

Cultural and artistic relevance in the Spanish post-civil war context

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Abstract: This paper explores various aspects of Spanish cultural potential and the ways in which musicians evolved – or failed to evolve – within a precarious historical context (1939-1945). The cultural panorama presented here reflects a diversity of ideals, concerns, and artistic convictions held by intellectuals and artists operating under a general sense of desolation and despair. The path they embarked upon proved to be a difficult one. Proponents of new musical transformations adopted languages and ideologies that departed significantly from traditional normm. Their interest turned towards the achievements of European and American composers, with particular attention to recent innovations such as electronic and electroacoustic music, instrumental theatre, and contemporary opera. This journey often led to either physical exile or internal (psychological) withdrawal. In terms of music, there was a noticeable return to the aesthetic of the national school, preceding the free modernist expression attempted by the *Generation of 1927* – a generation largely silenced and obscured by the passage of time. Consequently, Spain endured a strong cultural colonization by German-Russian symphonism, particularly in terms of national musical schools and Romantic creations, which were still largely unexplored by Spanish musicians at the time.

Keywords: Spanish music, Generation of 1927, symphony, chamber music

1. Introduction

The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) generated a profound state of questioning and unrest. In its aftermath, and with the outbreak of World War II, a mass phenomenon of exile ensued. What made this situation particularly painful was that Spanish exile involved not only political, economic, ethnic, or religious decline, but also a significant cultural loss. The cause lay in the mass departure of scientists, artists, and culturally engaged individuals – most of them supporters of the democratic and republican ideology. Spain's gaze turned towards European and American societies, and the primary host countries for exiles became Mexico, Argentina, Cuba, Chile, the Dominican Republic, the USSR, France, the UK, Belgium, among others.

Once settled in their new host countries, exiles initiated a process of integration and cultural symbiosis, especially in countries like Mexico and France. The exiled intellectuals brought with them their native customs and

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cultural legacy, leaving behind their homeland with deep nostalgia. At the same time, they helped reshape perceptions of Spanish society, fractured by internal divisions. Poetry became the dominant literary genre through which Spanish writers expressed the anguish of exile, deep spiritual and material desolation, nostalgia for the past, feelings of ambiguity, and a lack of immediate perspective.

Spanish intellectuals in exile engaged in numerous cultural activities, including collaboration with journals and periodicals, in addition to their work as creators. They continued the ideological and spiritual trajectory initiated in Spain by the avant-garde movement, influencing and transmitting cultural values across borders. This cultural exchange gave rise to institutions such as the *Casa de la Cultura* and the *Spanish Republican Circle*. Through these efforts, the process of cultural and artistic revitalization accelerated. All major figures of the Spanish intelligentsia participated, promoting a mode of coexistence and intercultural enrichment that transferred cultural heritage from one nation to another.

On the other hand, the cultural panorama for those who remained in Spain during the post-war years – under the weight of both the Civil War and World War II – reflected not only the desolate state of general affairs, but also a sense of moral decay and spiritual deprivation.

2. Spanish Culture and Intellectuals During and After the Civil War (1936 – 1945)

The near-total destruction of Spanish artistic heritage as a result of the historical circumstances following the two wars (the Spanish Civil War and World War II) led to acts of persecution and even threats to the lives of intellectuals. Cases of this nature reveal figures such as Federico García Lorca, Ramiro de Maeztu, Manuel de Unamuno, Ramón María del Valle-Inclán, Antonio Machado, Miguel Hernández, among others. Some of them were simply executed, others were politically imprisoned without much justification, while some succumbed to despair under the leadership of the Francoist and fascist regimes. Under repressive rule and isolated from the rest of Europe due to dictatorial censorship, Spain could not maintain its capacity for resistance in the face of the turbulent situation and thus fell into a state of social depression. Intellectuals were denied freedom of expression, which implies the broader context of the cultural drama during the post-war period (1939-1945).

In the arts, artistic concepts suited to the prevailing conjuncture were accepted, which, evidently, did not necessarily reflect the true ideological values of the artists. For a time, artistic expression bore the mark of falsity and took on a physiognomy inappropriate to authentic creativity, giving rise to expressions such as fascist art and culture or nationalist-Catholic expressions. Nevertheless, a segment of the intellectual class who remained in Spain refused to be intimidated by the new harsh realities in which they lived. Consequently, they

categorically rejected the manipulation of artistic, historical, and cultural values, which were reduced to superficial interpretations.

Simultaneously, there was a certain influence from beyond Spain's borders in the fields of art, science, and culture as a whole, generating artistic expressions borrowed from European movements. For example, Spain for a time admired the architecture of Nazi Germany, with elevated columns – an idea that attracted even our own great visual artist Constantin Brâncuși. Geometrically angular vertical tendencies were embraced by artists such as Albert Speer, Paul Ludwig Troost, and Arno Breker. This same monumental profile of construction and macro-forms is seen in the sculptural aesthetics of Russian artists like Vassily Kandinsky and Kazimir Malevich. In music, the phenomenon of grandeur is found in the symphonic and concertante genres brought by composers such as Dmitri Shostakovich, Aram Khachaturian, and Dmitri Kabalevsky. The stylistic configuration associated with the concept of monumentality, as mentioned above, found success in Spain through the works of architects Luis Moya y Zabala and Gutiérrez Soto. Religious buildings in neo-Gothic style with Romanesque influences signify nothing other than the absence of a firm and clear aesthetic, and the absence of true religious meaning, which ultimately degenerates into mere protocol acts – once again affirming the emptiness of the Catholic spirit's essence.

As for the visual arts, a variety of artistic expressions emerged, along with a constant search for means of expression. These range from the tension-filled expressivity (as nuance) found in the paintings of Diego Velázquez, to the realism of Fernando Álvarez de Sotomayor, to the calm landscapes of José María Santamarina and Pedro Bueno, and to the figurative speculations of José Aguiar.

In literature, particularly prose, there was a strong interest in clarity and conciseness of phrasing, as demonstrated in the works of Ángel María Pascual, Luys Santa Marina, and Antonio Montes. Formal rigor in poetry was conveyed through the works of the generation focused on the sonnet: Dionisio Ridruejo, Fernando Gutiérrez, Miquel Peris i Segarra, Leopoldo Panero, Juan Eduardo Cirlot, and others.

In any case, the period between 1939 and 1945, which includes World War II, was marked by a series of universal calamities: on September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland; on June 10, 1940, Italy declared war on France and Great Britain; on October 28 of the same year, Italy invaded Greece; on December 8, 1941, the United States and Great Britain declared war on Japan; on January 18, 1942, the Military Alliance entered Germany, Italy, and Japan; and on August 6, 1945, the U.S. bombed Hiroshima.

In Spain, on April 1, 1939, Francisco Franco declared himself a military general, marking the end of the internal conflict, and by January 26, 1940, he had established a dictatorial regime. Syndicates dependent on the Falangist political organization were then created, whose ideology was rooted in Italian

fascism. Later, on March 1 of the same year, Franco proclaimed the Law of Repression against Freemasonry and Communism. In 1946, the United Nations condemned the Francoist regime and severed all relations of aid and cordiality with Spain.

Ultimately, Franco's dictatorial government failed to impose a totalitarian culture with homogeneous particularities due to the counter-manifestations brought by those who followed the educational system proposed by Francisco Giner de los Ríos (the project of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, proposed in 1876). In other words, cultural figures were aware of the evolution of events and did not allow, under any form of mass manipulation, the loss of educational achievements with pedagogical content. As a result, major cultural leaders resigned from important positions – Ramón Menéndez Pidal, for instance, resigned as director of the Department of the Spanish Language within the Spanish Academy. This institution, along with the Student Residence in Madrid, the *Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios, Instituto Escuela*, the Higher Council for Scientific Research in Madrid, and the Ramiro de Maeztu Institute were taken over by religious entities, which advocated for censorship and creative abstinence.

With the onset of the persecution of intellectuals, each followed their principles or interests according to their own moral compass. The tragedy of events led some to adopt a form of psychological exile (silence). The thirst for knowledge and communication endured the pain of forced silence. Such was the case for dramatic figures like Vicente Aleixandre, Juan Gil Albert, or Rafael Cansinos Asséns, among others. A series of artists, scientists, and educators went into exile. Jorge Guillén, Rafael Alberti, María Zambrano, Luis Cernuda, José Bergamín, Francisco Ayala, and others pursued professional careers in their adoptive countries, where some obtained Nobel Prizes – Juan Ramón Jiménez for literature and Severo Ochoa for medicine –. Some of them returned to Spain after 1939. Nonetheless, Spain permanently lost many creators who remained abroad until the end of their lives. As a gesture of gratitude for the lost cultural values, starting in 1945, Spain began to pay homage to them, with this movement gaining momentum through the “Generation of 1951” or the “Avant-Garde Generation”, coinciding with the rise of the avant-garde movement.

Thus, the new role of music in the immediate period following the Civil War and the outbreak of World War II (both in 1939) did not differ much from the period preceding these events. The fostering of interest in culture and the arts among the masses was marked by the same neglect, primarily due to social and economic issues, but also due to a lack of or inadequate information, in comparison with the rest of Western Europe. Although the avant-garde movement had reached maturity in the rest of Western Europe, it only began in Spain around the 1950s–1960s and continued to suffer from the effects of isolation imposed by Francisco Franco's regime, which lasted until his death in

1975. Spain's cultural isolation intensified over time, leading to a decline in cultural development and a disorientation of its intellectuals.

As a result, Spanish music experienced a slowdown in creative activity, as did all fields, despite being promoted by the "Generation of '27" (of the Republic), which was cut short by the conflict and its aftermath. It is worth mentioning that in 1936 most musicians were in their prime, having already consolidated their personal aesthetics and styles. There are many examples within this generation, but several representative figures of the musical movement between the 1920s and 1950s can be mentioned: Joaquín Homs presented in 1934 his *Songs for Soprano and Piano* and in 1936 *Duo for Flute and Clarinet*; Matilde Salvador composed in 1933 *Com es la lluna* for mixed choir; Xavier Montsalvatge was on the path to defining his aesthetic – later known as Antillean, inspired by Cuba – when he composed *Three Impromptus* in 1934 and *Petites peces burlesques* in 1936; Gerardo Gombau showed interest in modal and formal aspects, harmonizing melody in the style of Felipe Pedrell, followed by Manuel de Falla, and was among the first composers to explore twelve-tone techniques.

3. Gerardo Gombau – an Outstanding Composer of the Post-War Period

Gerardo Gombau, a musician belonging to the Generation of '27, stands out as one of the few composers – if not the only one – who did not cease his creative activity during the wartime or post-war years. On the contrary, between 1940 and 1945, he actively participated in various musical movements as a composer, conductor, musicologist, lecturer, and pedagogue. Moreover, Gombau demonstrated a particular interest in presenting classical repertoire, ranging from Renaissance composers to contemporary ones. Through his dedication, this notable figure of 20th-century Spanish music contributed to the emergence of provincial cities such as Salamanca as significant musical centres that have maintained their artistic value to this day.

A distinctive trait of Gerardo Gombau is his anticipation of a certain attitude of openness toward new systems of musical syntax. He paved the way for several other composers, including Roberto Gerhard, Ernesto Halffter, Joaquín Homs, and Carlos Suriñach.

As a relevant aside supporting the analysis of one of Gombau's key compositions, the symphonic poem *Don Quijote velando las armas* [*Don Quixote Watching Over His Arms*] is characterized by a neoclassical orientation that retains elements of the national school – a successful blend of aesthetic components. Composed in 1945, the work alludes to the third chapter of Cervantes' novel: "Wherein is related the droll way in which Don Quixote had himself dubbed a knight." The evolution of Gombau's compositional technique reaches considerable maturity here, notably through the rigorous organization of formal structures and instrumentation. This piece marks his first large-scale

orchestral composition, addressing a theme of shared interest among many composers – not only Spanish – each interpreting the character and scenes through distinct programmatic images and musical perspectives.

However, Gombau's stylistic individuality in the musical portrayal of the episode *Don Quixote Watching Over His Arms* is reflected in his formal choices, particularly his use of the sonata form, which he treats differently from its classical meaning. Although the formal scheme consists of the same four sections – introduction, exposition, development, and recapitulation – his focus lies in the episodic vision, with thematic exposition presented in fragments and sections.

The analysis reveals a departure from the classical sonata (Allegro) form. Formal structuring is conceived in smaller dimensions, through short musical interventions. Conversely, the introduction and development sections are extended in temporal scope. The same applies to tempo: longer sections are slower, while shorter ones are faster. Regarding the treatment of musical material itself, Gombau – then at the onset of his artistic maturity – foreshadows his future stylistic evolution. This is evident in his command of compositional technique, his orchestral choices (notably the use of the harp as a coloristic effect, a hallmark in many of his orchestral works), his emphasis on dissonance, and his specific approach to orchestration.

The Spanish symphonic poem *Don Quixote Watching Over His Arms* brings together post-Romantic Straussian and Wagnerian elements with those of the Spanish national school, particularly the regional (Castilian / Castilla-La Mancha) style. Another hallmark of Gombau's stylistic particularity lies in his avoidance of classical techniques for presenting instrumental textures in thematic repetitions; instead, he adopts a continuous and variational developmental process. This method reflects his intention not to depict characters or actions narratively but rather to present the contrast between two thematic-personas – one active and the other passive – representing Don Quixote and Dulcinea, respectively.

Fig. 1 Gerardo Gombau, *Don Quixote Watches Over His Arms*, Dulcinea's theme, mm. 48-49

In terms of tonality, the work presents considerable ambiguity due to its melodic complexity, being laden with dissonant notes. The dissonances, in turn, create significant melodic instability. Timbral tensions result from enharmonic modulations, which move away from the initial tonic centre towards the major key. There is a noticeable amalgamation of alterations affecting the notes that form intervals of seconds, fourths, fifths, sixths, and sevenths (predominantly dissonant ones), along with the inclusion of both augmented and diminished intervals. Thus, there are no harmonic preparations or resolutions, and the musical discourse appears to unfold simultaneously in multiple directions. The composition seeks to open new horizons, leaving behind numerous harmonic and timbral explorations.

The image displays a page of a musical score for Gerardo Gombau's *Don Quijote Watches the Arms*, measures 85-89. The score is written for a large orchestra and includes the following parts: Flute (Fl.), Flute 2 and Flute 3 (Flt. y Flt. 3), Oboe I (Ob. I), Oboe II (Ob. II), Clarinet (Cl.), Clarinet Bass (Cl. bajo), Bassoon (Fg.), Contrabassoon (Cfg.), Horn I (Hr.), Horn II (Hr.), Trumpet (Trp.), Trombone I and Trombone II (Trb. II y Tuba), Timpani (Timb.), Snare Drum (Caja), Bass Drum (Pand.), Bassoon (B-o), Piano (Piano), Violin I (V1), Violin II (V2), Viola (Via.), Violoncello (Vic.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score is marked 'Menos' at the beginning and includes various performance instructions such as 'sonoro', 'f', 'mf', 'pizz.', and 'arco'. The piano part features complex, dissonant chordal structures and enharmonic modulations, with specific markings like 'Pia. con maza' and 'div. a 3'.

Fig. 2 Gerardo Gombau: *Don Quijote Watches the Arms*: Dissonant chordal overlays and enharmonic modulations, mm. 85-89

It is noteworthy that the key of A major appears at the beginning and end of the work, through clearly exposed triadic chords or ascending scales.

③ Allegro noble $\text{♩} = 96$

Fl.
Flt. y Fl. III
Ob. I
Ob. II
Cl. I
Cl. II
Cl. bajo
Fg.
Cfg.
Hr.
Hr.
Trp.
Trb.
Trb. II y Tuba
Timb.
Caja
Pand.
B-o
Piano
V1
V2
Vla.
Vlc.
Cb.

Allegro noble $\text{♩} = 96$

Fig. 3 Gerardo Gombau: *Don Quijote Watches the Arms*: Appearance of A major tonality at the beginning and end of the work, from measure 61, then from m. 190 to the end.
a) Beginning.

The image displays a page of a musical score for a symphony orchestra, covering measures 190 to 192. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral layout with multiple staves for each instrument family. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. A second ending bracket labeled 'II' spans measures 190 and 191. The woodwind section includes Flute (Fl.), Flute and Flute III (Flt. y Fl. III), Oboe I (Ob. I), Oboe II (Ob. II), Clarinet (Cl.), Clarinet Bass (Cl. bajo), Bassoon (Fg.), and Contrabassoon (Cfg.). The brass section includes Horns (Hr.), Trumpets (Trp.), Trombones (Trb.), and Trombones II and Tubas (Trb. II y Tuba). The percussion section includes Timpani (Timb.), Cymbals (Caja), and Snare Drum (Pand.). The string section includes Violins I (V1), Violins II (V2), Viola (Via.), Violoncello (Vic.), and Contrabass (Cb.). Dynamics such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *uniss.* (unison) are indicated throughout the score.

b) End (mm. 190-192)

From this analysis, it can be observed that the theme in the exposition is conceived in the form of contrapuntal imitations, in the low instrumental register (deliberately ambiguous effect); the development is not structured according to the model of tonal relationships; the recapitulation does not conclude in the main tonality (on the contrary, the key signature disappears at one point, without referencing unaltered scales).

The image displays a page of a musical score for Gerardo Gombau's *Don Quijote Watches the Arms*, specifically the exposition section (measures 44-47). The score is written for a large ensemble, including woodwinds, brass, percussion, piano, and strings. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The tempo is marked *casi rit.* (almost ritardando). The dynamic marking *p ma sonoro* (piano but sonorous) is present in the woodwind and brass parts. The score shows contrapuntal imitations of Don Quijote's theme in the low register, with various instruments playing the theme in different registers and textures. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment. The string parts provide a harmonic and rhythmic foundation. The overall effect is deliberately ambiguous, as noted in the text above.

Fig. 4 Gerardo Gombau: *Don Quijote Watches the Arms*: The exposition – contrapuntal imitations of Don Quijote’s theme in the low register with an ambiguous effect, mm. 44-47

A particular feature of Gerardo Gombau's style is the confirmation of the cadence, not following the principle of classical harmony, but starting from the main tonality, after which the cadence resolves on the dominant. Thus, instead of the traditional dominant-tonic cadential progression, this composer creates it in reverse, tonic-dominant, recalling the semi-cadences typical of folk melodies.



Fig. 5 Gerardo Gombau: *Don Quijote Watches the Arms*: Confirmation of the cadence starting from the main tonality and resolving on the dominant, mm. 203-205

Regarding dynamics and agogics, these are also affected to a large extent by: fleeting alternations between slow and fast, piano and forte (with orchestral *crescendo*) or homophonic-textured and polyphonic-textured (exposition-development). The timbral differences, initially soft and almost imperceptible, eventually build up (a hallmark of the composer) to an orchestral tutti when presenting the main theme or themes. (Fig. 6)

After composing *Don Quijote Watches the Arms*, Gerardo Gombau would enter a transitional period; the years 1950-1958 were years of aesthetic exploration, of self-definition in a fully personal style. Starting from 1954, Gerardo Gombau progressively distanced himself from tonal language, focusing more and more on affirming polytonality.

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Tempo I (Andante)

Fl.

Flt. y Fl. III

Ob.

C.I.

Cl.

Cl. Bajó

Fg.

C.Fg.

Trp.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tbn III y Tubu

Tim.

Trg. y Caja

Cast. y Pand.

Pto. y B'.

Arp.

Vn. I

Vn. II

Va.

Vc.

Cb.

Tempo I (Andante)

unis.

arco

fff

pp

Fig. 6 Gerardo Gombau: *Don Quijote Watches the Arms*: Alternations between lento-rapid, piano-forte, homophony-polyphony, timbral differences building up to orchestral tutti, mm.

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4. Ernesto Halffter – Defining a Personal Style on the Path of Neoclassicism

The path of Neoclassicism is also reflected in the work of another composer, Ernesto Halffter (before his departure from the country). Here are a few pages from his culminating work in this regard, *Sinfonietta* (1930 in its definitive form, although written between 1923-1925), a creation with neoclassical tendencies, where both the title and the formal structure allude to the type of classical symphony. Thus, the composer reworks the baroque form of the *concerto grosso*, after the model of which the solo sections alternate with the tutti sections. Halffter's originality lies in his inclusion of the solo group within the orchestra itself, as though there were two orchestras, where the larger one includes the smaller one. The chamber instrumental group consists of: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, two trumpets (initially one), percussion (timpani, and large and small drums, which he later introduces), and what initially was the trio of violin, cello, and double bass will be expanded later by the addition of the entire string orchestra. This model of the orchestra does not align with the classical conception of the instrument number from the 18th century, nor with the one from the romantic era.

Musicologist Adolfo Salazar refers to Ernesto Halffter as a “Scarlatti of the 20th century”, because *Sinfonietta* contains Scarlattian elements and orchestral nuances that occasionally evoke the style of Domenico Scarlatti, of course, all enveloped in Halffter's modern conception of musical material development. The language used by Ernesto Halffter is tonal, with harmonic dissonances treated as ambient colour. In certain moments, the juxtaposition of harmonic masses leads to the idea of bitonality, as in Figure 7.

The existence of Scarlattian motifs is ambiguous due to the Halffterian melodies, which unfold under the same polyphonic presentation mode. (Fig. 8)

The rhythmic pulse, marked accents, and various modes of attack present continuous metamorphoses of the musical content, where sometimes the rhythmic part is heard precisely, while other times a vocal-like impression (auditory impression) is created. This happens not only because of the rhythmic pulse but also due to the construction and intervallic organization, attributed to the expressive legatos and symmetry of the phrases. The entire amalgamation of melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, and even formal combinations (in this regard, there is a great variety in the sections within the classical formal scheme) gives the work the uniqueness of Halffter's stylistic language. One of the composer's objectives, expressed throughout his creation, is to compose according to the principle of simplicity, artistic freedom, and to give the work a communicative and open character. (Fig. 9)

The image displays a page of a musical score for Ernesto Halffter's *Sinfonietta*. The score is arranged in systems, with each system containing staves for different instruments. The instruments listed on the left are: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl. b.), Clarinet in A (Cl. a.), Bassoon (Fag.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon in C (Fag. c.), Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), Viola (Vcl.), Violoncello (Vcllo), Contrabasso (Cb.), Flute (Fl.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl. b.), Clarinet in A (Cl. a.), Bassoon (Fag.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon in C (Fag. c.), Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), Viola (Vcl.), Violoncello (Vcllo), and Contrabasso (Cb.). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Key markings include *f*, *P dolciss. espress.*, *p dolce*, *pizz.*, and *arco espresa.*. The score is written in a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature.

Fig. 7 Ernesto Halffter, *Sinfonietta*: Neoclassicism under the sign of ambient coloristic dissonances and the juxtaposition of chords that sometimes lead to bitonality, letter K, finale.

The image displays a musical score for Ernesto Halffter's *Sinfonietta*, specifically the fourth movement. A box labeled 'H' is placed at the beginning of the first system. The score is written for a large ensemble, including strings, woodwinds, and brass. The notation is complex, with many overlapping melodic lines and dynamic markings such as *mf*, *pp sub.*, and *p*. The score is divided into systems, with the first system containing the most detailed notation. The second system shows a continuation of the overlapping lines, with some instruments playing *pp sub.* (pianissimo, *subito*). The third system shows a change in dynamics, with some instruments playing *mf* and *p*. The fourth system shows a return to *pp sub.* for many instruments. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The notation includes many slurs, accents, and dynamic markings, indicating a highly textured and dynamic piece.

Fig. 8 Ernesto Halffter, *Sinfonietta*: Overlapping melodic lines, letter H from the fourth movement

beginning, Halffter introduces a Scarlattian theme in *Pastorella*, the first movement in sonata form:



Fig. 10 Ernesto Halffter, *Sinfonietta*: I. *Pastorella*: Scarlattian theme (mm. 1-2)

The exposition unfolds according to the sonata form, based on themes that cadence following the rules of the classical cadence (I-V-I).



Fig. 11 Ernesto Halffter, *Sinfonietta*: I. *Pastorella*: First theme (measures 1-4)

Baroque ornaments such as mordents, trills, and rhythmic formulas typical of the period are present here. Likewise, the first movement is characterized by the introduction of Spanish folk melodies and cadences in the Phrygian mode. Interestingly, Halffter, in order to introduce novelty into *Sinfonietta*, will rework those melodies from the second section of the development (letter Q) in the recapitulation.



Fig. 12 Ernesto Halffter, *Sinfonietta*: I. *Pastorella*: Recapitulation, reintroduction of the Spanish theme from the second developmental section (letter Q).

Alongside these examples, there is another facet of composers in a state of professional confusion, searching for a path within the traditional music school. The exception that confirms the rule is found in the case of composer Joaquín Rodrigo, who follows the same path of the aesthetics of the national school. However, *Concierto de Aranjuez* (*Concert of Aranjuez*, written in 1939) retains the undeniable value of a fully realized artistic creation. Joaquín Rodrigo's stance only supports the process of involution of musical language, as projected by the

other case of Gerardo Gombau, that is, the evolutionary path along the avant-garde composition of Western music of that time.

5. The 1927 Generation: From the Tendencies of the National School to the Creation of Spanish Avant-garde Music

A particularity of the group is that the members of the 1927 Generation demonstrate a lack of interest in fostering relationships among themselves. However, they also face the phenomenon of the separation of any aesthetic links that could contribute to defining a unified behaviour. It is well known that belonging to an exemplary group holds decisive importance regarding the value assessment of the figures it represents, and consequently, the works created. Once an individual's style is established, the dominant character of the aesthetic itself naturally takes shape. Only in this way can the hierarchical valorisation of each member, dependent on the group they belong to, be realized based on the contributions made by each artist through their creation. According to historians, the case of the generation of Spanish composers who reached professional maturity at the time of the outbreak of two conflicts, one national and one international, reveals a significant deficit in collective consensus and common aesthetic bonds; in a word, the absence of group spirit is noteworthy, a concept that is closely linked to the movements and tendencies of later artists. The tragedy of this situation, suffered by musicians in Spain during the post-war years, is marked by a lack of clarity and homogeneity of ideas, which is further exacerbated by the impossibility of relying on the immediate historical reality of the past.

In contrast, the course of life for the musicians who emigrated unfolded differently from that of those who remained in Spain during the years 1936-1945. The former assimilated the processes and conditions in their adopted country, each according to the professional trajectory they would follow. Carlos Surinach, who emigrated to the United States, pursued his professional career as a conductor and composer. The musical language employed by this Spanish composer, fully integrated into American culture, contains elements characteristic of Andalusian music, as well as influences from German symphonism. Similarly, Luis Benejam wrote numerous chamber works, infused with American influences, which interacted with the essence of Spanish melodies and rhythm. María Teresa Prieto settled in Mexico, where she continued her musical career, rooted in the Hispanic aesthetics of her music. In France, in Paris, Vicente Garcés and Mauricio Ohana met. Roberto Gerhard, after traveling to Vienna, Berlin, and the United States, settled in England, but never lost contact with Spain. Adolfo Salazar and Rodolfo Halffter went to Mexico, where they spent the rest of their lives. Manuel de Falla and Julián Bautista had already taken the path of exile to Argentina. As can be seen, some Spanish composers would remain forever in their adopted lands, while others would return to their homeland only after the great economic crisis in the

United States (1929-1940), or after the division of Germany into East and West (1989), or much later, after the fall of the Soviet Union (1991).

Shortly after the end of World War II (1945), a musical phenomenon took place: the revival of the national school, initiated at the end of the 19th century. This orientation had recently been abandoned in favor of neoclassicism, adopted by the members of the 1927 Generation during the corresponding decade. Thus, the recovery of the aesthetic promoted by the Spanish national school led to the imitation of a concept known as “casticism”, which refers to the attitude characteristic of literary circumstances in the 18th century, drawing its artistic essence from the social, political, and cultural reality of that time. The dominant features of the casticist aesthetic belong to the Goyesque universe, depicting royal and aristocratic environments, promoting bullfighting art, and the nocturnal revelry known as *fiestas*, accompanied by guitars and castanets, as well as vocal performances called *tonadillas*, which are poetic-musical compositions with a Spanish character. The casticist style is characterized by the accuracy of the native literary language, wrapped in neoclassical architectural forms, and a deep marking of the patriotic sentiment embedded in local traditions.

Musicians, particularly composers, are those who adopt, for a period, the exaggerated sentiment of patriotism in their musical language, reiterating languages of their own value, albeit outdated. As a result, works are written with similar imitative effects across the compositions of composers. For instance, Joaquín Rodrigo’s *Concierto de Aranjuez* (1938-1939), the symphonic poems *Don Quijote velando las armas* (1945) and *Campocerrado* (1947), as well as *Variaciones poemáticas sobre un tema de carácter popular español* (1949) written by Gerardo Gombau, and Joaquín Turina’s *Sonata Española* No. 2 Op. 82 (composed between 1933-1934, revised in 1942), *Variaciones clásicas* Op. 72 (1936), and *Las musas de Andalucía* Op. 93 (1942). These works reflect an image of a past Spain, at the time, evoking a nostalgia for former times.

At the same time, during this period, genres such as zarzuela, variety music, *tonadillas*, as well as other lighter compositions (paso-doble, Spanish couplets, *habaneras*, tangos, regional dances, etc.) directly derived from Hispano-American folklore experienced a revival. As can be observed, the situation was rather precarious in all artistic domains. Musicians were constantly required to seek informational material from outside the country (scores, treatises, musicological writings, articles, etc.). The context in which Spanish musicians found themselves coincided with the new change in Igor Stravinsky’s aesthetics, as he stated, a return to Bach, meaning neoclassicism, alongside other directions such as Bartók’s plea, the new Messiaen’s language, dodecaphonism, serialism, and the initiation of integral serialism.

A figure of maximum importance in the evolutionary process of contemporary music, an exponent of the 1927 Generation, but whose thinking aligns with the avant-garde artists of the second half of the 20th century, is the

composer Gerardo Gombau. The transition from the Castilian nationalism to the dodecaphonic-serial system is based on a particular way of giving new structural forms and musical content. At the same time, the quality of authenticity is present in each of his creations, reflecting a constant search for novelty and originality. Gerardo Gombau was one of the first composers to enter the realm of electronic music with his work *Alea 68*, composed in 1968.

Another reference work by this composer, as proof of his constant search for a modern language in tune with European musical reality, is his *Cuarteto de cuerdas 3+1* [*String Quartet 3+1*], composed in 1967. The composer uses variation techniques that highlight both solo moments and tutti (ensemble) sections. The sound movements are created in a compact acoustic form typical of serialism, where the three instruments – first violin, viola, and cello – often control the organizational structure of the melodic line, while at other times, the second violin intermittently presents the sonic ideas. In this way, Gombau's intention is fully realized, as the musical discourse is clear and the formal architecture reveals balance.

The image displays a musical score for String Quartet 3+1 by Gerardo Gombau, specifically pages 83-93. The score is arranged in a compact form, showing sound displacements and interruptions of the sound line for violin I, II, viola, and cello. The notation includes various dynamics (pp, ppp, p, mf) and performance instructions such as 'sin vibrar', 'sin sordina', 'pizz', 'arco normal', and 'arco'. A specific measure is marked with a box containing the number 90. The score is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The instruments are labeled as 'Violin I', 'Violin II', 'Viola', and 'Cello'. The score shows a complex interplay of sounds, with some instruments playing sustained notes while others have more active, rhythmic parts. The overall texture is dense and intricate, characteristic of Gombau's serialist style.

(1) La + es el signo tradicional para indicar pizz. m. izda.

Fig. 13 Gerardo Gombau: *String Quartet 3+1*: examples of sound displacements in compact form (violin I, II, viola, cello) or interruptions of the sound line (violin II), mm. 83-93

The sound effect is achieved through the elaboration of the pointillist technique, following the model of Anton Webern. In this work as well, it stands out from the analysis that the themes or motifs, which are repeated with almost symmetrical consistency, provide modifications depending on the timbral configurations. In turn, the timbre is given a variety of expressive nuances that belong to the style of the Spanish composer, without omitting the highlighting of some slight Bartókian influences in terms of articulation and phrasing, as seen in the following musical context:

The musical score consists of four staves. The first three staves are for Violin I, Violin II, and Viola, and the fourth is for Cello/Double Bass. The score is in 4/4 time and features a variety of articulations and dynamics. Key annotations include 'logno (battuto)', '(arco normal) robote', '(sempre J-J)', 'Golpe on la (tapa inferior con los nudillos)', 'pizz', '(simile) (violín I)', '(simile) (violín I)', 'arco (pontic)', '(vibrato) arco (sul tasto)', 'pizz', 'pizz', 'arco pontic', '(tapa)', '(tapa)', '(tapa)', 'III Coda', 'P (sforzando)', 'mf', 'mp', 'mf', 'p', 'ff'. A box containing the number '20' is located at the beginning of the second staff.

Fig. 14 Gerardo Gombau: *String Quartet 3+1*: pointillist technique, Webernian model, and Bartókian articulations; mm. 20-25

In addition to these individualities of Gerardo Gombau's language, special attention is given to exploring the extreme registers of the instruments (a characteristic specific to avant-garde Spanish composers). Moreover, attention is focused on achieving completely unique and special timbral effects, even applying the mute during the calmest moments of the quartet. Gerardo Gombau does not neglect to contrast these episodes with those that highlight very condensed timbral variations in sound.

Figure 15 shows a musical score for String Quartet 3+1, measures 73 and 76. The score is written for four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass). The key signature has one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, *p sf*, and *pp*. It also features performance instructions like "Sord. (sin vibrar)", "Sord.", "IV Cda. lentamente", "gliss", and "III Cda. gliss". The music is characterized by long, sustained notes and glissandos, with a focus on timbral effects achieved through the use of mutes.

Fig. 15 Gerardo Gombau: *String Quartet 3+1*: example of a mute used as a new timbral effect, mm. 73 and 76

Figure 16 shows a musical score for String Quartet 3+1, measures 83-86. The score is written for four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass). The key signature has one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *p*, *ppp*, and *pp*. It also features performance instructions like "sin vibrar", "II Cda.", "gliss", and "Vibrodol mínima. Puede forzarse tan deprisa como sea posible resp. todo las indicaciones intermedias. (A. G. 1971)". The music is characterized by extreme registers, condensed timbres, and glissandos, with a focus on exploring the limits of the instruments.

Fig. 16 Gerardo Gombau: *String Quartet 3+1*: condensed timbres and exploration of the extreme registers of the instruments, mm. 83-86

Rhythm constitutes a particularly important parameter in *String Quartet 3+1*; it is attached to frequent variations, where syncopations and off-beats predominate, alongside the diversity of accents, changes in meter and time units, as well as continuous transformations of tempo, dynamics, and musical agogic. All these elements provide the general pulse of the work with variety, complexity, and sound colours designed in various nuances, based on a well-structured, well-thought-out compositional technique.

Figure 17 shows a musical score for String Quartet 3+1, measure 65. The score is written for four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass). The key signature has one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, *f-p*, *p*, and *pp*. It also features performance instructions like "pizz", "IV Cda.", and "p subito". The music is characterized by rhythmic patterns and dynamic contrasts, with a focus on pizzicato and other performance techniques.

Fig. 17 Gerardo Gombau: *String Quartet 3+1*: rhythmic variations, changes of accents, time and measure units, dynamics (mm. 64-72)

Even the indications for notation in the quartet’s score contain clear and concise statements. This only facilitates the performers’ reading, in order to be able to capture the artistic message conveyed by the composer.

The essential feature of the composition is the dissonant configuration of the melodic-harmonic line, not consonance. Thus, the serial structure is built from characteristic intervals such as: the minor second, the major seventh, the augmented fifth, and the augmented fourth, intervals that lead to the existence of many dissonances in the harmonic plan.

Fig. 18 Gerardo Gombau: “String Quartet 3+1”:
dissonant configuration of the serial structure (mm. 1-6)

Gerardo Gombau’s compositional language no longer has to do with dissonance according to the idea of dissonance proposed by Felipe Pedrell (melodic harmonization). Consequently, the system used by Gerardo Gombau is the serial one, and the fundamental technique relies on the Webernian pointillist concept, which is why it is not compatible with the Pedrellian idea.

6. Conclusions

In any case, the repercussions of the cultural gap are evident during the period between 1939-1945, where disorientation is felt at every level – artistic, scientific, cultural, social, and ethical – both in Spain and in Europe. However, the internal turmoil suffered by the Spanish people, along with the loss of control over the situation, shakes the very foundation of the consciousness and sense of life of all humanity. The situation of the world wars stands as a true testament to this. The 20th century, therefore, presents a disturbing aspect that leaves deep imprints long after the end of World War II. Even though the power of the creator will gradually recover through complete spiritual and cultural recognition, the artworks from these periods leave a grave, unforgettable relic in the history of mankind and the nature of humanity.

In another context, regarding music, the aesthetics derived from innovative musical languages concerning harmony (Alexandr Scriabin), rhythm (Igor Stravinsky), sound structuring (Arnold Schoenberg), the creation of a sonic world through other forms of artistic presentation (Claude Debussy, Olivier Messiaen), the practice of modern writing techniques, the refinement of musical instruments, and the novelty of orchestration theories valid for the new language (Manuel de Falla, Bela Bartók) were not easily understood at that time in Spain. Therefore, there are opposing stances, either accepting or rejecting any system

that surpassed the tonal extremes, even among some Spanish composers themselves. Due to this reason, the composers who remained in the country created a constant state of concern for themselves. As a result, they felt lost in their own despair, searching for values that had already been established but could no longer be supported in the present reality they lived in. Only after 1945 did the first signs of the restoration of Spanish culture, and thus the arts, begin to emerge. Thanks to the justification of the phenomenon of aesthetic and ideological fragmentation, Generation of '27 represents those musicians and intellectuals from any field who will remain in the history of music as a transitional generation, situated between tradition and avant-garde.

Throughout these years, many works by the composers of the Republican Generation (of 1927) were lost. Some scores and musicological writings were recovered over time, while the other part appears, unfortunately, to have never been found, at least up until the present moment.

Following the debut of the avant-garde movement proposed by the generational group (from the 1927s), two tendencies in creative practice will emerge: one reflecting the neoclassical style with elements derived from Spanish folklore, which would later accept the novelty of the dodecaphonic system; the other revealing an attraction to the aesthetics of the national school, with specific regional characteristics, as well as Romantic influences. As a consequence, Spanish musical art, just before the middle of the century (precisely between 1945-1950), will divide into two distinct artistic conceptual worlds. It is certain, however, that all musicians will, for a period, move away from the harmonic concepts and modal language proposed by Manuel de Falla, in search of universal values in music. They thus return to the classical tonal system and to the use of their own folklore in the simplest form of artistic presentation.

Gradually, from this point forward, between 1945-1950, Spain's socio-economic tension begins to ease. This helps create another musical phenomenon, that of aesthetic mixture. In the middle of the 20th century, Spanish composers, on one hand, cultivate the idea of renovating the musical language, while on the other, they persist with the conservative line of selected artistic formulas. This process proves to be quite natural, given Spain's historical circumstances up to this point.

In conclusion, the shift towards cultural modernization takes place in the form of an eclectic movement, with the goal of later embracing the avant-garde movement (in Spain, as it had already debuted in Europe much earlier). The composers belonging to the generational group of 1927 are those who will follow very varied personal artistic paths, resulting in particular styles derived from a mix of sometimes native and adopted cultures (for those who left the country). Starting with the Generation of 1951, compositional styles will emerge, as diverse as they are particular in their ethnic unity from which they draw inspiration, and of

course, rich in distinctive personal characteristics that mark each composer and each individual creation, showcasing the originality of their artistry.

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