabesca* – can be interpreted as an affirmative appropriation of Spain's Moorish



Francisco de Goya, *The Parasol*, 1777, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

history. None of the pieces literally quote native musical sources from folklore or the history of Spanish music, although some allude to regional Spanish songs and dances, as well as musical genres prior to the 19th century. It should also be noted that these pieces are relatively accessible from a technical point of view.

***Goyescas* or *Los Majos* *Enamorados* (1909 - 1912)**

Granados considered *Goyescas* to be his first mature piece. On the one hand, as the title suggests, Granados conceived the score as a kind of homage to the painter Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, of whom he was a great admirer. These days Goya's work is recognised

worldwide as a reflection of the historical period in which it was created, in particular because it personifies the fascinating transformation from courtly kindness in the 18th century to a representation of the artist's tortured subjectivity. On the other hand, Granados linked *Goyescas* to an imagined past in which he found the essential traits of Spanish character, from his point of view, which he represented in a contemporary piece, *Tonadillas en Estilo Antiguo* (1912); the composer thought of this piece as an essay on the operatic version of *Goyescas*. He summed up these features in a letter sent to the American pianist Ernest Schelling in 1913: "Wit, drama, melancholy and grace, combined." Schelling

actively supported Granados's career outside Spain, and it was he who composed the version of *Goyescas* for piano and orchestra.

This suite is a major contribution to the international repertoire written by the pianist-composer, heir of a tradition started by Frédéric Chopin and Robert Schumann's generation. It represents a technical challenge for any pianist, who is required to place value on the richness and variety of their sound texture and the eloquence of their rhythmic material. The singing profiles of the melodies exist alongside piano artistry that should display elegance, without losing the almost improvisatory character also displayed by this music. One of *Goyescas*'s greatest features is the mixture of grace and melancholy that the piece hopes to link to the spirit of the 18th century. This reference is based on the quotation of themes from historical *tonadillas* – a short-lived genre of Spanish musical theatre very popular between 1770 and 1810 – and in certain references to the style of Domenico Scarlatti's sonatas. Granados included other elements of Spanish culture in his score, such as the sonority of the guitar and the allusion to popular dance rhythms.

The score follows a typical love story starring a *castizo* couple, popular characters defined by their beauty and charm. The successive

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chapters are courtship – *Los Requeiebros* –, eroticism – *Coloquio en la Reja* and *El Fandango* –, jealousy – *Quejas o la Maja y el Ruiseñor* – and the accomplished threat of death and the possibility of a life afterwards – *El Amor y la Muerte* and *Serenata del Espectro*. Within the plot, Granados gives particular meanings to different themes. Two obvious examples happen after the introduction of *Coloquio de la Reja*, allowing identification retrospectively with those of the two lovers. The penultimate piece summarises the thematic material that has previously been heard, representing in hindsight the typical varying emotional states that, as the composer indicates, combine the experience of happiness with that of pain.



MANUEL DE FALLA

(Cádiz, Spain, 1876 -
Alta Gracia, Argentina,
1946)

La Vida breve (1904 - 1913)

Between 1900 and 1904 de Falla wrote six zarzuelas, although only one came to be played. The following year he entered *La Vida breve* into a Spanish competition for opera composition and was awarded first prize. Although its premiere was planned, it never happened; no theatre was willing to risk putting on an opera by an unknown composer. This disappointment led to him deciding, in 1907, to accept a job as a piano accompanist which took him to Paris, a city for which he had always felt affection and gratitude. He went on to write the following: "Without Paris, I would have stayed buried in Madrid, sunken and forgotten, being swept along in the darkness, living a miserable life as a teacher and keeping my prize [from *La Vida breve*] in a frame as a family keepsake and the score for my opera in a cupboard." *La Vida breve* ended up being released in Nice in 1913, partly thanks to the support he received from Claude Debussy, Paul Dukas and Maurice Ravel, who knew it first-hand through the piano reduction. In

1914 it was performed at the Théâtre National de l'Opéra Comique in the French capital, where it was given a favourable reception. The same year it was played at the Teatro de la Zarzuela in Madrid, where de Falla had returned after fleeing from the war.

The action takes place in Granada, a city that de Falla did not know when he wrote his score but where he went to live in 1920. It tells the tragic love story of a gypsy girl, Salud, who is disappointed by her lover, Paco, when he decides to get married to a young woman of his social standing. Determined to spoil their wedding, she bursts in. Paco pretends not to know her and has her thrown out, at which point Salud falls dead at his feet. It is obvious that the libretto's treatment develops this realistic character, which de Falla underlines through the inclusion of references to popular songs and certain motivic anecdotes. Puccini's influence is also clear in the score, for example in the interlude that makes up the second scene and accompanies the sunset in Granada.

The first element mentioned, as may be obvious, is displayed in an abundance of borrowings from

flamenco, with themes that have been seen on Spanish stages since the 19th century. De Falla uses flamenco *palos* that appear in isolation; one example is the motif of the forge – with the words “Damn those who were born anvils instead of hammers!” –, which is based on the martinet, a genre of flamenco typical of gypsies who worked as blacksmiths. Salud's character is linked to a popular style of Andalusian inspiration, with genres such as *seguiriyas* and *fandangos*, and in the third scene a *cantaor* sings in the style known as *soleares*. In the famous dances of the second act, de Falla is ultimately shown to be a “rhythmic” composer, capable of capturing the essence of his sources of inspiration.

Noches en los Jardines de España
(1909 - 1916)

In *Noches en los Jardines de España*, de Falla integrated the emotive voluptuousness – which oscillates between determination and neglect – and local Spanish colour in a new, solid concertante style. Firstly, it inherits the complex piano writing of composers such as Emmanuel Chabrier and

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Maurice Ravel, added to a new orchestration style devised by Rimsky-Korsakov. Secondly, the evocation of Andalusian colour appears in this luminous score, which is also one of the few Spanish pieces to be part of the standard repertoire. In the 1920s de Falla decided to employ the sometimes harsh yet intimate chamber-like neoclassicist sound in *Concerto per clavicembalo*. This fact, added to his immovable religious convictions, has given rise to the image of an ascetic composer turned cliché. In all of his work, however, and particularly in some pieces written prior to World War I (such as *La Vida breve* and *Noches en los Jardines de España*), an understanding of music is seen to be a natural primitive strength, capable of connecting with the most intimate and visceral parts of human beings.

The limits that separate sensuality and mysticism are traditionally quite ambiguous in Spanish art; de Falla could be seen as a follower of this artistic continuity.

The pieces in *Noches en los Jardines de España*, namely *En el Generalife*, *Danza Lejana* and *En los Jardines de la Sierra de Córdoba*, don't imitate particular landscapes, but they are the interpretation of their impressions: it doesn't matter whether they are real or imaginary, they connect movement and outdoor experiences in a passionate way. It is surely not a coincidence that the composition of this work, which he started in Paris, was hugely developed in Sitges (Catalonia, Spain) in the house known as Cau Ferrat, owned by the important modernist artist Santiago Rusiñol, who was a painter of gardens and landscapes.

De Falla initially intended to compose a series of piano nocturnes inspired by Spain, after being influenced by Albéniz's *Iberia*. This model gave him a starting point to make use of "Spanish vocabulary" – rhythms taken from folklore, modality, characteristic ornamental motifs in the melody – within a conventional, international framework. De Falla encapsulated both aspects, as well as adding a third: French influence. It can be seen in the orchestration (influenced by Debussy), and it plays a central part in the piece, superior to the brilliant and expressive soloist part, in concertante style. We could consider this aspect to be a link between Ravel's findings and Camille Saint-Saëns's proposed solutions, in their respective concerts.

***Concerto per clavicembalo* (1923 - 1926)**

De Falla's fascination with the harpsichord as an adequate instrument for composition came from Wanda Landowska's visit to Granada in 1922. De Falla, who was by then established in the Andalusian city, had the opportunity to see first-hand the harpsichord that the company Pleyel had built for her ten years previously. Its historical restoration allowed the

recovery of a specific sonority, directly associated with the history of music before the 19th century. It is not surprising that this inspired the composer from Cádiz, given that he always identified part of his creative work with a process of "saturation" of the impressions received from abundant stimuli, whether literary, musical, artistic, intellectual or natural.

Strongly influenced by the ideology of nationalism, it was fundamental for de Falla to establish links between his music and Hispanic cultural history. He understood it as a collective legacy that could and should be updated by the artists of each era. It was there that he found not only the inspiration for the sound images linked with Andalusia found in other pieces, but also for the composition of pieces that sought to be affiliated with eternal tradition, in which the boundaries between cult and popular, and religious and secular, are brought down. The Concerto is the perfect encapsulation of these ideas. For this piece de Falla searched for inspiration in historical musical sources he had become interested in at the start of the 20th century. One of those was traditional Hispanic song, represented by the loving carol *De los Álamos Vengo, Madre*, arranged

for four voices by Juan Vázquez in the 16th century, and which constitutes the thematic material on which the first movement is based. Another source are the sonatas that Domenico Scarlatti composed during his stay in Madrid, which are the main starting point of the *Concerto's* third movement.

There is not, however, the slightest trace of pastiche in this piece: de Falla managed his sources and recomposed them using techniques that were his own and that he gradually polished over the years. He manipulates the borrowed melodic material referring to a pre-classic period through polyphonic and contrapuntal means. Rhythm and colour are the parameters on which the discourse is based. It is a work of tonal character, although de Falla's harmonic thinking is completely modern and corresponds to a non-functional conception based on natural acoustics, which governs the construction and succession of chords. The stark instrumentation shows the respective colours of each solo instrument in its pure state and contributes, together with the elements mentioned previously, to a musical atmosphere that is both archaic and exotic.



ERNESTO HALFFTER

(Madrid, 1905 - 1989)

Sinfonietta (1925 - 1927)

The name 'Halffter', in spite of its German roots, closely represents musical composition in Spain in the 20th century. Ernesto Halffter is the younger brother of Rodolfo Halffter (Madrid, 1900 - México, 1987) and the uncle of Cristóbal Halffter (Madrid, 1930). Ernesto was the first musician in his family to enter the cultural scene in Madrid, and he did it as the most prominent composer of his time. Adolfo Salazar, a very influential

critic, played a significant role in the young's Ernesto's social recognition. *Sinfonietta* is Halffter's most reputed work, and made him famous all over Spain.

Ernesto Halffter is considered to be one of Manuel de Falla's few direct disciples. In fact, as well as being taught by him he was also his protégé, as the letter exchange between the two men clearly proves, and de Falla had a significant influence on Halffter's life and music. *Sinfonietta* is a perfect example: it was written a few years after de Falla's *Harpsichord Concerto* and shares its philosophy, aesthetics and musical language. This piece fit in with emerging neoclassicist trends and also displays a variety of elements considered to be typically Spanish.

Sinfonietta was awarded the National Prize for Music in 1925 and was played for the first time by the Madrid Symphony Orchestra in 1927, with great enthusiasm from the audience. This fact clearly contradicts Ortega y Gasset's concept of 'select minorities', also defended by Salazar in relation to music. [Ortega y Gasset was a prominent philosopher in the aesthetics of modernism in early 20th century Spain.] *Sinfonietta*, considered the new paradigm of Spanish music after its premiere, was described in these words by the critic Víctor Espinós: "A brimming room applauded until they were exhausted, with true conviction.

ERNESTO HALFFTER IS CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF MANUEL DE FALLA'S FEW DIRECT DISCIPLES

Art touches so few people! What a great swindle that a wave of sincerity can be swept away so easily!" This is a direct nod to the aforementioned Orteguian concept.

Sinfonietta is divided into four movements, following a concertante structure. There is an instrumental dialogue between a small orchestral group (violin, cello and double bass) and the symphony orchestra. Other instruments, such as the flute, bassoon and oboe, also play important parts in the score, giving the piece a memorable, colourful atmosphere. *Sinfonietta*'s musical language shares many topics with other types of music, some which could even be defined as 'popular'. As such, in hindsight, the success it achieved is understandable. Simplicity, the search for beauty, the use of classical forms, tonality and the easily recognisable melodic lines make this score an

emblematic work of Spanish musical composition from the 1920s.

Rapsodia portuguesa (1938)

Halffter was a musical composer from Madrid belonging to the so-called *Grupo de los Ocho*, or *Grupo de Madrid*, founded by his brother Rodolfo Halffter, Fernando Remacha, Gustavo Pittaluga, Rosa García Ascot, Julián Bautista, Salvador Bacarisse and Juan José Mantecón. They were all recognised as part of the "Musical Generation of '27", and they defined themselves as the modern Spanish school. Their names appear repeatedly in texts as representatives of musical modernism in Madrid during the 1920s and 1930s.

The course Halffter's life took during the Spanish Civil War, the era in which *Rapsodia portuguesa* was composed, and the post-war

[A] MAJORITY OF AUTHORS FROM THE GENERATION OF '27 DISAPPEARED FROM MUSI- CAL TEXTS DURING FRANCO'S DICTATOR- SHIP

period is unique compared to that of other composers belonging to this group. Halffter, married to Portuguese pianist Alice Câmara Santos, spent the war in Portugal and, after the war, didn't find it too difficult to go in and out of Spain. Unlike other composers, such as his brother Rodolfo (exiled in Mexico), García Ascot (also exiled in Mexico), Bacarisse (exiled in France) or Bautista (exiled in Argentina), Ernesto Halffter did not disappear from the historiographic musical discourse written during the early years of the Franco regime.

In this regard, the appearance of *Rapsodia portuguesa* in the collective book *Diez años de música Española* (1949), written by author Gerardo Diego, composer Joaquín Rodrigo and musicologist Federico Sopena, is particularly significant. In this book, as can be seen by the title, the first ten years of musical life in Spain after the Spanish Civil War is addressed; Ernesto Halffter has his own chapter. The majority of authors from the Generation of '27 disappeared from musical texts during Franco's dictatorship because of their political

connections, but that is not the case with Ernesto Halffter, who, together with his teacher Manuel de Falla, continued to appear with the same relevance.

Rapsodia portuguesa – paradoxically, due to the name of the score itself – was judged by Spanish critics to be representative of what was considered at the time to be authentic Spanish music. The piece, dedicated to Ravel in memoriam, is a 20-minute score written for piano and symphony orchestra. The orchestra is made up of twenty woodwinds in twos, four French horns, three trombones, three trumpets, a tuba, two harps, strings and an extensive percussion section which includes, naturally, castanets. The piece is relatively free in its form and structure – hence the “rhapsody” in the title – and it needs a certain amount of virtuosity from the solo pianist from the outset as the melodic line is full of adornments and quick figures. The result is a very colourful, sensationalist piece, with clear, cantabile melodic lines (sometimes linked to popular tastes, as with the entrance of the first *Allegretto vivace*).

This page of a musical score features the following instruments and parts:

- Fl.** (Flute): First staff, measures 1-4.
- Ob.** (Oboe): Second staff, measures 1-4.
- Clar.** (Clarinet): Third staff, measures 1-4.
- Fag.** (Bassoon): Fourth staff, measures 1-4.
- Corni** (Horns): Fifth and sixth staves, measures 1-4.
- Tba** (Trombone): Seventh staff, measures 1-4.
- Tbone** (Trombone): Eighth staff, measures 1-4.
- Timp.** (Timpani): Ninth staff, measures 1-4.
- Tambl.** (Snare Drum): Tenth staff, measures 1-4.
- Tamb. Picc.** (Piccolo): Eleventh staff, measures 1-4.
- Vno Solo** (Violin Solo): Twelfth staff, measures 1-4.
- Vcello Solo** (Viola Solo): Thirteenth staff, measures 1-4.
- Cbasso Solo** (Cello Solo): Fourteenth staff, measures 1-4.
- Vni** (Violins): Fifteenth and sixteenth staves, measures 1-4.
- Viola** (Viola): Seventeenth staff, measures 1-4.
- Vcelli** (Cellos): Eighteenth staff, measures 1-4.
- Cbassi** (Double Basses): Nineteenth staff, measures 1-4.

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and articulation marks. Dynamics like *pp* (pianissimo), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *f* (forte), and *f stacc.* (forte staccato) are indicated. Other markings include *tr* (trill), *8* (octave), *10* (decima), *sul A* (sul tasto), and *pizz.* (pizzicato). The tempo is marked *Allegretto* at the bottom right.



JOAQUÍN TURINA

(Seville, 1882 -
Madrid, 1949)

La Oración del Torero (1925)

La Oración del Torero takes something that is internationally associated with Spain and brings it into the spotlight using symphonies and chamber music. Although it was originally written for a quartet of lutes, Turina wrote a string quartet version in 1925 and the following year he orchestrated it for double bass and string orchestra. It is perhaps one of Turina's most often played and recognised scores, and throughout its history it has been arranged for a diverse selection of musical ensembles.

In *La Oración del Torero* Turina drew on many musical features usually recognised as being authentically Spanish. The Sevillian composer called on his origins to bring Andalusia, and the musical features associated with the area, into focus. These geographical musical origins were showcased by Spanish composers claiming to be the only ones who could make

music legitimately with these characteristics. This aspect is especially important if we analyse how some of these sounds, which are identified as Spanish and have been very successful throughout history, have been developed and recognised in Europe over the past century in pieces such as *España* (1883), written by the Frenchman Chabrier, *Capricho Español* (1887) by the Russian Rimsky-Korsakov, or the famous opera *Carmen* (1875) written by another Frenchman, Bizet. However, in a notably essentialist discourse, Spanish composers claimed that their birth certificates verified the authenticity of their pure, unique Spanish sound. In fact, Turina himself, in a musical critique of Chabrier's *España* in 1911, stated: "Spain is revered by French people, with its bright sounds: as beautiful as they are false." In spite of that, Turina – and a majority of Spanish composers of his generation – also became linked to Paris and the long-awaited universalisation of all that was Spanish, calling frequently on their studies in the Schola Cantorum.

Turina often demonstrated his great sense of humour in his diaries. In the early 20th century, aside from composing, he also critiqued music; in 1911, before an

orchestration of Albéniz's *Rapsodia Española* arranged by Georges Enescu, he declared: "What right does the violinist Enescu have to orchestrate this piece? How can a man born in Romania have a love of Spain that is not in the form of castanets, tambourines and other adornments?", as though by passing into the hands of a composer born outside Spain it would somehow lose all possibility of being Spanish, in spite of the original score being written by Albéniz.

It is true, however, that Albéniz rarely made use of castanets, even though they are often used in orchestral music to recreate a Spanish sound; take *La Oración del Torero*, an especially rhapsodic piece which is just over eight minutes long and, on occasion, evocative of the traditional rhythm of the *pasodoble*, which is blurred, stylised, and very characteristic of Spanish bullfights.

Cinco Danzas Gitanas for orchestra (1929 - 1930)

Joaquín Turina, born at the end of the 19th century, is probably one of the only Spanish composers of that era to have enjoyed an international career and marked success, alongside Manuel de Falla. Their

work is often compared: traditional Spanish historiography usually associates de Falla with the label of modernist nationalism, compared to Turina who was linked to a somewhat more traditional nationalism. That being said, if their musical language is considered from a more current perspective, the differences between the two composers diminish considerably.

Turina, with his Andalusian roots, usually upholds the musical and thematic features of that Spanish region. Gypsies, bullfighters and dances associated with *flamenco* and other popular culture such as the *Zambra* which opens this piece, are the usual creative elements of his musical imagination. *Las Danzas Fantásticas*, probably his most well-known orchestral piece, shares these representative elements.

In 1929, Joaquín Turina wrote his *Cinco Danzas Gitanas* for solo piano, and in 1930 he made a version for piano and orchestra. The dances included in the score are 1. *Zambra*, 2. *Danza de la Seducción*, 3. *Danza Ritual*, 4. *Generalife* and 5. *Sacro-Monte*. The orchestral version of the piece was premiered in 1930 by the then recently formed Orquesta Clásica de Madrid, directed by Arturo Saco del Valle. Interestingly, the orchestra that

performed the symphonic premiere of the score was proportionally small. Turina wanted to evoke the classical and neoclassical sounds that were typical of musical modernism in that era. That being said, the work of the Sevillian composer is usually free from the features associated with musical neoclassicism, but, as previously mentioned, it does contain the most quintessential features of what is recognised as Spanish music. Even so, the reduced orchestration (without trombones), including woodwind, trumpets and French horns in twos, bowed strings and a scaled-down percussion section – without the clichéd sound of castanets – means that the sound of the piece is distanced from grand orchestral effects, thus aiming for a less ostentatious Spanishness that creates a greater sense of intimacy and subtlety in the details.

FREDERIC MOMPOU

(Barcelona, 1893 - 1987)

Música callada (1951 - 1967)

Shyness, introspection, reserve and sensitivity are all adjectives that are often associated with the Catalan composer Frederic Mompou; the title of this collection of piano pieces, *Música callada*, metaphorically resolves the matter. Mompou was born in Barcelona in 1893, and so chronologically belongs to the “Musical Generation of ‘27”. His music, however, and particularly his work for solo piano, was only to be recognised years later. That being said, he does share many of the characteristics associated with composers of that generation: he studied in Paris; he is aesthetically linked to musical modernism; he went to meetings at the *Els Quatre Gats* café in Barcelona, which is the Catalan version of the famous *Chat noir* in Paris; and his music was greatly influenced by French music, as seen in his use of harmonics, and especially by French composers such as Debussy.

Música callada consists of four notebooks with a total of 28 short pieces for solo piano. It was defined by Mompou himself in his welcome speech at the San Jorge Academy of Fine Arts in the following way: “This music is *callada* because it is heard internally.

Contained and reserved. Its emotion is a secret and only takes sonorous form when resonating through the cold vault of our solitude. It is not asked to reach beyond a few millimetres in space; its mission is to penetrate the great depths of our souls.”

The piano pieces that make up *Música callada* have a musical language that is particularly significant in the composer’s journey. There are no typical elements of Spanish music (generally from Andalucía), but the essence of colour, the search for new timbres and acoustics, and the quieter and calmer evocation are what connects the different pieces. The melodies are usually simple, with a very limited register that sometimes evokes lullabies, and are accompanied by chords that appear to add, in most cases, elements of colour.

The notebooks open with a quote in French that unites the aesthetic world of Mompou with another great topic associated with Spanish music: mysticism. “It is difficult to translate the true meaning of *Música callada* in a language other than Spanish. The great mystic poet, Saint John of the Cross, wrote in one of his beautiful poems: ‘The Voice of Silence, the Sonorous Solitude’, trying to express the idea of music that would be the voice of silence itself.” Thus, before playing even one note, two basic values are highlighted: mysticism and silence. It is, therefore, the music that compels introversion and deep, silent reflection, as is alluded to in its title.

HIS MUSIC
WAS GREATLY
INFLUENCED
BY FRENCH
MUSIC, AS
SEEN IN
HIS USE OF
HARMONICS



***Combat del somni* (1950)**

Combat del somni, originally for voice and piano, was written in 1949 and orchestrated the following year. The text was written by Josep Janés i Olivé – a poet who, throughout his life, had a special relationship with Mompou –, father of the famous author Clara Janés, who was especially well-known as a

literary editor. This is a piece from the 1940s: in fact, Mompou started to work on the score in 1941 in Barcelona. The text is written in Catalan, even though the language was being increasingly persecuted during the early years of Franco's regime in Spain.

Mompou's musical style was defined in his obituary, which was published in *The Musical Times*,

as “a highly personal idiom, aiming for maximum emotional expression through minimal means, that remained untouched by current trends”. These characteristics can undoubtedly also be associated with the piece in hand. *Combat del somni*, despite being a piece from the 1950s, follows a traditional tonal line, giving it a certain timeless quality and disengaging it from the musical innovators that were emerging in Europe after World War II.

Intimate and delicate, like so much of the Barcelonan composer's music, the orchestral score requires only a small orchestra comprised of two flutes, an oboe, a clarinet, two bassoons, two trumpets, a harp, and a small string section. The orchestra accompanies the soprano – the real protagonist – throughout the piece. The score is divided into three musical sections, which correspond to three poems by Janés: 1. *Damunt de tu només les flors*, which is just under five minutes long; 2. *Aquesta nit un mateix vent*, which is three minutes long; and 3. *Jo et presentia com la mar*, which is just over two minutes long. The music accompanying the poems is simple, easy to listen to and often resolutely melancholic. It is a symphonic piece that moves away from musical topics associated with Spain, instead entering a world of rhapsodic evocation, both intimate and sentimental, which is so typical of Mompou's composition style.

LUIS DE PABLO

(Bilbao, 1930)

Módulos III (1967)

Luis de Pablo is one of the most international Spanish composers of his generation; his journey outside Spain is comparable to that of Cristóbal Halffter. From the end of the fifties onwards his career certainly attracted a lot of attention – especially in Francophone art music circles –, allowing him to be in constant contact with European and American avant-garde experimentation of that period, from serialism to aleatoric music. His piece for two pianos, *Móvil I* (1957), was his first experience of open creation: a milestone that the composer links – in his collection of short essays entitled *Approche d'une esthétique de la musique contemporaine* – to other emblematic works from the same period, such as Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XI* (1957), Pierre Boulez's *Troisième Sonate* (1957) and Henri Pousseur's *Mobile* (1958).

Throughout the sixties De Pablo integrated both serial experience and the opening of musical forms, without sacrificing his own

path. The series known as *Módulos* should be highlighted, as it is among his most important works from this period; the series does not form a cycle in itself, but is rather a collection of diverse pieces (in terms of number of instruments) regrouped according to technical motivations. This part of the Basque composer's catalogue is made up of five “modular” pieces: *Módulos I* (1964–65) for an ensemble of 11 musicians; *Módulos II* (1966) for an orchestra divided into two instrumental groups; *Módulos III* for an orchestra of 17 musicians divided into three groups; *Módulos IV* for string quartet; and *Módulos V* (1967) for organ.

The instrumentation for *Módulos III* is quite surprising and very significant: one of the instrumental groups includes a four-trumpet band, whilst the other two combine percussion, plucked strings and keyboard instruments. The score is written in full but the conductor is left to select and combine the suggested material to produce a concrete result from the possible musical options. These options depend on a balance between duration and nuance; this is an unusual technical conception, which led musicographer José Luis García del Busto to state, in his biography of De Pablo, that the piece is considered to be “one of the composer's

most rational and abstract”.

Módulos III was composed in Berlin by means of a scholarship De Pablo received in 1966. The piece was premiered by the NDR Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Andrzej Markowski.

Éléphants ivres (1972–1973)

De Pablo has always distanced himself from the folklorist nationalism found in music which, in his mind, is a position that “covers up a huge part of the common cultural task, a task we wouldn't have undertaken were it not for the easy rationalisation of ‘Spanishness’, which serves as both a passport and an excuse, as well as for artificial produce”. This rejection of antiquated patterns does not imply a negation of his country's musical heritage; on the contrary, various references (and sometimes quotations) borrowed from Spanish history – especially from music between the XVI and the start of the XVII century, a period often called the “Golden Age” of Spanish culture – have appeared in his scores from the late sixties to the present day.

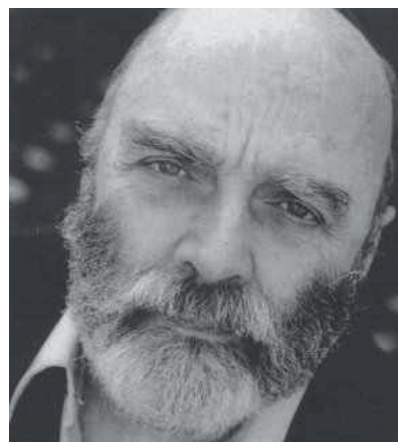
This intertextual approach is chronologically contextualised by positions similar to those of his European colleagues, such as Bernd A. Zimmermann's *Pluralismus* or

DE PABLO INTEGRATED BOTH SERIAL EXPERIENCE AND THE OPENING OF MUSICAL FORMS, WITHOUT SACRIFICING HIS OWN PATH

Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia* (1968), among others. Several compatriots of his generation took the same route: it can be seen in Carmelo Bernaola's *Villanesca* (1978), or in many of Cristóbal Halffter's pieces. In any case, it would be quite audacious to classify this compositional attitude, in aesthetic terms, as a postmodern affirmation. In fact, commenting on a piece equally inspired by Spanish musical history, namely his concerto for guitar and chamber orchestra, *Fantasias* (2001), which includes music by Alonso Mudarra, a guitar and vihuela player from the XVI century, De Pablo demonstrated a rejection of pastiche in favour of "a peaceful coexistence of styles".

Éléphants ivres – a rather comical reference to a passage in *Gitālamkāra*, an ancient treatise on Indian music – is one of the most remarkable pieces in the Basque composer's catalogue as a result of its use of borrowing as a

creative strategy. The four pieces of the cycle – of which three were written for orchestra, the fourth for an instrumental ensemble – take the motet *Veni, sponsa Christi* (1585), by the great Castilian polyphonist Tomás Luis de Victoria, as their starting point. De Pablo treats the material in several different ways in each piece, ranging from a very shrewd concealment of the quote – surrounded by almost random loops – to filtering through a tone cluster. The often feverish rhythm in certain passages throughout the cycle should also be noted as it is very characteristic of De Pablo's work, as well as his liking for brass bands, the mysterious ambience of strings or the vibraphone's sustained resonance.



"El Diari," Diabolus
in Música, Anna
Ricci (S) Palau de la
Música Catalana

JOAN GUINJOAN

(Riudoms, 1931)

Tzakol (1977)

A basic accordion, still waiting for someone to inflate its bellows in his home village of Riudoms, was the instrument that drove a young Guinjoan towards a very different destiny from that which he had expected as the son of farmers. He trained intensively with both talent and tenacity, first in Barcelona and later in Paris, after which he successfully started earning a living as a pianist. Although this slightly delayed his entrance into the world of composition, it also allowed Guinjoan to keep a certain distance from the avant-garde; he never feared musical contamination from contact with others who formed part of his experiences. Neither did he battle with classical ways of doing things; in fact, in the piece in question, Guinjoan tried "to get in touch with tradition" without forsaking his composing style.

Tzakol was commissioned by the Orquesta Nacional de España and was premiered in the Teatro Real de Madrid in January 1978, conducted by Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos. By choosing the image of Tzakol, the Mayan god associated

with creation, Guinjoan joined composers such as Edgard Varèse, Alberto Ginastera and Olivier Messiaen who sensed a cosmos of abstract, primordial forces in the pre-Columbian era to which the myth attributed the origin of sound, time and, ultimately, life. This idea allowed Guinjoan to take a largely basic approach in his production, using different types of language coherently: textural elements, which give prominence to percussion and various "extended" instrumental procedures, and both sharper and more temperate materials. We should not forget the composer's wish to "achieve a sound architecture that is as solid as possible", which he associates with "a short symphony", because of his so-called "para-musical" approach. In the first section, which is predominantly large-scale and timbric, the musicians are invited to take part in a breathtaking emergent process through which certain materials acquire corporeality. In the midst of the confusion around the overlapping elements, a hesitant *Tzakol* appears to put time in order and contemplate the process with progressive caesuras that add to the increasing tension. This leads to a new rhythmic section: a fugue with an air of jazz and harmonic resonance that involves the whole orchestra, intensifying the development until again the sound material is subjected to a chaotic,



impossible tempo. After a pause "that emphasises the symmetry of the melodic lines", the counterpoint work returns to drive the piece towards maximum densification. The surprise of a melodic mirage in a surreal and poetic climate materialises in the epilogue: a pentatonic melody, resplendent with humour and tenderness, over an enchanting backdrop of



harmonics. It is the origin, or the essence, found in the simplest melody, like that which accompanied the hazelnut harvest in the fields of Riudoms.

***Trama* (1982 - 1983)**

Joan Guinjoan believes that there are ten prominent pieces in his catalogue and, for him, *Trama*

is one of them. It is difficult not to agree with him; *Trama* is an exceptional composition that stands out for its refined construction and its constant attention to perceptive processes. These were, without doubt, the aspects which made it the deserving winner of the Ferrer-Salat Music Foundation's *Premio de Composición Reina Sofía* in 1983. In December 1984 it was

premiered in the Teatro Real de Madrid by the RTVE Symphony Orchestra, directed by Max Bragado-Darman.

To refer to his composition, Guinjoan uses terms such as “symphonic tableau” or “orchestral fresco”. These associations are not insignificant given that pictorial stimuli, especially informal painting that in a given moment reveals



a figurative concept, can be associated with his usual combination of large-scale, timbric elements from which temporal components that are linked to tradition arise. With his syncretic personal focus, Guinjoan reconciles materials of a diverse nature to use as composition generators. For example, in this piece, a flexible dodecaphonic, symmetrical series coexists with other fundamental elements such as rhythmic cells and resting areas, which play an essential role in the build-up of tension.

One of the composer's worries, alongside the intention of uniting these components coherently and testing new types of development, was "establishing a guiding thread for the listener". As such he formed a three-part structural plan, the first

of which offers the main material through contrasting atmospheres. The real storyline takes place in the central part: Guinjoan presents a simple quasi-refrain made up of various recognizable patterns in two sections. Confronting each other with great versatility until reaching the dense *tutti*, these bars produce renewed sound images in such a way that the dimension of the sculpted framework reaches a temporal development of enigmatic transcendence.

Calmo, the ending of *Trama*, brings together the expressive and moving illusion of an innocent children's choir, an "allegory in the key of D major" presented through a timbric kaleidoscope. The extent of Guinjoan's stunning, magical orchestration is displayed here: the harmonics on strings, the Harmon mutes, the oscillations and stops in the woodwind section. His orchestration allows the listener to reconstruct a song from memory; it materialised thanks to an instrumentation influenced by the Viennese School, Gerhard, de Falla and the impressionists, as shown by the citation of *Soupir*, the first of Ravel's *Trois Poèmes de Mallarmé* (1913), which permeates the sliding harmonics of the string quartet.

We should not forget, despite the benevolence and sense of humour

found in many of his thought processes, the strong character of Joan Guinjoan's music and the unwavering determination which made musical creation the main focus of his life. He takes no satisfaction in succeeding; with each new challenge he finds only a search which starts *ab origine* every time.

WITH HIS
SYNCRETIC
PERSONAL
FOCUS,
GUINJOAN
RECONCILES
[DIVERSE]
MATERIALS
TO USE AS
COMPOSITION
GENERATORS

326

P. Fl. *mf*

Fl. I *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

Fl. II *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

Hrb. I *mp* *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

Hrb. II *p* *cresc.* *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

C. a. *p* *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

Cl. I *p* *cresc.* *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

Cl. II *p* *cresc.* *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

Cl. b. *p* *cresc.* *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

Bn. I *p* *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

Bn. II *p* *cresc.* *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

Cbn. *cresc.* *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

I-III *mf* *à 2* *cresc. poco a poco*

Cor II-IV *mf* *à 2* *cresc. poco a poco*

Trp. I-II-III *mf* *à 3* *cresc. poco a poco*

I-II *mf* *à 2* *cresc. poco a poco*

III-Tb. *mf* *à 2* *cresc. poco a poco*

Perc. II *poco* *f*

III *mp* *f*

326

VI. I *ff* *dim. poco a poco*

VI. II *ff* *dim. poco a poco*

Alt. *ff* *dim. poco a poco*

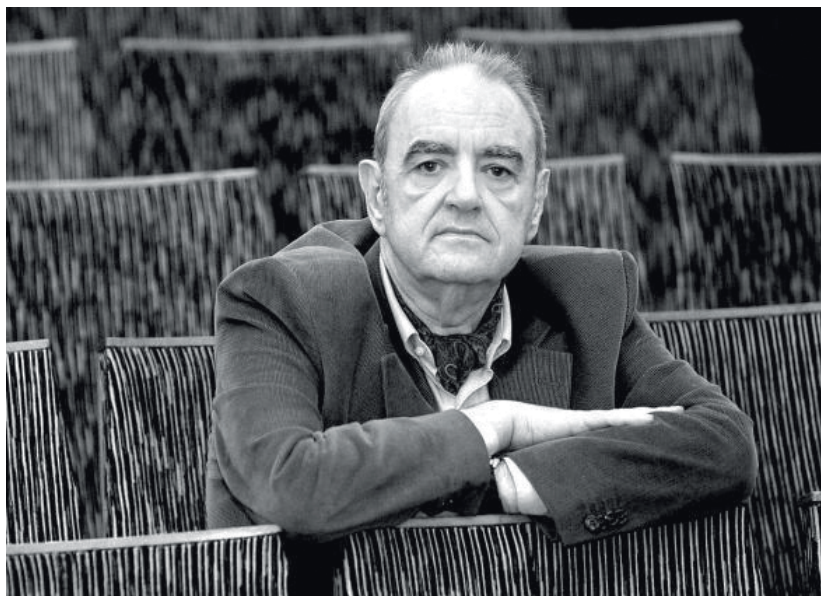
ff *dim. poco a poco*

ff *dim. poco a poco*

ff *dim. poco a poco*

ff *dim. poco a poco*

Trama,
JOAN GUINJOAN



TOMÁS MARCO

(Madrid, 1942)

Necronomicón (1971)

Tomás Marco, the most influential Spanish composer among those born in the forties, was appointed as a member of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in 1993. In his opening speech, entitled (in Spanish) Musical Creation as a World Image between Logical and Magical Thought, he stated that, “In the musical origins of the highest cultures of the planet, there is a mystical, magical view that influences the way music is produced, affecting its rules and its senses.” Considering this, it is

not surprising to see how many of Marco’s pieces have titles evoking a spiritual or magical world, ranging from contemplative mysticism in his “heavenly music” – *Vitral* (*Música celestial* nº 1) (1968 - 69) and *Floreal* (*Música celestial* nº 2) (1969) – to the satanic rituals of witches in *Akelarre* (1976).

Marco’s *Necronomicón* is a piece which combines elements that are both magical and terrifying. The title of the piece is actually inspired by the nightmarish universe of H.P. Lovecraft: Necromonicon is a fictional textbook created by the American writer, whose etymology is linked to the laws of the dead. The title suggests an atmosphere of necromancy with its implicit rituals, which is a powerful image consistent with the almost ceremonial distribution of the six percussionists needed for the piece,

almost inviting a complementary dramatisation. In fact, the subtitle of the piece is almost a statement of intent: “Choreography for six drummers”.

Necronomicón was premiered in Alhambra during the International Festival of Granada by Les Percussions de Strasbourg, who played it all around the world throughout the seventies. According to the composer in his programme note for the piece’s premiere, “There is a very strict formal work which can be seen as far as the instrumental economy of each section.” This conceptual formalism contrasts with the sextet’s largely indefinite notation: the durations are very approximate, and Marco allows the musicians to choose the pitch for instruments such as the marimba and the vibraphone. This work is very similar to collective improvisation performances, which were highly respected at that time.

The sextet can be divided into four parts, which the composer has numbered but are continuously linked. The first is devoted to metal instruments, the second to wooden percussion, the third to membranophones, and finally the last section which regroups all the different types of instrument. *Necronomicón* thus passes from delicate, sombre colours in the beginning, in a way reminiscent of electronic sounds – combining three tamtams rubbed with a bow, two tamtams immersed in water and twelve Thai gongs –, to the rhythmic whirlwind at the end, accentuated with sirens.

“THE PIECE IS SOUTHERN, ANTIPODAL...” BECAUSE “DURING AN EXTRAORDINARY BOOM OF MULTIPHONIC WRITING (WHICH WAS EVERYWHERE), I ONLY WANTED TO USE TRADITIONAL SOUNDS”

Concierto austral (1981)

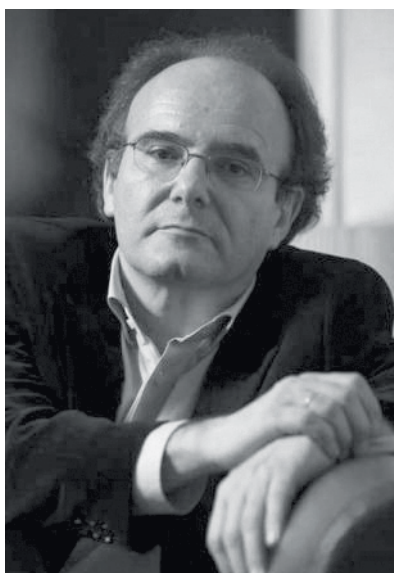
Marco dedicated a large part of his compositional efforts (from the seventies onwards) to the writing of concert music. In particular, up to the start of the early eighties, we can cite his *concerto for violin and orchestra Los Mecanismos de la memoria* (1971 - 72), his concertos for guitar and orchestra *Concierto Guadiana* (1973) and *Concierto Eco* (1976 - 1978), his Baroque concertos *Autodafé* (1975) and *Tauromaquia* (1976), his *Concierto for Cello and Orchestra* (1974 - 76), his violin concertos *Concierto coral* (1980) – accompanied by a double choir – and *Concierto del alma* (1982) – with string orchestra –, and the concerto for oboe and orchestra entitled *Concierto austral*, whose premiere was in Lisbon with Miguel Quirós as soloist.

The title *Concierto austral* is a double reference to Marco's

creative intentions. On the one hand, the piece follows a set of geometric proportions drawn from the Southern Cross, one of the southern constellations. The Madrilenian composer's passion for astronomy – or perhaps for astrology, returning to the balance between logical and magical thinking he supported – is reminiscent of Karlheinz Stockhausen's mystical philosophy, in view of the close relationship between the two composers during 1967. On the other hand, the use of the solo instrument consciously opposes certain scriptural methods that were very fashionable from the seventies onwards. In the programme note for the premiere of *Concierto austral*, Marco stated that “the piece is southern, antipodal, with regard to the oboe”, because “during an extraordinary boom of multiphonic writing (which was everywhere), I only wanted to use traditional

sounds”. Could this be seen as a relatively open criticism of the avalanche of epigonic attempts glorifying the great success of Luciano Berio's *Sequenza VII* (1969)?

The search for a certain austerity in the composition does not only concern the solo instrument, however. Admittedly, the *Concierto austral* is characterised by a typically sober rhythmic figuration and a harmonic ambience with various diatonic passages, even with a tonal chord closing the piece. This chord has root note A, the pitch with which the soloist begins the piece whilst imitating the orchestral ritual of tuning. These characteristics bring Marco's work somewhat closer to the current aesthetic of New Simplicity.



JOSÉ MANUEL LÓPEZ LÓPEZ

(Madrid, 1956)

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1995)

In the seventies, the arrival of spectral music in France marked an important milestone in the future of European art music. Numerous composers from all over Europe, most of them born in the fifties, used spectralism as a starting point – both technical and artistic – in the conception of their work, thus establishing a movement often called the “second spectral generation”. Alongside composers such as Georg F. Haas from Austria or Kaija Saariaho from Finland, we find José Manuel López López: the most significant representative of the aforementioned generation among his Spanish compatriots. His *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* is perhaps the most emblematic of his work – among the pieces that he composed during the nineties – in the assimilation of the spectral experience of personal writing. The piece was premiered by the Spanish National Orchestra with Anne Mercier as soloist.

Starting with a high E on violin, and adorned with the sound of percussion rubbed with a bow, the concerto is far from being a virtuoso acrobatic exercise periodically supported by the orchestra. The soloist maintains an almost uninterrupted discourse throughout the piece, triggering various orchestral processes which both amplify the violin melody and increase its complexity. According to López López, his aim was to avoid “the cliché of the indulged soloist in relation to the instruments of the orchestra”; on the contrary, the composer wanted to emphasise “the variety and virtuosity of a complex polyphonic network, the result of the interaction between several elements”. The result is a symphonic fresco where the melody is occasionally lifted to the surface, but is often overwhelmed by a vast amount of sound material.

The *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* proves López López had a taste for opulent and extremely refined sounds. The symphonic mass can be heard in this piece, with its layers of harmony-timbre, lay out with the rapid movements of the orchestra, at times culminating with the radiating brilliance of metallic percussion. The basic harmonic material for the composition of this piece comes from the spectral analysis of sounds produced

by percussion instruments rubbed with a bow, then orchestrated to simulate several techniques of electroacoustic music. López López wrote in an explanatory piece for the magazine *Sibila* that his concerto offered “the paradox of listening to a dense orchestral mass that is the release of an internal sound which lasts a few milliseconds”. Still, the composer has never wanted to simply transcribe computer data. The balance between acoustic research and poetic impulse is considered straightforward with López López – an attitude the musician has always had.

***Movimientos* (1998)**

According to Argentinian composer Horacio Vaggione, López López’s teacher during his training period in Paris, the concerto for two pianos and orchestra entitled *Movimientos* “certainly has a spectral approach, but it is the structuring in different time scales that is at the forefront.” The listener can hear the harmony-timbre agreements López López loves so much numerous times throughout the piece, but the meticulous work on the tempi and a precise rhythmic interpretation of the materials are the two most salient aspects when listening. For example, at the beginning of the piece the listener

can hear the way López López shapes an inexorable but cleverly fragmented temporal stream, distributed throughout the orchestra, with hockets often springing from soloist passages, perfectly balanced even if they are asymmetrical.

Another remarkable aspect of *Movimientos* is the spatial conception of the piece. In this regard, López López’s septet entitled *Met-tendo il grande oceano in spavento* (1997) must be taken into account; it is an incipient experience in the writing of concertos. *Movimientos* inherits the spatial arrangement of the aforementioned chamber piece, namely the opposition of the pianos and the triangular shape of the percussion. According to the Madrilénian composer, this distribution of soloists and percussion creates an acoustic space, generating sounds “that the orchestra picks up, changes and distributes permanently into the space”. The result is a sonorous discourse in perpetual motion, both temporally and spatially: quite an aural challenge for the audience.

Movimientos was premiered at the Musica Festival in Strasbourg by the Orchestre National de France, conducted by Pascual Rophé, with Delphine Bardin and Franz Michel as soloists. In addition, this piece marks a decisive turning point for López López in

both his creative thought process and his catalogue. In fact, the final bars of the concert weave a complex polyphony whose individual melodies use grains of sound at different speeds. The simulation of the electroacoustic techniques of granular synthesis in this work is characteristic of López López’s mature pieces, among which are his *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* (2005), his *Trio No. 3* (2008), and *SIMOG-CIVITELLA* (2011), his saxophone quartet.

**HIS AIM WAS
TO AVOID
“THE CLICHÉ
OF THE
INDULGED
SOLOIST IN
RELATION
TO THE
INSTRUMENTS
OF THE
ORCHESTRA”**



ALBERTO POSADAS

(Valladolid, 1967)

Magma (2000)

Magma was Posadas's second – and at that time last – symphonic piece, written seven years after his first, *Ápeiron* (1933), if his final two concertante pieces are not taken into account. Composed when Posadas was only 33 years old, it is not a work of youth; the Castilian composer uses *Magma* to demonstrate a very solid mastery of orchestral writing. Dedicated to his wife, it was premiered at the Musica Festival in Strasbourg, with Arturo Tamayo conducting the Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra. It

was also played at IRCAM's Mani-Feste during the 2017 season.

The title of the piece obviously evokes the geological processes associated with volcanic eruptions. Given this scientific metaphor, a virtual filiation can be established between Alberto Posadas's thoughts and Edgard Varèse's aesthetics. The Franco-American composer explains in his famous article *The Liberation of Sound* that, for him, musical form was born of a process equivalent to the "phenomena of crystallisation". The musical structure was then "extended and divided into different forms and groups of sounds, with constantly changing contours, directions and speed, attracted and repelled by several forces". On his side, Posadas explains in his programme note for *Magma*'s premiere that "the assimilations and differentiations are alternated so that the sound mass constantly changes its internal composition, whilst keeping some residues of the previous stages of its state within itself". In addition, he describes his formal strategies as a process of "evolving from states of crystallisation to melting points". The similarity between the quotations from the two composers is quite remarkable.

Magma is a piece for orchestra in threes, reinforcing the woodwind with a saxophone quartet. The score combines the creation of sound masses on a large scale – reminiscent of Iannis Xenakis's compositional attitude, or that of his teacher Francisco Guerrero – with minutely detailed writing for each of the instrumental lines. For example, many of the string

[POSADAS] DESCRIBES HIS FORMAL STRATEGIES AS A PROCESS OF “EVOLVING FROM STATES OF CRYSTALLIZATION TO MELTING POINTS”

passages are full of *divisi* – sometimes resulting in a polyphony of twenty voices – in which each of the lines is carefully sculpted, thus perpetually transforming the sound material. This tension between the mass and the details, as well as the very precise writing of dynamic nuances, gives rise to colours that are often vibrant, sometimes fragile, modelled on the abrupt forces triggered within volcanic formations.

***Sombras* (2010 - 2012)**

The string quartet holds a very special place in Posadas's catalogue. After one of the composer's first early works entitled *A silent sonitu* (1994), his cycle *Liturgia Fractal* (2003 - 2007) gave him an international visibility which deeply impacted the rest of his artistic career. It was also the starting point of a close collaboration with the Quatuor Diotima. Posadas

embarked on a new project with these musicians – to which voice and clarinet are added – called *Sombras*, striving for a reinvigoration of his composition. The entire second cycle was premiered at the Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik by the Quatuor Diotima, accompanied by the soprano Sarah Sun and the clarinetist Carl Rosman.

Sombras is made up of five pieces: *Elogio de la sombra* for string quartet; *Tránsito I* for voice and viola; *La tentación de las sombras* for voice and string quartet; *Tránsito II* for voice and clarinet; and finally *Del reflejo de la sombra* for bass clarinet and string quartet. This order must be strictly respected – even though the pieces can be played independently of each other – because it includes a particular staging purposely designed by the composer. As a matter of fact, only the quartet remains visible throughout the cycle: the soprano enters and exits

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the stage thanks to two opaque panels placed behind the quartet, and the clarinetist joins the rest of the musicians from outside, at first heard only in the distance like an echo of the musicians present.

The game of appearances and disappearances, moving from visible to hidden, calls on the shadows evoked in the title of the cycle, and the dark metaphor thus infiltrates many other aspects of *Sombras*: for example, several passages in *Elogio de la sombra* are played twice, the second time with a radical change in playing techniques and nuances. This produces an otherworldly halo effect, like a glimmering memory of the previous passage. In addition, the instruments are sometimes prepared or played using unorthodox techniques – for example, the cellist has to wear a thimble in *Del reflejo de la sombra* – to multiply the parasitic noises and thus hide the conventional colour.

One of the most unique aspects of *Sombras* in comparison to Posadas's other pieces is the emergence of a particular melodic theme that is found in several pieces in the cycle. The most obvious case is manifested through a short motif in *Tránsito I*, a three-note melodic cell linked to the first sung delivery of the word "*sombra*" [shadow]. This motif is repeated several times in an almost obsessive way during *La tentación de las sombras*, and underlines the most shocking passages of Emil Cioran's text. The dark motif finally dissolves in a sequence of velvety multiphonic sounds, played by the clarinet towards the end of *Tránsito II*.

***Kerguelen* (2013)**

Other geographical and geological references can be found in Posadas's catalogue, in addition to *Magma: Kerguelen* is the name of a huge submerged plateau in the Indian Ocean. This vast platform gives rise to several French and Australian archipelagos. The image of a great mass engulfed by water from which visible forms emerge metaphorically describes the compositional strategies of Posadas's homonymous triple concerto. In *Kerguelen*, the composer conceives a non-dialectic relationship between the three soloists – flute, oboe and clarinet – and the orchestra, a creative logic previously explored in his concert for bass saxophone *Resplandor (poema lírico dedicado a Atón)* (2008), which is opposed to the traditional dialogue between soloist(s) and accompaniment. As such, the orchestra works like a "sound plate" from which the materials of the soloists emerge and are emancipated, without establishing a true question/answer relationship between the two instrumental poles.

Regarding the orchestration of the piece, Posadas demonstrates his ability to shape the sound by moving from the most fragile nuances, that have a rarefied transparency – sometimes squeaky, as when the percussionists rub polystyrene blocks with a bow –, to the most extreme and sophisticated densities. In addition, certain heterophonic passages are reminiscent of other pieces by the composer, notably his piece for ensemble *Anamorfosis* (2006). The treatment of solo instruments

The image displays a musical score for the piece *Kerguelen* by Alberto Posadas. The score is written for multiple staves, likely representing different instruments or voices. It features complex microtonal shifts, indicated by symbols like $\pm [5/6]$, $\pm [b\flat]$, $\pm [b\flat] \text{ (dolce)}$, $\pm [F\sharp/E/G\sharp]$, and $\pm [1]$. The dynamics range from *mp* (mezzo-piano) to *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano). The score includes various musical notations such as trills, multiphonic sounds, and microtonal variations. The piece is identified as *Kerguelen* by ALBERTO POSADAS.

in *Kerguelen* is equally remarkable; the Castilian composer always tends to avoid the spectacularly athletic virtuosity often associated with the concertante genre. That doesn't imply the writing for the soloists is simple; on the contrary, it systematically exploits the most characteristic idiomatic gestures of the flute, oboe and clarinet, in the search for microtonal shifts in pitch and microscopic variations in qualities related to sound timbre. The result is a very successful three-way polyphonic symbiosis, specially developed throughout the *cadenza*. In this passage, the soloists intertwine as the register rises steadily, linking trills and multiphonic sounds in a perpetual and iridescent change of timbre.

Kerguelen was premiered at the Donaueschingen Festival by the Southwest German Radio Symphony Orchestra, conducted by François-Xavier Roth, with woodwind from the Ensemble Recherche. This piece, with a unique make up of musicians – the concerto *Sillages* (2005 - 2009) by Michael Jarrell can be cited as a similar case – was played again with the same soloists in 2016, during the season of the Musica Festival in Strasbourg.

HÈCTOR PARRA

(Barcelona, 1976)

***Caessant l'horizon* (2010 - 2011)**

Son of a physicist and assistant professor at the University of Barcelona, Hèctor Parra has time and again found science to be an inexhaustible source of musical inspiration. But Parra is far from using science as an abstract model for strict, future musical formalisation; his borrowings are generally metaphorical, often accompanied by iconic stimuli from visual representations of scientific knowledge. The composer's ideological position is clear enough in this respect, as seen in one of his articles where he emphasises that "beauty, intuition, elegance, and the profound feeling of finally-achieved perfection are shared cultural values which make lively and immediate communication between scientists and artists possible, both of whom share the delight of the creation of the universe".

Caessant l'horizon simultaneously hosts two scientific components as inspiration, one related to astrophysics and the

other to biological studies on the origin of development and life, specifically organogenesis. The title of this piece for an orchestra of 27 musicians seems to be a nod to the work of Jean-Pierre Luminet. The astrophysicist poetically describes the event horizon of black holes in his famous popular science book, *Le destin de l'Univers*, while indicating that an observer near this frontier with space could "brush as close as they wanted to without touching it".

The contrast between the physics of supermassive objects in the universe and the fragile condition of life is expressed by Parra in the form of a highly contrasting formal dialectic and in the conception of his musical material. On the one hand, the titanic gravitational forces inspire the most violent and rhythmically agitated passages of *Caessant l'horizon*, with brass and percussion used very abrasively. Here, the composer tries to "imagine what we could experience physically if we were actually going through the gravitational waves generated by the collision of two black holes". On the other hand, Parra evokes the processes of the formation of life whilst weaving lyrical melodic lines – often entrusted to the woodwind section – over a

harmonically extended and calm backdrop, but which tends cyclically towards becoming a complex polyphony heading for collapse.

Caessant l'horizon was premiered in Paris by the Ensemble InterContemporain conducted by Emilio Pomarico. The composer recently wrote a new piece for soloist, orchestra and electronics entitled INSCAPE, once again emerging from his interest in black holes. It is the fruit of a triple commission from Barcelona, Lille and Cologne, and this time he collaborated directly with Luminet. The world premiere of this project took place in 2018.

***Moins qu'un souffle, à peine un mouvement de l'air* (2012)**

Ensemble and chamber music holds a very important place in the young Catalan composer's catalogue. Among his pieces for a relatively small ensemble, *Moins qu'un souffle, à peine un mouvement de l'air* is the only one conceived for a solo instrument – the flute – with accompaniment, with the exception of his quintet *Early Life* (2010) where the oboe plays an equally predominant role. *Moins qu'un soufflé...* was premiered by the musicians of the



Klangforum Wien – who commissioned the piece – in the Mozart Hall of the Wiener Konzerthaus, conducted by Enno Poppe.

The title of the piece is taken from a narrative found in *Trois femmes puissantes*, a novel by Marie Ndiaye, so *Moins qu'un souffle...* is in some way the prologue of the close collaboration between Parra and the French author – who has Senegalese roots – for two ambitious stage projects:

the monodrama *Te craindre en ton absence* (2012 - 2013) and the tragicomedy *Das geopfert Leben* (2013). At the end of an interview with the Ensemble InterContemporain for Accents magazine, the composer revealed how “the flute, inspired by Fulani flute melodies, personifies the young illegal immigrant until the tragic destiny of which Marie NDiaye speaks”.

Sub-Saharan musical traditions have had a decisive impact on the

soloist's virtuoso writing. The Fulani flute is the traditional instrument of the shepherds found in the Fouta Djallon mountain range in the west of the Republic of Guinea, but it can also be found in several neighbouring countries. Made of wood, its shape is similar to that of Western transverse flutes, but the African instrument is diatonic. Parra did not choose this model to recreate a tradition from outside Europe within contemporary music, however; the most decisive creative input for the solo writing is related to the playing techniques that are particular to the African flute. It is true that the sound of this instrument has a strong wind component, often reinforced by the vocal colour of the instrumentalist. This type of technique can be found, albeit taken to the extreme, in *Moins qu'un souffle...*: the soloist is faced with an athletic challenge throughout the piece, with a wide variety of playing techniques ranging from the most fragile and delicate sounds to sudden explosions and bursts of air. In turn, the ensemble imitates and often accompanies the profiles of energetic tension traced by the flute, but sometimes opposes fairly contrasting materials.

Wilde (2014 - 2015)

We have already mentioned two pieces for stage written by the composer from Barcelona: *Te craindre en ton absence* and *Das geopferte Leben*. They are preceded by *Zangezi* (2007) – based on the homonymous poem by Velimir Khlebnikov – and *Hypermusic Prologue* (2008 - 2009) – with a booklet by the American physicist Lisa Randall –, both small scale. Parra's fifth composition for the stage, entitled *Wilde*, is believed to be his most ambitious project with regard to the duration and number of musicians. Furthermore, the fact that he has five stage pieces in his catalogue before the age of 40 is a sign of Hèctor Parra's uniqueness and precocity on his artistic journey.

Wilde is the musical adaptation of Händl Klaus's dramaturgical text/libretto (*Wilde*) *Mann mit traurigen Augen* (2003). This text is inspired by *Haus ur* by the artist Gregor Schneider, winner of the Venice Biennial; a house with a conventional façade but with the inside modified to be a squalid maze, apparently designed by psychologically disturbed inhabitants. This terrifying image serves as a starting point for Klaus: his theatrical piece describes the nightmare experienced by a young recruit from Doctors without Borders, Gunter, who is unfortunately taken

[HE CREATED] “OPPRESSIVE MUSIC THAT EMPHASIZES THE PROFOUNDLY SELFISH AND WILD PART OF A HUMAN BEING”

prisoner by the Flick family – a terrifying, sadistic clan. The Flicks expose the doctor various different kinds of physical and mental degradation and humiliation, until the point of destroying his emotions and his human condition.

According to Parra, being faced with such a disturbing libretto was a great compositional challenge, given its duration of almost two hours. He conceived the idea of “revealing human fragility but also confronting us with its cruellest face”, through “oppressive music that emphasizes the profoundly selfish and wild part of a human being”. In fact, all of Parra's stylistic elements are present in *Wilde* to create a stifling atmosphere, on the edge of claustrophobia, thus causing the listener to feel very agitated and troubled. The voices emerge with magnified lyricism – sometimes threatening – over some very distressing orchestration, without

the vocals becoming too conservative or nostalgic.

Wilde was premiered at the Schwetzingen Festival, directed by Calixto Bieito; it will be played again for the bicentenary of the Teatro Real in Madrid. In addition, the opera is at the root of two pieces for orchestra in the Catalan composer's catalogue: *Wilde Concert Overture and Finale* (2015) and the longer *Wilde Suite* (2015), respectively premiered in Madrid and Barcelona.



BLAI SOLER

(Barcelona, 1977)

Sol (2016)

A trained violinist who settled in London in the nineties, Blai Soler was a pupil of Georges Benjamin at King's College and was awarded a doctorate in Composition from this prestigious university institution. Today, the young musician's catalogue contains five orchestral pieces: *Rilke Verses* (2007), *The Rock, The Vulture and The Chain* (2010), *Plain-Chant* (2011), *Divinations* (2013) and the most recent – published by Éditions Durand –, *Sol* (2016). The latter was premiered on 2nd March 2017 by the Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine, led by their principal conductor Paul Daniel. The string quartet entitled *Imaginations* (2013) is also published by Durand.

Sol is a deliberately ambiguous title. The Catalan term makes reference to the sun, the ground and solitude, as well as the musical note G; all of these meanings play a part in the poetic metaphor of the piece. It is divided into five movements, with an overall duration of around 18 minutes, yet the piece is presented in a unified way as an organic whole – with the exception of the final movement, which deliberately contrasts with the

previous ones in terms of duration and tempo. In fact, the modal conception of the melodic-harmonic materials chosen by Soler, as well as the strategic distribution of the registers explored in each movement, obey logical sequences between meticulously calculated movements throughout the piece, without becoming a mechanical flux. In this way each movement creates its own universe, but in turn projects compositional consequences towards the next movement.

Another remarkable aspect of *Sol's* composition is the restrained treatment of the orchestral palette exercised by Soler. Passages in *tutti* – or using almost all of the instruments in the orchestra – are rarely found in the piece. This restraint does not imply a lack of colour; on the contrary, the young Catalan composer uses a wide range of instrumental combinations, with clear differentiation between the different sections of the orchestra, always aiming for transparency in competing layers. The result is a sound that is not very dense but rich in its lightness, whose tensions and sound balance are immediately perceptible to the listener.



JOAN MAGRANÉ FIGUERA

(Reus, 1988)

Marines i boscatges (5è dia de la creació) (2016)

Joan Magrané Figuera is currently the youngest Spanish composer to be published by Durand Salabert Eschig. Although the composer has not yet reached his thirties, four of his pieces have already been played by the Ensemble InterContemporain: in an educational context, his trio *Un Triptyque voilé* (2014) and his mixed quintet *Bréviaire de l'aurore* (2014); and through professional commissions, his *Fragments d'Ausiàs March* (2016) for voice and ensemble, and his piece for 14 instruments *Marines i boscatges (5è dia de la creació)*.

The latter piece was commissioned by Matthias Pintscher for the Ensemble InterContemporain's 40th birthday, in a project which, based on the seven days of creation, contains the same number of pieces – each around six minutes long –, and includes commissions from Mark Andre, Franck

Bedrossian, Chaya Czernowin, Stefano Gervasoni, Joan Magrané Figuera, Marko Nikodijević and Anna Thorvaldsdóttir. Magrané Figuera composed the music for the fifth day, when God said: “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” *Marines i boscatges* alludes to this biblical verse and to the abundance of life in the sea and the forest. The Catalan composer nourished his poetic imagery with inspiration from a famous tapestry housed in Girona Cathedral which depicts the seven days of creation. These types of stimuli, exogenous to music, is almost a constant in Magrané Figuera's work: it is often laced with pictorial and literary references. In an explanatory piece for the Basque ensemble Ciklus he states: “Because of the inescapably abstract nature of the music, some extra-musical references must be given. [...] Within the framework of such a proposal [...] approaching the idea of madrigalism is unavoidable.”

The essence of madrigalism can be found everywhere in *Marines i boscatges*. In fact, some compositional solutions are quite suggestive of the natural elements explicit in the title, practically playing a figuralist role. For example, the concatenation of several almost

Ondulante ♩ = 63

22

f *pp* *mf* *pp* *mp* *pp* *f*

f *pp* *mp* *pp*

f *pp* *mp* *pp* *f* *pp*

f *pp* *mp* *pp*

Marines i boscatges,
JOAN MAGRANÉ
FIGUERA

periodic impulses, like a breeze, could invoke images of ocean waves. Certain polyphonic frames hampered by a very refined usage of timbre stir up dreams of a jungle full of birds; could we surmise a hidden reference to *Prêche aux oiseaux* from Olivier Messaien's opera? The most symbolic cultural reference emerges in the middle of Magrané Figuera's piece: the Catalan composer quotes – with the celesta, harp, piccolo and metallic percussion – Orlando Gibbons's madrigal *The Silver Swan* (1611). The swan, an aquatic bird, symbolises the connection between the water and the sky.

ISAAC ALBÉNIZ8*Pepita Jiménez*

2-act lyric comedy

3.3.3.2 — 4.2.4.0 — timp

- perc - 2 hp — strings

[divided]

1h30'

Iberia, twelve impressions

for piano

35'

MANUEL DE FALLA14*La Vida breve*

lyric drama in two acts

and four scenes

3.3.3.2 — 4.2.3.1 — timp - 2

perc — 2 hp — cel — strings

65'

*Noches en los Jardines**de España*

for piano & orchestra

3.3.2.2 — 4.2.3.1 — timp

- perc - cel - hp — strings

[divided]

25'

Concerto per clavicembalo

for harpsichord (or piano)

with flute, oboe, clarinet,

violin & cello

15'

LUIS DE PABLO26*Módulos III*

for 17 musicians

0.0.0.0 — 0.4.0.0 — timp -

4 perc - orgue/harmonium

- cel - 2pno - 2 hp - gt -

mand

18'

Éléphants ivres

for orchestra

3.2.2.2 — 4.3.2.0 — 3 perc

- org Hammond - hp —

8.8.8.6.4

15'

ENRIQUE GRANADOS11*Doce Danzas Españolas*

for piano

1h

*Goyescas, « Los majos
enamorados »*

for piano

18' 25"

JOAN GUINJOAN28*Tzakol*

for orchestra

3.3.3.3 — 4.3.3.1 — 4

perc - pno - hp — strings

[divided]

14'

Trama

for orchestra

3.3.3.3 — 4.3.3.1 — 3

perc - pno — 16.14.12.10.8

[divided]

20'

ERNESTO HALFFTER..... 18*Sinfonietta*

for violin, cello, double bass

& orchestra

1.1.1.1 — 2.1.1.0 — timp -

perc — strings

36'

Rapsodia portuguesa

for piano & orchestra

3.3.4.3 — 4.3.3.1 — timp -

2 perc - cel - 2 hp — strings

20'

JOSÉ MANUEL LÓPEZ**LÓPEZ34**

Concerto for Violin and

orchestra

for violin & orchestra

4.4.4.4 — 4.3.3.1 — 5 perc -

pno - 2 hp — 16.14.10.10.8

19'

Movimientos

for two pianos & orchestra

2.2.2.2 — 2.2.2.1 — 3 perc

- pno - pno — 12.10.8.6.4

10'

JOAN MAGRANÉ**FIGUERA44***Marines i boscatges*

for 14 musicians

2.1.1.0 — 0.0.0.0 — 3 perc

- pno - hp — 1.1.1.1.1

9'

TOMÁS MARCO 32*Necronomicón*

for 6 percussionists

20'

Concierto austral

for oboe & orchestra

3.3.3.3 — 4.3.3.1 — timb -

2 perc - pno - hp — strings

18'

FREDERIC MOMPOU24*Música callada*

for piano

1h

HÈCTOR PARRA..... 40*Caressant l'horizon*

for 27 musicians

2.2.2.2 — 2.2.2.1 — 3 perc

- hp — 3.2.2.1

30'

*Moins qu'un souffle,**à peine un mouvement**de l'air*

for flute/bass flute/small

flute & ensemble

1.0.0.0 — 0.0.0.0 — 2 perc

— hp - pno — 1.1.1.1.1

20'

Wilde

for six singers, actor (silent

role) & orchestra

2.2.2.2 — 2.2.2.1 — 2 perc

— hp — strings

2h

ALBERTO POSADAS36*Magma*

for large orchestra

3.3.3.3.4 — 4.3.3.1

— 4 perc - accordion —

16.14.12.10.8

20'

Sombras

for soprano, clarinet &

string quartet

- *La tentación de la**sombras* : soprano & string

quartet - 21'05"

- *Tránsito I* : soprano voice

& viola, 5'33"

- *Elogio de la sombra* :

string quartet, 19'08"

- *Tránsito II* : soprano

voice & clarinet in B flat,

5'13"

- *Del reflejo de la sombra* :

bass clarinet & string

quartet, 18'05"

BLAI SOLER.....43*Sol*

for orchestra

3.3.3.3 — 4.3.3.1 — 3 perc

— 12.12.10.8.6

20'

JOAQUÍN TURINA.....22*La Oración del Torero*

for string orchestra

8'25"

Five Gypsy Dances

for orchestra

2.2.2.2 — 2.2.0.0 — timp -

perc - pno — strings

16'

Combat del somni

for voice & piano or

orchestra

2.1.1.1 — 2.0.0.0 — hp —

10.10.8.4.4

8'40"

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